HELVETAS

VOICE, INCLUSION & COHESION

Helvetas supports local actors in achieving sustainable systemic change that

- **amplifies the voices of vulnerable communities, migrants and refugees**

- **enhances the space for civil society and the private sector to meaningfully participate in inclusive decision making**

- **strengthens the capacities of public institutions to deliver gender and youth responsive services and to articulate transformative policies for a cohesive society**

ABOUT HELVETAS

Helvetas was founded in 1955 as the first private organization for development cooperation in Switzerland.

It has since grown to become a global nonprofit with sister organizations in the U.S. and Germany. We support projects in 30 countries in Africa, Asia, South America and Eastern Europe.

We are a member of the Alliance2015, a strategic network of eight European non-governmental organizations with an annual programming budget of over €640 million.

For over 65 years, Helvetas has been contributing to efforts to alleviate poverty, working to advance human rights, and fighting injustice across the globe.

HOW WE WORK

Our primary role is to be a temporary facilitator. With our support, key system actors from local communities, public institutions, and civil society work together to identify the causes of system failure and transform those systems to serve as many disadvantaged people as possible.

Our work is guided by thematic expertise (our thinktank, known as Advisory Services), field work (over 370 projects) and policy dialogue (advocating for policy change).
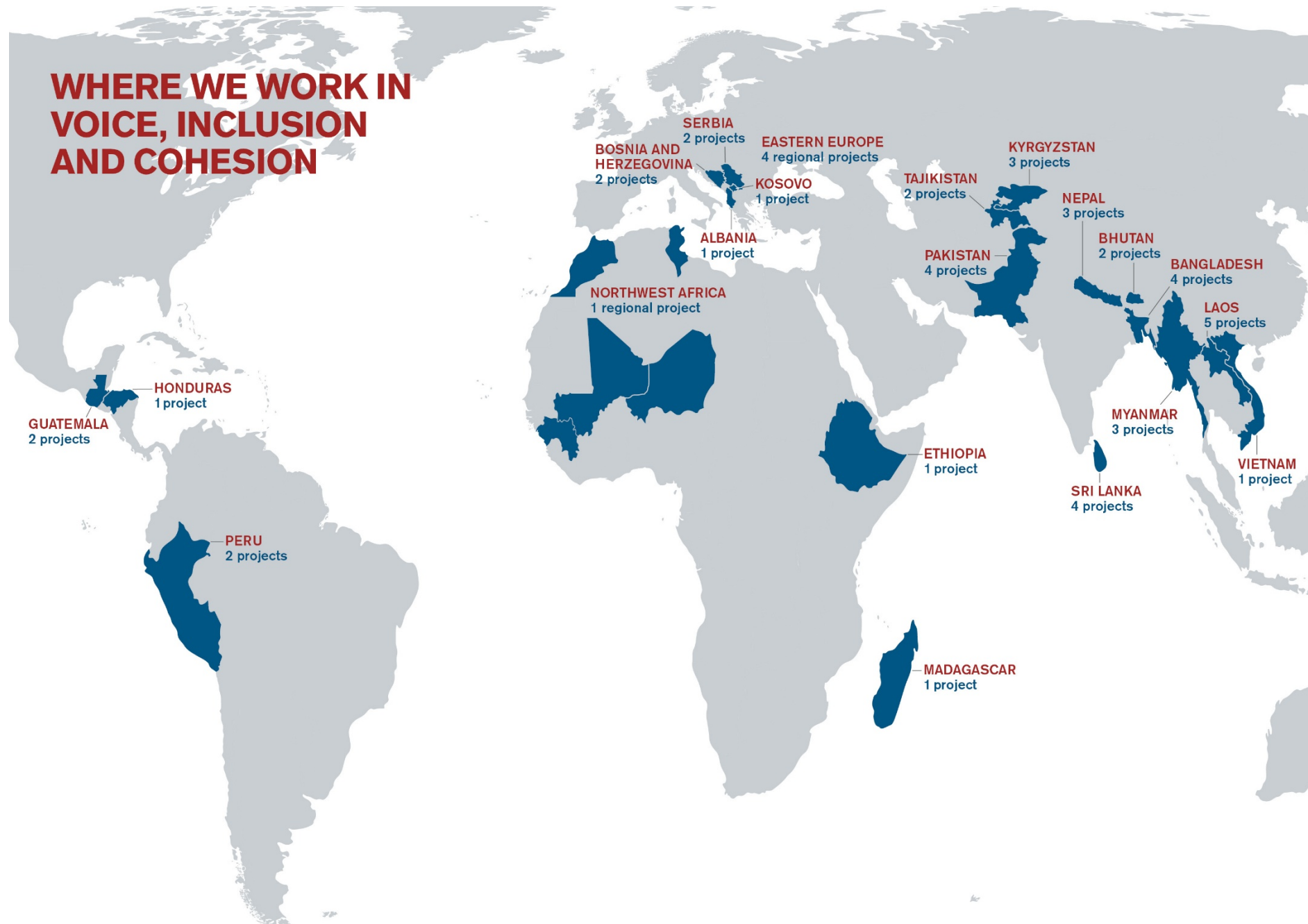
We create synergies through strategic partnerships. Helvetas is a member of 77 professional networks and alliances and works with over 850 local partners to ensure solutions are locally owned.

