

# 2015



**HELVETAS**  
Swiss Intercooperation

## ANNUAL REPORT

263,180

people benefitted from better commercialisation of their farm products.



525,993

people attended training for methods to improve the yield of their farms in a sustainable manner.



617,014

people have gained access to land and forests and/or prepared themselves to adapt agricultural production to the effects of climate change.



45,206

people – children as well as adults – attended primary schools or literacy courses.



1,296,228

people got improved access to schools, hospitals and markets thanks to bridges and roads.



353,369

people received access to water and acquired knowledge to improve the irrigation of their fields.



395,201

people attended courses at which they learned about their civil rights and/or democracy, decentralised administration, migration and peace-building.



37,907

people attended vocational colleges or trainings.



83,533

people received access to sanitation facilities.



## A BETTER LIFE FOR

## 3,617,631 PEOPLE



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**23** villages in northern Laos have established vegetable patches and fish ponds to supplement their maize monocultures. People now enjoy a more balanced diet and sell part of their produce on local markets.

Seite 12



© Herman Akereko

**2,167** children in rural Benin have been able to catch up on their primary schooling outside the official education system and acquire the fundamental skills of a trade.

Seite 16



© Saad Cerna

**1,750** people in Shkodra, northern Albania, communicated in 2015 with the authorities of the country at recently established local internet points run by the municipality.

Seite 18

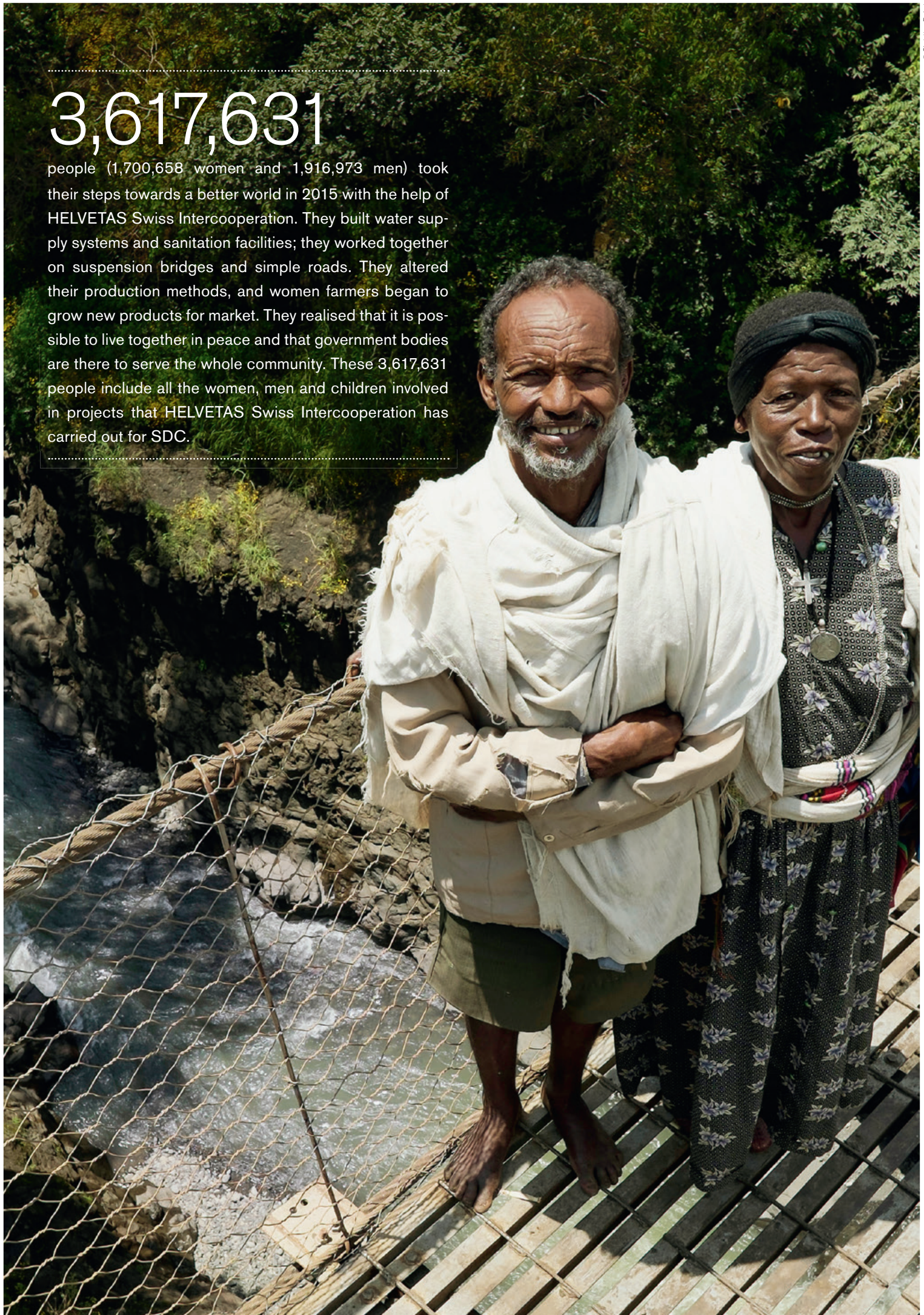
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## ABOUT US

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation is an international network of independent affiliate members working in the field of development cooperation and emergency response. As a network, we promote the fundamental rights of individuals and groups and strengthen governments and other duty bearers in their service provision. The HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation network builds upon six decades of development experience. Its 1,600 staff members work in over 30 countries. The affiliated members share a common vision and mission and subscribe to common working principles and policies. The members implement joint development programmes and adhere to one common strategy built on defined working approaches and thematic areas of intervention.

# 3,617,631

people (1,700,658 women and 1,916,973 men) took their steps towards a better world in 2015 with the help of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation. They built water supply systems and sanitation facilities; they worked together on suspension bridges and simple roads. They altered their production methods, and women farmers began to grow new products for market. They realised that it is possible to live together in peace and that government bodies are there to serve the whole community. These 3,617,631 people include all the women, men and children involved in projects that HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation has carried out for SDC.



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.



# KEEPING PROMISES

“Our aim is clear. Our mission is possible. And our destination is in our sights: an end to extreme poverty by 2030; a life of peace and dignity for all.” UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon was clearly in a good mood, his demeanour almost euphoric and festive, as he addressed the UN General Assembly on 28 September 2015.

The international community had just approved 17 Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved by the year 2030, some of them extremely ambitious: end extreme poverty and hunger; ensure access to water and sanitation for all; reduce the child and maternal mortality rates; double the productivity of small farmers; halve global food waste; ensure primary and secondary education for all children; promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice for all.

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation is playing its part in attaining these goals. We are funding the construction of water infrastructure and latrines, which improve overall levels of health. We are helping farmers to introduce new production methods that are adapted to climate change. We are supporting vocational training to complement mandatory primary schooling. Our training programmes enable citizens to shape their society’s democratic development and lay the foundations for a better future.

All these projects are only possible because of the support we receive from a great number of people and institutions. I would like to thank our 100,000 members and donors for standing by us to face up to the many global challenges and fight for greater equality. I am grateful to all the cantons and municipalities that have stuck to their commitment to development cooperation despite straitened financial circumstances. I would like to thank development institutions such as SDC, SECO and the Liechtenstein

Development Service for their cooperation and constructive critical engagement with our work.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals are a significant and convincing response to these challenges. Ban Ki-moon hailed them as a “towering achievement” by the international community. Our Federal President Simonetta Sommaruga was less euphoric in her address to the General Assembly. The 2030 Agenda was no miracle solution to the world’s problems, she said. “For Switzerland, it was clear right from the beginning of this process that sustainable development will only be possible if the entire international community – not just individual states – pull in the same direction.” Her words of warning to politicians and civil society are justified – grand development plans have all too often been consigned to deep drawers.

The first worrying indications of this are already becoming apparent in Switzerland. Mere weeks after the solemn approval of the Sustainable Development Goals, the National Council and the Council of States voted to cut expenditure on development cooperation by 115 million Swiss francs. Despite promises that these savings would be restricted to 2016, it is likely that the development cooperation budget will come under renewed pressure after the Parliament lurched to the right during the autumn elections. We can expect the first major clash on the topic when the new credit framework for development aid comes up for debate in the 2016 summer session.

© Michele Lunna



Elmar Ledergerber  
President of  
HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation

Helvetas is opposed to any erosion of solidarity and will constantly remind our political leaders of their international commitments. Alongside practical project work, this is one of the core tasks of a development agency.

# LEARNING FROM SUCCESS

When successful development projects are reflected in government programmes in a partner country, it ensures that their impact is felt far beyond any individual location. HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation actively seeks to make contact with public institutions and authorities. This also applies to disaster response and security.

Development cooperation works. This was brought home to me in Jalalabad in southern Kyrgyzstan. I was lucky enough to get to talk to small farmers there who have been cultivating farms of about half a hectare since the break-up of the USSR. Helvetas has helped an old Soviet canning factory to return to production and develop distribution channels to reach urban consumers. The now flourishing factory has become a reliable buyer from farmers in the region, who, thanks to agricultural training, business advice and the provision of small agricultural loans, have been able to secure a modest but stable livelihood for themselves. They now produce three times as many tomatoes, cucumbers and lettuces in their greenhouses as a few years ago. They also enjoy a more varied diet than they used to. They are investing in their farms, and their children are attending secondary school.

These successes have put a brake on emigration and are bringing stability to a region that is increasingly at risk from extremist movements. Our project has also influenced Kyrgyz development policy, for the Ministry of Agriculture now runs a centre in the capital city, Bishkek, that promotes greenhouses and drip irrigation.

More and more, our programmes try to find overarching solutions that both assist smallholder farmers and establish a policy framework that encourages development. In Honduras, the Ministry of Education has incorporated into the curriculum aspects of our vocational training projects preparing secondary schoolchildren to start

their own micro-businesses. In Benin, one of our pilot projects convinced the Ministry of Education to provide skills development training to the large number of untrained teachers in village schools and then formally recognise them as primary school teachers.

The disastrous earthquake in Nepal, which caused over 8,000 deaths and wrecked the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of families, presented a very serious challenge for Helvetas. Our staff began to organise the first emergency aid response immediately after the first major quake on 25 April. They were able to count on long-established networks and trusted partners to do so. Our staff pro-

vided regular and dramatic updates about their experiences via Internet and in the Swiss media, helping to trigger a massive show of solidarity by the Swiss public. Helvetas alone received donations totalling over four million francs, which funded swift and effective emergency aid despite the many bureaucratic hurdles erected by the Nepalese government.

