



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

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**ENSEMBLE,
CONSTRUIRE
UN MONDE JUSTE
ET FRATERNEL**

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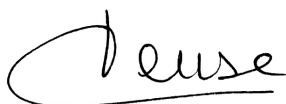
FACED WITH A HARSHER WORLD, BUILDING FRATERNAL BONDS

"It is not so much a question of finding a hundred thousand francs, but above all of awakening a hundred thousand hearts."

In the face of economic difficulties and geopolitical challenges, our societies are turning in on themselves. This is the painful observation we have reached after 2023, a year in which the protection due to the most vulnerable has been challenged on many fronts. We are not resigned to living in a world where exclusion and stigmatisation are the norm. Such a world has no future, it would signal the collapse of our social cohesion and of any hope of peace and justice. It is all the more difficult to accept because every day we experience another possible world, where men and women give of their time, their skills and their humanity to support people facing difficult situations. Year after year, the commitment of our 60,000 volunteers continues to be a source of wonder; it is our most precious asset. Not only because these men and women contribute to improving the lives of the more than one million people who visit our reception centres, but also because, in doing so, they rebuild fraternal relationships and restore hope.

Building fraternal bonds is our top priority. And although our message of reaching out is against the tide of the times – it could almost be called revolutionary – we are betting that it will speak to all those who wish to act to change things and change the world. By reducing their aid to the poorest among us, our leaders are implicitly relying on charities to fill the gaps. But they no longer have the means to do so as the needs are increasing. Food aid can no longer be sufficient in the face of the millions of people who depend on it, either because *minimum* social benefits do not allow them to get by, or because they have no rights and therefore no resources. The advocacy we are carrying out to guarantee a right to sustainable and quality food, to sanctify the social *minimum*, to value the countless contributions that unemployed people make to our society, is one of our initiatives. Mobilising goodwill is another, just as useful because it is in this way that public opinion will gradually become aware of the reality of poverty, which is different from how it is represented. *"It is not so much a question of finding a hundred thousand francs, but above all of awakening a hundred thousand hearts,"* said Jean Rodhain, our founder. This objective of awakening fraternity is at the heart of our project in the same way as the fight against poverty. Both were reaffirmed to us at the Bishops' Conference of France in 2023. Renewed confidence in line with today's challenges. In particular, climate change, of which the most fragile, here and around the world, are the first victims. Pope Francis urges us to listen to the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth. They are one and the same call not to turn away, but instead to embark on the path of hope to build together, a more just and fraternal world. ■

Véronique Devise
National President



Adélaïde Bertrand
Secretary General



Hervé Perrot
Chaplain General



THEY ARE SECOURS CATHOLIQUE

“CARMEN MARYINYS BERBEL MARTINEZ
“UNITING GIVES US STRENGTH
AND THE POWER TO RESIST.”



XAVIER SCHWIBEL / SCSF

Carmen Maryinys Berbel Martinez, 27, leader of the community council in Unguia, Colombia, testifies to how women are dispossessed of their territory but also of their bodies. *“The wave of violence throughout the Chocó department has directly affected us. Members of our families have been murdered, our men have been killed, our children have been forcibly conscripted, and we are the ones who resist and endure all this to this day. I was directly involved in the development of a report entitled ‘Women: bodies and territories’, in which we tell the story of the violence that we, women, suffer: the dispossession of our bodies, but also of our lands, of our territory. Uniting allows us to have strength and to resist. The report was presented to the Special Jurisdiction created as part of the peace process to denounce the violent acts of armed groups present on our territory.”* ■

“CUNGLUNG VEI-TCHA TEIE
“ONE DAY WE WILL LIVE ON
OUR LAND AGAIN.”



ÉLODIE PERRIOT / SCSF

Cungllung Vei-Tcha Teie, 64, is the leader of the indigenous Xokleng people who are fighting for recognition of their right to live on their ancestral land. *We used to live in Ibirama, in the southeast of Brazil, but in 1981, a dam was built and flooded seven of our villages. We then moved to São Francisco de Paula, because that’s where my father came from. São Francisco de Paula was covered in native forests when I was a child, but now there are only monocultures of eucalyptus and pine. Agribusiness has destroyed our forests. It’s a tragedy! We, the indigenous people, stay close to the forest. It guards, nourishes and heals us with our traditional medicine. Every morning, I call the Conglui bird, symbol of our people, to watch over us. A day will come when we will live on our lands again. Cimi, Secours Catholique’s partner, is supporting us in this fight.”* ■

“JEAN-YVES
“INSTINCTIVELY, WE HELPED THE MIGRANTS
IN BRIANÇON.”



C. HARGOUËS / SCSF

A volunteer at the Briançon solidarity shelter that welcomes migrants crossing the border, Jean-Yves has only one credo: to help others. *“Since 2016, me and my fellow local mountaineers have been seeing migrants arriving, first via the Col de l’Échelle and then via the Col de Montgenèvre, between Italy and France. We found young people, their feet frozen, and we started to help them by bringing them food, clothes or SIM cards. Our parish has opened a kitchen. Then the Refuge solidaire was born in 2017 in Briançon. I immediately volunteered and I joined its board of directors. Today I am also assigned by Secours Catholique as the association’s representative within the Terrasses solidaires, the structure that now hosts the Refuge and other associations helping migrants since 2021. I sincerely believe that devoting time to others is how one should live.”* ■

“ SUZANNA

“EXPERIENCING EMOTIONS THAT I HAD NEVER FELT BEFORE.”



C. HARGOUES / SCSF

Suzanna is a member of Les Perles, Secours Catholique Montpellier's cultural support group. An experience that is as cathartic as it is unifying. *"I arrived in France five years ago from a small*

village in Albania. I discovered Les Perles group when I was still living in a squat with my two children and my husband. It was a very violent place; I witnessed several knife fights. People then directed me to Secours Catholique. I went to the solidarity café at Campredon house, and I met Claire, the founder of Les Perles. We meet every Wednesday afternoon, either for cultural outings or for creative workshops. It was with Les Perles that I went to the opera for the first time. I looked everywhere; I memorised the smallest details. With culture, I feel emotions that I had never felt before and I meet beautiful people who have become friends." ■

“ FRANCKY

“I WAS FINALLY MADE TO FEEL LIKE I COULD BE SOMEBODY.”



