



For a world without hunger

magazine

What We Achieve Together



PERU:

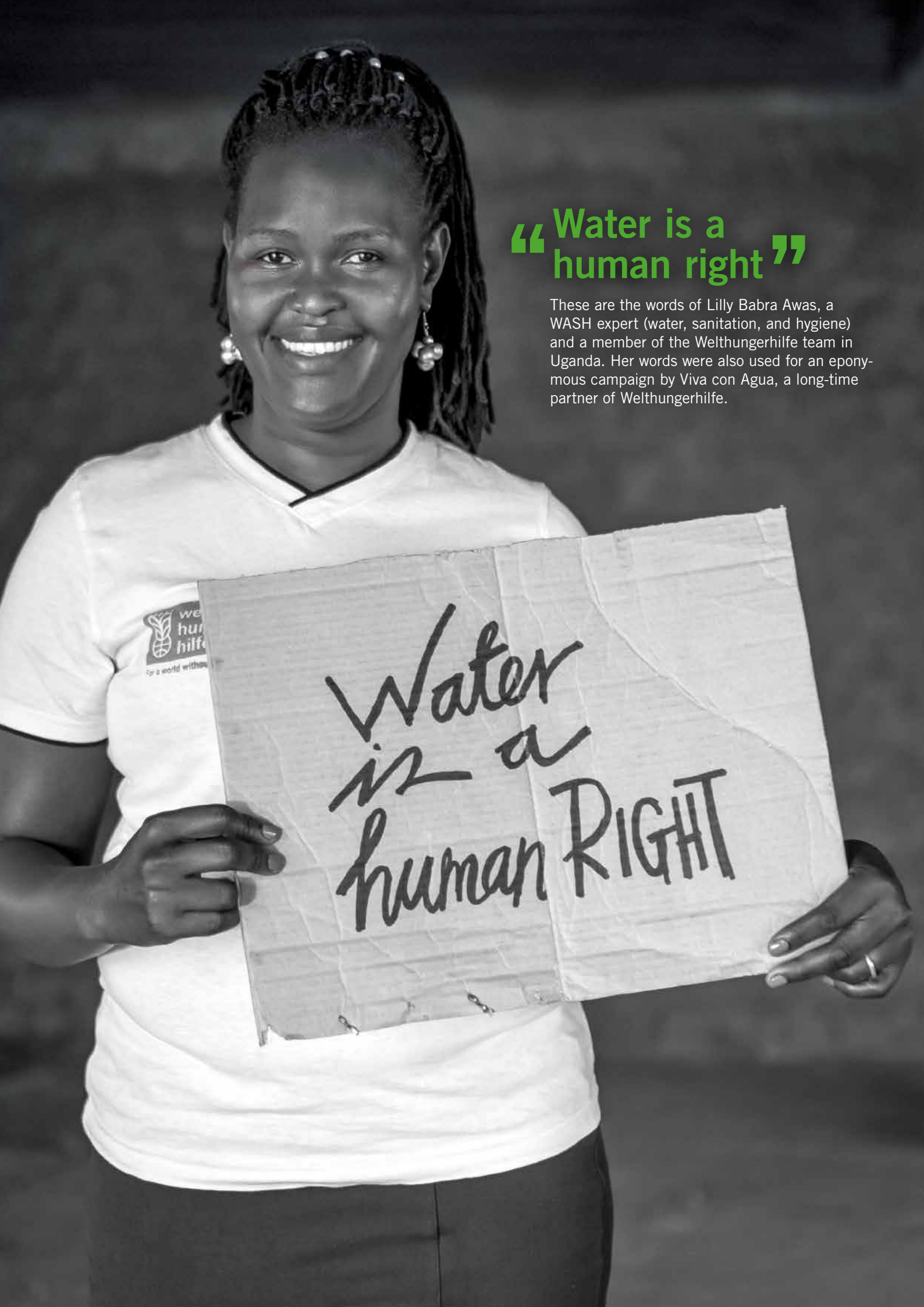
Healthy, Sustainable Food for All

MADAGASCAR:

A Looming Famine

INNOVATIVE WELTHUNGERHILFE:

An App for Identifying Malnutrition



“Water is a human right”

These are the words of Lilly Babra Awas, a WASH expert (water, sanitation, and hygiene) and a member of the Welthungerhilfe team in Uganda. Her words were also used for an eponymous campaign by Viva con Agua, a long-time partner of Welthungerhilfe.

Dear friends of Welthungerhilfe,

2021 was yet another challenging year for us: The Coronavirus still dominates everyday life and, with its far-reaching consequences, also threatens years of development progress in the countries of the Global South (p. 20). In August, an earthquake struck Haiti, killing over two thousand people and leaving many thousands injured. We are providing support to the families who lost all their belongings, to meet their basic needs (p. 9).

Events in Afghanistan shook the world too: with an inconceivable speed, the Taliban took over following the withdrawal of international troops. After intensive consultations, we decided to continue our work in the country because we will not abandon people (p. 6).

This core belief guides us in everything we do. World-wide, up to 811 million people are suffering from hunger in a world of plenty. We must not and will not accept this because there is enough food for everyone. The fight against hunger can only be successful in the long term if the path of food from the field to the plate is fair and sustainable. Welthungerhilfe has long been driving change in food systems – including in Peru (p. 12).

Now more than ever, we need global solidarity; only together can we be successful. Our team of 3,000 colleagues in 35 countries is working day in day out to achieve our most important goal: a world without hunger. Their knowledge, courage and experience are the foundation of our work and our greatest strength. I am delighted to share some moving stories with you in this issue of our magazine, stories about what we have accomplished together in 2021.

Kind regards,

Mathias Mogge



Mathias Mogge, Secretary General and Chief Executive Officer



Healthy, Sustainable Food for All

A Welthungerhilfe project in Peru supports families to switch to organic farming

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Converting Sunshine to Harvest

By Zaro Kurbanbekova

The panels of Rahmonov Hamza's solar array flash in the midst of rugged cliffs. They provide enough energy to supply water for the small-scale family farm in the barren, impoverished mountain region in Tajikistan. The solar-powered pump needs only four hours to fill the large reservoir, dug by the family itself, with water from the nearby Surkhob river. The Hamza family used to grow wheat here, but without irrigation, the harvest was meager – as were the family's living conditions. Today, their fields are lush with pumpkins, potatoes, and magnificent watermelons that fetch good prices. Welthungerhilfe is working with farming families and the Bargi Sabz organisation in the region of Baljuvon to make agriculture more productive. People currently earn barely enough to sur-

vive, with many relying on long-outdated farming methods while having to deal with the effects of climate change. Large forests are being lost because people need the wood for heating and cooking. Only one tenth of Tajikistan's area is arable, making it all the more important to farm this land as efficiently as possible. The families in Baljuvon lead the way: Ten small-scale farming cooperatives have adjusted their agricultural practices to be more efficient and to better conserve resources. Five small hydro-electric power plants and 20 solar arrays have already replaced wood, coal, and expensive diesel with renewable energy. It looks like the Hamza family's sons will one day be able to follow in their parents' footsteps.

Zaro Kurbanbekova is a head of project for Welthungerhilfe in Tajikistan.



Learn more about our work in Tajikistan under www.welthungerhilfe.org/our-work/countries/tajikistan/







Our Work in Afghanistan Continues

To protect the identity of the people portrayed, we have made their faces in this photo unrecognizable.

Even before the Islamist Taliban took over in Afghanistan, the humanitarian need in the country was severe – now it has become even more dramatic. More than ever, Welthungerhilfe therefore wants to continue its work in Afghanistan. But what about some of the projects, especially those involving women – for example the saffron cooperative in the west of the country? What will happen there? Andrea Jeska is a journalist who traveled to Herat in October 2021 and met the women of the cooperative. In her report she tells us about the situation in the country and what has changed for the people in the project area.

By Andrea Jeska

^ Families in need receive firewood to get through the harsh winter months.

⌋ The cold is dangerous, especially for children.



