



magazine

What We Achieve Together!



Young People in Focus:

“HUNGRY FOR LIFE”

IRAQ:
Starting Over
Despite Obstacles

BANGLADESH:
Floating Gardens

 For a world without hunger

WELTHUNGERHILFE DIREKT

Life in South Sudan:
Our colleagues tell their story



In a special edition of our 'Welthungerhilfe Direkt' podcast, we hook up with our team members in South Sudan. Carolin Jarmusch talks to five colleagues about supporting others in one of the worst humanitarian crises of our time, while at the same time being affected themselves. Food insecurity, violence and displacement are currently shaping people's lives – including those of our colleagues. This very personal and moving episode of our podcast is broadcast in English for the first time. All podcast episodes (the rest of them in German only) are available at welthungerhilfe.de/podcast and wherever podcasts are available.

Dear friends of Welthungerhilfe,

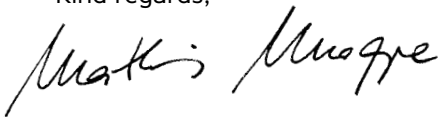
Through our global work, we are committed to tackling the root causes of hunger. But a life without hunger is not just about food. It is also about having a realistic perspective for a better future and the opportunity to shape it. In many countries, communities are concerned that young people are turning their backs on rural areas because they see no future there. Yet it is precisely the potential and innovation of these young people that is needed to bring about change and ensure adequate and healthy nutrition.

One of Welthungerhilfe's approaches is to provide young people with skills that will enable them to earn a living. The Green Colleges program, for example, teaches food processing, solar technology, beekeeping and ecotourism. Young people who have not been able to attend school and come from difficult backgrounds are also given the chance to find promising employment opportunities (p. 12).

Every day we see the benefits of working with local communities, especially in the face of climate change. In Bangladesh, for example, floating gardens make it possible to grow vegetables even during floods, while in Kenya we promote climate-smart agriculture and build wells and rainwater harvesting tanks for times of drought. Innovative approaches such as mobile gardens allow food to be grown efficiently on very small plots of land using little water (p. 22).

Our team of 3,000 colleagues in 37 countries works every day to achieve our ultimate goal: a world free from hunger and poverty. I am delighted to share some of the inspiring stories in this issue of the magazine, stories of what we have achieved together with our supporters in 2023.

Kind regards,




Mathias Mogge, Secretary General

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ENOUGH WATER FOR A HEALTHY GROWTH

By Hninyu Wai



Water has become as precious as gold in Nyaung U. The district is in the centrally located dry zone of Myanmar, with the highest temperatures of the country, and rainfall is becoming increasingly rare and less abundant. Around 30 percent of the people here have no access to clean drinking water. The growing water shortage leads to crop losses, threatens livestock herds and thus the livelihood of the farming families. At the same time, the economic situation in Myanmar has deteriorated rapidly in recent years as the COVID-19 pandemic was followed by the military coup d'état in 2021 and the war in Ukraine, which drove up food and fuel prices. According to estimates by the World Food Programme, nearly one in three children in Myanmar under the age of five suffers from stunted growth due to malnutrition. Unemployment, poverty and hunger are therefore on the rise. Together with its partner Chan Myae Myitta Development Association, Welthungerhilfe is now laying the foundation for healthy growth in Nyaung U and other regions of the country – so that children and the local economy can thrive. To foster long-term transformation, the teams support cooperatives for seed production and village development committees. Families receive cash to buy food and also tools and seeds for their agricultural activities. Welthungerhilfe and its partner are also building water points and sanitation facilities, for example in the village of Hman Taw (see photo). All of these measures lead to better health, more food security and higher incomes. This in turn makes the families more resilient and enables them to better deal with the devastating crises they are facing.

Hninyu Wai works with the Welthungerhilfe team in Myanmar.



VIOLENCE IS WEAKENING AN ENTIRE REGION

Jameson Gadzirai worries that the already difficult living conditions in Niger will deteriorate even further.



Niger

In a coup on July 26, 2023, the military seized power in Niger. The African desert state is one of the poorest and most unstable countries in the world. For years, droughts and armed conflicts in the region have been weakening the population. Now, the humanitarian crisis is worsening dramatically. Jameson Gadzirai, Welthungerhilfe's program manager in Niger, reports.

The consequences of the coup are causing additional distress and hardship for people. Due to border closures and international sanctions, trade has come to a standstill, there is not enough food and prices are rising, some by up to fifty percent. Growing food insecurity, made worse by regional flooding, is affecting those who are already suffering from hunger and poverty the most.

For years, violent conflicts in the country itself, and in neighboring countries, have been causing massive refugee movements. Niger is completely overwhelmed with providing for its own population plus taking care of the refugees. Over four million people are dependent on humanitarian aid, and with the current crisis, this need is constantly rising. But even though the situation in the country is precarious, we are continuing our work. Together with our local partners, we are distributing food, seeds and tools for agricultural production. We are setting up feed banks to be able to feed livestock in times of need. And we provide cash so that particularly destitute families can cover their daily food requirements. At this time, our support is more crucial than ever.



Niger and Sudan are currently in the grip of violent crises – both are countries in which Welthungerhilfe is active. Our colleagues on the ground provide an overview of the situation and our work.

Sudan

In April 2023, fighting broke out between the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Since then, the number of deaths and injuries has risen steadily. The economy has largely collapsed and people lack food, water, medicine and everyday necessities. The energy and water supply is unstable and the prices of goods have risen dramatically. Shadrack Mutiso, Welthungerhilfe's program manager in Sudan, describes the situation.

Armed conflicts and social tensions between the government, rebels and ethnic groups have long been a burden on life in Sudan. As a result of the current fighting, around 5.5 million Sudanese have been forced to leave their homes and have been refugees since April. The majority of them are seeking shelter in other regions of the country, while an estimated one

million have crossed the borders to neighboring countries such as the Central African Republic, Ethiopia or South Sudan.

Because of the precarious security situation, Welthungerhilfe initially suspended all its work in Sudan, but we are now able to resume some of our activities. With financial support from the German Federal Foreign Office, we are providing emergency accommodation, water and hygiene products in the east of the country, where the security situation is relatively stable. In the north-east of the Central African Republic, we are also providing refugees from Sudan with emergency accommodation and hygiene products. With the situation deteriorating, especially people who are fleeing urgently need humanitarian aid.

▮ Shadrack Mutiso is relieved that Welthungerhilfe can resume its activities in Sudan.

WHEN COPING STRATEGIES NO LONGER WORK

✓ An alarming number of children are showing signs of malnutrition.

There has been a drought in Kenya for three years now and five rainy seasons in a row have failed. For pastoralist families in the north of the country, these are life-threatening conditions. There is not enough water, neither for the people nor for their livestock.

By Richard Blane

The pastoralist communities of northern Kenya that Welthungerhilfe works with, have managed to adapt well to the conditions in their homeland. When a period of drought sets in, they move their cattle from whichever dry area they are in to one where it has rained and there are better grazing lands. However, if too little rain falls for several years in a row, the existing coping strategies no longer work and an entire region faces massive suffering.