C. HARGOUES / SCSF

Formerly homeless, Francky is now involved with the Secours Catholique in Haute-Loire where he lives. He was behind the creation of a shared garden. *"I decided to become a*

volunteer because I experienced homelessness and for 15 years I benefited a lot from charitable support without ever being able to participate. It was a bit like that 10 or 15 years ago, Secours Catholique was reserved for an "elite", more or less, and if you were a beneficiary, it was out of the question to change sides. Today, in our team, there are no more volunteers or beneficiaries. We are Secours Catholique and that's all; We are people. It was the first association that made me feel that I could be someone. The fact that I have achieved this, to create the shared garden, helped me and encouraged me to move on to my own project. Before, I had no confidence in myself. It's because Secours Catholique made me grow, otherwise I would never have done it." ■

“ MARIE-ANNICK JOLY

“I AM PROUD TO DEFEND THE POOR.”



ÉLODIE PERRIOT / SCSF

Marie-Annick Joly, 67, has known poverty. Today, she sits on the board of directors of Secours Catholique, to which she brings her experience. *"It all started when I separated from my partner and found myself with two kids, without a job, without the right to unemployment benefits. I've experienced power cuts, water cuts, evictions, no longer having a car to go to work. I always tried to get by with odd jobs, but they didn't pay much, so one day, I knocked on the door of Secours Catholique. I was helped and given moral support. When they asked me to talk about the difficulty getting to work when you are without a car, I said yes. That's how I met Véronique Fayet, when she was president of Secours Catholique. At the moment, I am a member of the national council, and I am on the board of directors. I am proud to defend the poor. My kids are also proud of it."* ■

LOOKING BACK AT 2023



CHRISTOPHE HARGOUËS / SCCF

APRIL

A group of women living in poverty, supported by Secours Catholique, attended the rehearsals of an orchestra conducted by the conductor Zahia Ziouani in Montpellier, who volunteered her time.

24 JUNE

Six-day meeting of regional participants from the agroecology programme in the Sahel (PAES) in Lomé, Togo. It was an opportunity to capitalise on the actions and advocacy carried out so far.



CHRISTOPHE HARGOUËS / SCCF

AND ALSO...

JANUARY 28. Inauguration of the "Caisse alimentaire commune" in Montpellier, which allows you to easily buy products with local currency. Implementation of Secours Catholique's programme "Together, live well, eat well". **FEBRUARY 2.** As part of the debate on the immigration law, a "living library" was set up in the National Assembly to make parliamentarians hear the impact of each article of the law on the lives of the people concerned. **MARCH 31.** The plenary assembly the Bishops' Conference of France (CEF) adopted a text specifying the mission of Secours Catholique as a service of the Church, thus renewing the confidence placed in it by Bishop Louis-Marie Billé in 1998. **JUNE 7.** On Place d'Italie in Paris, the Les Morts de la prison collective, of which Secours Catholique is one of the key members, organised a tribute to those who have died in detention, including 125 by suicide, the highest rate in Europe. **JULY 7.** Publication of the 12th issue of *L'Apostrophe* magazine in which the authors-experts on poverty look from another angle at the fully digital society where social links are crumbling and exclusions are widening. **SEPTEMBER 13.** Press conference for the publication of the report "A Crazy Job" which documents the countless contributions



MATHIEU GENON / SCGF

6 TO 11 AUGUST

Some 1,200 people from the Saint-Laurent network and Secours Catholique made their traditional pilgrimage to Lourdes to celebrate, share their faith, pray, access the sacraments and meet in fraternity.



ÉLODIE PERRIOT / SCGF

25 OCTOBER

Publication of the report "Carbon offsetting at the cost of human rights" on the impact of TotalEnergies' afforestation project in Congo-Brazzaville.



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14 NOVEMBER

Secours Catholique de Gardanne team launched Le Colibri, a different kind of "inclusive" grocery store, because it is open to all, which allows you to mix your time shopping with an opportunity to meet, exchange and listen.

made by the unemployed, and proposes that they be recognised and valued. 20. Release on screen of the film *Comme une louve* by Caroline Glorion, a drama which Secours Catholique contributed to from the outset because of its interest in raising awareness of the realities experienced by vulnerable mothers raising their children alone. **OCTOBER 16.** Signature of an agreement with Refashion, allowing Secours Catholique to benefit from a textile reuse fund to invest in innovative projects for eco-responsible shops. From 26 to 31 around sixty people from across the Secours Catholique network meet to explore creativity, as individuals and together, as a lever for developing their power to act. **NOVEMBER** From 30 to 13 December, Secours Catholique and its partners advocate at COP 28 on the regulation of carbon markets and the establishment of a compensation fund for people whose land is already uninhabitable. **DECEMBER 8.** Secours Catholique and several major charitable partners sign an opinion piece published in *Le Monde* to warn about articles from the immigration bill that do not respect the fundamental rights of the people concerned.

BRINGING COMMUNITY, FRATERNITY AND THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION TO LIFE

IN A MISSION STATEMENT adopted by the plenary assembly in 2023, the CEF renewed its confidence in Secours Catholique – Caritas France and invited it to continue its role of awakening solidarity, of performing outreach, giving mutual aid and the joy of fraternity. Once again, this year, this has been shown by the 12,000 volunteers who run our reception and day care centres, our ever-expanding network of family centres, but also those who go on board the *Fraternibus* and our new “pop up shops”, to meet the most isolated among us, in a process of reaching out to those who are in need, making it possible to rebuild links across the regions. Creating links and giving meaning is also the challenge of the creative or spiritual retreats that have been organised throughout the year, as well as the advocacy, collective participation or intercultural and interreligious meetings which underpin the main principles on which our commitment is based: listening to what people have to say, empowering them to act and taking into account their spirituality, whatever it may be.



COMBATING ISOLATION AND RE-ESTABLISHING SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

ROLL OUT OF THE FRATERNIBUS TO REACH OUT TO PEOPLE

In 2023, a dozen new Fraternibuses were put into circulation in Hauts-de-France, Bouches-du-Rhône, Haute-Garonne, Cantal and Yvelines, in addition to the twenty-two that set off on the roads in 2022 thanks to the France Relance subsidy at the end of 2020. Created by the desire to reach out to people living in territories that have gradually emptied of all local shops and meeting places, the Fraternibuses re-establish links.