In western Afghanistan, in a dusty and arid landscape, the city of Herat lies surrounded by desert. The flat mountain range of the Dau Shakh stretches out on the horizon, and only a few trickles of water make their way through the wide riverbed of the Heirut. For years, people here have been waiting for enough rain, but this summer there was so little that the wheat dried up right on its stalks. Farmers here are used to barely being able to feed their families, but this summer made those who can usually make ends meet poor, and the previously poor are now destitute.

For many years, Merajudin Shahabi, from the village of Gabighan, struggled with the hardship that the aridity of the desert caused in his life. The farmer, a large man with strong hands, grew potatoes and onions, kept a few sheep and cows

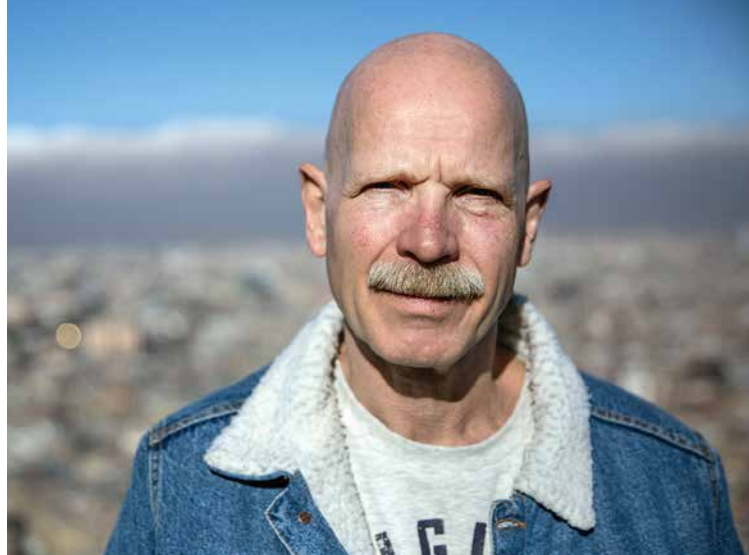
and – in good years – managed to earn 3,000 afghani, (about 30 euros) per month. In bad years, he made only 2,000 Afghani – less than the cost of a 25-kilo bag of rice. He carried the entire burden of making a living, and when a big man like Merajudin says, “I felt very much alone,” the size of that burden becomes clear.

Bibi Gul, Merajudin’s wife, clearly has a mind of her own, which becomes obvious as soon as you meet her. Two years ago, she started to pick up half the burden, if not more, from her husband. She became part of a women’s cooperative that grows, harvests, processes and markets saffron. And this is not just any saffron, but saffron that ranks among the world’s best. Two sentences sum up the difference this change makes for the family. “I have become visible and am respected,” says Bibi Gul. “I no longer feel alone,” says Merajudin.

Welthungerhilfe originally started the saffron cooperative “Socio-agricultural women of Pashtoon Zarghoon District” and works with its local partner organization RAADA (Rehabilitation Association and Agriculture Development for Afghanistan) that is based in Herat, an old trading town on the former Silk Road. Herat used to be the prosperous center of poets and musicians, Sufi masters, top carpet weavers, and the seat of the renowned Balkh University. Today, the city has 600,000 inhabitants. On August 12 of this year, Herat was handed over to the Taliban after days of fighting. The provincial government and security forces had previously retreated to a nearby army base, enabling the Taliban to march in unopposed.

After the first fearful weeks, during which hardly anyone had dared to go out, and women in particular had stayed at home, the situation stabilized. The colorful hustle and bustle along the streets returned, with merchants offering clothing and spices – there is a scent of cinnamon and cardamom in the air. The office of Nazir Ghafoori, director of RAADA, is located in the rear of a building in the middle of Herat. Technically, the man in his mid-fifties is a veterinarian, but for several decades now, he has been committed to the rights and empowerment of rural women. He has launched half a dozen initiatives to give these women their own income and at least a little bit of freedom. The idea of growing saffron emerged from his cooperation with Welthungerhilfe.

As soon as you leave the wide streets of Herat on your way to the surrounding villages, the land becomes barren. Stunted vegetation, farmers on donkey carts, mud houses with rounded roofs. The few stores that continue to exist, sell only basic foodstuffs and all colors of plastic sandals. Those who live here must be tough and unassuming. The Saffron project enrolls women who are struggling with great hardship. “We visit the villages and look for the poorest families. To be able to participate in the program, they must own a piece of land where the women can grow crops. Then we talk to the village elders and the husbands. We explain to them the advantages of having the women earn money. We rarely encounter difficulties, because the men quickly understand,” says Nazir Ghafoori. The selected women, 100 at present, each receive 400 saffron bulbs from



We Will not Abandon People

Thomas ten Boer is Welthungerhilfe’s country director in Afghanistan. He reports on the organization’s next steps, coping with the difficult situation.

Particularly in the rural regions, there is a shocking degree of need. Our fact-finding missions in the north and east of the country reveal the devastating destruction and huge levels of poverty, hunger and desperation in the villages. The people are caught in a vicious circle: due to international sanctions, the banking system is paralyzed and there is a lack of cash. Food prices are skyrocketing, and single women in particular hardly know how to feed their children. They are no longer allowed to pursue their work and often cannot leave their homes without a male escort.

Additionally, the economic damage caused by the Corona pandemic is enormous, persistent droughts are affecting harvests, and for the winter season, there is again a forecast for below-average rainfall. Around the capital Kabul, internally displaced people have been living in informal settlements for years now, without medical care, adequate shelter or schooling for their children. This hopeless situation will worsen dramatically in the winter, when homes offer little protection from temperatures well below zero. We are preparing to distribute heating materials and simple stoves to needy families in rural areas and in Kabul.

At this point, we are still unsure about our working prospects. We do not know, for example, whether women will be able to continue their work in all of our projects, and under what conditions. We do not know yet whether the new government will guarantee us unhindered access to those in need, the neutrality of humanitarian aid and security for our team. We have temporarily suspended our development activities and are focusing on emergency relief only. For example, since October, 6,500 particularly needy families in Nangarhar province have been receiving rations of flour, oil, pulses and salt. In November, we extended our aid to 10,500 families.

Welthungerhilfe was also active in Afghanistan during the first Taliban government. Then as now, we discuss our projects with the respective village and town councils. Together we approach the Taliban for negotiations. For us it is clear that we will stay in the country to fulfill our humanitarian mission. We must not and will not abandon the people!

Welthungerhilfe and training on cultivation. In order to be able to market their goods independently in the cooperative, there are also literacy and accounting courses. RAADA closely supports the women and advises them on all questions and problems they might encounter.

Since the Taliban took over, little has changed politically for Bibi Gul and the women of the cooperative. The Islamists had been controlling most of the villages in the steppes around Herat anyway and had refrained from interfering, because they needed the support of the aid organizations to feed the population. During the so-called anti-terror war of the Americans and NATO, poverty in Afghanistan increased each year. The reasons for this were not only the droughts, but also the fighting from which people fled, for example, and the marginalization of the rural population. The Afghan side invested virtually nothing in poverty reduction, the health system or infrastructure; these tasks were left to the aid organizations.