Shallow wells and reservoirs dry up, herders have to walk for miles to find drinking water for their families and livestock, and the few existing fertile grazing areas cannot provide enough fodder for both the resident and nomadic communities. The consequences are dramatic: when the animals no longer have enough food and water, their health deteriorates. They lose weight and become more susceptible to disease, and many no longer produce milk, an important source of nourishment for young children.

Not all droughts are the same. In some too dry years, a bit of rain does fall at the right time, thus allowing for a fairly decent harvest. Sometimes, it rains briefly, but not during the time window required for farming. Farming families can neither plan nor produce effectively, and many lose everything they invested. Worst of all are extensive droughts, which drag people into a downward spiral of scarcity and distress – like the ongoing one in the Horn of Africa. Almost all areas of the pastoralists' lives are affected. There are hardly any weddings anymore, because families no longer have the cattle they need for the dowry. On the other hand, desperation leads to underage girls being married off so that the household has one less member to feed. Most children have to leave school in order to help with daily chores such as collecting water and firewood.



“**We cannot make the rain fall – but we can support people so that they can move through this very difficult time more easily.**”

Both now require more time because they are harder to find. There is also a lack of money for school fees, books and exercise books. A school director in the village of Burgabo in the Marsabit district tells us that those children who still come to school have difficulty concentrating: “They are tired and weak. You can tell that they had no breakfast in the morning. There is so much dust in the dry air that all the children are constantly coughing.” He also reports that there are always dead animals lying near the school – sheep and goats, but also donkeys and a camel, even though the latter are the ones best able to withstand the drought.

In Burgabo, a young mother tells us that she has to pay a motorcyclist to bring them water from a distant well because her donkeys have died. In the village of Basele, we see a cow lying down near a house, because it is too weak to keep standing. Its owners say that she

will probably never get up again. For these pastoralist communities, who have such a strong emotional bond with their livestock, it is incredibly difficult to see their animals suffer, to watch how their herds are slowly perishing right in front of their eyes, all their modest wealth disappearing.

Burgabo lies on a rocky plain in the scorching heat. As you approach the village, you come across a small infirmary. Mothers are waiting in front of it with their babies. From the two health workers, we find out that the increasing number of malnourished mothers and children in northern Kenya has already reached emergency levels in several districts. In the village of Locheripetet in the Turkana region, we hear that a middle-aged woman and two four-year-old boys have died of hunger. We can see for ourselves that many people have only wild berries and palm nuts to eat, which have very little nutritional value.

All these people will urgently need humanitarian aid during the coming months. The Kenyan government and other actors on the ground have already taken measures, but these are far from sufficient to meet the enormous needs. Our teams are providing short-term cash assistance to support people quickly. This is valuable aid, covering many basic needs. Families can buy food for themselves, or feed for their livestock, pay school fees or receive medical assistance. In the long term, we and our partners will support communities to invest in climate-resilient agriculture and to construct wells and rainwater collection tanks. We will also assist pastoralist families in finding alternative sources of income if they can no longer keep livestock because of the droughts. We cannot make the rain fall – but we can support people so that they can move through this very difficult time more easily.

Richard Blane is Welthungerhilfe's project manager in Kenya.



✓ It is becoming increasingly difficult for pastoral families to find water for their herds





FLOATING VEGETABLE GARDENS

People in Bangladesh are used to floods, they have always lived with them. The country lies just above sea level with many rivers running through it, which create both fertile fields but also regularly cause floods. Last summer, the monsoon rains were so heavy that they brought on the worst damage in years. A Welthungerhilfe project supports families in adapting their farming methods to the conditions of the progressing climate change.

By Juliane Last

From the flooded meadows, Naharun Begum herds her flock of ducks back into the coop. The water is still high. Naharun's family lives in a simple house made of corrugated iron in the village of Ronshi in north-eastern Bangladesh. "We have rebuilt the house," the 42-year-old says. "The flood last June damaged it badly

^ The vegetable beds protect the crops during floods and can also be planted when the water is high.

v Duck farming offers great new income opportunities.



➤ Grown in bags, plants require significantly less water.

and washed away all our possessions, including our rice crop.” The family used to rely solely on growing rice, like most families in the area. Whenever the crop was lost to recurring floods or pests, they were left with nothing. “We were starving,” Naharun recounts. She and her husband would then work as day laborers on and off, without any securities.

This situation has now improved, because a Welthungerhilfe project that the organization runs together with its local partner Friends in Village Development Bangladesh, offers alternatives to the current agricultural system to the inhabitants of the Santiganj region. With these, they also have the chance to develop more resilience towards the challenges of climate change. Duck farming is one example. Seven families form a group and start with ten ducks and one drake, which they receive from the project team. The participants learn about the best feed to use and how the coop should be set up so that the animals stay healthy and lay as many eggs as possible.

“Selling the ducks and eggs enables us to make a living. Without this, we could not survive,” Naharun reports. Each duck lays up to 150 eggs a year. The families eat some of them themselves, and sell the rest at the local market, where they receive the equivalent of about 15 cents per piece. The next goal is to sell the eggs in the city, where they can get almost twice as much for each egg.

In order to adapt their agriculture to the climatic conditions, the inhabitants have also set up Climate Field Schools with the support of our teams. In total, there are now schools like that in 103 villages in the Santiganj region. Families grow vegetables in communal fields, learn how to optimize cultivation and pass on their knowledge to other interested parties. Aleya Begum is one of the agricultural community advisors: “We meet four times a month and discuss, for example, how to grow vegetables in bags or herbs in buckets. That saves soil and water. And if a flood threatens, the containers can be moved to safer locations.”

Often, the fields remain under water for a long time after a flood and cannot be used. A solution has been found for this too – ‘floating gardens.’ Mud and soil are



piled onto a bamboo frame and several types of seeds are brought out, such as red amaranth, water spinach, beans or bottle gourd. So the vegetable bed floats on the water and that way – even when there is flooding – the families do not lose everything they have grown. They can harvest vegetables, provide for themselves and, depending on the situation, still sell some at the market.

“A big advantage of our vegetables is that we grow them without using any chemicals. So many other products on the market are loaded with them. We eat healthy, and we sell healthy,” says Aleya Begum. “About the money, the women can decide themselves and do not have to ask their husbands. They use it to pay for their children’s education, for example.” Interest from retailers and grocery stores in the region in organic vegetables, rice, fruit, duck meat and duck eggs is high. The project also raises awareness of climate-neutral, organic foods, especially among consumers in the cities.

The project is also providing greater security in other sectors. Three agricultural service centers issue early warnings of weather extremes and offer guidance on market prices and cultivation issues. 100 microenterprises have joined together to form communities, increasing their competitiveness. For the families, this is more important than ever at a time when the consequences of the flood are still lingering and the cost of living has risen enormously.

Juliane Last works with the Welthungerhilfe team in Berlin and visited the project in Bangladesh in August 2022.





HUNGRY FOR LIFE

> First, Latisha figured out how to effectively grow vegetables herself, now she is training other young people to do the same.