You can come and chat over tea or coffee, find out about your rights, carry out administrative procedures on the computer installed on board, but also benefit from the activities offered according to the needs identified by the delegations.

In 2023, the Gironde and Hauts-de-France delegations took advantage of an online training tool to prepare their volunteer teams in this new approach

of reaching out to very isolated people, up to now unconnected to our centres.

FIRST TRIALS OF “POP UP” SHOPS

In 2023, Secours Catholique – Caritas France wanted to diversify its solidarity shop activity by increasing the number of pop-up shops. Already successfully tested in Berry, this system makes it possible to reach out to people who do not necessarily have cheap clothing offers nearby, for example on student campuses, in nursing homes or in dense areas of cities. Thanks to a donation from the company Elis and the Refashion fund, two boutique trucks have been offered for six months to teams wishing to evaluate the relevance of such an approach in their regions. They will start in the Gard and Upper Normandy in 2024.

Also, thanks to the Refashion fund, other shops, with rental trucks, will be able to »»

HERVÉ PERROT CHAPLAIN GENERAL OF SECOURS CATHOLIQUE — CARITAS FRANCE

“IF IT STARTS FROM THE POOREST, SECOURS CATHOLIQUE WILL NEVER BE WRONG”



ÉLODIE PERRIOT / SCCF

What do you remember about 2023?

What was striking in 2023 and what worries us is seeing a greater insularity at societal and political levels, sometimes even within the Church and our own network. It's a challenge in this context to embark on a journey of fraternity in the name of the Gospel and of a Jesus who loved everyone, pagans, believers in other religions, a path of joy and building community but also an ecclesial path, by sharing our differences, without watering down our individual characteristics. Identity, yes, because it allows openness, but isolationism, no. The identity of Secours Catholique was reaffirmed in the mission that the CEF entrusted to us in March 2023. We are a church

body, but we are also an association under the 1901 law. Thus, we are at the crossroads of popular education and teaching that consists in allowing ourselves to be taught and evangelised by the little children (Luke 10:21). But who are the most fragile and excluded today?

It is the homeless people without work, without land, without rights, with increasingly vulnerable families, it is the exiles, the migrants who, in addition to suffering poverty, live the pain of being cut off from their roots. A reality that also concerns us is the future of our planet. By tying them together we must fight both to appease 'the clamour of the earth' and 'the cry of the of the poor' (LS 49). Let us be proud, beyond our fears, to act courageously in all these places.

Doesn't your identity evolve with this diversity of actors?

There is something of a Galilee of the Nations within Secours Catholique and its 60,000 volunteers through its 72 delegations and its international partners. We are in the process of reviewing our statutes so that our institutions are more representative of our diversity. It is a historic transformation, which is shaking us up, but which allows us to get back to basics for our times. Living together with our diversity is a sign of a fraternity

on the move, and the "Jesus attitude" helps us with this. The challenges of awakening new generations of volunteers to charity and letting ourselves be shaken up by their commitment force us to reinvent ourselves. The spiritual dimension is a lever in the fight against poverty and for the recognition of our common and universal dignities. I am an optimist. If it starts from the poorest, Secours Catholique will never be wrong.

They are the ones who must take the best place at our tables and on our journey. Of course, it is not the easiest journey, but it is what will strengthen our communion. What a joy it is to be,

“ THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION IS A LEVER IN THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY. ”

from generation to generation, actors at the service of our most rejected brothers and sisters. So that they themselves may be promoters of a fairer and fraternal society, of an ever more diaconal and synodal Church. ■



SEBASTIEN LE CLEZIO / SCCF

» be tested. Designed according to the model of our solidarity shops, these pop-up shops have a friendly outdoor space. They will also be able to offer sewing or upcycling workshops in premises made available by the municipalities or parishes on the days when the mobile shop is in operation.

STRUCTURING OUR NETWORK OF FAMILY CENTRES

The network of family centres, which Secours Catholique – Caritas France created in 2009 with the Apprentis d'Auteuil, has been supplemented by two more in 2023, one in Saint-Jacques-de-la-Lande, near Rennes, and the other in Saint-Brieuc. It became clear we needed to reflect on the development and structure of the network. Secours Catholique is co-financing to the tune of €355,000 and which now has 22 units. In 2023, Secours Catholique began with an audit of the current parenting support sector in France. This first study demonstrated the value of our model where parents are in the position of stakeholders, recognised for their experience. A complete audit, covering the main functions of the national coordination, and the legal format it can take, will be delivered in the spring of 2024.

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO WELCOMING, LISTENING TO AND SUPPORTING PEOPLE

The role of volunteers welcoming people to our centres occupies an important place at Secours Catholique – Caritas France, both in terms of the number of volunteers involved in it and because it represents, for many people in great difficulty, the gateway to our association. In 2022, 15% of the volunteers in our France network were involved in this activity, which had never been clearly defined or supervised. Hence the desire to dedicate a practical guide to it.

The aim of this guide is to clearly define the position and role expected by Secours Catholique from the volunteers involved in these activities. They have a listening role but are also authorised to grant financial aid and are committed over the long term to the people they support towards access to rights or to seek solutions to their situation with them. A difficult role, it is also rewarding, with an important impact on beneficiaries which contributes to creating links and developing the power to act of the most vulnerable. The guide also aims to support volunteers in their practice by giving them benchmarks and recommendations in terms of position, qualities to implement, type of bond to create, but also limits.

Its design was part of a mission, which took place between 2022 and 2023 with some forty volunteer teams leading these sessions and through exchanges with more than 300 network players, including people with experience of vulnerability. A small group of network actors was tasked with reflecting on the definition and framework of the activity. Renamed "Home – Listening – Support" in order to take account of the plurality of mechanisms and designations already in place in the delegations, this activity carries the principles of our action as defined in 1946 in our statutes: "To provide, wherever the need arises, to the exclusion of any national or denominational bias, any help or assistance, direct or indirect, moral or material, regardless of the philosophical or religious opinions of the beneficiaries." ■

“ 15% OF VOLUNTEERS FROM OUR FRANCE NETWORK ARE INVOLVED IN RECEPTION SERVICES. ”

ENABLING THE POOREST TO PARTICIPATE AND BE HEARD



ELODIE PERRIOT / SCCF

LISTENING TO PEOPLE

It is through participation and strengthening people's power to act that Secours Catholique – Caritas France fulfils one of the central ambitions of its national project, namely that "the knowledge of individuals and groups in vulnerable situations be recognised and shared to create new knowledge and practices".