Such dramatic events are a turning point in the life of every affected programme. All too often – and in Nepal’s case quite literally – we suddenly realise that the ground beneath our feet is not as solid as we were inclined to believe during the good times. Our partner countries suffered twenty events last year alone, most of them climate-related, but despite the misery and destitution they caused, they barely made it into the Swiss headlines. The security situation has also deteriorated in many countries, often for political reasons but also because a lack of economic prospects and stark social inequalities are driving increasing numbers of young men to crime.

Development cooperation has become harder in many of our partner countries. Authoritarian regimes have a tendency to place ever stricter controls on our work, and attempted coups in Mali and Burkina Faso had a temporary detrimental impact on our projects. Members of our staff and their families have been threatened by criminal gangs or suffered from the after-effects of natural disasters. We have responded in two ways, firstly by drawing up emergency response plans



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Melchior Lengsfeld  
Executive Director  
HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation .....



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**Successful development.** When drip irrigation and greenhouses get the Kyrgyz government's backing.

for countries where the threat is greatest and, secondly, by tightening our security arrangements.

Yet I was also very touched and impressed to see the cohesion between our country programmes at various extremely traumatic moments in the past twelve months. This unity was reflected in messages of solidarity and generous donations by staff in other countries.

The two international agreements signed last autumn in New York and Paris provided grounds for hope. The UN Sustainable Development Goals – the 2030 Agenda – and the Paris Climate Agreement have the potential to act as a decisive and positive force in development and climate policy over the coming years. After the success of the Millennium Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the UN General Assembly's attempt to establish a comprehensive framework for overcoming global poverty. For the first time, economic, social and environmental issues were incorporated into a clear catalogue of goals, for which states not only promised to make funding available but also to alter their own patterns of consump-

tion and wealth distribution. Then, barely three months later, delegations from almost every country on earth gathered at the climate conference in Paris and reacted – also for the very first time – to the warnings of the scientific community. To our joy and surprise they resolved to do everything in their power to keep global warming below the critical 2°C threshold. Of course, we are conscious that the battle has not been won simply because an agreement has been signed, and we know that civil society must keep a close eye on politicians to ensure that they back up their words with deeds. We are therefore supporting civil society organisations in our partner countries so that they can stand up for their rights and demand that these promises are kept.

The two agreements are of extra special importance to us in Switzerland, because we use four times more resources than we are entitled to in proportion to the rest of the globe. That is why Helvetas also campaigns on climate and development policy in Switzerland. We support petitions and initiatives such as the Responsible Business Initiative, which would make it mandatory for Swiss companies to respect fundamental human rights in

their overseas operations as well. We tackle development issues through street campaigns and in our *Partnerschaft* magazine. Our successful travelling exhibition "We Eat The World" has recorded over 77,000 enthusiastic visitors to date including a high proportion of schoolchildren. It has raised visitors' awareness of how they can contribute to a better world through their actions as citizens and consumers. We see the exhibition as an educational investment in a more sustainable and peaceful future.

The current streams of migrants and the heightened terrorist threat have brought home the consequences of poverty to industrialised countries as well. This is reason enough to stand together: we are the first generation that has the ability to end mass poverty worldwide.

Retreating into some imaginary idyllic past will not help us deal with these challenges, nor will shutting ourselves off from others – even if that were possible. What we need is joint, coordinated action for a fairer future for all. I would like to thank you all, as members, donors and representatives of private foundations or public institutions, for shaping this future with us.

# COUNTRY PROGRAMMES IN 2015

The map provides an overview of the country programmes in HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation's 32 partner countries. The figures are as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015.

## LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

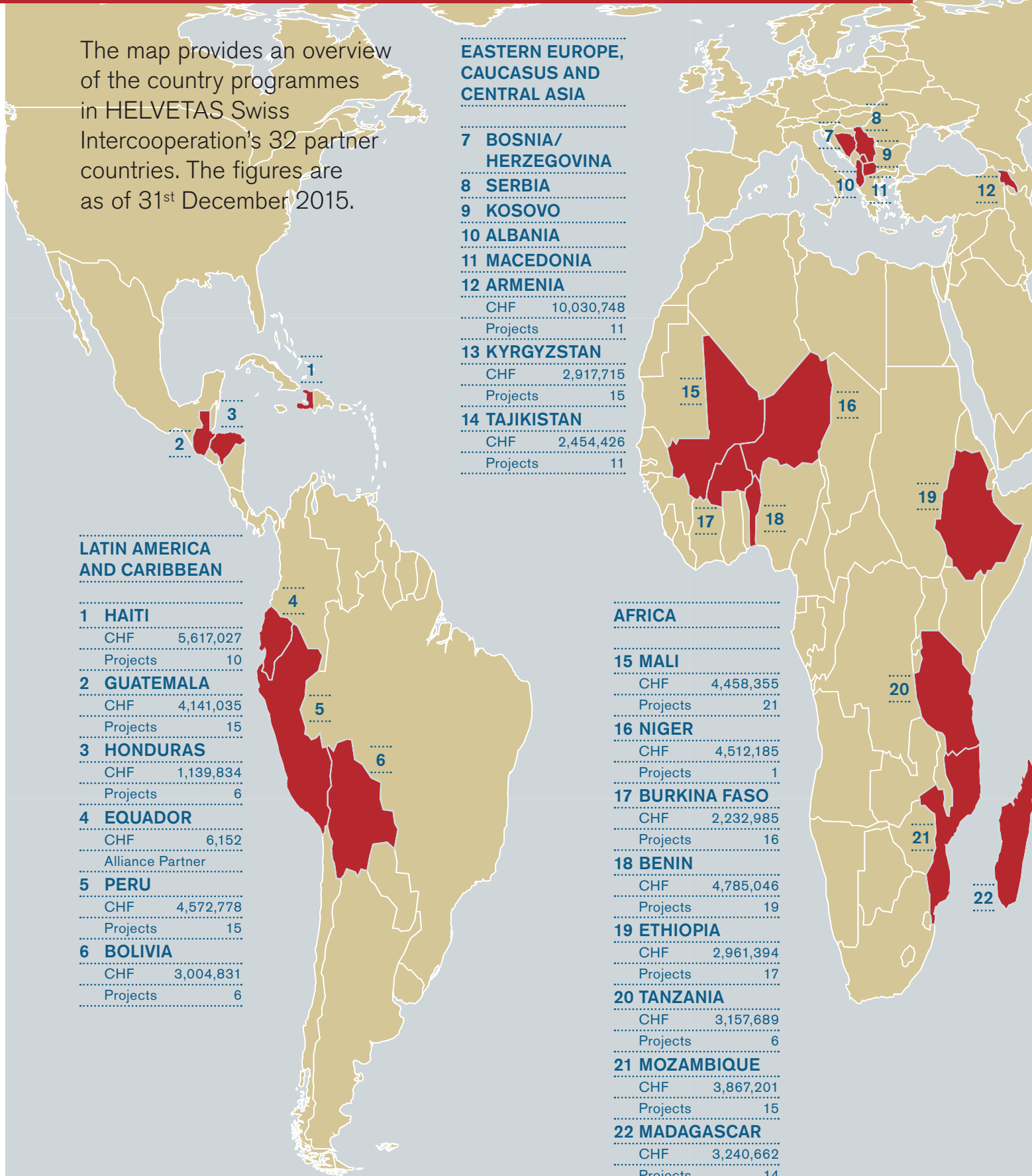
<b>1 HAITI</b>	CHF	5,617,027
	Projects	10
<b>2 GUATEMALA</b>	CHF	4,141,035
	Projects	15
<b>3 HONDURAS</b>	CHF	1,139,834
	Projects	6
<b>4 EQUADOR</b>	CHF	6,152
	Alliance Partner	
<b>5 PERU</b>	CHF	4,572,778
	Projects	15
<b>6 BOLIVIA</b>	CHF	3,004,831
	Projects	6

## EASTERN EUROPE, CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA

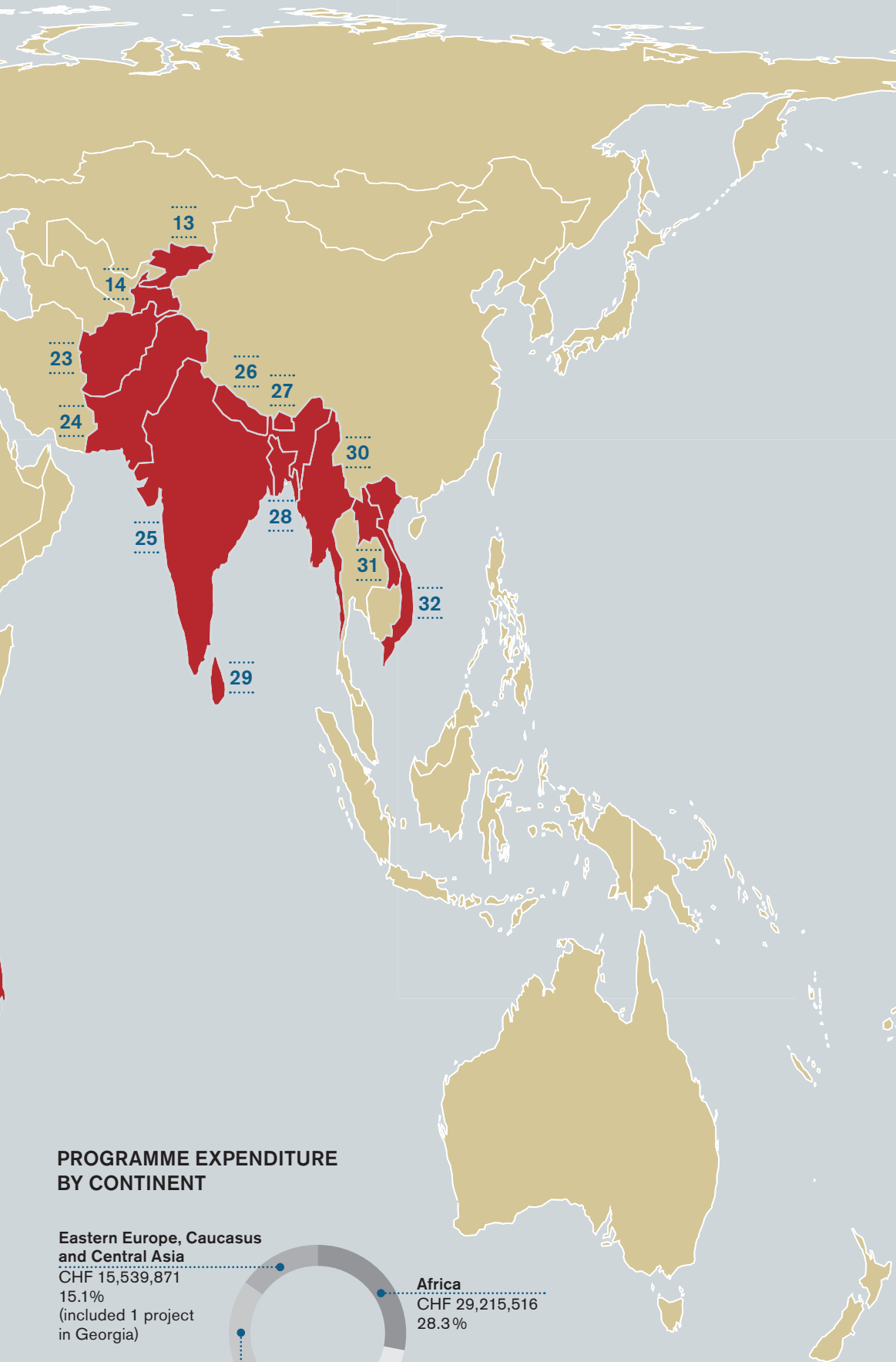
<b>7 BOSNIA/HERZEGOVINA</b>		
<b>8 SERBIA</b>		
<b>9 KOSOVO</b>		
<b>10 ALBANIA</b>		
<b>11 MACEDONIA</b>		
<b>12 ARMENIA</b>	CHF	10,030,748
	Projects	11
<b>13 KYRGYZSTAN</b>	CHF	2,917,715
	Projects	15
<b>14 TAJIKISTAN</b>	CHF	2,454,426
	Projects	11