735 million people suffer from hunger around the world, including a disproportionate number of young people, predominantly in countries of the global South. One-fifth of the world’s youth were neither in school nor in any kind of formal education or training in 2022. At the same time, the potential of the young generation to make a lasting difference is enormous. In its projects, Welthungerhilfe works to tap and strengthen this potential. A life without hunger means more than “just” having something to eat. It is about a better future for each individual, for their families, their communities, their country. The following stories portray how much of a difference it can make to provide education and employment.

By Karin Grunewald

In her village in western Uganda, Beatrice, who can neither read nor write, is training to become a solar panel installer. On the edge of Nepal’s Bardia National Park, Deviram, who was married at age 15 and has two children, used to keep three goats and has now become the region’s most successful goat farmer. In Tajikistan, Parviz is successfully growing fruits and vegetables. The days when he searched for work in Russia, in order to be able to send a little money back home, are definitely over.

Beatrice, Deviram and Parviz live on different continents in very different cultures, separated by thousands of kilometers, yet they have a lot in common. They are three of a total of over one billion young people worldwide, and like everyone else, they have hopes, dreams and ideas. They also give hope to their villages and countries that they were born into, unable to choose the conditions. Poverty, food insecurity and too few opportunities for education have always been part of their lives. Additionally, devastating natural disasters and wars have been exacerbating a negative cycle that often cannot be broken without support.

What these three young people also have in common is that they – like thousands of others like them – have had the chance to participate in Welthungerhilfe projects, which have been making a major difference in their lives. There are, for example, the Green Colleges in western Uganda, which offer young people from disadvantaged backgrounds the chance to train in a ‘green’ and sustainable profession, i.e. in agriculture, solar technology, food processing or ecotourism. 78 percent of Uganda’s population is under 30 years old. The youth unemployment rate is at more than 70 percent, far from the global average of 18.4 percent. The same applies to the average income of 840 U.S. dollars – per year.

20-year-old Beatrice and 23-year-old Cypriano come from Fort Portal, which at 1,500 meters above sea level, surrounded by green mountains, is becoming a



popular tourist destination for hikers. For the two young people, however, every day is about being able to make a living. “My biggest fear was always that I would not be able to finish school,” Cypriano says. But when his father died, that is exactly what happened. No one could pay his school fees anymore when Cypriano was only in sixth grade.

Beatrice never went to school. Her parents thought it was unnecessary. She worked around the house and occasionally sold vegetables at the market. Learning a trade, she thought, was impossible without schooling anyway. But one morning, that changed abruptly. “I was just in the kitchen when I heard on the radio that Welthungerhilfe was offering apprenticeships in our region,” she says. “Neither school-qualifications nor fees were necessary for this, just motivation” – something she certainly has.

Today, Beatrice and Cypriano assemble solar units, install them and know how they supply a house with electricity. The very hands-on training takes six months; for other professions, the duration varies. Together with its local partners, Welthungerhilfe will have provided training in ecological and sustainable activities for around 2,500 young people by 2026. They grow vegetables, breed fish, weave baskets, and build energy-saving stoves – becoming ‘ecopreneurs,’ entrepreneurs in environmentally friendly professions. The project is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. At the end of the training, there is a two-month internship and start-up assistance for self-employment.

In addition to offering the young people a chance for a better life, their awareness of the environment is also improved. “We often cut down trees to heat and to run our stoves, but solar energy is the solution for the future,” Cypriano says. For Beatrice, it is also about some-

thing else. “I chose this job because it seemed like a typical male profession,” she says with a smile. “I wanted to change that.” Just under half of the young people in the project are women.

Another Welthungerhilfe program – Skill Up! – also aims to help young people earn a decent income through employment and entrepreneurship. Welthungerhilfe is implementing it in several stages in eleven countries between 2019 and 2026, working to improve young people’s quality of life and that of their families and communities. A total of 15,000 young men and women are taking part: beekeepers in Iraq, experts in photovoltaics in Malawi, seamstresses in Nepal – there is a long list of successful examples.

The focus is always on the various levels of education, starting with professional knowledge and technical skills. For Deviram and his goat farm in Nepal, learning about innovations and technology was crucial to making his farm efficient and productive. “I now use much better feeding techniques, a system to monitor the health of my goats, and I can make my decisions based on data,” he says.

Bhawana (25) found out how growing local produce in her Nepalese community of Runtigadhi can combat malnutrition and undernourishment. Before that, she did not even know what vitamins were. In many other Welthungerhilfe projects around the world, young people are learning how to produce healthy and climate-adapted food – immediately and effectively combating hunger.

In addition to professional knowledge, one also needs entrepreneurial skills and a good sense for business ideas that are going to work, in order to be successfully self-employed. Any work for the young people is of no use for them, if they cannot make enough money with it. They need the right skills to be able to become committed and innovative in a promising way. They need to be able to set up small businesses that pay off and for whose products or services there is enough demand.

At the age of 19, Raheal has already tried several approaches. Initially, she sold sugar cane from a market stall in Katadoba, Uganda – making a loss, as she was disappointed to discover. “By now, I know how to draw up a business plan,” she says. After training at a Green College as a juice maker, she plans to open a shop in town where she will be selling her juice in the morning and frying cassava and chips in the evening. “I’m convinced that these two offers will complement each other well,” she says.

◀ Beatrice (m.) has trained how to assemble and install solar cells – a job with a future.





⤴ Thanks to Deviram's newly acquired knowledge, his goats are healthier and his farm is more profitable.

⤴ After a failed attempt at selling sugar cane, Racheal (left) is now a self-employed juice maker.

Also Latisha is only 19 when she graduates from a Green College with a degree in vegetable gardening. Her home is in the Uganda Crater Lakes region, which is also an area with tourist hotels. She now grows high-quality organic vegetables, such as spinach, cucumbers, green onions and strawberries, and sells them to the hotels.

It is never just the young people themselves who benefit from their newly acquired skills. To begin with, they are able to better feed their families with their income. Almost always, however, something bigger is triggered that begins to take on a life of its own. Latisha now trains other young people in vegetable cultivation, Racheal saves part of her profits every day for further qualifications to teach juice-making herself, and Bhwana has convinced first her mother-in-law and then her entire village of the importance of green vegetables.

Deviram, the goat farmer, wants to attend agricultural fairs and conferences to exchange knowledge and ideas. For his village, he has long been a role model and source of inspiration. With their own education and employment, the young people become change agents who can break the negative cycles and bring about sustainable improvements. They can bring knowledge and skills, as well as hope and courage, to their families, their communities, and beyond. This is an invaluable asset,



⤴ In Tajikistan, becoming beekeepers is promising Mahrubin (left) and Marina a good income.

⤴ In her home country Nepal, Nima trains women in healthy eating and educates them about how disadvantaged families can benefit from government programs.