Almost everywhere in the delegations, our teams have been piloting approaches since 2021 valuing the expertise of the people they

support, for example by calling on their testimonies to illustrate advocacy, by designing an activity with them, a local project, by involving them in the life of the association, both at the local and regional levels, and even nationally, or by developing and living

together and sharing experiences at retreats such as the Voyages de l'espérance.

In 2023, the analysis of these experiences has made it possible to identify 14 benchmarks or points of reference to guide the development of an "all players" approach, from the preparation of the journey to the departure from the quay, arrival at the destination and the disembarkation from the boat. This shared learning was trialled in September, during a retreat at the Cité Saint-Pierre in Lourdes, which brought together several groups that had experienced such approaches, and which had itself been prepared and set up in "all players" model.

'L'APOSTROPHE' MAGAZINE, OR FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

There are few places where the words of those who live in exclusion or poverty can be freely expressed. *L'Apostrophe* magazine was born from Secours Catholique – Caritas France's desire to document

“STEPS TO RECOGNISE THE EXPERTISE OF PEOPLE BEING SUPPORTED.”

CHRISTOPHE HARGOUËS / SCCF



this expression, to allow it to be put into words in order to present a different view of our society. In their issue no.12, published in July 2023, the authors of *L'Apostrophe* take a look at the digital age, to explore how social links are vanishing and exclusions are widening. They also give voice to the words of Claire Hédon, Defender of Rights, during an in-depth interview on the digital age and its divides.

The new issue of *L'Apostrophe* echoes other artistic projects, such as those of the Alfabètes, a group of poets brought together by the Samu social de Paris, and the exhibition "Les Habitées" produced by the La Gribouille workshop in Toulon.

Intimate Homes

In a nutshell,

stink,
blood,
deprivation.

Misery...

The increase in the price of rent,
he doesn't want to hear it anymore
The One who has taken up residence
in this pile of cardboard.

His only luxury.
Is to exist in spite of himself.
Don't worry, he's in charge!

Christophe R.

obstacles do they have to overcome? To give substance and life to the advocacy carried out in the context of the asylum and immigration bill, Secours Catholique – Caritas France proposed to deputies and senators from the Hauts-de-Seine department to meet migrants and volunteers who support them. In the heart of the National Assembly, where the law was to be debated, parliamentarians and their staff were able to browse a "living library" throughout the morning of 2 February 2023 which enabled them to hear, through testimony, the very concrete impact of each article of the law on the lives of the people concerned. A human experience, far from microphones and cameras, and much more eloquent than a speech.

INAUGURAL "LOCAL ADVOCACY DAYS"

Local advocacy plays an important role in the development of the power to act of people in vulnerable situations and makes it possible to act on the causes of poverty. Secours Catholique – Caritas France therefore wanted to launch two-day programmes, entitled "Local Advocacy Days" and intended to train volunteers and facilitators in this practice, based on tangible situations.

The first "Local Advocacy Days" took place in February and June 2023, in the Franche-Comté and Burgundy delegations, with the participation of all the association's actors: volunteers, some of whom have experience of vulnerability, members of the offices and employees from the delegation. To enable them to appropriate the notion of advocacy from the outset, it was written in the form of an invitation to "transform your indignations into actions".

The first day enabled participants to understand what advocacy is, based on concrete examples, and to name the stages of a local advocacy action by clearly defining the intended object. The second day allowed the local teams to work on concrete concerns or injustice that they identified and to build the beginning of a strategy on subjects as varied as problems of access to rights, mobility in rural areas or access to culture. ■

THE VOICE OF EXILES AT THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

What is the daily life of migrants who are waiting to be granted leave to remain? For those who have been integrated into French society for years and lose their residence permit and their job because of problems at the prefecture? What administrative

BRINGING CREATIVITY TO LIFE



VINCENT BOISOT / SCCF

DEVELOPING CREATIVITY AS A LEVER FOR EMPOWERMENT

After two “summer” residencies in 2021 and 2022 dedicated to exploring creativity, Secours Catholique – Caritas France organised an “autumnal” meeting in Lourdes, from 26 to 31 October 2023. During these brief gatherings, about sixty participants from across our network, supported by artists, explored creativity, both individual and collective, as a lever to create links in a different way and develop people’s power to act.

Thus, each group was able to present and test its own practices in fields such as theatre, body expression, visual arts, mandalas, sound travel, mosaic, cooking, or even sewing projects using old jeans, through 25 workshops, including one to explore new opportunities, like becoming a workshop leader. As in previous years, an “incubator space” was offered to participants from the network wishing to be supported in their reflection on an issue to be tackled through creation. The delegation from Gironde, for example, submitted the idea of a trip to the Holy Land for which the organisers wanted to involve as many people as possible through

a collective work to be launched before the trip and which would then be enriched by what was experienced there. This incubator played its role in enabling our teams to develop their skills in the process of pooling their collective intelligence, which in turn is likely to lead to renewed action and even advocacy approaches.

PRACTICE OF ARTISTIC RESIDENCIES, AT NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS

Artist residency proposals appeared on Secours Catholique – Caritas France’s radar in 2021. They made it possible to validate an intuition: giving oneself time to support the creativity of network members is a powerful lever in the fight against isolation and poverty. This initiative was continued and tested in June 2023 in Lourdes, where a group took up residence in Cité Saint-Pierre. Its objective: to bring an artistic dimension to the national meeting “Let’s celebrate fraternity” scheduled for 11 August, when more than a thousand people were scheduled to attend from Secours Catholique and the Saint-Laurent network. The group in residence

was composed of 35 participants in the national meeting and artists from different disciplines. They worked on several fronts to also make the pilgrimage a success from an artistic point of view, realising two ambitious projects: the creation of a *freeze mob* made up of the thousand or so pilgrims from the national meeting, and a more permanent artistic offer with the opening of a semi-permanent creative space to which everyone could bring their own touch.