## AFRICA

<b>15 MALI</b>	CHF	4,458,355
	Projects	21
<b>16 NIGER</b>	CHF	4,512,185
	Projects	1
<b>17 BURKINA FASO</b>	CHF	2,232,985
	Projects	16
<b>18 BENIN</b>	CHF	4,785,046
	Projects	19
<b>19 ETHIOPIA</b>	CHF	2,961,394
	Projects	17
<b>20 TANZANIA</b>	CHF	3,157,689
	Projects	6
<b>21 MOZAMBIQUE</b>	CHF	3,867,201
	Projects	15
<b>22 MADAGASCAR</b>	CHF	3,240,662
	Projects	14







## ASIA

### 23 AFGHANISTAN

CHF 8,910,534

Projects 7

### 24 PAKISTAN

CHF 3,819,681

Projects 11

### 25 INDIA

CHF 29,308

Alliance Partner

### 26 NEPAL

CHF 12,646,391

Projects 43

### 27 BHUTAN

CHF 1,386,427

Projects 12

### 28 BANGLADESH

CHF 5,291,775

Projects 13

### 29 SRI LANKA

CHF 804,973

Projects 5

### 30 MYANMAR

CHF 1,100,006

Projects 3

### 31 LAOS

CHF 3,150,908

Projects 6

### 32 VIETNAM

CHF 2,166,265

Projects 10

## PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY CONTINENT

### Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia

CHF 15,539,871

15.1%

(included 1 project in Georgia)

### Latin America and Caribbean

CHF 18,481,657

17.9%

### Africa

CHF 29,215,516

28.3%

### Asia

CHF 39,936,306

38.7%

(included disaster relief in Southeast Asia and 2 projects in the Philippines)

# BUILDING BRIDGES

Specialist knowledge about how to build suspension bridges was passed on to Ethiopians by Nepalese experts, not Europeans. In 2015 HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation carried out 62 projects in the Water and Infrastructure working area, and invested CHF 19,786,445.

## ETHIOPIA LEARNS FROM NEPAL

A new bridge is a life-changer. It makes every-day journeys safer and quicker for local people. New handicraft businesses, snack bars and markets appear at the either end of the bridge, and bridge maintenance committees often form a core around which civil society can coalesce. The communities begin to organise public life and make government agencies listen to them. "There is no other development project that reaches so many people so quickly, so directly and at so little cost," says Swiss expert Toni Hagen, who was a development adviser to the Nepalese government over 50 years ago and has followed Helvetas' bridge programme ever since.

Suspension bridges have become an important symbol of Swiss development cooperation in Nepal – solid, close to the grassroots and inexpensive. Today, it is Nepalese who are in complete charge of planning and building the bridges. Nepalese engineers calculate and design the bridge. Nepalese foremen direct the building, Nepalese workers pour the foundations, and it is the future Nepalese users from the surrounding villages who supply the stones, the gravel and the sand and help actively with construction. This success story is continuing in Ethiopia. Once Helvetas and the Ethiopian road agency had agreed on the construction of 12 pilot bridges, it was not Europeans who travelled to Ethiopia but Nepalese experts who came to train local bridge-building specialists. It took them



**Knowledge transfer.** From the South and for the South.



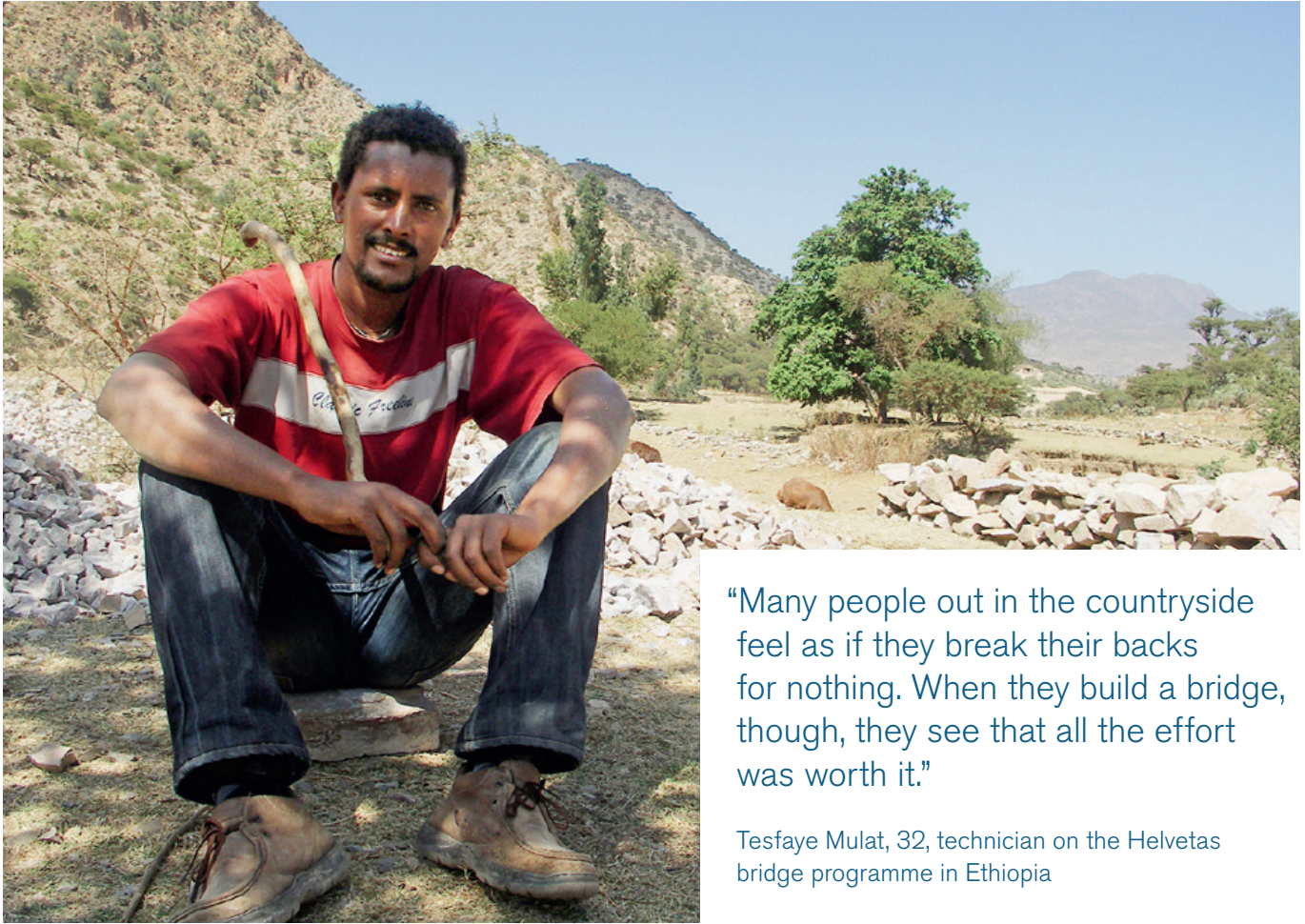
**Spanning divides.** In Ethiopia and Nepal.

only two years to pass on their skills to a team of Ethiopian bridge-builders.

One of these new bridge-builders is Tefaye Mulat. "I want to help myself and my country progress," he says. After training informally as a mason, the Nepalese experts taught him to make calculations for building bridges, use a theodolite and organise workflows.

Since 2009, 70 bridges have been built in Ethiopia, six of them in 2015. A further eleven bridges are currently under construction. "South-South cooperation is a great concept, but it's not always easy to put into practice," says Martin Fischler, the Programme Coordinator for Ethiopia at the Helvetas office in Berne. "But it has worked in the Ethiopian bridge pro-

gramme. That's probably because many villages in both countries are cut off from urban centres by watercourses and gorges, and because the technicians who took part set about their work with a great deal of common sense."



© Hanspeter Bundi

“Many people out in the countryside feel as if they break their backs for nothing. When they build a bridge, though, they see that all the effort was worth it.”

Tesfaye Mulat, 32, technician on the Helvetas bridge programme in Ethiopia

**2.6 billion**

people have gained access to clean drinking water in the last 25 years.

**335,421**

people gained access to clean drinking water and/or sanitation in 2015 thanks to Helvetas.

**1,296,228**

people gained better access to schools, hospitals and regional markets in 2015 thanks to Helvetas.

#### ADVISORY SERVICES: INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO PROVIDING CLEAN WATER

Five years ago, eight Swiss development agencies heavily involved in drinking water and sanitation, including Helvetas, united to form a water consortium. This is a unique platform that was set up to promote knowledge exchange – and a promising model of cooperation. Its coordinator, Daya Moser, has been the go-between for the eight organisations, their 20 water projects in ten countries, three regional advisers and SDC as the funding body since 2014. The results of these projects are compiled and published online ([waterconsortium.ch](http://waterconsortium.ch)). As well as regular meetings in Switzerland, Daya Moser helps organise regional workshops at which the project teams analyse innovative approaches. Such workshops were held in Mozambique, Togo and Nepal in 2015.



**Daya Moser** gained an MSc in Environmental Sciences from the ETH Zurich and managed a research project into the treatment of faecal sludge and market waste in Ghana.