However, with the Islamists coming to power in Afghanistan and announcing a rigid Islamic state leadership that denies women the right to work and education, the anxious question arose as to how the cooperative would continue. Thanks to negotiations between Welthungerhilfe and the local councils, and the committed mediation of RAADA, the women's organization has so far been allowed to continue its work. Those Taliban who are in charge in the villages around Herat, Ghafoori explains, are locals who understand the precarious living conditions of the people. "Many men are unemployed or earn very little money. In at least a quarter of all Afghan families, mothers or daughters earn the income; in another quarter they partly

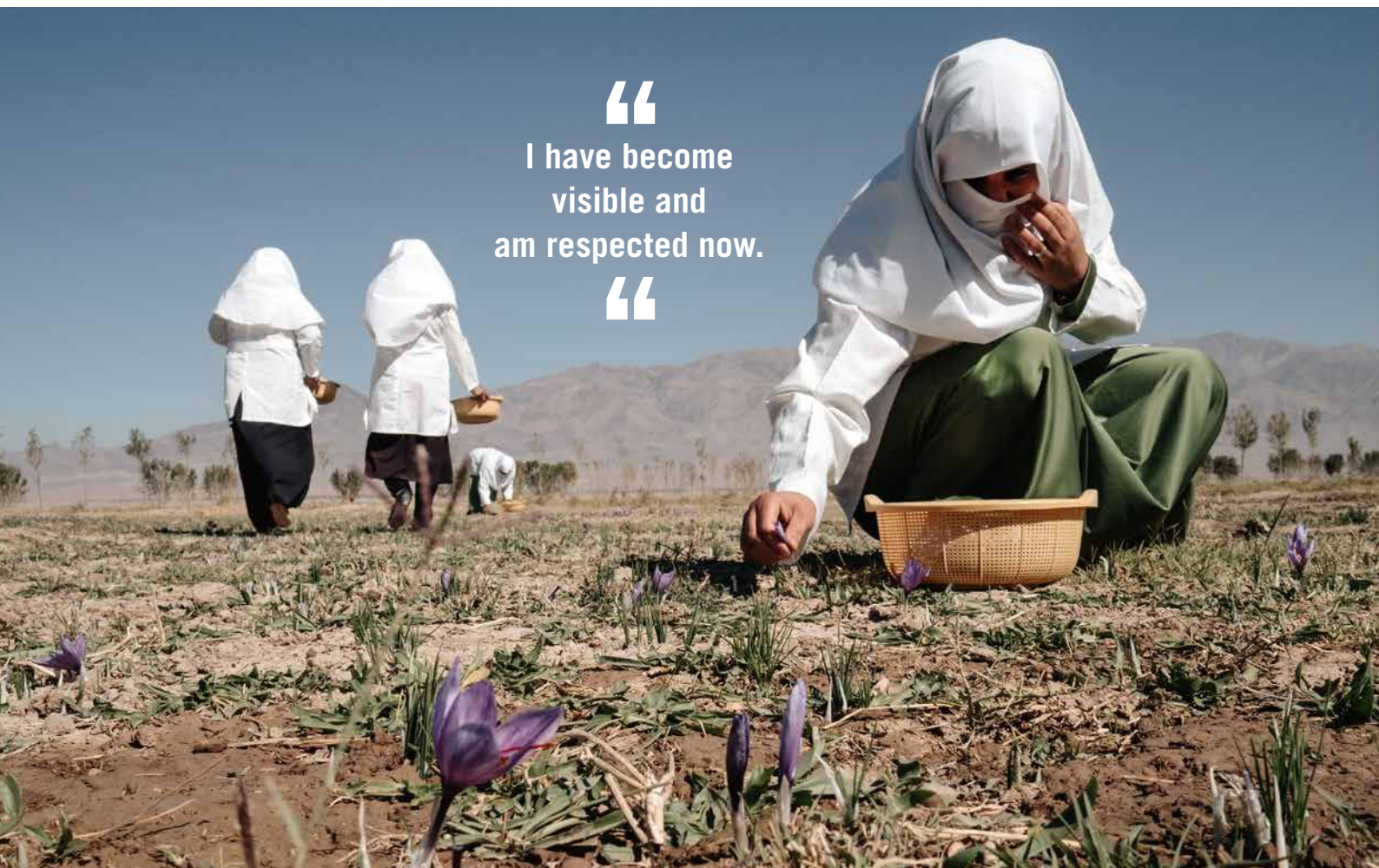
support the family income. To deny them participation would lead to catastrophic hardship."

Nevertheless, economically, the new situation is an existential threat. The Taliban government has no money, and more than 70 percent of the population is now without work. The United Nations is warning of a famine should humanitarian aid not continue on a large scale in the country. Additionally, winter is approaching and people lack the money to heat their homes. In some areas, there is no electricity for many hours a day. The cost of basic foodstuffs such as rice, flour and oil has risen by 30 to 50 percent. Already, malnourished children have been admitted to hospitals, and the number of beggars in the cities has multiplied. The BBC recently reported of families that sold one of their children in order to be able to feed the others.

The women's cooperative is also feeling the effects of the economic downturn. When the Corona pandemic began, the price of saffron fell by 50 percent. Now, it is continuing to go down even further. This is also because Afghanistan is now isolated, the banking system is still not functioning, and exporting abroad has become difficult or impossible. Also Nazir Ghafoori cannot predict what the future holds for saffron cultivation and for the women in his country. "These are dark times," he says, "and we can only hope that they will become brighter again."

Freelance journalist Andrea Jeska has visited Afghanistan regularly over the years, most recently in October 2021.

To find out more about our work in Afghanistan, please go to: www.welthungerhilfe.org/our-work/countries/afghanistan/



“
I have become
visible and
am respected now.
”

No Respite for Haiti

On the morning of 14 August 2021, an earthquake of magnitude 7.2 on the Richter scale struck southern Haiti. Tens of thousands of houses were destroyed, and more than 2,000 people died. Only a few days later, tropical storm Grace swept through the area. Many thousands of people have been dependent on outside aid ever since. Welthungerhilfe and its partners support families with what they need most.

By Tanja Heimann

The images brought back terrible memories of the severe earthquake in 2010, but this time, the shock waves were worse. Once again, tens of thousands of people lost the roof over their heads, hospitals overflowed with casualties, medical equipment was in short supply, and many people were left without access to drinking water. The earthquake struck primarily the southern peninsula, one of the poorest areas of the country and one with poor infrastructure. The only road leading out of the capital city, Port-au-Prince, runs through areas that have been under the control of armed groups since June. The disaster struck the Caribbean state at a time already rife with political instability, economic misery, and great suffering. In July, the president at the time, Jovenel Moïse, was murdered. Haiti is also suffering greatly from the economic effects of the coronavirus pandemic.


Immediately after the earthquake, the Welthungerhilfe team distributed hygiene supplies as well as tarpaulins and blankets. Together with the French organisation ACTED, one of our partners in the European network Alliance2015, Welthungerhilfe is also supporting three hard-hit communities in the départements of Grand-Anse and Sud with drinking water. Tanker trucks are supplying 15,000 people with water for one month. In addition, 300 families are receiving direct financial support through FODES-5, our local partner in the département of Nippes. This enables them to independently purchase food or replace things lost through the disaster. Even before the earthquake, Haiti was one of the poorest countries in the world, with around half of its population being forced to live on less than USD 1.00 per day. For many families, even basic food items have become essentially unaffordable due to rapidly rising prices. For example, a loaf of bread costs the equivalent of USD 1.60, and a liter of cooking oil costs USD 1.00. As a result, more than two thirds of children under the age of five are undernourished.



^ The families most affected by the earthquake receive financial support.

< Thanks to the water treatment facilities, many thousands of people have access to safe drinking water.

Only a few days after the earthquake, people in the south of the country were struck by tropical storm Grace. Accompanied by torrential rain, it caused mudslides and landslides that brought further suffering to the people living there. Because their makeshift shelters could not stand up to the floods, many people were forced to remain outdoors without shelter. It will be a long time before they recover from the effects of the disaster and can once again make their living with full independence. We remain on site and will continue to support the people who need it the most.

Tanja Heimann is a member of the Welthungerhilfe team in Haiti. 

Learn more about our work in Haiti at: www.welthungerhilfe.org/our-work/countries/haiti 



“I Never want to have to beg Again”

^ Suleiman helps with grinding the prosopis pods. Finally, he has work for which he gets paid.

An innovative cooperation in western Somaliland provides both jobs for the villagers and solves a pressing agricultural problem, giving the local economy a boost. Welthungerhilfe is supporting a company in the region to produce animal feed, fertilizer and charcoal from an invasive plant. After an early success there are now big plans. The fate of 72-year-old Suleiman has also taken a hopeful turn as a result of the project.

By Hodan Mohamed

Suleiman knows what it feels like to hit rock bottom. For many years he had to live the life of a beggar. He had lost everything during the civil war in Somalia in the late 1980s. “Before the war, I lived in Mogadishu and had a job as a waiter in one of the best restaurants in town. I lived in a nice house with my wife and children, two boys and a girl.” Then the family had to flee the violence in the country, his wife and children lost their lives in the turmoil.