ARTISTIC RESIDENCIES TO STRENGTHEN REGIONAL TIES

In 2023, the artistic residencies experiment as developed since 2021 by Secours Catholique – Caritas France was also carried out at local level, on the theme “Word, music and sounds”. In Isère, for example, a group of 13 people met for four days of immersion, from 1 to 4 December, at the Saint-Hugues centre in Biviers. For this experiment to play its role in breaking down the barriers between

volunteers and people in vulnerable situations and to help forge new links, the participants were chosen from across the same region. At the beginning of the residency, they tried their hand at writing workshops that brought out texts intended to be mixed, reworked, arranged, set to music and then recorded, with support from four musicians.

Eleven amazing songs and sound compositions came out of these days, rich in emotion. The objective now is to promote and publicise these experiments so that other teams can take them up. A project support fund, financed by a sponsor, is planned to encourage this kind of initiative, which is not part of their everyday life. ■

“A FULL-TIME COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE WORKS TO FORGE LINKS IN A DIFFERENT WAY.”

BRINGING SPIRITUALITY TO LIFE

CEF PLEDGES RENEWED CONFIDENCE

Since 1998 and Bishop Louis-Marie Billé’s decree, the mission given to Secours Catholique – Caritas France by the CEF had not been revisited. Since then, however, the world has changed, and the Church is facing new questions within society. For several months, a team made up of members of Secours Catholique and three bishops worked on a new mission statement that was voted on by the bishops at their plenary assembly on 31 March 2023.

This mission statement reaffirms the identity of Secours Catholique which, although an association under the law of 1901, is a service of the Church in the sense that “it is organically linked to the CEF and to each of the diocesan Churches”. It reinforces us in our teaching by taking up the three core values of our mission: to awaken solidarity, outreach, mutual aid and the joy of fraternity; strengthen the capacity of all to act so that everyone has access to dignified living conditions; to combat the causes of poverty, inequality and exclusion. Finally, with this text, the Bishops’ Conference invites us to continue the implementation of the Church’s social doctrine

through our action and organisation, to continue our journey at the heart of the movement of integral ecology defined by Pope Francis and to strengthen our research work, especially on the pedagogy of charity for the most vulnerable, to ensure the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth is heard. This mission statement, alongside the reference text on the spiritual dimension of Secours Catholique, adopted in 2021 by our General Assembly, constitute the foundation and scope of our action.

ST. LAWRENCE FESTIVAL FOR THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF “DIACONIA 2013”

Secours Catholique – Caritas France coordinated the Saint-Laurent network that it helped to create, on the 50th anniversary of Cité Saint-Pierre in Lourdes, to respond to the desire of people in very vulnerable situations to come together, to share their faith based on the Gospel and to meet every two years in Lourdes. From 6 to 11 August 2023, this traditional pilgrimage of the St. Lawrence network brought together some 1,200 people to allow them to celebrate, share their



MATHIEU GENON / SCCF

faith, to pray, to perform the rituals of Lourdes, to access the sacraments and to meet in fraternity. During this pilgrimage, the Saint-Laurent network hosted the Saint-Laurent Festival, in tribute to the 10th anniversary of Diaconia 2013. Through various workshops, this festival aimed to transmit the "culture of the St. Lawrence network", which is mainly expressed by the place and the word given to the poor, by the sharing of the Word of God, by fraternity, trust, the sense of celebration and celebration in the Church. But also a chance for everyone at the shrine

to have a spiritual experience, to let themselves be taught by the poorest and to welcome the mysterious wisdom that God wants to communicate to us through them.

The three short films made at this festival, and in anticipation of the International Day of Fraternity on 4 February 2024, bring together the strong and authentic testimonies of those who, through the suffering and exclusion they have lived, have a unique experience of faith. ■

FOR MORE INFO



STRENGTHENING FRATERNAL AND INTERRELIGIOUS TIES

RAISING AWARENESS OF THE URGENCY OF FRATERNITY

On 21 December 2020, the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) declared 4 February as the "International Day of Human Fraternity", a decision following the signing by Pope Francis and Sheikh

El Tayeb, Imam of Al Azhar, of a common reference text on human fraternity.

As of 2022, Secours Catholique – Caritas France has chosen to celebrate this day with partner associations committed to intercultural dialogue such as Coexister, the Islamic-Christian Friendship Group (GAIC) or Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), and to institutionalise it

at the national and local levels. In 2023, the approach consisted of inviting the delegations to value what their teams are experiencing and share with people in terms of fraternity, and, at the same time, to bring together many other associations for a meeting organised with the National Service for Relations with Muslims (CEF NSRM), and the General Secretariat of Catholic Education, to reflect on how to organise this day and make it a success. A second meeting, in July, with a much wider circle of partners, resulted in a common appeal "for fraternity to be the benefit of all". This was distributed at the end of the year to the heads of associative networks for signature at the beginning of 2024. The appeal underlines our shared desire to celebrate "this day in a spirit of openness to make it a festive and popular event, capable of raising awareness of the urgency of fraternity".

Several delegations of Secours Catholique have already responded to this urgent need for fraternity. In the Loiret, for example, in Orléans, there were several invitations to the interfaith, intercultural and interreligious meetings on 4 February, with the programme of informal activities around a coffee or tea, an indoor football tournament with young people of all faiths from 15 to 20 years old, and a visit to the Assounnah mosque. This work is done in partnership with partner associations, particularly in the employment sector. ■



MATHIEU GENON / SCCF

»» IN BRIEF »»

CALVADOS VISITING SENIOR CITIZENS

In Troarn, six volunteers visit the homes of elderly people who suffer from isolation.

"They can be widows, or in a relationship but with a spouse who is weakened by an illness," explains Christine, one of the volunteers involved. "We spend some time with them, we listen to their stories they have to talk about local life... We are the link." The visits are carried out in pairs. Beforehand, the volunteers follow a Monalisa training, named after the national mobilisation, that brings together actors working to combat the social isolation of senior citizens. "In the long term," concludes Christine, "we hope to connect the different people we meet and organise outings and meals with them."