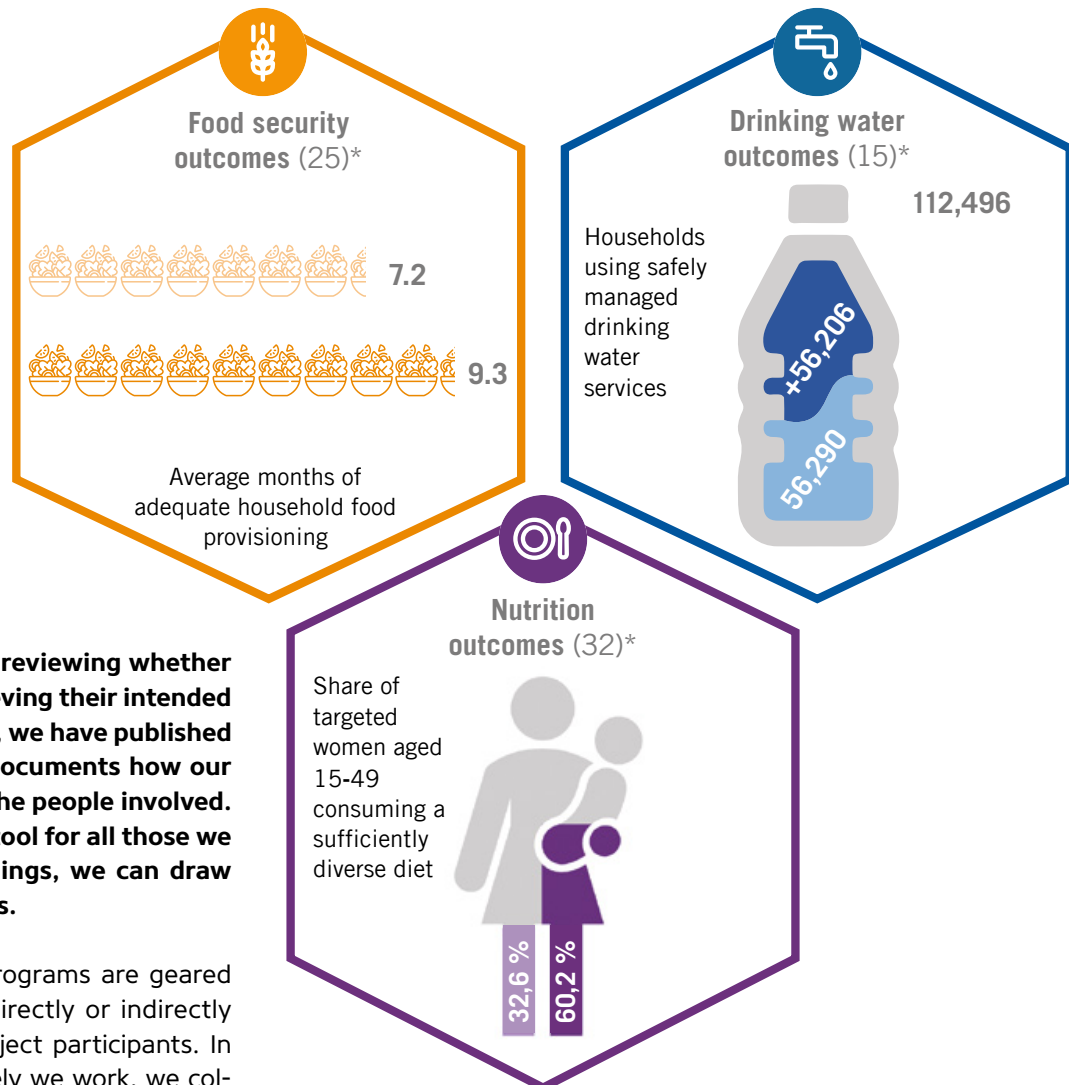
especially in rural areas, where many young people are leaving because of their complete lack of perspective there, seeking work in cities or even other countries.

Ultimately, all this not only changes the living conditions but also the people themselves. Employment gives them a sense of self-empowerment and self-confidence, increasing their commitment and confidence to develop themselves, their small business and the world – and, last but not least, these changes bring something like happiness. “Finally, I’m going to get my high school diploma,” says solar installer Cypriano. “I want to study something related to the environment and climate change later on.” His ‘colleague’ Beatrice also wants to learn how to read and write. “Since the training, everything has changed,” she says. “Before, I worked at home, with little confidence and no perspective. Now I have a job. Who knows what else the future holds – it is full of surprises.” Latisha sums up: “For me, it is like a dream come true.”

Karin Grunewald is a freelance journalist in Cologne.



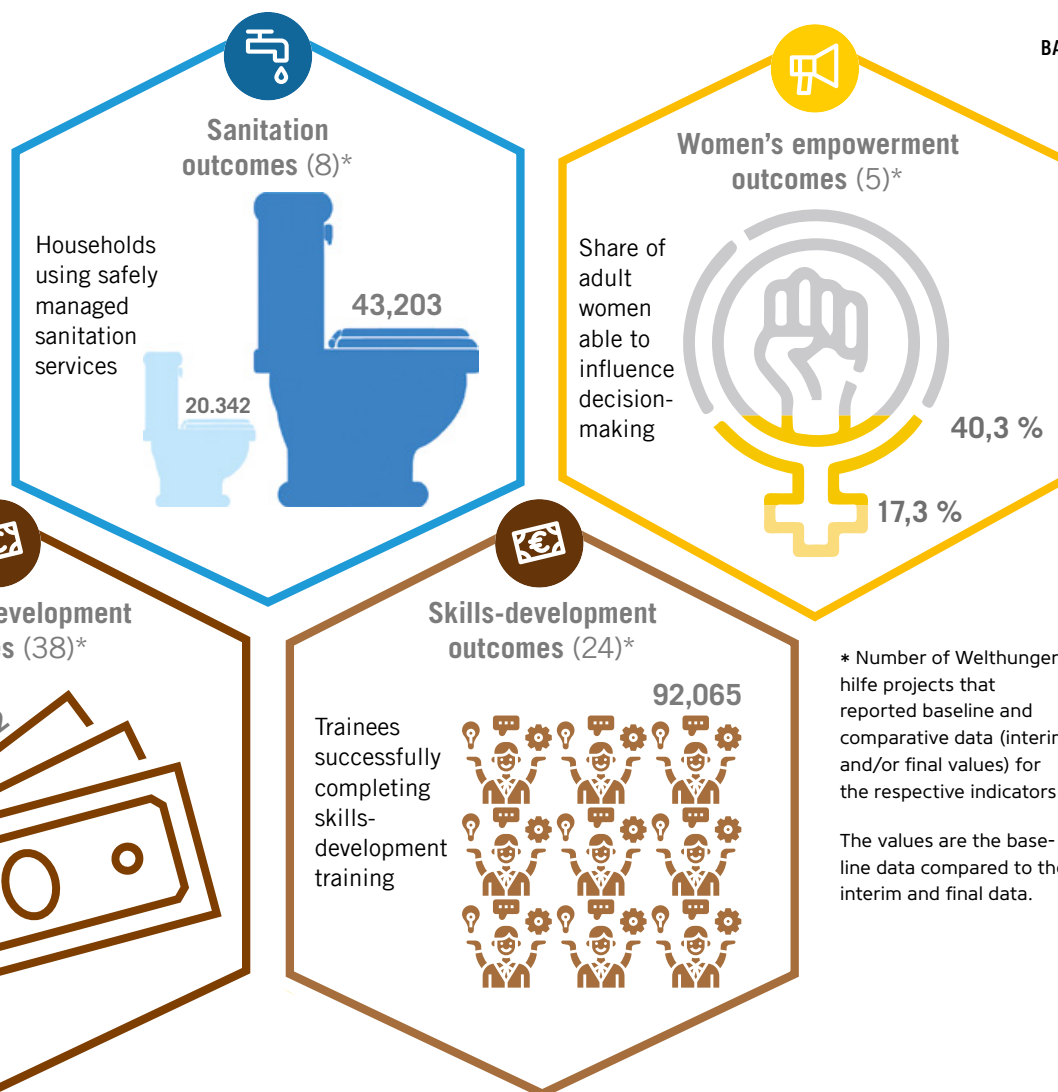
MEASURING IMPACT AND BETTER UNDERSTANDING “WHY”



Welthungerhilfe is constantly reviewing whether and how our projects are achieving their intended impact. Now, for the first time, we have published a report that systematically documents how our work is changing the lives of the people involved. It serves as an accountability tool for all those we work with, and from the findings, we can draw conclusions for future projects.