“After that loss, I was no longer the same, everything seemed to have turned against me. I settled in the village of Gabiley, where I owned a piece of farmland. From there, I was then evicted – the government claiming that the land was no longer mine, showing me deeds that they had forged.” This is



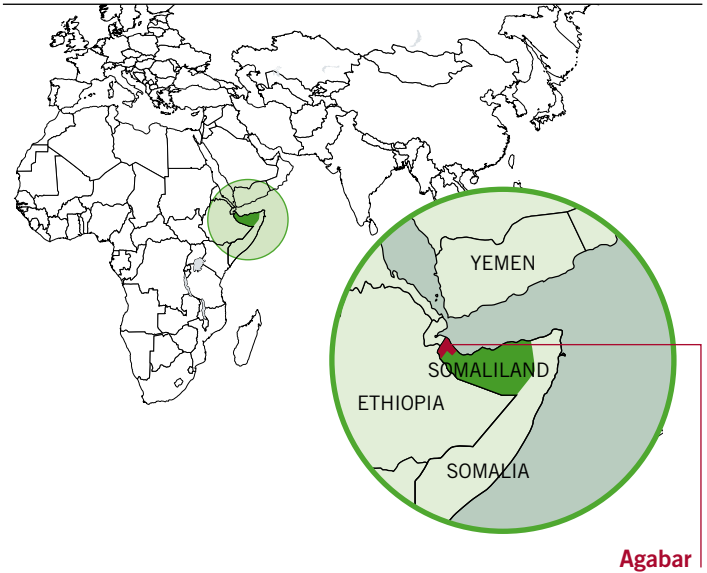
how he ended up as a beggar in Agabar, with no roof over his head, no family and an empty stomach most of the time. “I survived by begging for food – something I wouldn’t wish on anyone,” says Suleiman, who is profoundly marked by this difficult time.

Then, he heard about the Lander Prosopis company, which had begun to process the undesirable shrub into animal feed in his village. Suleiman was desperate for a chance to finally earn his own living again, but he wondered: “At first I thought maybe I was too old to work that many hours outside in the sun, gathering and separating pods. But I knew I had to try or there would be nothing left for me.” He made it and got a job.

Prosopis juliflora is a plant that is spreading relentlessly, already covering hundreds of acres of land in the area, choking crops and overgrowing roads, making them impassable. Guuleed Ahmed, founder and director of Lander Prosopis, says, “At first, the community had doubts that this plant they hated so much could be useful or even have business potential. But now, they can watch how the dried and ground up pods actually turn into animal feed, which we sell. As a result, 80 people from the village now have jobs, and their quality of life has improved noticeably. Last but not least, we are controlling the Prosopis invasion.”

Suleiman works hard now and is among the employees who collect the most prosopis pods, putting them in bags and preparing them for processing. He also assists in running the mill that Welthungerhilfe funded. His monthly wage allows Suleiman to eat three meals a day – what others take for granted is like a miracle to him.

Lander Prosopis is processing plenty of orders. The organization Veterinarians Without Borders, for example, ordered 5,000 kilograms of animal feed for one of their drought-related emergency feeding programs. Other organizations also appreciate the high-quality product. Gradually, the small social enterprise is growing, investing part of its profits in the village to



Somaliland > in northern Somalia, declared itself independent in 1991, but was never recognized as a separate state by the international community. Today, the political and economic situation is relatively stable and the government is functioning. The population lives fairly secure, but over half of the people are poor. In Agabar, as in many other villages in Somaliland, Welthungerhilfe promotes sustainable agriculture.

> **Husband and wife Guuleed Ahmed and Hodan Mohamed founded Lander Prosopis. Their success is supporting the entire region.**



create even more jobs. Guuleed Ahmed has ambitious plans: “We won a UN competition for environmental and social start-ups and received grants for a modern charcoal kiln. Instead of just burning the invasive plant, as many families do here to clear their land, we will produce ‘green charcoal’ – also helping to protect native trees that way. Welthungerhilfe also promotes Prosopis as a bio-fertilizer and is advocating for a better nutrition of the local women’s groups’ livestock with our feed. Who knows, the village of Agabar may even start exporting animal feed, charcoal and biofertilizers to the Gulf States.”

Suleiman hopes that Lander Prosopis will stay in his village for a long time: “This job means dignity and survival for me. I want to work and never have to beg again.”



A threat with benefits

The Prosopis species are extremely fast growing and drought resistant trees or shrubs. The thicker trunks make good building material, charcoal or firewood. For animals, the green leaves are inedible and the sweet pods not very well digestible. But dried and ground up, they can be used as animal feed. The pods can also be used to make a high-protein food. The shredded leaves and branches are used as mulch, letting the soil absorb and store more water.

Hodan Mohamed is a co-founder of Lander Prosopis.





Healthy, Sustainable Food For All

In a world of plenty, there are still over 800 million people suffering from hunger. This is unacceptable, because we have enough food for everyone. The September 2021 UN Summit on Food Systems examined the causes and contexts of hunger and is seeking solutions to overcome it permanently. Welthungerhilfe is on board. The organization has been fighting for the human right to food for a long time – for example in Peru.

By Susanna Daag



◀ Since families sell their produce at local farmers' markets directly, instead of to middlemen, their earnings have increased significantly.

▲ More than a dozen potato varieties grow in the Andes – a diversity worth preserving

Lucia Inga Tapia's sales crate is full to the brim with big, fat luscious avocados. The Peruvian smallholder's green fruits weigh almost three times as much as the export goods found on German supermarket shelves. This is no surprise, as Lucia Tapia's home village of Pacapuchuro, on the eastern slopes of the Huánuco region of the Andes, offers ideal conditions for growing tropical fruit. At an altitude of around 1,800 meters, avocado, mango and guava trees thrive, along with bananas, coffee, corn, beans and, of course, more than a dozen varieties of potatoes, the "gold of the Andes" – all for local consumption.

The house of Lucia Inga and her family has mud-walls, on the roof a Peruvian flag is flapping in the wind. The family built up their small farm with their own hard labor but never thought of growing different types of fruit, vegetables, cereals and legumes before. Their hardship was mainly based on the fact that Lucia Inga Tapia and her mother Idelberta, like most families in the region, kept only a little bit for themselves, growing mostly white potatoes, which they sold to middlemen. This meant meager profits, which were barely enough to survive on. Their situation changed when the two women participated in training courses that Welthungerhilfe and its partner organization IDMA (Instituto de Desarrollo y Medio Ambiente) organized. They switched to organic farming, growing more varieties and farming differently now. "We grow crops without chemical fertilizers or pesticides. The project has helped us get our products certified and sell them directly to customers at good prices," says Lucia Inga Tapia. In the meantime, the energetic 30-year-old is herself advising neighboring smallholders on organic farming, because word is getting around and others are following suit.

In the Andean region, the organization IDMA, which translates to 'Institute for Development and the Environment,' has been implementing a large-scale project on food security, the human right to food and sustainable food systems. Ironically, it is the home of the potato, avocado and many other nutrient-rich foods, where the food situation is deteriorating dramatically.

In 2019, nearly 48 million people across Latin America were affected by hunger. By 2030, that number is projected to reach nearly 67 million – not yet including the devastating impact of COVID-19. Latin America and the Caribbean are the regions of the world where food insecurity is rising faster than anywhere else. Availa-





› During the lockdown, farming families started a door-to-door delivery service.

bility of- and access to food are declining even faster than in Africa. The World Hunger Index documents how serious the situation is, showing Latin America ranking among such countries as Myanmar or Malawi. This also applies to the agricultural region of Huánuco: Despite fertile soils and an enormous biodiversity, one in three people here lives in poverty. One in four children under the age of five suffers from chronic malnutrition, and almost 13 percent of all young children suffer from anemia.

This is somewhat grotesque, because in Peru and throughout Latin America, obesity and related diseases such as diabetes are also on the rise. Cheap processed foods rich in fats, sugar and carbohydrates are to blame for this trend; in Peru, a large proportion of the population is overweight. What we observe in the industrial world has spread to Latin America as well: People no longer consume diverse, seasonal produce that grows locally, but turn to inexpensive and processed imported goods instead. Rather than the perhaps shriveled but nutritious Andean potatoes, more and more Peruvians are eating industrially produced French fries, which often come from far away wealthy countries such as Belgium. Rather than corn products, they now eat white bread and pizza; instead of fresh water and juices, they drink sugary sodas.