Daya Moser has worked in development cooperation since 2003 and is an adviser in the Water and Sanitation working area.

# NUTRITIOUS

Farming families in northern Laos have broken free of their dependency on export crops and are paying greater attention to a balanced diet. In 2015 HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation carried out 100 projects in the Rural Economy working area, and invested CHF 28,279,781.

## LAOS: HEALTHY AND HOMEGROWN

"I've learned to cook a wide range of food, and that's good for my children," says 20-year-old Phout Bounthip from Keo Chiya. She points to her two boys, three-year-old Tovanh and his younger brother Sikham. For a month she took daily notes for the nutritional adviser on all the meals she cooked for her family and observed how her children responded to their food. "They like eating more, and they eat more since I started cooking a variety of meals," she says. "And they look healthier too." The project's technical adviser confirms the young mother's observations.

Keo Chiya is a small village in the poor, remote north of the country. During a visit a Laotian Helvetas team paid to the village, they noticed that the children were pale and too small for their age. When asked what they fed their children, the mothers replied, "Rice ... sweet potatoes ... a few vegetables ... very rarely some meat."

These farming families used to prioritise intensive maize production for the Vietnamese and Chinese markets, in accordance with government advice, and had therefore neglected other crops. The soils were depleted, and so they and the Laotian advisory team started exploring possibilities to make a living from growing other products. Existing lines of production such as weaving, fruit production and livestock rearing were improved, and new areas such as fish farming and silk-worm breeding introduced. In addition, the women started kitchen gardens in

which they grew pulses and peanuts for their own consumption as well as vegetables such as pumpkin, onions, carrots and garlic.

Phout Bounthip was one of those who laid out a kitchen garden. At cookery courses with the 50-60 other women of the village she is learning to introduce hitherto little-used ingredients into her recipes. Rice is enriched with pumpkin and crushed peanuts, pulses are reduced to a puree, and leafy vegetables are steamed or combined with other types of vegetable to make a soup or a salad. As well as the practical aspects of cooking, the women learn that a balanced diet should contain not only carbohydrates but also vitamins and minerals. Simple dietary tables now hang in many people's homes.

Within a very short space of time this new approach to farming has markedly and visibly improved the health and quality of life of 8,000 people in 18 villages. The vicious circle of poverty, poor nutrition, sickness and resignation is in the process of being broken. To ensure that these changes are sustained and serve as an example to other areas, the programme is also providing training for officials working for local and regional government authorities. They are beginning to better appreciate their responsibility for the living conditions in the villages, and increasingly draw some professional pride from the advancement of their region.



Healthy. New ideas in the fields ...



... and in the kitchen.



“I now have a garden with water spinach and other leafy vegetables, onions and carrots growing in it. It’s good for all of us! We have enough to eat and we feel better. My children aren’t so skinny anymore and they look healthier.”

Phout Bounghthip, a 20-year-old mother of two in Keo Chiya, Laos

© Patrick Rohr

**2,900**

calories per day are now available to the average person, 6% more than 15 years ago.

**525,993**

people were trained in agriculture, animal husbandry and forestry in 2015 thanks to Helvetas.

**263,180**

people were able to market their products better after attending courses run by Helvetas.

#### ADVISORY SERVICES: LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

Ten years after Helvetas introduced organic cotton production in West Africa and Central Asia, Ruedi Lüthi conducted a SECO-funded study to analyse the experiences. Organic production in Mali, Burkina Faso, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan has had an unconditionally positive effect on the environment, and farmers’ health and soils have significantly improved. Organic production resulted in halving the emission of carbon dioxide compared to conventional production. Economically, organic cotton has been a greater success in Central Asia than in West Africa. Powerful parastatal marketing boards in Africa have shown little interest in promoting organic production, and it has proved harder than expected to develop profitable organic companies.



**Ruedi Lüthi** graduated as an agronomist from the School of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences in Zollikofen and managed Helvetas projects in Vietnam,

Laos and Bhutan for 20 years. Following five years in the private sector, Ruedi Lüthi became Co-Head of our Rural Economy team in 2015.

# DIVERSITY

Farmers in the highlands of Bolivia are adapting their production to the new, harsher climatic conditions. In 2015 HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation carried out 55 projects in the Environment and Climate Change working area, and invested CHF 12,064,797.

## BOLIVIA: MAKING FARMING MORE RESILIENT

The frosty nights have got colder and it hails more frequently; the rainy seasons are shorter and less predictable. These are the signs of climate change in the Bolivian *altiplano*, and Amalia Valeriano knows that farmers on the *altiplano* can do nothing to halt them. Amalia is a dynamic woman in Jankosaya, an isolated village at an altitude of 3,950 metres. She knows that crop failure can plunge entire families, villages and regions into poverty. She and other farmers on the *altiplano* are searching for solutions that might best cushion her community from these sorts of shocks.

Experts have a word for this: resilience. Not only bodies and ecosystems but also social communities can develop resistance – to economic and political crises, to destructive social influences or to environmental disasters. In old, predominantly rural societies the knowledge about such resilience was based on long-standing experience. Anyone who worked the land made sure to plant several varieties of a particular crop, left the soil time to recover and provided it with the nutrients it required. In increasingly market-driven production systems this knowledge is now in danger of dying out.

Helvetas advisers are helping families to revive their traditional knowledge and adopt new production methods at the same time. They are revising their crop rotations. They produce compost, green liquid manure and natural pesticides.



© Jean Pierre Grandjean

**Adapting.** Varieties for dry and frosty seasons as a response to climate change.

They are diversifying their production and looking for opportunities to market their produce at better prices.

Quinoa, the ancient crop of the *altiplano*, plays a special role in this strategy. The small grains, which are also known as Inca rice, are rich in protein and used to form a major part of people's diet. In the modern age, the effects of which are felt even by traditional Aymara and Quechua communities, the sowing and consumption of quinoa steadily fell. But then consumers in industrialised countries discovered the precious grains and market prices shot up. As indigenous values and traditions simultaneously began to gain more traction, farmers in the *altiplano* rekindled

their interest in quinoa and a related plant in the amaranth family, cañahua, which has similar nutritious properties.

Quinoa plays an important role in the project to make farming systems more resilient. Amalia Valeriano and several other farmers from Jankosaya tested six different varieties of quinoa before choosing the Jacha Grano variety. This plant produces good yields even if the rains come late, and takes less time to ripen. Most farms have also increased the size of their plots and now harvest enough to cover their family's needs and even sell quinoa in the market.



“We hardly knew how to grow quinoa any more, but now we produce our own seeds again and quinoa has found its way back into our kitchens.”

Amalia Valeriano, a 34-year-old farmer in Jankosaya on the Bolivian altiplano

© Jean Pierre Grandjean

**800 million**  
people plant and  
harvest some of their food  
in cities and suburbs.

**321,525**  
hectares of land were  
protected or managed  
sustainably in 2015 thanks  
to Helvetas.

**185,929**  
farmers prepared  
themselves in 2015 for the  
consequences of climate  
change and drought with  
support from Helvetas.

#### ADVISORY SERVICES: COPING WITH NATURAL DISASTERS

The catastrophic floods of May 2014, the worst to hit the Balkans for 120 years, also affected the partners of a Helvetas market development and job creation project in north-eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina. With funding from SDC, Eveline Studer advised local authorities and private companies on how to cope with natural disasters. She used concrete examples to demonstrate to councils and companies that disruption to production has high hidden follow-up costs. They were also alerted to the fact that the cumulative damage of many small floods is greater than that caused by a spectacular flood. As a result, private companies and councils have been persuaded to invest their limited resources increasingly in simple protection and maintenance measures that will limit future damage.



**Eveline Studer** has an MSc in Environmental Engineering from the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale in Lausanne and, after spending extended periods in Georgia/ Armenia, Bolivia,

Bangladesh, Honduras, Spain and Burkina Faso, has worked for Helvetas since 2014. Eveline Studer is an adviser on disaster prevention and natural risk management in the Environment and Climate team.

# SECOND CHANCE

In rural Benin children who have left school prematurely – mainly under pressure from their parents – can catch up on their primary school education in new informal school centres. In 2015 HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation carried out 26 projects in the Skills Development and Education working area, and invested CHF 13'390'676.

## BENIN: CATCHING UP ON MISSED SCHOOL YEARS

Benin spends proportionally as much on education as Switzerland, i.e. 5.3% of its GDP. This surprising figure demonstrates one thing – that the Beninese authorities recognise the importance of education and are making huge efforts to catch up on neighbouring countries. The number of pupils in primary schools is rising at an annual rate of 5–6%, and two-thirds of all 15–24 year olds are now able to read and write. The equivalent rate for Benin's entire adult population is a mere 38%.

The quality of teaching in primary schools is especially poor. Only around a half of all teachers have completed teacher training; the rest are *enseignants communautaires*, whom local communities employ to teach in village schools. They have to deal with classes of 44 children on average, and up to 30% of these children do not even have a seat in the classroom. 47% of all children leave school before the sixth grade, often under pressure from their parents who need them as extra labour in the fields or around the house. Girls are far more likely to break off their schooling than boys, and this happens more frequently in the countryside than in urban areas.

Helvetas was commissioned by SDC to develop a programme with Solidar Suisse to enable premature school leavers to catch up with the material taught during the first six grades outside the official school system. It is the local

authority that takes the decision to build such a school, and local people who actually build it. Switzerland pays for the training of teaching staff and the drafting of educational materials. So far, 54 such schools have been completed, and 2,167 children and young adults were enrolled in them last year. Thanks to the compact curriculum, pupils are able to cover six years of primary material in only four years, and are prepared for a simple trade when they leave school in parallel to their school classes. Each school centre also has its own garden, its own canteen and latrines. New wells were dug at 22 schools.

56 per cent of the pupils over the past year were girls. That is a particularly high proportion for Benin, where girls are in the minority at every single level of schooling. In rural areas, many parents are sceptical about their children going to school, not least because they see how little their children actually learn there. Lafio Arouna, a farmer whose daughter attends the school centre in Sinendé, is aware of this scepticism. "I tell all the parents that they should send their children to the new centre," he tells a female programme worker. "They'll respect you if they go to school there, and they'll learn what they need for life. That's what I tell the parents." The fact that the children are taught in their local language and bring material home in this language has established a strong bond of trust with the parents.

Over the coming years Helvetas will strive to publicise this successful second-chance model in other regions and to integrate it into the national education strategy. A first step has already been taken: building on the experience of the Helvetas project, the Ministry of Education has begun to train the *enseignants communautaires* and to recognise them as teachers.



Hungry to learn. When schools make front-page news.