All of our projects and programs are geared towards changes that directly or indirectly improve the lives of project participants. In order to measure how effectively we work, we collect quantitative and qualitative data using various methods. For the impact report, we focused on the qualitative results in selected projects worldwide. The aim is to better understand the “why” behind the successes and sometimes failures and to learn from them. Wherever possible, we apply seven success indicators that enable us to measure impact. We have evaluated these indicators and can see an overall positive trend for all seven of them (see graphic). The results are based on 147 sets of data with available baseline and comparative data (interim and final values) from projects that we implemented between 2014 and 2021.

Given the complexity of our operating environment, it is sometimes difficult to assess which changes have been achieved, for whom and how, and what our contribution has been. In great detail, the 52-page impact report explains the different methods, approaches and instruments that have led to the evaluation results. These include so-called focus groups, in which participants from the village communities discuss progress and also their thoughts on what could be improved. In addition to the scientific background and the project examples, the report also highlights the perspectives of those involved.



Sufficient Food

The number of months per year in which households participating in our food security projects had adequate supplies of food, increased from an average of 7.2 to 9.3 months over the course of the 25 projects with available baseline and comparison data.

Safe Drinking Water Supplies

The number of households that were reliably supplied with clean drinking water rose by 99.9 percent, from 56,290 to 112,496 households, over the course of 15 drinking water supply projects.

Minimum Food Diversity

The proportion of women aged 15 to 49 with at least minimal diversity in their diet rose from 32.6 percent to 60.2 percent over the course of 32 projects.

Safe Sanitation

In eight sanitation projects, the number of households using safe sanitation increased from 20,342 to 43,203 households.

Participation in Decision-making Processes

As a result of five gender equality projects, the proportion of women who stated that they were able to influence decision-making processes at local level increased from 17.3 percent to 40.3 percent.

Higher Incomes

Thanks to 38 projects that contributed to economic development, 241,852 families were able to increase their income.

Vocational Training

92,065 participants successfully completed the vocational training courses that were conducted as part of 24 qualification projects.



You can download the report at <https://www.welthungerhilfe.org/our-work/our-impact>

SPEAKING ABOUT THE INEXPRESSIBLE

↳ The protected group helps women to speak openly about traumatic experiences

Since the year 2000, an ongoing conflict in northern Ethiopia has been having cruel consequences especially for women and girls. Many of them experience violence, often rape, with serious physical effects. Children, pregnant women and the elderly can also become random victims. They usually do not access healthcare facilities out of shame or because they lack the financial resources.

By Fasika Asrat

It's a relief to share things that I've kept to myself for so long," says Kedo.

Welthungerhilfe set up this protected space in collaboration with the Ethiopian organization MCMIDO and with financial support from the German Federal Foreign Office. Here, a total of 75 women speak about what they have gone through and had to endure: sexual abuse and other forms of violence. Many are traumatized and many have contracted sexually transmitted diseases, including Kedo: "I kept it to myself because I was afraid of being excluded

from the community. But when I came here and found out that others were also affected, I gratefully accepted the offer of medical treatment. I'm feeling better now." The project gave sick or injured women access to medical care at the nearby health center or, depending on the severity of the case, at a hospital further away. They also received hygiene products such as soap, sanitary napkins and underwear.

The project has ended, but the women continue to meet and the space remains available for them. They not only talk about violence or violent traditional practices such as circumcision, they also campaign for change. The Welthungerhilfe project has made it possible for them to participate in training sessions together with representatives of the local government and community as well as religious leaders. They have been discussing the issue of gender-based violence and how to take action against it. This is already having an impact. Hawa, who heads the women's group, reports: "We get involved in community meetings and have, for example, managed to bring cases of abuse to court in cooperation with the local police. This used to be completely taboo. We are still a long way from achieving any substantial change, but we are determined to keep pushing for it."

der-based violence and how to take action against it. This is already having an impact. Hawa, who heads the women's group, reports: "We get involved in community meetings and have, for example, managed to bring cases of abuse to court in cooperation with the local police. This used to be completely taboo. We are still a long way from achieving any substantial change, but we are determined to keep pushing for it."

* The name has been changed



Those who are affected by such violence often remain alone with their physical and psychological trauma. A Welthungerhilfe project in the Amhara region has provided support for them, including a space where women and girls can meet in a protected atmosphere. One of them is 37-year-old Kedo* from South Wello. She never misses any of the meetings that the women come together for every Sunday. Like many others here, Kedo was abused by military forces. "What I went through during the war is unimaginable and too horrible to put into words. But knowing that I'm not the only one has helped me to talk about it with my friends.

Fasika Asrat works with the Welthungerhilfe team in Ethiopia



STARTING OVER DESPITE OBSTACLES

Evin Juno Badal had been living in a village in Iraq's Sinjar Mountains when the so-called Islamic State attacked the region in 2014. Evin and her family had to flee. Now she is back home and Welthungerhilfe is supporting her to start over.

By Rozita Rebwar

With only a small supply of water and food, Evin's family fled to the Sinjar Mountains and from there on to the Syrian border where they settled into a camp in the region of Kurdistan. "It was terrible in the mountains and on the long walk, we were so scared. But life in the camp was just as hard," says Evin.

After a year in the camp, Evin got married and returned to Sinjar with her husband to live with her parents-in-law. "We were so full of hope to start over, but then found ourselves returning to a destroyed house and a ruined farm," says Evin. Despite all the difficulties, however, they managed to rebuild the house and their fig farm, which only yielded very little at first.

Evin has been familiar with farming ever since she was a child: "One of my earliest memories is planting tomatoes on our farm with my mother. Now I grow them for my children." Her son Fawaz is three years old and her daughter Ella is seven months old. "I want my children to lead a healthy life and to be able to provide for themselves later on. I will make sure to look after their health and their education."