HAUTS-DE-SEINE HAVE FUN TO UNWIND

Puzzles, board games, card games, storytelling... Every Wednesday and Saturday afternoon, a group of about twenty women and their children meet at the Oasis des familles, an apartment located in Malakoff, consisting of a living room with kitchen, a games room and a laundry room equipped with two washing machines. "Everything has been designed based on the needs of the families," most of whom are staying in hostels, explains Sylvie, the volunteer behind the project. In this space, while the washing machines are turning, mothers and children chat, create, have fun and dance together. On Friday, school day, the mothers get together for meetings that do them good. "We clear our heads. We feel less stressed," says Lolite, a single mother.

VENDÉE MOBILE OUTREACH TO HELP BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER

For the past two years, a Fraternibus has been crisscrossing the roads of the Vendée to forge a social link in isolated rural areas. Twice a month, it stops in Nesmy, 5 kilometres south of La Roche-sur-Yon, first at a picnic area where the team invites the inhabitants to prepare and share a meal, then on the village square, near the town hall, where the communal centre for social action carries out food distribution. Some beneficiaries of this distribution have become accustomed to joining the Fraternibus to help with this mobile place, have a hot drink and chat. Among them, Evelyne, who had the idea of outdoor meals. "I love cooking," she says. "Fraternibus is a way of doing it whilst sharing."

FOR MORE INFO



COMBATING VULNERABILITY THROUGH ACCESS TO RIGHTS FOR ALL

MAXIMUM INFLATION on food and energy, saturation of emergency accommodation and food aid, unprecedented floods, heat and drought... 2023 racked up many painful records, especially for the most fragile households, the first to pay the price for the disruptions our society has experienced. More than one million of them have been supported fraternally and socially by Secours Catholique – Caritas France volunteers. We understand the life that vulnerability imposes on them, they tell us about it, we bear witness to it. Because solutions exist to improve things in the long term, we are coming up with them, and we are testing them out. This is where the good news came from in 2023. Our proposals to fight against non-take-up of public funds are beginning to be put in place. Our "Living Well, Eating Well" and "1DigneToit" programmes are making a difference. Other projects are being developed, around textile reuse for our charity shops. So many actions that restore dignity and the power to act and help to articulate the fight against poverty and the preservation of "our common home".



COMBATING FINANCIAL INSECURITY AND ENSURING ACCESS TO A DECENT INCOME

PROGRESS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST NON-TAKE-UP OF PUBLIC FUNDS

Since the publication in 2021 of the report "No access: a social debt that obliges us", Secours Catholique – Caritas France has not ceased to lobby for the campaign for non-take-up of social benefits to become a priority public policy. With success, since some of our recommendations are among the measures included in the 2023 Solidarity Pact.

► 100% access to social welfare zones pilot

While three initial trials had already begun in 2022, Secours Catholique's pilot was taken up in the 3DS law (differentiation, decentralisation, deconcentration and simplification), giving rise to 10 other pilots provided for in the law. In view of the numerous applications (70 territories) received in response to the call for expressions of interest launched at the beginning of 2023, the decision was taken to retain 39 (with funding from the Solidarity Pact). On

a human scale, the various partners, namely the CAFs (family allowance fund), the council, the town halls, the MSAs (mutual insurance companies), social centres and civil society groups undertake to work together to identify and to reach out to the people eligible for social benefits who do not apply for them or are unable to obtain them. As the initiator of the scheme, Secours Catholique was invited to sit on the scientific monitoring committee that supervises the 39 pilots, as well as on the coordinating committee for access to rights (Cocoad).

“MOBILISING TO IDENTIFY AND REACH OUT TO ELIGIBLE PEOPLE.”

► Automatic payment of social benefits to eligible people

This recommendation, supported by Secours Catholique with the Collectif Alerte and the Pacte de pouvoir de vivre, has also been partly taken up by the government. Although the system, called "Solidarity at source", is being implemented in very gradual stages (for example, the addition in payslips of the "net social amount" to be declared each month to the CAF) and presents risks, it denotes a real desire to fight against non-take-up. The principle of a pre-filled form that beneficiaries will only have to check and sign will be tested from 2024.

► Human support in the face of a digital world

Another source of satisfaction: in its 2023-2027 objectives and management agreement (COG), the National Family Allowances Fund (CNAF) plans for the first time in a long time to recruit 600 employees to support people in the digital world.

These successes encourage us to continue to defend other measures: an end to the suspension of rights in case of doubt and the staggering of undue repayments based on the "unseizable minimum" provided for in the Banking Code in the event of over-indebtedness.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE FULL EMPLOYMENT BILL

Secours Catholique – Caritas France and its partners have engaged, unfortunately without being heard, in the debate on the new full-employment law. One of the aspects of the law is of particular concern to us: the takeover by France Travail, the

entity that replaces Pôle emploi, responsible for the management of the RSA under new arrangements. From now on, the payment of this social *minimum* will be conditional on the one hand, on the registration of beneficiaries as job-seekers, while many of

them have to deal with social or health problems before considering returning to work, and, on the other hand, an obligation to work fifteen hours a week: training, integration into companies, voluntary

work. Secours Catholique is alarmed by this misuse of the principle of unconditionality of the RSA, originally designed to repair the social inequalities that put so many people in great difficulty. The measure also goes against the policies undertaken elsewhere to fight against non-take-up, and risks making people who will lose the RSA invisible or cause them to give up.

"A CRAZY JOB" REPORT

In the worrying context of the new full-employment



law which intends to force unemployed or vulnerable people into employment, the report "Un boulot de dingue", published in 2023 by Secours Catholique – Caritas France and Aequitaz, proposes to reverse the view of these allegedly "inactive" citizens. As our field teams witness on

a daily basis, these people are on the contrary for the most part extremely "active". Some help a relative, an elderly parent or a child with a disability, while others solve multiple administrative problems, for themselves or for relatives, or get involved in the life of the neighbourhood, in the neighbourhood, in associations. These non-employment contributions, which are unpaid and do not enter the calculation of contributions and protections, are nonetheless essential to our society.