ABOUT VOICE, INCLUSION & COHESION

All the work we do is driven by the goal of delivering just and sustainable systemic change that transforms the living conditions of the world's most marginalized and disadvantaged people.

Our Approach

Voice, Inclusion and Cohesion work includes three working fields:

Governance & Civic Space: Our aim is to ensure that communities and civil society can claim their rights and meaningfully engage in development and policy processes. To achieve this, we develop the capacity of civil society to wield influence, and for local governments to manage public resources efficiently and transparently.

Conflict transformation: We build cohesive societies where people can live in dignity by fostering peaceful relationships and creating spaces to exchange ideas, prevent radicalization of youth, and constructively resolve conflicts by tackling their root causes and potential drivers.

Migration: We maximize the development benefits of migration and protect the rights of migrant workers and their families by strengthening institutions that work at the interface between governments, migrants, and migrant organizations in the places of origin and destination.

Our Impact

Every year, Helvetas supports up to 420,000 women and men in claiming their civil rights. But the most meaningful measures of our impact are activities that promote sustainable and systemic change. Examples of such impact in 2019 include:

- 238,402 people attended courses at which they learned about their civil rights and/or democracy, decentralized administration, migration and peace-building
- 6,776 civil society organizations strengthened their capacities and working methods
- 1,195 civil society organizations and networks were supported in their advocacy work
- The Open History Project in Myanmar reached 4,227 persons through exhibitions supporting women, men and young people from different ethnic and social groups in creating and promoting mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence
- The Safer Migration Project in Nepal supported the establishment of 39 inter-municipal collaborations between 156 Palikas for the effective and efficient provision of foreign employment services

WHERE WE WORK IN VOICE, INCLUSION AND COHESION

SERBIA
2 projects

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
2 projects

EASTERN EUROPE
4 regional projects

KOSOVO
1 project

ALBANIA
1 project

KYRGYZSTAN
3 projects

TAJIKISTAN
2 projects

NEPAL
3 projects

PAKISTAN
4 projects

BHUTAN
2 projects

BANGLADESH
4 projects

LAOS
5 projects

NORTHWEST AFRICA
1 regional project

HONDURAS
1 project

GUATEMALA
2 projects

MYANMAR
3 projects

VIETNAM
1 project

ETHIOPIA
1 project

SRI LANKA
4 projects

PERU
2 projects

MADAGASCAR
1 project

FEATURED PROJECTS

SAMI - NEPAL

The Safer Migration (SaMi) project is a joint initiative of the governments of Nepal and Switzerland. The project helps reduce the risks and maximize the development impact of labor migration by raising awareness on safe migration and offering skills development and financial literacy training, as well as legal and psycho-social support.

Legal counselor Manju Subedi explains to Ranjita Mehta how she can repatriate her husband from Qatar.

Selected results

SaMi gained a reputation as a standout success in Nepal and the South Asia region. From 2014 to 2017, 48,900 potential migrants received advice from what are now called Migration Resource Centers. SaMi staff collaborate closely with the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, which has helped improve Nepal's foreign employment system for the better protection of migrant workers.

Key insights

- Media, street drama, songs and storytelling have been effective mediums to disseminate information in remote areas.
- Mobilizing returnee migrants in awareness raising is the best way to inform communities, especially women and disadvantaged groups that rely on informal channels for labor migration.
- Information centers, working closely with local administrations, offer an effective approach for helping young migrants make informed decisions.

DEMOS - KOSOVO

The Decentralisation and Municipal Support (DEMOS) project helps municipalities through performance grants that are co-funded by the Kosovo government. Competition among municipalities, combined with technical assistance, triggers positive behavioral changes in the areas of improved democratic governance, financial and human resource management, and responsive public services.

DEMOS annually awards grants to municipalities based on their performance.