^ Lucia Inga Tapia and her mother Idelberta now rely on organic farming – and are convincing others to follow suit.

› Hunger and malnutrition are on the rise in Peru. An effective and diversified agriculture is therefore becoming more important.



“
We farm without chemical fertilizers or pesticides. The project has helped us get our products certified, and we sell them directly to customers at good prices.
 ”

And while large agricultural corporations use the coastal area to produce trendy superfoods such as avocados, green asparagus and grapes for export to Germany, China or the USA, fewer and fewer Peruvian families are able to feed themselves sufficiently and healthily. Since the Peruvian Pacific coast is normally far too dry for the cultivation of export goods and not nearly as suitable as the area of the Tapia family farm, natural water resources from the Andes are diverted to the coast via reservoirs and canals. Rivers and groundwater are also siphoned off for irrigation of the vast monoculture landscapes. As a result, the water table is falling, the soil is turning saline, the Andean region is drying up, and small farming families are becoming even more impoverished. A state of water emergency has had to be declared on several occasions. Add to this the harmful use of large quantities of agrochemicals, and you get the complex and familiar problems that are well known from vegetable cultivation on the



Spanish Mediterranean coast, strawberry plantations in California or intensive mass animal farming in Germany.

To counteract this imbalance in the global food system, Welthungerhilfe is busy on many levels and in many ways: In projects like the one in Peru, we work with our partners to strengthen small-scale, ecological agriculture, laying the groundwork for a change in the way producers and consumers interact and for new ways of local distribution. We promote civil society organizations and their networking so that they can demand their human right to food. We hold regional and national governments accountable for them to actually implement these rights. And we are achieving initial successes: Peru now has a legal framework that promotes the sustainable production of healthy food. This now also includes certification procedures for official organic labels.

Also in Huánuco, Peru, change has arrived. Lucia Inga Tapia is one of six organic farmers organized in her village of Pacapuchuro, and 520 families in the Huánuco region are already participating. “On our farm, we have everything we need to live,” says the young woman. She sells her healthy produce at the market in the town of Huánuco. People have started to appreciate the quality of her products and are happy to pay a little more. COVID-19 temporarily cut off this sales channel, but the enterprising businesswomen around Lucia Inga Tapia and the IDMA team quickly developed creative solutions: Via mobile markets and Whatsapp services, they supplied customers in the city directly from door to door.

The next step is creating supply contracts for regional school meals. The government program uses the encouraging Quechua name “Quali Warma” (“healthy child”), but the nutrient-poor lunches far from compensate for the severe nutritional deficiencies of the Huánuco students. Through persistent negotiations, the organic producers and IDMA managed to succeed in getting local representatives of the Ministries of Health and Education to commit to sustainable nutrition. This includes opening kiosks with fruit, vegetables and dairy products in schools and introducing local, healthy and sustainable products for school meals. By the time Lucia Inga Tapia’s three-year-old son starts school, the program will certainly be in place.

Susanna Daag heads Welthungerhilfe’s office in Peru. 

Please find more information about our work in Peru at: www.welthungerhilfe.org/hunger/food-systems/ 

No more ‘Witchweed’ in the Fields

The ‘purple danger’ looks completely harmless, but the Striga plant – also known as “witchweed” – is threatening the food security of around 300 million people in sub-Saharan Africa. “Toothpicks” are now the weapon of choice for Welthungerhilfe to combat the pest. This innovative approach aims to ensure that millions of farms can increase their harvests and that way contribute to reducing hunger and malnutrition.

When Gaudencia Teiye starts noticing the first Striga plants in her cornfield in western Kenya, she knows right away that food will soon become scarce for her and her children. The parasitic weed attacks the roots of corn, millet, sorghum, cowpea and highland rice. After a short while, the plants die or produce very meager harvests. Estimates assume that this causes damages worth 7.5 billion euros every year. Chemical pesticides and manual weeding do not work for smallholder farmers like Gaudencia Teiye, because the damage occurs before the Striga plant becomes visible above ground. That way, the aggressive weed manages to repeatedly destroy entire harvests.

The search for a remedy against the purple pest also kept the American doctor John Sands busy. He had been working in a hospital in western Kenya in 2007 where he was constantly treating severely malnourished children, women and men. Sands wanted to find out why people living in such a fertile region had so little to eat. A farmer took him to his Striga-covered cornfield and explained that it was the “witchweed” that caused his children often going to bed hungry. The invasive plant can produce up to 500,000 seeds per season. In Africa, some 50 million hectares of farmland are already affected.

John Sands realized that the problem of malnutrition needed to be solved in the field, not in the hospital. He reported his findings to his brother David, a biologist who works as a crop protection researcher at Montana State University. The latter began to investigate how the Striga plague could be controlled with simple, ecologically compatible and inexpensive means. A year later, he made a breakthrough. In collaboration with the Kenyan research organization KALRO, David Sands

found an effective means of combating the “witchweed”: a fungus.

Sands managed to isolate the fungal strain FOXY T14 and cultivated an extremely potent and highly effective pathogen from it in the laboratory. At first, he cultivated the permanent spores of the fungus in toothpicks, then switched to small wooden sticks. These are delivered to specially trained farmers, who insert them into cooked rice in order to produce a biological, highly effective pesticide during a process lasting several days. With half a teaspoon of the mixture added to each corn kernel at sowing time, the plant will be reliably protected against damage from Striga.

The organic crop protection product is now produced and marketed under the catchy brand name “Kichawi Kill” (Swahili for “magic kill”). With the support and involvement of German scientist and entrepreneur Dr. Peter Lüth and the participation of Welthungerhilfe, the Toothpick Company was founded three years ago, bringing the technical solution for improving food security from the laboratory to the field. Based in Kakamega, western Kenya, the social enterprise ensures that smallholder families can buy “Kichawi Kill” at affordable prices. As a limited liability company, the company was initially financed by shareholder contributions. In the

future, it is supposed to support itself through its sales revenues. In one of Welthungerhilfe’s projects, men and women in more than 40 Kenyan villages are trained to use the fungus and rice to produce the natural crop protection. By now, it has already been used in more than 1,000 fields. David Sands, meanwhile, is working with an international network in order to introduce the Kenyan model to other African countries.



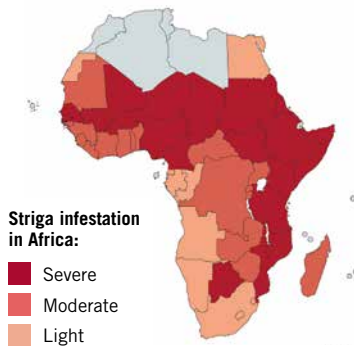
> FOXY T14 is cultivated in little pieces of wood, put in sterile packaging and delivered to local producers.



✓ These then cook rice, add the fungus-containing wood and put the mixture into a plastic container, which they shake twice a day.



⌈ In the laboratory, scientists isolate and cultivate the fungal strain FOXY T14.



^ After three days, FOXY T14 has spread throughout the rice, and a small portion is placed in each seed hole.



”The success of Kichawi Kill as a highly effective organic crop protection product speaks for itself. The inexpensive product does not harm people’s health and has no negative impact on the environment. It can sustainably improve the lives of millions of smallholders,” says Heinz Peters, Welthungerhilfe’s agricultural expert. Gaudencia Teiye will soon become one of these smallholder farmers. She wants to protect her corn plants with the ‘toothpick’-based bioherbicide as early as the next sowing season – hoping for a good and healthy harvest.

Trials have shown that fields protected from Striga can improve their harvests by about 50 percent.



▲ In the health center in Andranobory, under- and malnourished children are examined and treated.

A Looming Famine

In southern Madagascar, people have been waiting for rain for three years – in vain. The crops are withering in the fields, and 70,000 children are already acutely undernourished. Julio Rainimananjahary, a head of project for Welthungerhilfe, reports on how desperate the families are and how his team is meeting their most urgent needs.