© Herman Akereleko

“I love my school because here no one beats me and I have enough to eat. I’m learning to read in my language.”

Soudick Soule, a 12-year-old pupil in the Barka school centre in Goua, Benin

**86 %**

of all adults worldwide can read and write, 10% more than 25 years ago.

**37,907**

young people took charge of their own vocational training in 2015 thanks to Helvetas.

**45,206**

boys and girls attended primary school in 2015 thanks to Helvetas.

#### ADVISORY SERVICES: SKILLS TRAINING AND ARRANGING EMPLOYMENT

Tens of thousands of young Kosovars are looking for a job. Many of them fail because they haven't learnt a trade or because an official vocational course did not equip them with adequate practical experience. Two Helvetas projects enable young adults from every ethnic group to do a simple apprenticeship or get some work experience in addition to the official vocational course. This can only work if the private sector pulls its weight. Small and medium-sized enterprises can offer placements to young people so they can gain practical professional experience. Katharina Walker advises company bosses and checks the results and processes with them. She organises workshops where all the participants can express new ideas on how to design the syllabus.



**Katharina Walker** has an MA in International Relations and has worked in development cooperation since 2009, joining Helvetas in 2014. She has particular work experience in

India. Katharina Walker is an adviser in the Education and Skills team with a particular focus on cooperation with the private sector.

# CLOSER TO THE PEOPLE

A quarter of a century after the collapse of the Communist regime, Albanian citizens are beginning to trust the state and its administration. In 2015 HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation carried out 68 projects in the Governance and Peace working area, and invested CHF 20,007,424.

## ALBANIA: A QUANTUM LEAP BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES

41-year-old Alma Kurti, who runs a private old people's home in the northern Albanian town of Shkodra, is not exactly overjoyed when she talks about her company and the local authorities. That's because the difficulties she faces are simply too overwhelming: the authorities have no plans for dealing with an ageing population, Alma receives neither subsidies nor tax relief for her old people's home, and it is hard to find qualified carers due to a lack of training courses. Yet she remains optimistic about the future, among other reasons because she notices some positive changes in the workings of the state and its administrations.

From 1944 to 1991 the Albanian Communist Party and its chairman Enver Hoxha ran the country into the ground, imposing a crude form of communism inspired by Stalin. Albania was strictly centralised, and its citizens' attitude towards their state was somewhere between distant and hostile. The Albanian Communist Party lost power when socialist regimes all over Eastern Europe collapsed, but people have only recently begun to recover from the crisis of state authority and get over their loss of confidence in their government – and that is due to their hopes of joining the EU.

Helvetas was commissioned by SDC to assist with decentralising the state apparatus. Civil servants have begun to take their duties towards the population more seriously. They now organise public con-

sultations to listen to civil society. They communicate and explain their decisions to the public in a more transparent manner. Administrative procedures have been standardised and simplified. The authorities have become more professional following the administrative reform of 2015, which reduced the number of municipalities from 373 to 61. The gap between the administration and the people has narrowed, and it has become easier to get in touch with the administration. Civil servants working in these new bodies increasingly grasp that they are at the service of the people.

An obvious symbol of this new mentality is the so-called one-stop shop in each municipality, where citizens can contact various authorities and ministries directly. At the same counter they can, for instance, request a birth certificate, apply for a construction permit or contact the Ministry of Health in Tirana. Helvetas has made a significant contribution to the introduction of these one-stop shops. Helvetas has improved electronic administration by helping to digitize over 60 different services, greatly improving both their transparency and their efficiency.

"I used to have to knock on the doors of lots of offices and get in touch with many officials if I needed some information, a form or a permit," says Alma Kurti. "Now I can take care of all those things at the new shop, and it doesn't matter whether it's for myself, for the old people's home



**Transparent.** No room for shady dealings.



**On the Net.** The capital is just next-door.

or for my residents' social security." As someone who never once thought of leaving her country, even in its darkest days, she has seen her optimism and her persistence rewarded in the last couple of years.



“It is incredible how much things have changed in the last two years. Communication with us citizens has greatly improved, and the administration is much more transparent than before.”

Alma Kurti, the 41-year-old owner of a private old people’s home in Shkodra in northern Albania

11,110

women worldwide are members of national parliaments, 22.7 % of the total and twice as many as in 1990.

395,201

people have learned more about their civil rights and civil duties through Helvetas.

2,910

local development plans were drawn up on a participatory basis in 2015 with support from Helvetas.

**ADVISORY SERVICES: PREVENTING CONFLICTS, PROMOTING PEACE**

Helvetas works in many conflict-torn regions including Afghanistan. Helvetas and other organisations have drawn up a three-step model for working in such situations. First, Helvetas staff and affected people cite existing tensions and potential scenarios for peace. Next, all participants carefully analyse which aspects of a planned project might have a (positive or negative) effect on tensions and conflicts. Lastly, concrete steps are drawn up to adapt the project as best as possible to the context. Esther Marthaler coordinated the drafting of this successful three-step model, and the UN now uses it in its online course on conflict sensitivity.



**Esther Marthaler** has a degree in Social Anthropology and Communication and joined Helvetas in 2008 after spending extended periods in Indonesia, Vietnam and Australia.

Esther Marthaler is Co-Team Leader of the Governance and Peace team with a particular focus on conflict sensitivity and peace-building.

# A BETTER LIFE

The pathways to rural development are defined by the vision small farmers, young people and skilled workers have about their future. Together with them HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation builds a common approach to rural development and helps ensure the inclusion of successes in national development strategies.

## WATER: A HUMAN RIGHT

More than 250,000 people gained new access to drinking water in 2015 thanks to Helvetas.



## AGRICULTURE: NEW MARKETS FOR FARM PRODUCTS

More than 260,000 farmers received training in value chain activities.



## BASIC SANITATION: LATRINE CONSTRUCTION

Almost 85,000 people gained new access to sanitation facilities.

Worldwide  
83,533  
people

Latin America  
and Caribbean  
7,043  
people

Asia and  
Eastern Europe  
12,725  
people

Africa  
63,765  
people



## EDUCATION: PREPARING YOUNG PEOPLE FOR THE FUTURE

More than 80,000 people attended basic education, vocational training or literacy courses.

Africa  
46,834  
people

Asia and  
Eastern Europe  
31,059  
people



Worldwide  
83,113  
people

Latin America  
and Caribbean  
5,220  
people

# WE EAT THE WORLD

The “We Eat The World” exhibition, which has been touring Switzerland since spring 2013, highlights the links between dietary issues, global food production and the environment. Helvetas commissioned the very first appraisal of the impact of one of its projects in Switzerland. The results are heartening – over a third of respondents have bought more organic and Fairtrade products since visiting the exhibition.

## INSIGHTS, RESOLUTIONS AND CHANGES

Enjoyment and diet, speculation in food commodities and globalisation, justice and environmental protection – these are the subjects that people who visited the Helvetas “We Eat The World” exhibition were able to discover and explore on a fictional journey through eight countries, armed with a passport and a new identity. At the end of their trip they were given the chance to record their impressions in a video message and post it on [www.wir-essen-die-welt.ch](http://www.wir-essen-die-welt.ch)

Helvetas sought to appeal to both adults and young people with an exhibition that went public in spring 2013. It is specially targeted at schoolchildren, and we have developed a number of worksheets, workshops and other material with them in mind.

“We Eat The World” is the most comprehensive and elaborate exhibition that Helvetas has ever produced. It uses multimedia and interactive displays, and more than ever before it seeks not only to impart information but also to change people’s behaviour. “We Eat The World” was designed as a travelling exhibition to be shown all over German-speaking Switzerland, mainly in museums. The exhibition was made possible through funding from the Stiftung Mercator Schweiz and SECO, and will run until 2017.

### Visitor numbers

From May 2013 to December 2015 over 77,000 people visited the exhibition and

associated events. This was more than expected and also more than any other previous Helvetas exhibition. “We Eat The World” attracted the highest number of visitors at the Naturama in Aarau, which was the first venue to host the exhibition and did so for nine months, which is also the longest time it spent in any one place. The exhibition then visited the Käfigturm in Berne, the Politforum des Bundes in Sihlcity, Zurich, the Liechtenstein National Museum in Vaduz, the Nature Museum in Frauenfeld and the Zurich University of Teacher Education, each for a period of between three and five months. The exhibition is currently on show at the Lucerne Nature Museum from 13 November 2015 to 10 April 2016. Every one of these museums has recorded higher than average numbers of visitors.

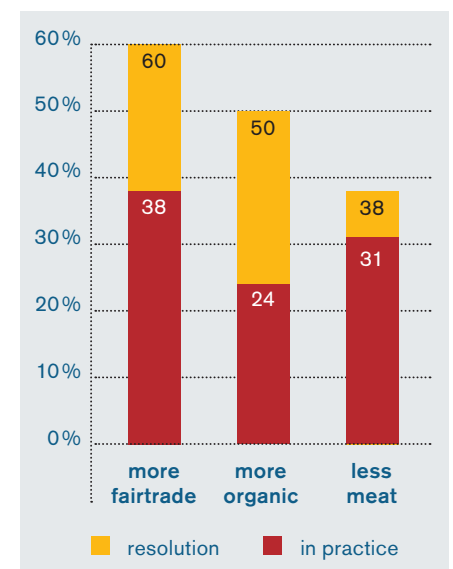
A quarter of all visitors were young people who saw the exhibition on a school outing. Of the 900 school groups that visited before October 2015, roughly half requested a guided tour led by Helvetas or museum staff.

### Questions from Helvetas

Helvetas carries out its own assessment of every project it implements in a partner country, for example regarding the number of beneficiaries. However, Helvetas also commissions a certain number of impact studies each year from an independent organisation in order to analyse the effects of its projects. The impact study of the effects of “We Eat The World”

was the first time Helvetas had done this in Switzerland. The company Econcept was asked to evaluate the attitudes and behaviour of people who had visited the exhibition. Did the exhibition succeed in raising visitors’ awareness about justice and environmental protection? Did visitors resolve to change their consumption habits? And did they actually put those resolutions into practice?

Exhibition visitors were polled twice, once immediately after their visit in Aarau, Berne and Zurich, and a second time two and a half months later. 401 people filled out a questionnaire straight after the exhibition, and 113 of them took part in a follow-up survey online two and a half months later.



### Knowledge, attitudes, behaviour

Half of respondents stayed in the exhibition for between one and two hours, about a third stayed for less time and the rest for longer. Ninety per cent of respondents said that the exhibition was “good” or “very good”. One encouraging fact is that 96 per cent of those who answered the follow-up questionnaire noted that they had discussed the issues highlighted by the exhibition. Slightly more than two-thirds sought further information after their visit, including on the exhibition website.