This is what this report demonstrates, the result of two years of investigation and workshops involving researchers, professional associations, but also people concerned, some of whom receive the RSA. Far from being marginal, these activities can be evaluated in billions of hours of domestic work: 40 billion per year, which is more than paid working time, according to INSEE. The number of family carers is 9 million for 15 million children and 5 million adults who are sick, disabled or elderly. As for volunteering, it concerns nearly 13 million French people and represents about 680,000 full-time equivalents.

Based on these findings, the report proposes recommendations to transform our social protection system so that it recognises and secures, without creating an obligation, people who invest in others, society and the living world. In fact, solutions already exist and would only need to be extended. It is these mechanisms that make it possible to offer a form

“CONTRIBUTIONS OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT ARE ESSENTIAL TO OUR SOCIETY.”

of recognition for unpaid activities: the allowances or reimbursement of expenses to which volunteer firefighters, salaried caregivers, jurors, local elected officials and certain association leaders are entitled; the maternity benefits enjoyed by mothers; the possibility for volunteers to validate their acquired experience; the skill barter system devised by the Accorderies. Presented at a press conference on 13 September 2023, this report was widely taken up by the media, which welcomed its approach: inviting debate, imagining new rights, and consolidating those, such as the guaranteed minimum income, called into question by the government.

– Caritas France is a founding member, has had a difficult year in 2023. This system, which we know contributes effectively to the government's objective of full employment, has been jeopardised by two decisions: the reduction of aid (from 102% to 95%) for each job created, which weakens the economic model based on activities that are not profitable in themselves, but also the desire to freeze the subsidy granted to TZCLD, which prevents any new pilots in other territories. Our collective lobbying, widely relayed by local elected officials, eventually made it possible to obtain an additional 11 million, admittedly less than the 20 million hoped for. ■

DEFENDING TERRITORIES WITH ZERO LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT

The association Territoires zéro chômeur de longue durée (TZCLD), of which Secours Catholique

“TOGETHER, LIVE WELL, EAT WELL” PROGRAMME

INNOVATIVE PILOTS FOR FOOD DEMOCRACY

In 2021, the Territoires à vivreS pilot began in Lyon, Aix-Marseille, Toulouse and Montpellier, the objective of which was to create new cooperation in order to invent sustainable and inclusive food systems. Supported by Secours Catholique – Caritas France's "Together, live well, eat well" programme, with its partners: Vrac, Ugress, Civam, Cocagne, it has come to an end more than satisfactorily in June

2023. The Territoires à vivreS have indeed been rich in education and innovative achievements of food democracy. Among them, the "Common Food Fund" from Montpellier, inaugurated on 28 January 2023, which allows you to buy products with a local currency supported by municipal and private funds, as well as citizen contributions.

The model is of interest to the city of Lyon, where Territoires à vivreS has set up an association responsible for implementing it. For its part, Secours Catholique is working on the creation of a national "Right to Food" network, inspired by the dynamics of the Territoires à vivreS.



CHRISTOPHE HARGOUES / SCCF

ADVOCACY IN THE FACE OF THE INABILITY TO FIX FOOD INSECURITY

Secours Catholique – Caritas France sits on the Cocolupa (National Coordination Committee for the Fight against Food Insecurity). In 2023, it followed one of the recommendations that we supported with ATD Fourth World: that the participation of people in a situation of food

insecurity, is one of the objectives and evaluation criteria for projects financed by the "Eat Better for All" Fund, which was supplemented by €60 million that same year.

These results, although going in the right direction, remain disappointing in view of the reality highlighted at the end of 2023 by the Restos du Cœur and many other associations when they called on the public authorities. Food insecurity has taken on such serious proportions that food distribution, as it has been practiced for years, is at the end of its tether: it is no longer able to meet demand. This analysis was carried out at the Cocolupa meeting in December. It was an opportunity to insist once again on the need for structural policies to combat poverty.

STUDY ON THE "REAL COSTS" OF FOOD

Since the beginning of its advocacy for dignified access to sustainable and quality food, Secours Catholique – Caritas France has seen the emergence of many projects in its network for shared gardens, solidarity food baskets, social and solidarity grocery stores, financial aid, vouchers, etc.

In order to go even further, in 2023 we launched an in-depth study on the "real costs" of food in terms of health, environmental protection, territorial development, etc. Conducted with the laboratory for economic analysis, Basic, it will allow us to shed light on what is hidden behind the price of food and to make proposals to preserve access to quality food for all, the income of producers, who themselves face great vulnerability, and the quality of our environment. It will serve as a basis for the mobilisation of the "Dignified access to food" network between 2024 and 2027.

DIGNIFIED AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD, A MOBILISING THEME

Fresh solidarity baskets, inclusive solidarity grocery stores... these new types of actions, which are increasingly being taken up by the delegations of Secours Catholique – Caritas France, demonstrate important changes in practices and ways to get involved. This is what emerged from the state of play in 2023 as well as the study conducted in 2022 on the views about food assistance practices of more than 1,000 volunteers. Following this study, tools were developed in 2023 for facilitators to

enable them to support people keen to get involved in projects of this type, with a social and ecological dimension.

From 10 to 13 October, representatives from 38 delegations carrying out these approaches met in Montagnac, in the Hérault, to get to know each other, define a common vision and move forward on their projects. The 140 people present were able to participate in workshops on the theme of changes to be made to meet today's challenges, inspiring visits around the agricultural world, rural solidarity and the development of the power to act, in "open forums" to make progress with our projects and consider questions to be debated with others, to times spent on fraternity and collective awakening, and also to plenary meetings to welcome each other, to share a vision of dignified access to food, also in its local-global dimension.

LE COLIBRI, AN INSPIRING MODEL OF "INCLUSIVE GROCERY STORES"

On 14 November 2023, the Secours Catholique de Gardanne team inaugurated Le Colibri ("The Hummingbird") in its town centre premises. Run by volunteers, this is a different grocery store, "inclusive" because it is open to all, it makes it possible to make time spent shopping an opportunity to meet, exchange and listen. Its concept is simple: everyone can shop there but not at the same price: normal price for those who can afford it and 30% of the same price for people whose application has been accepted by volunteers. The distinction is made discreetly. All you need to do is indicate your name at the checkout and the software will apply the right rate. With three support customers for one customer benefiting from a reduced rate, Le Colibri will balance its books.