This is one of the reasons why the young woman decided to participate in a Welthungerhilfe agricultural

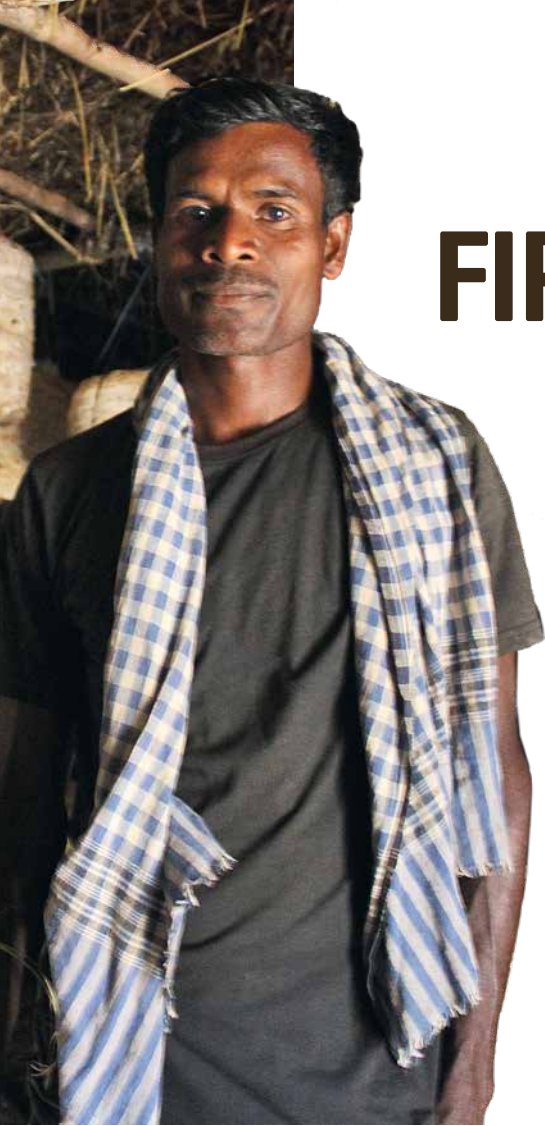
project for returning families. The project is supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. In 2021, Evin was equipped with a small greenhouse and the necessary tools. She used it to grow herbs, but after a while the greenhouse's foil tore due to extreme weather and the harvest was destroyed. Evin did not give up, and the following year she received seeds and materials to start over. "I was glad to receive further support. Now herbs and vegetables are growing here," says Evin happily.

Evin enjoys working on the small farm, above all because her farming means she can now help provide for her family, who had been left with nothing just two years earlier. She is still learning and trying out new things. "Activities like this project help young people like us to realize their dreams. They are great initiatives and we hope that they will continue." Evin is now planning to expand her cultivation: with strawberries, potatoes and radishes.



^ Evin Juno Badal wants to make sure her son becomes familiar with agriculture early on.





FIRST A TRAINER THEN A MODEL FARMER

The ideal temperature to grow mushrooms is between 17 and 25 degrees Celsius – so mushroom cultivation in Malkangiri in India does not seem all that promising. The average summer temperature here reaches up to 47 degrees Celsius. However, small-scale farmer Guru Macha does manage to grow mushrooms here successfully, and he is not keeping this a secret but is sharing his knowledge widely with others.

By Isha Banerjee

Guru Macha was already working in sustainable agriculture when he took part in a Welthungerhilfe project in the district of Malkangiri in the Indian state of Odisha. One of the project's goals was to reach state-trained agricultural community advisors like him, in order to further qualify them, inform them about new methods and to deepen their knowledge. As an advisor, Guru Macha has been training local farming families, especially in remote villages – and as his level of knowledge increases, so do their chances of achieving better yields and harvests.

The living conditions in Malkangiri are extremely poor. In the years from 2000 to 2016, repeated clashes between a Maoist insurgency movement and Indian paramilitaries created constant challenges for the people living here. Poverty and fear were ubiquitous during this period, and public assistance hardly reached people. The backlog of development and investments is still obvious and visible in many areas, for example in agriculture, which also suffers from climatic changes such as long periods of drought.

Following the project that Guru Macha participated in, there was another one designed to support the families with Sustainable Integrated Farming Systems, or SIFS for short. This concept stands for a variety of ways to grow crops more effectively, protect resources and

reduce farming risks. By growing a variety of crops that have different requirements and growing seasons, for example, you can avoid losing everything, even if one crop yields poorly because of weather extremes or pest infestations.

It was precisely this idea that stayed with Guru Macha during his training: not to make his income dependent on only one activity. One possible source of income he found out about was mushroom cultivation, and he decided to give it a try. “I laughed at the idea at first. How could it work in temperatures as high as ours? But when I understood the concept and the method, I started to believe in it,” says Guru Macha.

In a low-ceilinged hut made entirely of straw, one can find the proof of his success. It is pitch dark and the temperature remains at 20 degrees Celsius at all times – an ideal temperature for growing the robust local mushroom variety “Dhinga.” The walls are made of densely packed wheat stalks, which are an inexpensive and effective way of insulating and cooling. Inside the shed, plastic sacks filled with straw hang from three-tiered rows of bamboo, sprouting mushrooms. “That’s all you need to grow mushrooms. A packet of locally available mushrooms, straw from local farms and the knowledge how to turn that into something productive,” says Guru Macha with a smile.



◀ Guru Macha's mushrooms are thriving.

✓ The temperatures in the insulated straw hut are ideal for their growth.

With his mushrooms, the small-scale farmer earns a net profit of the equivalent of 500 euros per season, while his investment amounts to around 55 euros. "As soon as the sacks stop producing mushrooms, I have to wait until the winter and then start the process again. The monsoon season is not a good time of the year for cultivation, because the straw won't dry and will start to grow mold." His work is well worth the effort, because mushrooms are a natural source of protein, and Guru Macha enjoys them on the daily menu of his family. "It's important to eat a varied diet. Thanks to my farm, we can eat everything from green leafy vegetables to millet and mushrooms. What we don't use ourselves, we sell later. Of course, I also grow rice to be on the safe side," says Guru Macha.

Today, Guru Macha no longer passes on his knowledge to other farming families as a theoretical advisor, but instead demonstrates the agricultural concept himself. As a so-called model farmer, he encourages others to try out new methods too, and to learn from him.



Isha Banerjee works with the Welthungerhilfe team in India and met Guru Macha during a project visit in April 2023.



INNOVATIONS FOR #ZEROHUNGER

✓ Mobile gardens give hope to people living in refugee camps.

Every day, together with the people in the project countries, our teams work tirelessly to solve problems and master challenges. This often gives rise to innovative and creative ideas. In order to provide space for their development, Welthungerhilfe has created an ‘Innovation Lab.’ New approaches are developed here in exchange with other teams around the world. Every year, a jury selects the best proposals: in 2021, an idea revolving around ‘mobile gardens’ won and is now undergoing its test phase. In 2022, two ideas shared first place.

Globally, more than 100 million people are currently fleeing wars and disasters. Families who were forced to flee their homes to find shelter in new places often share a common problem: they live in cramped conditions in camps or temporary shelters and are often unable to regularly provide enough food for themselves and their families. But many of them actually come from an agricultural background and know very well how to grow food. They just no longer have the required land or irrigation facilities. So Welthungerhilfe teams in Sudan and Bangladesh asked themselves:

“What could a solution for this problem look like?” Both countries are hosts to the largest refugee camps in the world.