Selected results

To date, the project has trained 2,065 municipal officials and has benefited 254,204 women and 49,606 minorities with better municipal services. The municipal performance grants have shown an increase in several positive governance indicators such as the oversight role of the municipal assembly.

Key insights

- The performance measurement is often done by local governments themselves and carries a risk of inflated data. To mitigate this, the performance measurement system of the Ministry of Local Government in Kosovo introduced data quality assurance mechanisms.
- To ensure sustainability, the performance-based grant scheme has been designed to become part of a government system that is sufficiently anchored in a legal framework and funded with a government budget.
- Covid-19 adaptation showed that information and communication technology can widen and deepen inclusive decision-making.

PEACE - MYANMAR

CLIENT: EUROPEAN UNION

DURATION: 2016 - 2020

BUDGET: EURO 2,136,000

Through the Promoting Equitable, Accountable, Civic Engagement (PEACE) project's support, local civil society organizations expanded, strengthened, and developed more meaningful relationships with different levels of government and communities.

Civil society organizations, community members, businesses and government work together to rehabilitate a canal.

Selected results

The project collaborated with 785 civil society organizations in Myanmar. The civil society organizations formed regional networks and a national network. "Given four years and a budget of €2 million, it is difficult to imagine a better way to sustainably increase civic engagement in Myanmar. The project was impactful far beyond the expected. Due regard was also given to issues of social equity for women, youth, and ethnic minorities," said Louise Coventry, lead evaluator of the external project review.

Key insights

- Give attention to the production of high-quality resource materials (e.g. documentation of curriculum), which contributes to project sustainability.
- One-off training is rarely sufficient; plan for follow-up and refresher courses, and set up peer support for trainees, communities of practice, mentoring or coaching services, and online reinforcement of learning.

YOU - KYRGYZSTAN

CLIENT: HELVETAS, LOCAL PARTNERS

DURATION: 2017 – PRESENT

BUDGET: CHF 1,415,000

The Youth United for Future (YOU) project supports youth in the south of Kyrgyzstan in finding their personal and professional purpose in life. It also promotes constructive dialogue between youth and older generations—as opposed to family simply dictating life choices to young people—and peaceful public discourse on religion and democracy.

Bekbolsun no longer feels awkward talking openly to older people, and Gulsara realized that her generation should put more effort into understanding young people.

Selected results

The project has directly benefited 1,350 young men and women aged 15-29 years. The government of Kyrgyzstan is now piloting the project's training methodology, called Tune In, in the national school curriculum. Tune In aims to include youth in community life to increase social cohesion and their resilience to violence and extremist rhetoric.

Key insights

- Experiential learning methodology is effective for yielding behavior and perspective change for both youth and adults.
- The psychosocial aspect is key to this type of work; trainings must incorporate methods for youth to build self-confidence and identify pathways to actively engage in their society.

ENFANTS ET JEUNES MIGRANTS – WEST AND NORTH AFRICA

CLIENT: SWISS AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION

DURATION: 2021 - 2024

BUDGET: CHF 23,000,000

The Enfants et Jeunes Migrants (EJM) project aims to strengthen national and regional systems of protection, education and socio-economic inclusion in a sustainable manner to facilitate access to the services provided by these systems for children and youth on the move. For the first phase, the project will be implemented in five pilot countries: Tunisia, Morocco, Niger, Mali and Guinea. Helvetas will lead the project consortium with support from Terre des Hommes and GIZ International Services and other implementing partners. The project is expected to be expanded in phase II and III (2025 – 2032) to the entire ECOWAS region plus Mauritania and all of North Africa, including Algeria and Libya.

The project will help children and youth on the move increase access to education and other safeguard protections.

Planned activities

- EJM will utilize a systemic approach, supporting existing initiatives and strengthening local systems. The intervention strategy aims to avoid typical pitfalls of projects, such as creating new structures or funding programs of partner organisations, which often conclude when external funding ends.
- The project adopts a multi-level approach from community level to transregional level and promotes cross-border and mobile interventions.
- EJM will prioritize innovation and digital tools by developing ways to access education for children and youth on the move and to increase their self-protection capacities.

PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM – SRI LANKA & BANGLADESH

CLIENT: EUROPEAN UNION

DURATION: 2020 – 2022

BUDGET: CHF 1,000,000

The CSO PVE Capacity Building project is a multi-country civil society initiative that explores methods for preventing violent extremism (PVE) in diverse contexts and identifies drivers and common narratives of extremism in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. The project engages youth and youth leaders to support PVE initiatives led by civil society organizations.