75 per cent of adults and 62 per cent of young people regarded themselves as being “fairly well” or “very well” informed. However, even visitors who were well informed before they saw the exhibition gained more nuanced knowledge through their visit. Thus, 37 per cent of all visitors noted that they had found out “quite a lot” or “a lot” about practical ways to make their own consumer behaviour more socially and environmentally responsible.

The aim of the exhibition was to reinforce people’s sense of responsibility, and it clearly achieved this goal. 76 per cent of respondents felt that they were “quite” or “absolutely” convinced that they should consume in a more socially and environmentally responsible manner; this even rose to 98 per cent among respondents to the follow-up questionnaire. However, at the same time 45 per cent of respondents – 59 per cent in the follow-up survey – expressed doubts about whether their acts would have any real impact.

The graphic on the previous page shows the areas in which visitors resolved to change their behaviour and – this is particularly important – where they actually put those resolutions into practice. As one might expect, respondents generally put less into practice than they had claimed they would immediately after visiting the exhibition. Their willingness to purchase Fairtrade products was mark-



**Inauguration.** Great praise from Liechtenstein’s Minister for Culture.

edly higher than when it came to reducing their meat consumption.

### What Helvetas has learned

Amongst its adult visitors, the Helvetas “We Eat The World” exhibition mainly reached people who were already grappling with issues of world food production and sustainable consumption. Interestingly though, the exhibition motivated even these people to rethink their consumer behaviour.

Young people, on the other hand (Helvetas’ main target audience for awareness-raising of this kind) generally went to the exhibition with less prior knowledge, and environmental protection or social justice was less of a factor in their consumer behaviour. So they learned a great deal more – and that is particularly cheering from Helvetas’ point of view.

Most visitors fully grasp the problems involved in global food production, yet many of them are sceptical about the wider impact of any changes in their personal behaviour. Scientists call this phenomenon “bigger than self”. When people perceive a problem to be too big, they are more sceptical as to whether their individual contributions make any difference, and their willingness to change their behav-

our diminishes. Helvetas really must take account of this fact when planning future exhibitions and in our general educational work. Rather than attempting to cover every facet and connection of an issue, it is better to focus on individual aspects, as these are easier for people to deal with and they feel that they can make a real difference.

In a world in which advertising and politicians vaunt a booming economy to be the solution to many problems, an exhibition like “We Eat The World” can act as a positive jolt to the system. The impact study shows that “We Eat The World” strengthens many visitors’ sense of responsibility and reinforces their existing convictions about social justice and environmental conservation. The exhibition presents practical, sustainable and effective opportunities for action and, importantly, prompts real changes in people’s behaviour.

Although this exhibition will continue until 2017, Helvetas is already discussing initial ideas for its next exhibition.

Find out more about the exhibition at [www.wir-essen-die-welt.ch](http://www.wir-essen-die-welt.ch)

# EMERGENCY AID

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation has a deep knowledge of the social, institutional and environmental contexts in the regions where we work. This knowledge was not always put to full use in previous disasters, when Helvetas tended to react in an uncoordinated manner. The 2013–17 Strategy underlines the need for institutional preparedness and it enables us to focus our emergency response on effective relief that benefits local people and institutions.

## WOOLLEN BLANKETS AND DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Haiti, January 2010. Within hours of the terrible earthquake, Helvetas staff in Port-au-Prince acted as any other person would: first, they tried to contact their families and their closest friends, then they provided water to people who had taken refuge in a park near the Helvetas office. Beyond improvising this immediate response to the most urgent needs, they had little idea of how to react to such a dramatic situation.

We were no newcomers, having worked in Haiti since 1983 to strengthen poor rural households and local governments in water, agriculture and forest management competences. Helvetas had also helped to increase food security and income in a country where cyclones and droughts are recurrent risks. However, this 2010 catastrophe killed 230,000 persons and destroyed 250,000 houses, schools and hospitals as well as water systems and access roads, leaving an urgent need to clarify some basic questions. Which national and international institutions were responsible for covering the most essential needs? Whose task was it to provide and coordinate emergency aid?

Although Helvetas always focuses its support on the most vulnerable, too much time was lost in organising aid when the lives and the health of thousands of people were at stake.

Haiti was not the first country in which Helvetas has had to provide help follow-



Emergency aid in Haiti. A change of approach after the disaster.

ing a catastrophe. We have also reacted to floods in Pakistan, hurricanes in Guatemala and the Philippines, the tsunami in Sri Lanka and droughts in the Sahel. After our experiences in the wake of the Haiti earthquake, Helvetas resolved to define a strategy for emergency response.

### A paradigm shift?

Helvetas sees emergency response as our moral obligation and duty towards our local stakeholders and partners. Even though we are first and foremost a development agency, we need to be able to react immediately and efficiently to emergencies in the countries in which we work, and to come to the aid of all those involved with our development

programmes. Our responsibility is all the greater given our deep understanding of social contexts and our long-established networks, making Helvetas ideally placed to react as soon as crisis hits our local actors and partners.

All stakeholders were included in discussions about emergency aid. They agreed unanimously that we must improve our preparedness for emergency response and incorporate this theme into our strategy. At the same time, Helvetas also agreed that emergency relief would never be our core business and that we would never compete with specialised humanitarian organisations. Rather, emergency aid is a logical extension of our develop-



ment cooperation work. The 2013–17 Strategy defines the role that Helvetas is to adopt. This is no paradigm shift, though, because improving our emergency response readiness does not alter the fact that development cooperation remains our central task.

Our emergency interventions are guided by a certain number of key principles:

- Our approach to emergency aid, as in the rest of our work, is based on human rights. The needs of the population affected are redefined for each emergency situation, either by Helvetas itself or in collaboration with other organisations working in the field of humanitarian aid.
- It makes no difference whether the disaster is caused by natural or man-made factors: it is its impact on the livelihoods of the communities that triggers our response.
- Our support remains focused on our fields of thematic expertise, namely Food Security; Water and Infrastructure; and Governance and Peace. In other words, regarding our response to the Nepal earthquake in April 2015, while we supported access to non-food relief items such as blankets, cooking equipment, seeds, water purification items, shelter material, etc. in the days and weeks immediately after the disaster, we very soon started to support the reconstruction of houses and infrastructure by providing training and materials. This support continues to this day.
- Our role in disaster relief changes over time and is adapted to the local situation. It generally begins with short-term emergency aid before shifting to help with reconstruction and finally development cooperation. Our support relies on our own funds and on help provided by other organisations. Wherever possible we work with local partners and reinforce their own interventions, always with a clear focus on reconstruction.

We are building the emergency response capacities of our country teams to ensure



**Nepal 2015.** Emergency response in our first partner country.

that they know and follow these principles. One of the very first steps is for the teams to establish contact with humanitarian aid coordination institutions and bodies, be they local, national or international. In addition, we strive to learn from like-minded organisations with long-standing experience of emergency situations. We regularly monitor and evaluate our own measures, one of our aims being to constantly improve our response and to learn from our mistakes.

An emergency adviser has been actively supporting our institutional preparedness and response processes from Switzerland over the past two years, but we have no plans to set up an additional department or unit. This helps to maintain the close link and overlap between emergency response and Helvetas' development-oriented mission.

Since our own funds are crucial to our being able to intervene directly after disaster strikes, Helvetas' Board of Directors created an "emergency fund" of 1 million CHF, which is immediately accessible to finance rapid assessment and direct emergency activities.

These steps towards institutional preparedness should allow Helvetas to achieve its aim of providing better support to local stakeholders who are regularly

affected by catastrophic events. The frequency and severity of such disasters is increasing with climate change. In 2015 alone, twenty emergency situations were reported in fourteen Helvetas countries. We have been involved whenever our programme areas were directly affected, for example in the Nepal earthquakes (April and May) and the floods in Pakistan and Myanmar (July), while readying ourselves to mitigate the effects on households of severe droughts related to El Niño in several countries (Ethiopia, Haiti, etc.).

Such institutional preparedness allows Helvetas to develop meaningful emergency responses combining relief, rehabilitation and development processes. Our development expertise, which is based on measures to strengthen the competences of civil society and institutions, means that we can support local actors to switch out of an emergency mentality as quickly as possible and return to long-term development processes. This enables the affected communities to avoid adopting a passive, "hand out" based attitude, and to use their energy and their own initiative to improve their living conditions. Helvetas is therefore able to build on emergency interventions to achieve one of the primary goals of development cooperation.

*Sabrina Mayoufi and Eric Chevallier*

# BUYING FOR NEPAL

Times of crisis reveal how strong a relationship really is, and this is equally true of the Fairshop's links to producers. Our relations with Nepal have only grown stronger since the earthquake there – for example with coffee producers in areas hit particularly hard by the destruction.

## FAIRTRADE AS A SOURCE OF ENCOURAGEMENT

"The whole place was razed to the ground," says Mandu Thapa from the union of coffee cooperatives. Sixty-four coffee farmers were killed and 122 injured in Sindhupalchok District alone, and most of them lost their homes. Twelve tonnes of coffee worth \$68,000 was destroyed, and 52 processing centres belonging to the coffee cooperatives were ruined. Plots of coffee and plant nurseries were damaged.

The 2015 earthquake was a severe setback for coffee farmers in what had up to that point been a successful process. Helvetas had made a significant contribution to this development by providing advice to coffee cooperatives interested in converting their existing plots to organic production. 15,000 families derived a significant part of their income from coffee, most of it organic. Some of this mountain coffee reached markets in industrialised countries through the Fairtrade supply chain. The Fairshop in Switzerland included Nepalese organic coffee in its product range in 2015, and this "Lalitpur" coffee, as it was branded, has sold as much in its first year as an established coffee from Guatemala (whose sales have fortunately not suffered).

To sustain the quality of the Nepalese coffee and ensure that the earthquake doesn't cost the coffee cooperatives markets, Helvetas decided that it would not only support the reconstruction of houses, schools and health centres



**Trust in the future.** Coffee seedlings in a newly established nursery.

in the worst-hit areas, but also initiate a separate project to rebuild the coffee cooperatives' processing centres and nurseries. The project has an ambitious goal – to allow the Helvetas-supported cooperatives to harvest, process and sell as much coffee in 2016 as they did before the earthquake. Generous donations from the Swiss public meant that this reconstruction work could begin last year.