The teams started by first working out the idea: a vertical mobile garden. Then, using locally available materials, they constructed a prototype that makes it possible to produce food efficiently and in a very small space, requiring very little water. Up to six plant levels can be arranged in a pyramid shape on a wheeled wooden cart, similar to a wheelbarrow. Currently, cut-open plastic bottles connected by water hoses serve as planters. Carrots, tomatoes, zucchini or lettuce can grow here and enrich families’ daily meals. Clay stones act as a refrigerator to store the harvest – without any electricity at all.

“Especially in refugee camps, malnutrition and undernourishment are extremely widespread. Mobile gardens could be an ideal supplier of healthy food here. Ever since the idea won the Innovation Award, the teams have been working with us to further develop and optimize it. The outcome is completely open,” says Florian

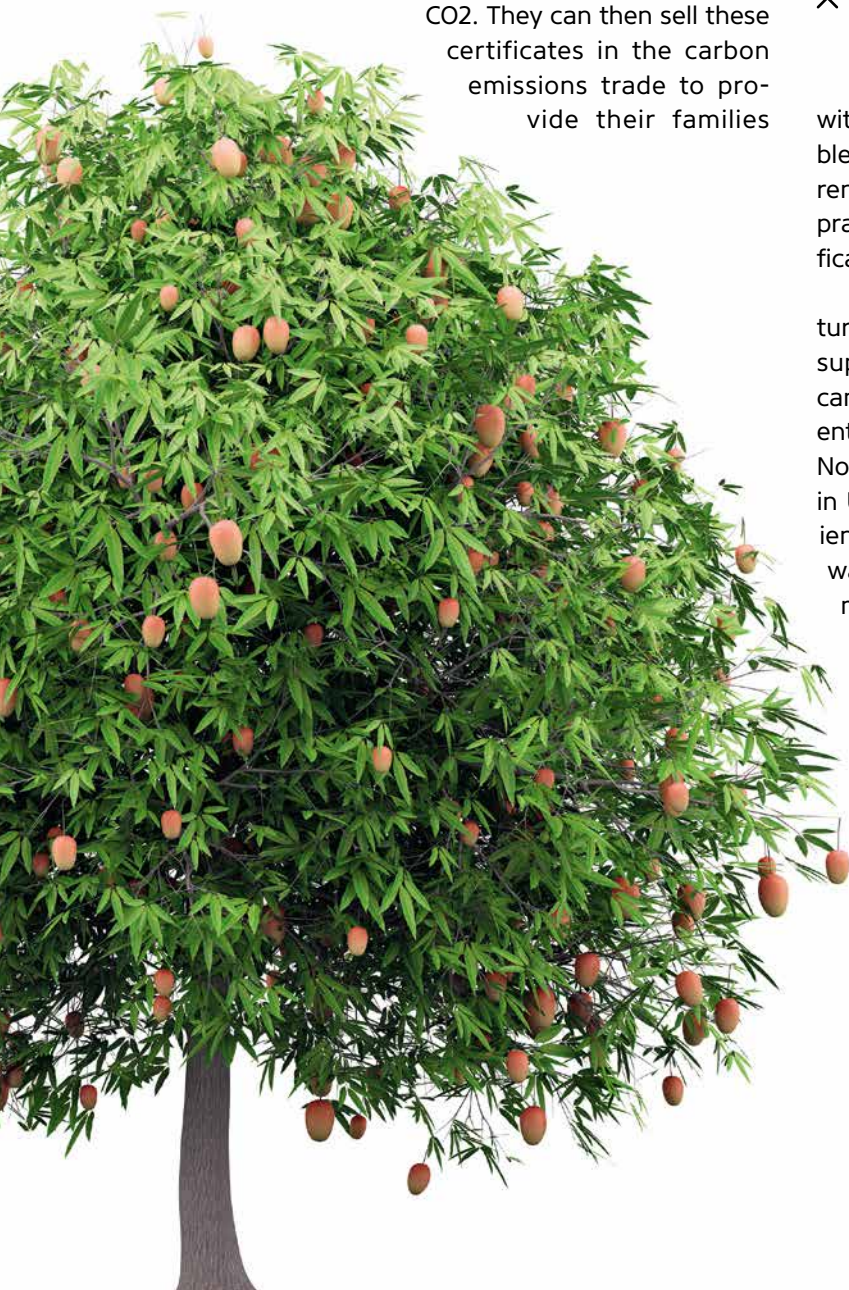


➤ Planting fruit trees has two effects: they absorb CO₂ and provide healthy fruits, such as mangoes.



Landorff, head of Welthungerhilfe's Innovation team. Currently, the mobile gardens' suitability for everyday use is being tested in the large refugee camps of Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh. If this works out, the concept could be employed in other countries as well. In November 2022, the idea attracted additional attention: Out of 600 entries from 75 countries, the mobile garden idea won one of the 'Seed Grant' awards from the internationally active Institute of Food Technologists.

The 2022 Innovation Award went to two ideas that both scored equally well. One of them was developed in Haiti and Mali, where long periods of drought and dryness have been making life difficult for smallholder families. The teams from both countries therefore developed their 'Smiling Nature' idea. It involves communities planting trees that feature a high carbon sequestration and utility (like fruit trees) using a water-saving method. In return, and as a motivation for their contribution, the communities can collect carbon credits – certificates equivalent to the reduction or avoidance of one ton of CO₂. They can then sell these certificates in the carbon emissions trade to provide their families



^ The solar-powered water pump is made from recycled materials.

with a small income. This and also the trees' fruits enables them to eat a more varied diet. The teams are currently fine-tuning the concept so that it can be put into practice in several projects. However, particularly certification is a tricky and demanding endeavor.

Also in Uganda, droughts regularly reduce agricultural yields, and incomes are often barely sufficient to support families. Here, the innovative country team came up with a solar-powered water pump made almost entirely of recycled materials. They call their idea 'Nature Now' and want to use it to support smallholder farmers in Uganda to increase their productivity and their resilience to climate change. The pump is made of plastic waste, scrap metal, and even the motor is recycled. This makes the pump affordable and, thanks to a solar panel, independent of electricity or gasoline. A prototype is already working reliably and is now being prepared for replication and widespread use.

"Innovation means trial and error and also putting up with the fact that maybe some things don't work out as quickly as you want or don't produce the result you're hoping for," explains Florian Landorff. "The test phase will show what happens next with these ideas. And the ones who will primarily be deciding this will be the users."





THE RIGHT TO FOOD, LAND AND A FUTURE

^ More regional markets, like the one in Huaracco in Peru, are supposed to establish themselves in urban areas of Peru and Bolivia.

In Peru and Bolivia, Welthungerhilfe works closely with national and local partners to support indigenous communities, smallholder farming families and vulnerable urban communities at risk of poverty. The focus of all activities is on demanding their right to food and land, and to promote the transition towards fairer and more sustainable food systems. These communities have hardly profited from the economic progress that has taken place in both countries in recent years.