A youth-led street campaign on COVID-19 awareness.

Selected activities

In December 2020, Helvetas Bangladesh collaborated with the National Peace Council of Sri Lanka to build understanding by hosting a conference themed "The Role of Community and Youth in Prevention of Violent Extremism."

The project utilizes social media platforms and influencers to reach young people with targeted campaigns. The "Alter Hate" Facebook campaign focused on tackling online hate speech and disease discrimination, specifically in regard to the COVID-19 pandemic. The campaign goal was to disassociate COVID-19 related developments from religious/ethnic elements, encouraging alternative narratives on contextual ethnic and disease discrimination.

Key insights
- The unpredictability of 2020, which was the year of this program's launch, emphasized that projects must be adaptive to young people's needs, interests and dynamics, for example through flexible planning and virtual formats.

ACT - SERBIA

CLIENT: SWISS AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION

DURATION: 2019 - 2023

BUDGET: CHF 5,749,000

The quality of democratic governance is steadily declining in Serbia and the space for civic engagement is shrinking. The program For an Active Civil Society Together (ACT) supports civil society organizations across the country to increase the trust and participation of citizens in decision-making processes, **especially at the local level**.

A panel discussion about the essential role of civil society organizations in Serbia.

Selected results

We support civil society organizations actively advocating for civil rights, good governance, gender, monitoring the implementation of laws and policies, decentralization and social inclusion. In the program's first year, 130 organizations received tailored support to strengthen their constituency base and networking capacities, enabling them to advocate for their cause more effectively and deliver quality services aligned with citizens' needs.

Key insights

- In our study "CSO Sector in Serbia in 2019," 79% of citizen respondents said they were not well informed about the work of civil society organizations. Informing citizens of the role and importance of these organizations and facilitating direct contact with citizens would lead to higher citizen engagement in the work of civil society organizations.
- The same study revealed that 83% of civil society organization employees are volunteers; only 2% are fully employed. There is a need for professionalism of these organizations to ensure better results and sustainability.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE - TAJIKISTAN

CLIENT: SWISS AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION

DURATION: 2013 – 2024

BUDGET: CHF 2,725,000

The Access to Justice project helps protect the rights of the most vulnerable citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan, especially women, by raising their legal awareness and literacy and promoting a functioning free legal aid (FLA) system.

Helvetas supports the transition to state-provided legal counselling and helps civil society organizations monitor service quality. We also strengthen the capacities of state actors to conduct legal awareness campaigns by developing communication strategies and informational materials.

A resident of Khujand in northern Tajikistan receives free legal advisement.

Selected results

In 2020, 5,172 women received free legal aid consultations from the state's legal aid centers.

Helvetas also assists non-governmental organizations that provide free legal counselling to 7,000 people annually.
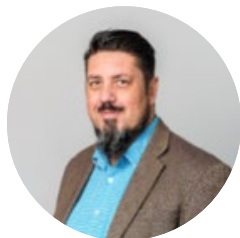
Key insights

- Inherent conflicts of interest arise within a local authority as soon as political, rather than social, issues are raised. It is important to further strengthen the interaction and dialogue between the government and civil society. Political topics should be resolved at higher levels, when possible, and recommendations adopted at the national level should be channeled through local civil society organizations.

CONTACT US

Jesper Lauridsen
Head of Voice, Inclusion & Cohesion
Jesper.Lauridsen@helvetas.org

The Voice, Inclusion and Cohesion team consists of gender balanced, highly professional, committed and multilingual advisors with several years of experience working in international development cooperation across the globe.

Meet our advisors

WHAT WE CAN OFFER

- Supporting the design, implementation, adaptation and reviews of projects

- Promoting innovation in projects through applied research, sourcing of good international practices and facilitating global exchange of know-how

- Developing and contextualizing methodologies, tools and approaches such as Conflict Sensitivity, Political Economy & Power Analysis, Socially Inclusive and Gender Responsive Budgeting, Social Dialogue & Audits, Experiential Peace Education and Arts & Culture for Social Cohesion

- Offering external clients DAC evaluations & reviews, feasibility analyses, and capacity development

- Capitalizing and sharing of project experiences

- Profiling of Voice, Inclusion and Cohesion in international events, networks and publications

- Partnerships in consortia, joint bidding, and joint project implementation

PARTNERSHIPS, ALLIANCES AND NETWORKS

DDLGN

LOGIN Asia

KOFF Swisspeace

SDC Network on Migration & Development

Conflict-Sensitivity Community Hub

CIVICUS

SDC Gender Equality Network

Vuka!

HELVETAS