The Helvetas Fairshop's purchases of coffee, handmade paper and Pashmina shawls provide Nepalese producers with material security as well as fostering badly needed trust in the future. This is important because the earthquake has had less visible but real effects on people alongside the material damage they have suffered – the feeling of the ground beneath their feet is no longer sound, the



**Fairtrade.** Coffee from the mountains of Nepal.

sense that the whole world is unhinged. "We still cannot really grasp how so much could change in just a few minutes," says coffee farmer Thirta Maya Lama from the village of Kavre. She is aware of the fact that international traders pay for their coffee in advance. This would be a real advantage in times of crisis, for example after a natural disaster has struck. That explains why other cooperatives are trying to enter the international Fairtrade system – and Helvetas and the Fairshop will do all we can to help them.



© HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation

“There is so much to be done after the earthquake. Relations with international organisations are valuable as they support the producers with advance payments.”

Thirta Maya Lama from the Nepalese village of Kavre

**1.5 million**  
farmers and  
handicraft producers  
worldwide benefit  
from Fairtrade.

**38,550**  
orders were placed  
with the Helvetas FAIR-  
SHOP in 2015 –  
8,600 of them through  
internet.

**54 %**  
of all bananas  
sold in Switzerland  
are Fairtrade.

#### CLIENT PORTRAIT: THE CLEANEST TOWELS

Organic cotton, fair production conditions and a charitable organisation with a spotless reputation – those were the guidelines that the merchandising department of Swiss International Air Lines set themselves when they began their search for new towels. A web search produced a list of potential suppliers, but they finally settled on the Helvetas Fairshop. It was particularly important for Corporate Supply Manager Jeff Lüscher, who also looks for the Fairtrade label when doing his own shopping, to ensure that no child labour was involved in producing the towels – and the Fairshop's products offer this guarantee. After a first order of 3,000 polo shirts three years ago, this is the second important SWISS contract to go the Fairshop – important because it also has the potential to encourage other respected firms to place large orders with the Fairshop.



**Jeff Lüscher**, a computer engineering and business management graduate, worked as a pilot for three years before switching to a management role at SWISS. He has been their Corporate Supply Manager since 2013.

# GOOD NEWS

In the race for people's attention, the media and aid agencies compete with each other in their stark portrayals of poverty around the world, often ignoring a host of promising developments. Helvetas is shifting its focus to report on all the people in developing countries who are investing their energy and imagination to make the world a better place.

## SWITZERLAND: A DIFFERENT MESSAGE ABOUT THE SOUTH

"Imminent famine in Ethiopia", "Crime in Honduras at alarming levels", "8,400 die in earthquake in Nepal"; reading the daily papers has become a depressing experience, as crisis, violence and disasters dominate the news. Even development agencies highlight hardship, helpless victims and a lack of resources in their bid to emphasise the urgent need for aid. Pictures of the happy few who have escaped poverty are only shown as proof that the aid does reach its target.

This focus on misery has an impact – but not the one we would like. According to an SDC-funded study by GfS Berne in 2014, a majority of respondents think that the situation in developing countries has not improved. Aid agencies bear some of the blame for this growing public scepticism. Only rarely do they mention the enormous progress made in recent decades, and yet there have been many impressive and positive achievements. In Ethiopia, for instance, roughly 80 per cent of children now go to school; it was only 20 per cent in the early nineties. Back then, almost two-thirds of the population of Vietnam lived in absolute poverty, whereas now it is only 2 per cent. The proportion of people in Kenya who own a mobile phone is as high as in the United States; over 20 million Kenyans pay for goods at the market by phone, whereas mobile payment systems are still in their infancy in Switzerland.

Helvetas considers itself duty-bound to put these positive and encouraging developments at the heart of its communications strategy and to correct the prevailing stereotype of powerless people trapped in poverty. Every day in our projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America we meet women and men who are taking their lives into their own hands and striving to improve their lot. Working with them we find that what unites us with people all over the globe is our hope of being able to forge a fulfilling life in dignity.

Helvetas therefore decided to break new ground with its 2015 campaign. We presented a wide range of encouraging and sometimes surprising approaches and examples of real change in adverts and in a report in our *Partnerschaft* magazine. We also produced a TV commercial that illustrated our experience that many things change for the good when people get together and campaign for a better world.

More than 77,000 visitors to our exhibition "We Eat The World" got to know the Honduran cocoa farmer Leonora Gomez, who joined forces with her colleagues to produce high-quality cocoa. Thanks to Fairtrade they now earn a fair price for their premium product. The examples of Leonora and other protagonists in the exhibition were inspiring: the impact studies presented on page 22 of this document show that 40 per cent of visitors report that they bought more Fairtrade products



Good News. Africa's connection to the world ...



... and education in Ethiopia.

after seeing the exhibition. These findings from Switzerland further reinforce Helvetas' conviction that we must highlight practical steps and opportunities to make the world a better place.



“In 60 years and throughout Nepal’s tumultuous political development Helvetas did not halt its collaboration with the Nepali people for a single day! So we became a major contributor to changing development paradigms in Nepal.”

Mona Sherpa, Deputy Country Director of Helvetas Nepal

© Michele Limina

**1.7 billion**

CHF is donated by Swiss households each year to charitable organisations.

**225**

individuals competed as charity runners for Helvetas in 2015 and raised CHF 110,000.

**77,448**

people visited the “We Eat The World” exhibition up to the end of 2015, most of them young people.

#### FUNDRAISING: BEQUESTS TO BRING REAL CHANGE

People increasingly think not only of their relatives but also non-profit organisations when drawing up their wills. Helvetas too receives regular bequests and legacies. Ines Meili has been in charge of bequests since 2012. She works with communities of heirs and solicitors to handle the execution of the person’s wishes, communicates advice to interested patrons and members, and provides information on the issue on the Helvetas website. In 2015 Ines Meili published a brochure entitled “Thoughts on Estate Planning”. She also arranged the first information sessions with specialist lawyers and trustees to examine important facets of inheritance law. These events were well attended, which is a sign that many people are thinking about managing their estates in a manner consistent with their fundamental beliefs.



**Ines Meili** has been involved in fundraising for cultural and social organisations for over 20 years. Since 2012 she has been in charge of Helvetas’ Inheritance and Bequest department.

# FINANCES

## Secure financial processes in our country offices

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation works in over thirty countries with a wide variety of cultures and levels of expertise in financial management. We have now developed a new "Financial Manual", valid for all countries, to further improve the quality and security of our processes. These regulations set the framework for how local bookkeeping should be managed, how reporting is to be carried out and who is responsible for what. The manual also defines the internal audit procedures. Development organisations too require standardised purchasing processes and contract management with local partners to prevent misuse of funds and corruption. Clear procedures, professional controlling and continuous training for our financial staff also help us to reduce risk in our handling of our donors' and clients' funds.

## Key figures

The earthquakes in Nepal triggered a wave of solidarity in Switzerland. Helvetas itself raised over CHF 4.4 million. Most of these donations were taken out of the current account and placed in a separate fund which will be drawn upon in the next few years for reconstruction activities in Nepal. Other non-recurring expenses and the decrease in overall income led to a negative annual result.

## Financial audit

KPMG audited the accounts and the financial statements and has approved them. Their audit report and the complete financial report 2015 can be viewed at the offices of Swiss HELVETAS Intercooperation, Weinbergstrasse 22a, 8001 Zurich and downloaded from our website [www.helvetas.ch/annualreport](http://www.helvetas.ch/annualreport)

## BALANCE SHEET

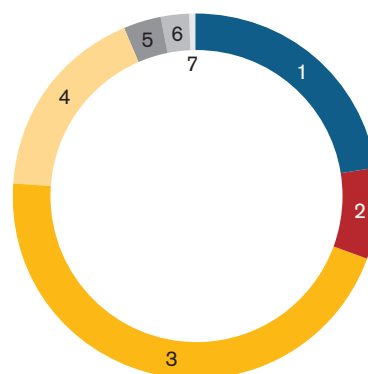
ASSETS	31.12.2015 in CHF	31.12.2014 in CHF
Cash and cash equivalents	42,289,696.60	33,724,510.93
Marketable securities	15,851,167.86	17,410,115.71
Receivables	2,779,584.73	1,511,663.96
Inventories	976,388.34	872,902.67
Net assets in project countries	8,558,560.80	8,756,297.76
Prepayments and accrued income	7,736,294.30	9,573,822.50
<b>Current assets</b>	<b>78,191,692.63</b>	<b>71,849,313.53</b>
Investments in financial assets	788,892.88	788,880.98
Tangible fixed assets	1,052,177.25	1,197,962.00
Intangible assets	178,250.69	514,059.96
<b>Fixed assets</b>	<b>2,019,320.82</b>	<b>2,500,902.94</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>80,211,013.45</b>	<b>74,350,216.47</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts payable	3,136,342.38	4,267,234.16
Accrued liabilities	44,187,980.02	36,963,679.16
<b>Current liabilities</b>	<b>47,324,322.40</b>	<b>41,230,913.32</b>
Provisions	736,404.29	708,638.29
<b>Long-term liabilities</b>	<b>736,404.29</b>	<b>708,638.29</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>	<b>48,060,726.69</b>	<b>41,939,551.61</b>
<b>Fund capital</b>	<b>5,952,457.58</b>	<b>2,118,322.82</b>
<b>Liabilities incl. fund capital</b>	<b>54,013,184.27</b>	<b>44,057,874.43</b>
Unrestricted capital	12,413,001.28	16,674,181.14
Restricted capital	13,618,160.90	13,618,160.90
<b>Organisational Capital</b>	<b>26,031,162.18</b>	<b>30,292,342.04</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>80,211,013.45</b>	<b>74,350,216.47</b>

## STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

INCOME	2015 in CHF	2014 in CHF
Membership fees	2,253,160.00	2,820,934.82
Donations	26,880,798.63	22,177,014.72
Legacies	413,402.59	1,073,708.12
<b>Income from fundraising</b>	<b>29,547,361.22</b>	<b>26,071,657.66</b>
Programme contribution SDC	10,700,000.00	10,700,000.00
Mandates SDC	59,586,678.47	61,999,841.59
Project funding from organisations	22,927,191.33	26,977,040.18
Income from advisory services	4,290,896.23	3,756,523.13
Income from Fair Trade	3,411,829.94	3,240,334.64
Other operating income	436,609.32	587,505.05
<b>Income from service provided</b>	<b>101,353,205.29</b>	<b>107,261,244.59</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>130,900,566.51</b>	<b>133,332,902.25</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Africa	29,215,516.44	31,177,071.24
Asia	39,936,306.38	46,631,895.38
Latin America and Caribbean	18,481,656.75	18,071,101.76
Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia	15,539,870.08	11,965,370.52
Programme coordination & support	1,795,367.47	2,016,778.54
<b>Expenditure on internat. programmes</b>	<b>104,968,717.12</b>	<b>109,862,217.44</b>
<b>Expenditure on advisory services</b>	<b>5,771,096.31</b>	<b>5,408,262.61</b>
<b>Expenditure on projects Switzerland</b>	<b>5,508,785.25</b>	<b>5,453,498.24</b>
<b>Expenditure on Fair Trade</b>	<b>3,531,586.90</b>	<b>3,368,512.77</b>
Head office	4,686,129.86	4,686,516.02
Fundraising	6,108,930.26	6,134,577.24
<b>Head office and fundraising</b>	<b>10,795,060.12</b>	<b>10,821,093.26</b>
<b>Expenditure from service delivered</b>	<b>130,575,245.70</b>	<b>134,913,584.32</b>
<b>Operating profit</b>	<b>325,320.81</b>	<b>-1,580,682.07</b>
Financial result	117,368.92	1,880,695.83
Other result	-703,067.83	38,618.93
<b>Result before fund result</b>	<b>-260,378.10</b>	<b>338,632.69</b>
Fund result	-3,834,134.76	174,788.05
<b>Annual result before allocation to organisational capital</b>	<b>-4,094,512.86</b>	<b>513,420.76</b>