By Susanna Daag

Until the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, the South American countries of Peru and Bolivia were experiencing substantial economic progress. Both are considered middle-income countries,

but the gap between rich and poor is widening. The pandemic has made structural deficits even more apparent, increasing poverty and food insecurity. And while the export of natural resources and the products of agricultural monocultures is flourishing, valuable ecosystems such as the Amazon rainforest and the Andean moorlands are disappearing to make way for soy-, palm oil- or avocado plantations.

The deforestation of the Amazon rainforest through legal and illegal mining, logging and agriculture is not only one of the biggest causes of carbon dioxide emissions worldwide, but also affects the livelihoods of indigenous communities and small-scale farming families. They are losing their land and their income. Many seek their fortune in the cities, but end up in poverty here too. More and more people are eating mostly cheap, industrially produced and nutrient-poor food. Malnutrition and obesity are the consequences.

Finding Solutions Together Locally

Gabriela Silva coordinates the Bolivian section of a transnational project that focuses on a change towards sustainable food systems. She reports about her particular work situation in Bolivia – and how it fits in with Welthungerhilfe’s strategy.

When I joined the team at the end of 2021, our cooperation with the two Bolivian partners Fundación Alternativas and Cosecha Colectiva had just begun. Welthungerhilfe has its own office in South America in Peru, but in Bolivia we work exclusively through our partners. In order to avoid commuting from Peru all the time, which would not have been good for our finances or for the climate, we did the fol-

lowing: I work at Fundación Alternativas for one year and will then switch to Cosecha Colectiva the following year. By being on site, I can provide ongoing advice on new approaches and methods for the project. Together we can work on solutions effectively and flexibly. In many countries, Welthungerhilfe is increasingly focusing on localization, i.e. strengthening local partners, and the way we work in Bolivia sends a convincing signal in this regard.



“
Change will only
be possible once all
stakeholders are
brought together.”

The governments of both countries have already created a number of important legal and political frameworks to promote sustainable production and access to healthy food. Together with our partners, we support communities to ensure that these laws and programs are put into practice. Change is only possible when all stakeholders are brought to the table. We therefore support local and national platforms, build bridges, strengthen networks and strategic partnerships between regional and international players. After all, the war in Ukraine has shown how closely our food systems are interconnected at a global and local level. Exchanging resources and knowledge is an important cross-cutting task for us in all of our projects. Strengthening civil society is just as crucial, as it plays a decisive role in achieving social justice and sustainably securing the livelihoods of the population.

Alongside national and local partners, Welthungerhilfe is working to counteract this development with a systemic approach. In four transnational projects, we support communities in Bolivia and Peru in claiming their rights, promoting healthy and sustainable nutrition and strengthening political participation. We focus on areas where food insecurity, exclusion and inequality are particularly high. The aim is to create sustainable food systems that can cope with the new challenges that climate change is creating.

More specifically, we support small-scale farming families on the outskirts of metropolitan areas in converting to agroecological cultivation. We also work to strengthen their local distribution channels, for example through government programs such as school meals and locally established markets. This also gives the urban population access to freshly harvested and healthy products. In the Amazon region, we support indigenous communities in joining forces against illegal land grabbing, corruption and violence. We also support forest management with Brazil nuts, which are collected wild in the rainforest and keep the ecosystem intact. Here, too, we work with our partners and the local families to establish distribution channels so that they can generate a solid income.

Susanna Daag heads the Welthungerhilfe office in Peru.





A letter from UKRAINE



Hello everyone,

I am writing to you from Kharkiv Oblast, a region in the east of Ukraine. A few weeks ago, I visited a project there for children living in the midst of war. The destruction was visible everywhere. On a rickety pontoon bridge, our car crossed the Siverskyi Donets, the river that divides the villages on both sides. The main bridge was blown up last March to prevent Russian troops from crossing. For months, many families lived separated on both sides of the river, some on occupied land, the others free but under constant fire. Since September 2022, however, Kharkiv Oblast has been under Ukrainian control again.

The situation is particularly unbearable for children. It is still dangerous to be outdoors, and because of the constant threat, school lessons are only taught online. One of the few opportunities for children to come together are the project's psychologically guided meetings. In the classrooms of a village near the Russian border, we take part in one of those meetings and can observe how the girls and boys come alive during craft activities, while playing table tennis, doing the "turtle dance" or playing "Chinese whispers." These children will never forget what they have experienced. But they can speak about what they have been through and process their traumatic experiences with trained psychologists in a playful way. At various locations, the project takes care of 400 children between the ages of four and 14, supporting them during the crisis.

What I am also told is that blaring sirens often interrupt the sessions. They announce shelling or the take-off of a Russian fighter jet near the border. As soon as the alarm sounds, the children, accompanied by the adults, run as fast as they can to the school shelter. This has become a disturbing routine that has been drilled into them for months. It is damp and dark in the basement, with only the teacher's flashlight providing a little light. The children begin to sing the Ukrainian anthem – a good way to combat fear.

The Ukrainian organization "We Are Brothers, We Are Ukrainians" runs the project in partnership with Welthungerhilfe, Concern Worldwide and CESVI (members of Alliance2015).



Oleksandra Titorova works with the Welthungerhilfe team and its partners in Ukraine.

“Baltic Lights”

At the beginning of March 2023, more than 400 huskies once again lured German TV stars to Usedom, an island off the coast of northeastern Germany, to be part of Germany’s northernmost sled dog race. Bernhardt Bettermann, Gerit Kling, Sana Englund, Erdogan Atalay and Matthias Schloo (from left) also showed real sportsmanship, championing a good cause. Actor and event organizer Till Demtröder (m.) was delighted with the generous support from the company Dr. Loges and the guests and spectators. An amazing 65,000 euros were raised for Welthungerhilfe!



An Opportunity for the Next Generation

After completing a degree in water management, Lusungu Gausi now works in a Welthungerhilfe WASH project (water, sanitation and hygiene) in Dedza, Malawi. The “Agenda for Change” has now chosen her to participate in the six-month “Women for WASH” program. This program brings together experienced mentors and young professionals to develop their technical and personal skills. “This is a great opportunity for me to learn and improve my expertise in the WASH sector,” says a delighted Lusungu Gausi. This is a great success – congratulations!



#ZeroHungerRun

On September 10, 2023, almost 2,400 runners participated in the race against global hunger in the Rheinaue, the biggest park of Bonn, in Germany. A big thank you to all participants for making the day an unforgettable event and for raising an incredible 33,000 euros for our project work!

Mayor of the City of Bonn Katja Dörner (right) and Welthungerhilfe Marketing Director Susanne Fotiadis launched the run. Two social media influencers gave their best in the team relay and had already strongly supported the event on their popular Instagram channel beforehand.



Publication Details

Publisher:

Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e. V.
Friedrich-Ebert-Straße 1,
53173 Bonn, Germany
info@welthungerhilfe.de

Editors:

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Conception and design:

MediaCompany – Agentur für
Kommunikation GmbH

Photos:

Dominik Asbach (p. 27), Karin Desmarowitz (p. 24), Stefanie Glinski (p. 14, 15), Franziska Krug (p. 27 a.), Fabeha Monir (p. 10, 11), Tiler84/stock.adobe.com (p. 22, 23 m.), Welthungerhilfe (p. 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27 m.)

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