By Julio Rainimananjahary

In my home country, an unimaginable disaster is taking place. The country is suffering from the most severe drought in 40 years, and around one million people already have too little to eat. The situation is especially bad in the south, where precipitation has failed for the third year in a row. Many fields have turned to dust. At this time of year, people should be harvesting the crops; instead, they are going hungry. The families are projected to lose more than half of their harvest in the coming months. All of the reserves have been used up, and their warehouses are empty.

Many people have no income sources any more. They normally earn their money as small-scale farmers or as day laborers on other farmers' fields, but now, they have no money

to buy food for their families. The coronavirus pandemic made things worse, with interruptions to supply chains and transport routes driving food prices up. I have met people forced to subsist only on leaves, berries, and locusts. In despair, a woman recently told me that she feeds her children berries mixed with sand just to fill their bellies. As horrifying and tragic as this is, it is not rare. The suffering is growing.

Our Welthungerhilfe team is providing people with what they need most urgently. In and around Fort Dauphin, we are distributing food to more than 1,000 households. But other districts urgently need help too. In collaboration with the United Nations and the Madagascar disaster authorities, we are intensively working to expand our activities to the affected areas. In addition, we are restoring supply systems and establishing new water distribution centers to ensure that everyone has access to sufficient clean drinking water. We distribute packages with soap and other important hygiene supplies to prevent diseases that the people are more vulnerable to due to their weakened state.

While we are doing everything we can to provide essential survival aid in the south, a famine is looming over the north as well. Our early-warning system has now been activated, and we are taking action (see info box). We will continue to support the people in the south. There are many lives at stake.



Providing Aid Before It's Too Late

With extreme weather events like droughts and floods becoming more frequent, new approaches are needed in humanitarian aid. Early, rapid, and efficient solutions are required. Welthungerhilfe is one of the few organisations that focuses on forecast-based humanitarian aid. Bärbel Mosebach, head of humanitarian aid at Welthungerhilfe, answers the most important questions on this topic.

What exactly is forecast-based action? Every year, around 230 million people are struck by disaster. However, aid funds tend to be distributed only once many people have already lost everything. Our forecast-based disaster relief employs early-warning systems to provide humanitarian aid before circumstances become dire and lead to hunger or even death.

And how does that look in practice? By conducting threat and risk analyses, we can predict extreme weather events with great precision and thereby provide early assistance to

the people who will be affected by these weather events. By anticipating major natural disasters, the damage caused can ultimately be reduced.

Could you give us a specific example? For example, cash transfers offer people a way to purchase food in advance or shore up their livestock numbers in order to best prepare for an approaching crisis.


And is this early-warning system cost efficient? Studies have shown that every dollar invested in prevention saves between four and seven dollars in emergency aid and reconstruction. This means that we are not only saving lives but also using available funds more efficiently.


Is the system not in place yet in Madagascar? A pilot project has been launched in central Madagascar in collaboration with the local civil-protection authority, the meteorological service, and additional partners. We have already developed a forecasting model for six regions the country. However, none of these regions were in the south. The devastating speed at which the situation devolved there is partially due to the unpredictable effects of the coronavirus pandemic. We will continue to expand our procedures to include more factors in order to prevent such crises in the future.

└ This boy is delivering urgently needed water from a distribution center to the villages.

Madagascar > The island country's economy is built around the cultivation of coffee, vanilla, cloves, and rice. Despite Madagascar's wealth of natural resources and its successful tourism sector, more than three quarters of its residents live in extreme poverty. Reasons include the severe effects of climate change, political instability, and a lack of infrastructure.



Julio Rainimananjahary is a head of project in Madagascar. 

Learn more about our work in Madagascar at: welthungerhilfe.org/our-work/countries/madagascar 

How the Coronavirus Endangers Development Successes

How is the coronavirus pandemic affecting the poorest regions in the world? The results of a recent survey conducted by Welthungerhilfe and Alliance2015 are sobering: Nine out of ten respondents are poorer today than before, and four out of ten have less access to food due to the coronavirus crisis. Existing inequality and insecurity are getting worse for women and girls. Concerns are growing that development successes could be set back by decades. Bettina Iseli, the director of programs for Welthungerhilfe, explains the situation.

Together with the Alliance2015 network, Welthungerhilfe conducted a household survey in 25 project countries, asking 16,000 people about the effects of the coronavirus crisis. What were the results?

Early on, we warned that the crisis would exacerbate global hunger. That fear has unfortunately come true. Around 40 percent of the people surveyed reported eating less and having a less-varied diet now. They can simply no longer afford food, and prices have risen drastically in many places. At the same time, many people earn less than before or nothing at all. Jobs have been lost, farming families can no longer sell their products, and remittances from relatives abroad are no longer coming in. Nine out of ten respondents are poorer than before the pandemic, and one in three is in worse health. Two out of three children have less access to education, and

◀ Women are forced to accept many disadvantages throughout the world, even more so due to the coronavirus pandemic.



many can no longer afford school fees. This financial need also increases the risk of child labor.

Have women and girls been especially affected by the pandemic?

Yes, in several ways. The women are usually the ones nursing the sick, whether professionally or in a family context. They end up facing much greater exposure to the virus and a high risk of infection. The majority of women worldwide work in the informal sector. Without health or employment insurance, the economic effects of the crisis pose an existential threat to them.

Vaccines are one way of curbing the pandemic. How significant is this issue in the countries in which you work?

The more people are vaccinated worldwide, the more quickly and effectively the pandemic can be contained. For many people, this would lower the risk of further spiralling into hunger and poverty. However, the majority of vaccine doses have been contractually reserved by rich countries, leaving many poorer countries empty handed. It would help to temporarily suspend patents for coronavirus vaccines and to expand production to additional locations. Making it possible for everyone to be vaccinated is a question of justice. This could also be the deciding factor in how long the pandemic will keep us in thrall through its mutations. The danger is growing that people

will die – not only from the coronavirus but also from hunger due to renewed lockdowns.

What does the crisis mean for Welthungerhilfe's work?

Our approach has held up to the crisis. By maintaining a presence around the world through our own employees and a tight-knit network of local partner organisations, we can work remotely to successfully and professionally implement our programs and to continue working closely with the affected families. It is thanks to our partners that informational and hygiene measures were implemented so quickly to protect people from the virus. New opportunities have also been created with room for future development and expansion. Digital solutions that connect people throughout the world enable better access to knowledge, joint learning, and improved participation for civil-society partners. This leads to new opportunities and innovations that enable us to better support disadvantaged people and address the causes of hunger. We cannot allow ourselves to forget that, in many countries, the coronavirus crisis is only one of countless life-threatening circumstances.

What have you personally taken away from this time?

I have been deeply impressed by the immense show of solidarity. Throughout the world, we are observing how people



*Bettina Iseli,
Welthungerhilfe Program Director*

share the little they have with those who have nothing left. This observation has been borne out by an Allensbach survey commissioned by Welthungerhilfe. Despite also being affected by the crisis, the majority of German citizens refuse to cut funding for development cooperation. Our supporters are also remaining steadfastly at our side. All of that encourages us and helps us through these difficult times. According to UN projections, the number of people going hungry will rise by up to 130 million due to the coronavirus crisis, and 150 million could be thrust into poverty. We cannot wait until the worst happens. We need to stand together – and act now.

9 out of 10

people surveyed in project regions in the Global South have less money to live on today than before the coronavirus pandemic due to loss of income.

4 out of 10

people surveyed have poorer access to healthy food today than before the coronavirus pandemic.



Quality Requires Clear Regulations

We also take responsibility to mean that continuous supervision and transparency must be ensured. We regularly review our structures and operating processes, both domestically and abroad, to ensure that funds are used for their intended purposes and in accordance with our objectives. Sonja Vogelsberg explains how that works. She has been the head of Internal Auditing at Welthungerhilfe for four years.

What exactly does Internal Auditing do?

We check to make sure that donations and public grants are used properly – according to their purpose and our mission – and as effectively as possible. To this end, we review internal work processes and organisational structures for regularity, effectiveness, safety, and efficiency. We monitor all key areas of Welthungerhilfe's operations in Germany and abroad and confirm that guidelines are being followed, that risks are being responsibly managed, and that internal control systems effectively prevent corrupt behavior and the improper use of funds.