## SOURCE OF FUNDS

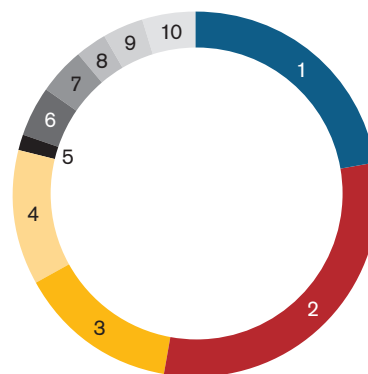
(Total CHF 130,900,566.51)



- 1 Income from fundraising 22.6%
- 2 Programme contribution SDC 8.2%
- 3 Mandates SDC 45.5%
- 4 Project funding from organisations 17.5%
- 5 Revenue from advisory services 3.3%
- 6 Revenue from Fair Trade 2.6%
- 7 Other operating revenue 0.3%

## USE OF FUNDS

(Total CHF 130,575,245.70)



- 1 Africa 22.4%
- 2 Asia 30.6%
- 3 Latin America and Caribbean 14.1%
- 4 Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia 11.9%
- 5 Programme coordination & support 1.4%
- 6 Expenses on advisory services 4.4%
- 7 Expenses on projects Switzerland 4.2%
- 8 Expenses on Fair Trade 2.7%
- 9 Head office 3.6%
- 10 Fundraising 4.7%

# THANKS

The work of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation would not be possible without the generous contributions of our partners, members and donors. We would like to express our gratitude for the support of all those mentioned below. We also extend our thanks to all the institutions and private individuals who wish to remain anonymous.

**FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND CANTONS** Federal Office for the Environment FOEN • SDC, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation • FEDEVACO, Fédération Vaudoise de Coopération • FGC, Fédération Genevoise de Coopération • Canton Aargau • Canton Appenzell Ausserrhoden • Canton Basel-Landschaft • Canton Basel-Stadt • Canton Berne • Canton Glarus • Canton Graubünden • Canton Lucerne • Canton Ticino • Canton Uri • Canton Vaud • Canton Zurich • Republic and Canton of Geneva • SECO, State Secretariat for Economic Affairs **CITY AND TOWN COUNCILS** Aarau • Affoltern am Albis • Ascona • Baden • Berne • Collina d'Oro • Erlenbach • Frauenfeld • Geneva • Herrliberg • Küsnacht • Lausanne • Maur • Münsingen • Oberrieden • Rapperswil-Jona • Rüslikon • Solothurn • Stabio • Sursee • Sorengo • Vernier • Zollikon • Zollikofen • Zurich **FOUNDATIONS** Albert Jenny Foundation • Argidius Foundation • BENEFICENTIA Foundation • CHARISMA Stiftung für nachhaltige Entwicklung • Corrado Foundation • Däster-Schild Foundation • ERBACHER Foundation • Ferster Foundation • Fondation Agnès Delachaux • Cordama Foundation • Fondation Dutmala • Fondation Gertrude Hirzel • Fondation Johann et Luzia Graessli • Megguy et Charlotte Renard Foundation • Fondation Philanthropia • Fondation Smartpeace • Gebauer Foundation • Accentus Foundation • Pro Dimora Foundation • Symphasis Foundation • Giessenbach Foundation • Green Leaves Education Foundation • Hans Konrad Rahn Foundation • Happel Foundation • I&F Public Benefit Foundation • Jacobs Foundation • Julius Bär Foundation • Laguna Foundation • Leopold Bachmann Foundation • MariaMarina Foundation • Medicor Foundation • René & Susanne Braginsky Foundation • Rosa & Bernhard Merz Foundation • Rotary Foundation Küsnacht • Share Foundation Basel • Solaqua Foundation • Stiftung ESPERANZA – cooperative help against poverty • Hoja Verde Foundation • Mercator Foundation Switzerland • myclimate Foundation • Perspektiven Foundation Swiss Life • Swiss Re Foundation • Tibetania Foundation • Von Duhn Foundation **COMPANIES** ADVANTIS Versicherungsberatung AG • Alternative Bank Schweiz AG • ArchiTeam Design AG • Bienfaisance Limited • Bike Adventure Tours GmbH • Claro Fairtrade Shop • Clean Forest Club • Coop • Coop Fonds für Nachhaltigkeit • Debiopharm International SA • Dectris Ltd. • Explora Events AG • Fent AG • FS Geotechnik AG • Frei + Krauer AG • Geberit International AG • Geberit Vertriebs AG • Globetrotter Tours AG • Globetrotter Travel Services AG • Globetrotter Club AG • Gruppe Welt Oberamt • Hartung Engineering GmbH • Heinis AG • Ingenieurbüro Frommelt AG • Loterie Romande • Migros-Genossenschafts-Bund • Paypal Pte Ltd • Philippe C. Biedermann Consulting • Pini Swiss Engineers • Play'n'Help AG • Pratohaus AG • Preform (Schweiz) AG • Primobau AG • Ricola AG • Schneebeli & Co. AG • Service Intercommunal de Gestion SIGE • Solstis • Stäubli International AG • Swan Analytische Instrumente AG • Technische Betriebe Flawil • Transa Backpacking AG • Top-Team-Sanitär-Installations GmbH • Vivell + Co. AG • Wasserkorporation Abtwil-St. Josefen • Zürcher Kantonalbank **NGOS, BODIES AND ASSOCIATIONS** Agridea • Brücke – Le pont • Caritas Switzerland • Chartreuse La Valsainte • Concern Worldwide • Diakonissen-Schwesternschaft Neumünster • éducation21 • Fastenopfer • FiBL, Institut de recherche de l'agriculture biologique • FOSIT, Federazione delle ONG della Svizzera italiana • Swiss Solidarity • Gruppe Welt Oberamt • HEKS,

“ In my experience of our projects to reduce rural poverty, the goal of our foundation, Helvetas has been a long-term partner that engages constructively with our feedback. ”

Esther Oettli, member of the board of trustees of the **HAPPEL FOUNDATION**

“ The Swiss Re Foundation and Helvetas have a common goal to make society more resilient. We are supporting farming families in Cuzco, Peru to take appropriate measures so that they can cope with the consequences and risks of climate change. ”

Carolina Hess, Manager at the **SWISS RE FOUNDATION**





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“ After almost six years of cooperation we are convinced that our vision of ‘Water For All’ is being implemented in Helvetas’ project countries in the best possible fashion thanks to their vast experience of water provision. ”

Jasmin Marti, Head of educational and water projects for  
**VIVA CON AGUA SWITZERLAND**

“ Our donors value Helvetas’ capacity to adjust to new development challenges such as the recent economic independence of Mozambiquan farmers. ”

Luc Giraud-Guigues, Secretary General of the  
**FONDATION PHILANTHROPIA – LOMBARD ODIER**

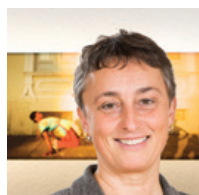
# THE ORGANISATION

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation is a politically and denominationally neutral development charity of 98,856 members, benefactors and nine active volunteer regional groups.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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lic. phil. I, former  
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Since 2010



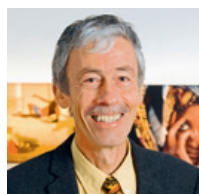
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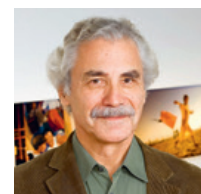
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Elmar Ledergerber represents the board of directors in the advisory board.



Rudolf Dannecker,  
Hinterkappelen,  
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Since 2003



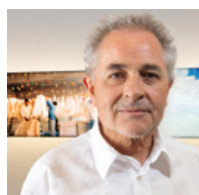
André Lüthi, Berne,  
tourism expert,  
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travel service  
Since 2009

## REGIONAL GROUPS

The Regional Groups provide moral and material support for Helvetas, endeavours through awareness-raising, organising events and fundraising.



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Since 2015

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

All links and mandates of members of the Management Committee and Board of Directors that are relevant to the activities of HELVETAS are listed in the financial report.

## PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

All organisations with which HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation has signed a framework agreement or on whose boards Helvetas has a seat are listed in compliance with ZEWO guidelines and §29 of the NPO Code.

Agridea Association for rural development • akte – Working Group on Tourism and Development • Alliance2015 • Alliance Sud • Cinfo • EAWAG aquatic research • End Water Poverty Coalition • FoBBIZ Vocational training and international cooperation • HAFL School for Agricultural, Forest and Food Science • ICCO Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation (NL) • IFOAM International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements • KFPE Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries • KM4Dev (Knowledge Management for Development) • KOFF/Swisspeace • Max Havelaar Switzerland • NGO Plattform der Schweizer Entwicklungsorganisationen • Skat Consulting and Skat Foundation • Swiss DRR NGO Platform • Swiss Fair Trade • Swiss Water Partnership • Swiss Water & Sanitation NGO Consortium

## THE ORGANISATION

The **General Assembly** is the organisation's highest body and meets once a year. It determines the mission statement and elects the members of the Board of Directors. The **Board of Directors** is responsible for issuing the strategy and approving the annual budget. The **Head Office** is responsible for planning, implementing and supervising the projects, programmes and actions within Switzerland and abroad.

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\* Formal member of the board



**Executive Director\***  
Melchior Lengsfeld



**Joint Head of  
Advisory Services**  
Peter Schmidt



**Deputy Director/  
Joint Head  
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Remo Gesù



**Head of  
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Stefan Stolle



**Joint Head  
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**Head of Finance  
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Erich Wigger



**Joint Head of  
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Rupa Mukerji



**Head of Fair Trade**  
Tobias Meier

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