What criteria do you use to decide what and where to audit?

Our planning is fundamentally risk oriented. Areas and processes that are at a high risk, for example due to their complexity or a lack of automation, have priority for auditing, both in Germany and abroad. Less-risky subject areas are audited at regular intervals. We have also started auditing fewer individual projects because Welthungerhilfe conducts around 400 projects in 40 countries every year. Apart from the fact that we could audit only a fraction of these projects, any improvements made would generally apply to only the audited projects. Instead, we want to address general operating procedures. To this end, we have begun to focus on processes, compliance, and the implementation of controls at the country level. This lets us optimise all projects conducted in a given country for the long term, thereby achieving better value for Welthungerhilfe.

How can a process be made more efficient?

A simple example would be the four-eyes principle. It is fundamental to internal auditing, whether in terms of contracts or accounting. In several cases, we observed that ten or twelve eyes were involved instead of four. The



intentions were good, but when doubts arise, it is easy for everyone to rely on the others, meaning that nobody speaks up. Having more signatures is therefore not necessarily indicative of better quality but can rather lead to mistakes and inefficiencies. That should be avoided.

Is it not difficult to gain a good understanding of all the various issues?

The members of our team are chosen for their expertise. I myself have been working on the financial side of development cooperation for over 20 years in a variety of countries, including Germany, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, and Haiti. I have also been in places like Pakistan and Niger as part of emergency aid efforts. This has helped to give me a more nuanced understanding of connections and circumstances. It is crucial that we continually learn, remain on the ball professionally, and rapidly assess even the most diverse auditing subjects in order to accurately evaluate what the risks are and what needs to be

improved in response. Because we cannot cover all subjects on our own, we draw on additional internal and external expertise for certain tasks.

Is your job changing?

Yes, and that can be exciting – for example when it comes to technological innovations. In the past, goods and services in overseas projects were paid for in cash, which is very risky in nature. Cash was later supplanted by cheques and bank transfers. Today, cash grants and payments are already being made by mobile phone in many countries. That makes our work more efficient and safer overall while also presenting Welthungerhilfe with new risks. We evaluated mobile payments last year and discovered that the underlying contracts with the mobile service providers were not always transparent and adequate. The use of new technologies also

means that audit processes need to be adapted or changed if necessary. All of this falls under the purview of Internal Auditing.

What happens with the insights you gain through your audits?

We report our results to the executive management and the audited units and provide specific recommendations on alternative courses of action, how the organisation should adjust its approach at a given location, or how processes could be better devised. Since we are bound by the professional and ethical principles of the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA), there are clear guidelines governing how we work. Welthungerhilfe is also audited by external institutions for the proper and efficient use of donations and grant money.



^ Proper filing is a must, even in a makeshift office like this one in Madagascar.

▣ Sonja Vogelsberg discusses payments for aid supplies with a colleague in Haiti.




^ Contracts with service providers need to undergo intensive scrutiny before cash payments for aid supplies can be made by cell phone, for example here in Mali.


▮ The people responsible for a project regularly put their own work processes under the microscope.



How has the coronavirus pandemic affected your work?

We normally conduct our audits on site in the country in question, but that was not possible in the past year due to travel restrictions. In addition, many people employed by our country offices were working from home. As a result, we did our audits remotely as well. On the one hand, this showed us how well our organisation is set up from a technical perspective. We were able to digitally access most documents and successfully conduct online interviews. On the other hand, it showed us where there is still room for improvement and where we need to take a more active role in the digital transformation; Welthungerhilfe is working on this now.

This interview was conducted by Stefanie Koop, the managing editor of this magazine. 

Learn more about this issue at: www.welthungerhilfe.org/about-us/transparency-and-quality 

➤ Together in Cologne: Susanne Fotiadis and Mathias Mogge of Welthungerhilfe's executive management together with celebrity activists Jeanette Koziol, Jens Kábbe, Susanna Ohlen, Florian Ambrosius, Hans Jürgen „Knacki“ Deuser, Basti Campmann, and Nils Plum (from left to right).

Run!

Between the virtual race and the “real” ZeroHungerRun in Cologne, thousands of people put on their running shoes to race against hunger and poverty during the past few months. A big thank-you to everyone who was there!

What a great success: This year's virtual charity run in May saw **6,445 runners** throughout the world take to the starting line. With teams from **46 countries**—including Bangladesh, Malawi, Syria, Uganda, Zimbabwe, and the United States of America—the ZeroHungerRun challenge achieved a great result. Between the starting pledges of the participants and the involvement of the sponsors, a sum of over **EUR 124,000** was collected for Welthungerhilfe's project activities.

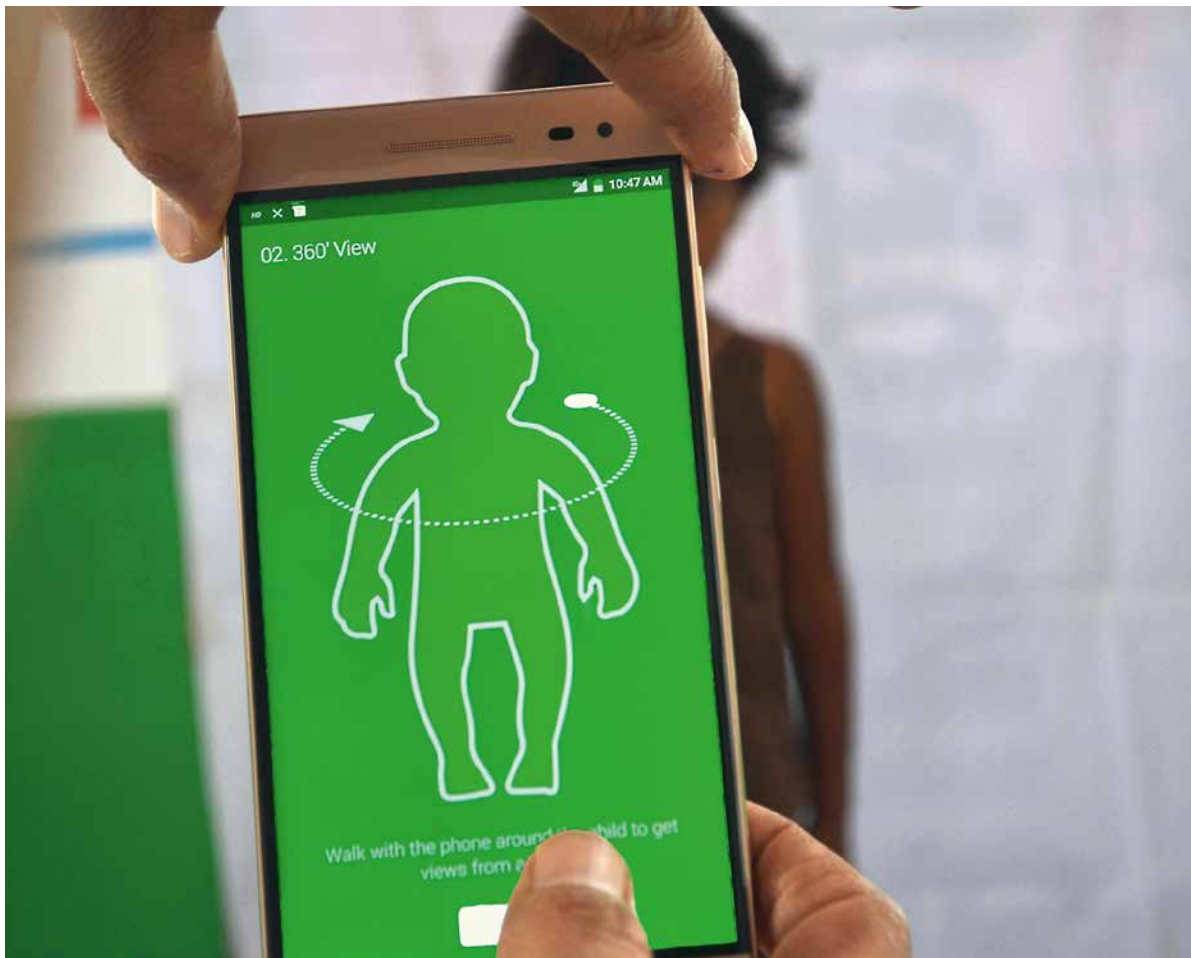
With calls of solidarity for people in need, celebrity participants included Eckart von Hirschhausen, Ann-Kathrin Kramer, Simon Böer, Gesine Cukrowski, Jan Sosniok, and Liz Baffoe as well as athletes like Haile Gebrselassie, Sabrina Mockenhaupt-Gregor, and Uta Pippig.

The actual running event finally took place in Cologne in July, albeit on a slightly limited scale due to the coronavirus pandemic. Taken together, the approximately **1,000 participants** ran a nearly unbelievable distance of **5,580 kilometers**. That is



◀ Enthusiastic participants in 46 countries took to the starting line, including Welthungerhilfe's teams.

almost the exact distance between Cologne and Addis Ababa. Under the motto “Zesamme stonn – Zesamme laufe” (standing together, running together), nearly **EUR 25,000** were donated. It is indisputable that all participants can be proud of this achievement and are a credit to the fight against hunger and poverty!



◀ The Child Growth Monitor app offers a contactless way to measure children's weight and height. This allows their nutrition status to be assessed as well.

An App for Identifying Malnutrition

Hunger and malnutrition are among the greatest challenges facing humanity. In addition, the effects of the coronavirus pandemic are placing further stress on the already precarious nutrition situations in impoverished countries. In the coming years, the world may see an additional 30 million children alone suffering from acute hunger. We are working to counteract this with many innovative approaches – above and beyond our regular activities.

One approach is the Child Growth Monitor app that Welthungerhilfe is developing. Using artificial intelligence together with image data collected via smartphone, the app calculates children's height and weight, immediately assesses their nutrition status, and identifies potential cases of malnutrition. This is crucial because acute malnutrition can lead to severe devel-

opmental delays that can be permanent. In serious cases, children are further examined and suitable treatment plans are devised. Supplementary nutritional counseling and support with starting a vegetable garden can help parents feed their children a healthier diet in the future.

The app's contactless scan function is simple and safe. To date, children have been measured and weighed manually. Depending on the region, however, there are frequent shortages of trained personnel, proper scales, and measuring tapes, and results are often inaccurate. The Child Growth Monitor app has been under development in project villages in India since 2018 and is currently being piloted there. To ensure that the app meets the highest standards of quality, we are developing it in conjunction with trusted partners from the fields of development cooperation and science as well as from the private sector. This combines expertise from a variety of sectors and lays a global foundation for conducting measurements that, in conjunction with appropriate aid measures, can save millions of children's lives.



A Letter from Turkey

Hello and merhaba,

I am writing to you from Welthungerhilfe's office in Mardin, Turkey, where I have been working as a psychologist for two years now. What we mostly do here is to support people who have had to flee the conflict in Syria. We assist them with accessing education and health services, for example, help them with registrations, getting an ID card or to enroll in schools or universities. We offer space for children to play and we fight for their right to an education. We help them to develop skills so that they can better deal with stress, depression or aggression, and we support them with rebuilding their self-confidence after all that they have gone through.

In my line of work, I have seen hundreds of uprooted people in need of psychosocial help, displaced children growing up far from their homes, and parents who have lost their identity. At the same time, I see both young and old people who have somehow managed to hold on to their hope and gratitude, despite all the destruction and losses they have suffered.

The experience of flight is like a narrow corridor with good and evil existing closely side by side. On the one hand, there are traumas, losses, horrible stories of all kinds of violence and the violation of rights. There are children whose childhoods take place behind closed doors, restless, lonely, hurt and angry.

On the other hand, there are people who somehow manage to withstand all the destruction they have faced, who find support in their families, who believe in the goodness of human-

kind and are helping others. I have met children who painted their mothers as superheroes, who dreamed of singing with birds and called school their safest place.

Watching people start over, moving on after experiencing a complete breakdown of their lives, persevering to find a path into their future – all of this motivates me to stay with them. My highest goal is to convince them that they have the necessary strength inside them to always find something they can do for themselves. And that they can rely on me being there. Because I absolutely know that people have the potential for recovery and healing. I am here to help them to grow and become stronger.

Kindest regards

Gülbahar

Gülbahar Arici is a psychologist working for Welthungerhilfe in Mardin, Turkey.



First Prize for Maize > Shallon Mutakiva is a farmer in Zimbabwe. In a 2020 issue of this magazine, we reported on a young woman attending the Agricultural Business Center, a Welthungerhilfe project that offers young people a vocational education. Having studied modern cultivation methods and entrepreneurial skills at the center, Shallon put this knowledge to use in a competition in late March 2021, proving once again how well her small operation was developing. She was awarded first place for her maize and second place for her sunflowers. Her prize? A new plough!



„Summer for Friends“ > Under this motto, actor Till Demtröder held a charity cycling tour to Usedom, an island off the Baltic Sea Coast near the Polish border, in September. Highly motivated, German celebrities like Dieter Hallervorden, Bettina Zimmermann, Kai Wiesinger, Gerit Kling, Ludwig Trepte, Andrea Kathrin Loewig, Stephan Luca, Tina Ruland, Jan Sosniok, and Mariella Ahrens took to the saddle. Each cycled kilometer was converted into a donation by the company Cellagon. With the help of the celebrity guests and many additional sponsors, the sum being collected for Welthungerhilfe grew significantly, ultimately reaching EUR 27,500. We would like to thank everyone who participated.



Say No to Plastics > Seedlings are usually raised in small plastic bags. When the government of Burundi banned single-use plastics, an innovative and environmentally friendly alternative was needed. The Welthungerhilfe project in Ngozi found the following solution: Acacia trees being raised to be planted on slopes and to protect the soil from erosion are now grown in containers fashioned from banana leaves. This has many advantages because the material is locally available and even releases additional nutrients to the seedlings as it decomposes.



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Stefanie Koop, Evelyn Langhans

Responsible:

Harald Düren

Authors:

Gülbahar Arici, Susanna Daag,
Philipp Hedemann, Tanja Heimann,
Andrea Jeska, Stefanie Koop,
Zaro Kurbanbekova, Hodan Mohamed,
Julio Rainimananjahary

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Cover photo: With improved farming methods, families in Ethiopia are achieving a better harvest.

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How Welthungerhilfe works

The knowledge, courage, and experience of our national and international staff are our greatest strength and the foundation of our work. Based on this foundation, we have been providing high-quality results and competent project implementation for nearly 60 years. We provide help from a single source: from rapid disaster relief to long-term development cooperation projects. Our guiding principle is help for self-help. Whenever possible, we work together with local partners. In addition, we inform the German public about development cooperation and take an advisory role on national and international policy. We are politically and ideologically independent.

Our Priorities



Ending Hunger

Our aim is to ensure good nutrition for everyone in the long term. Key approaches include **sustainable cultivation methods, improved seeds, warehousing options, and the protection of natural resources.**



Education and Professional Training

We fight to address the causes of hunger and poverty. We see **education and professional training** as the key to development as they strengthen people and create opportunities.



Water and Hygiene

Insufficient hygiene and a poor water supply cause life-threatening diseases that exacerbate hunger and poverty. Our solution includes **support for clean drinking water and hygienic living conditions.**



Disaster Relief

In emergency aid situations, we act quickly and efficiently to **ensure survival while also laying the foundations for long-term improvements in people's living conditions.**



Climate Change

We want to ensure that the fight against climate change and its effects plays a greater role in shaping social, economic, and political action at all levels. **We integrate adaptation to climate change into all of our programs.**



Political Change

We represent people whose voices are often lost in the political discourse. We influence German and European development policy and are also represented in networks and forums at the international level with the aim of creating political **framework conditions favorable to a world without hunger and poverty.**

Welthungerhilfe, IBAN DE15 3705 0198 0000 0011 15, BIC COLSDE33

Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V., Friedrich-Ebert-Straße 1, 53173 Bonn, Germany, Tel. +49 (0)228 2288-0, Fax +49 (0)228 2288-333, www.welthungerhilfe.org