Inclusive grocery stores such as Le Colibri are part of the models of action to combat food insecurity that Secours Catholique wishes to develop. A review of their social utility was carried out in 2023. Its conclusions will enrich our reflections to define a national strategy in 2024. ■



Gael Kerbaol / SCOF

INTERVIEW

JEAN MERCKAERT, DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY ACTION FRANCE EUROPE

“FIGHTING POVERTY IS THE MOST PROFITABLE INVESTMENT THAT OUR COUNTRY COULD MAKE”

In 2023, when inflation was making households poorer and charities raised the alarm about food aid and accommodation schemes reaching saturation point, the government adopted laws that produce poverty, non-take up of benefits, and instability. This is Secours Catholique's analysis, which reminds us that a healthy society is a society which takes care of the most vulnerable.

Secours Catholique was present in the political debate in 2023. Is this its vocation?

Secours Catholique has several ways to respond to the poverty it encounters: material aid, fraternal support to gain access to rights, collective action and, when the response cannot be only charitable, advocacy. The Church's social conscience encourages us to do so by affirming that commitment to the political field is the noblest form of charity.

We are therefore fulfilling our mission when we are involved in the political debate, and we are legitimate and expected to do so because of our action on the ground.

The realities we are witnessing have led us to define five priority issues: dignified access to a roof over one's head, to healthy and sustainable food, to a decent income, through employment or social benefits, the dignified reception of migrants and pursuing a fair ecological transition.

What is your view of 2023 in terms of anti-poverty policies?

There were some areas of satisfaction: the pilots that Secours Catholique carried out in the Hauts-de-France region inspired public measures to better combat fuel poverty. Similarly, the 39 "zero non-take-up zones" launched in 2023 are the direct translation of an idea that Secours Catholique championed to promote access to social benefits! Other advances should be noted, such as the strengthening of public support for housing, the increase in aid paid in the absence of alimony, or the development of the Early Childhood Public Service.

But overall, the year was marked by worrying laws and the launch of a disappointing Solidarity Pact. Whilst the 2018 Poverty Reduction Strategy showed real ambition, the few measures contained in the Pact do not hide the extent to which the situation of the poorest is far from the government's concerns. Faced with the shock of inflation, particularly on food and energy, we could expect a strong response. But the government is sticking to palliative measures. Barely a few million more euros after the alert raised by the Restos du Cœur. Is it really worthy of our country to put the burden of response to food insecurity on our charities when it affects millions of people?

This palliative approach also reigns over emergency accommodation provision. The Solidarity Pact barely maintained its budget, while homelessness, which reached record levels in 2023, calls for structural

“ WHEN WARNING SIGNS ARE FLASHING RED REGARDING THE CARE PROVIDED TO THE POOREST, TO MIGRANTS, TO PEOPLE IN PRISON, TO THOSE IN A SITUATION OF DEPENDENCY OR IN NEED OF PSYCHIATRIC CARE, IT IS SOCIAL COHESION THAT IS THREATENED. ”

responses. The drivers for action in the face of the saturation of the accommodation stock are well known: regularising migrants, many of whom are only asking to work and find housing on their own and develop pathways to social housing. However, in 2023, the construction of social housing fell to an all-time low. In 2017, Emmanuel Macron promised that there would be no one left on the street by the end of the year. Today, the SIAO (Integrated Reception and Orientation Service, which manages the 115 service) has been forced to consider women on the street with children over 3 years old as 'non-priority'.

You have opposed certain measures of the new France Travail scheme.

We agree on the objectives of full employment and better support for recipients of RSA (social security benefit), because the fall in integration budgets and the lack of social workers have a lot to do with the fact that many recipients have been on RSA for too long. Every day we meet recipients of *minimum* social benefits and know how wrong it would be to think that they are inactive – our report “A crazy job” demonstrates this – and it is wrong that they are forced to return to work, under penalty of sanctions. The implication of laziness is hostile and ignores the reality of employment: 3 million people are unemployed for 300,000 unfilled vacancies. It also doesn't take into account that for a certain number of beneficiaries, the conditions for a return to work are not met.

To claim that people “deserve” their social situation is a matter of ideology: in France, success depends to a large extent on social background, schools attended, and parents' friendships and professional networks. However, it is this ideology that justifies the maintaining of minimum social benefits at undignified levels and blames those who are unemployed.

But do we have the means for a more generous social policy?

Fighting poverty would be a worthwhile investment for our country. For Secours Catholique, all policies should be evaluated according to their impact on the most vulnerable. On the contrary, in 2023, even as the executive launched the Solidarity Pact, it also supported the adoption of the Kasbarian-Bergé law, which toughens the repression of the homeless and the asylum and immigration law which weakens a population already in great difficulty, and the full employment law which stigmatises and risks deepening the non-up-take of benefits.

For Secours Catholique, which measures the health of our society by the fate reserved for the most vulnerable, this trend is worrying. When most of the warning signs are flashing red on the care provided to the poorest, migrants, people in prison, in a situation of dependency or in need of psychiatric care, it is social cohesion that is threatened.

All the more so since the government has too often discredited, and therefore weakened, the intermediary bodies. Thus, in 2023, the government has remained deaf to large-scale social movements, and associations such as the League of Human Rights have seen their funding threatened due to critical attitudes. A society that no longer has collective, trade union, associative spaces through which to make different aspirations and interests heard is a society destined for more violence.

What direction should we take?

Let's start with a positive example: the Zero Long-Term Unemployed Zones, where people are told: “*We have unmet needs, we believe that you have things to bring us*”, all involved have experienced that it restores dignity, that it brings dynamism, cohesion, in addition to providing very concrete services, for example in the service of people or for ecological transition. We must start to believe again that we need each other and that it is by working collectively that we will see positive change, and not to the detriment of one another. ■

COMMITTING TO A FAIR ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION

ECOLOGICAL REVOLUTION FOR A MORE FAIR AND FRATERNAL WORLD

It has been many years since Secours Catholique – Caritas France, in response to calls from its international partners and delegations, has taken up the environmental issue. This issue is already embodied in programmes such as the one being carried out on five continents to implement a fair ecological transformation (see p.42), in projects carried out at national level to combat energy poverty, promote mobility and guarantee the right for all to decent and good quality food, but also in actions such as eco-places and textile reuse, and through various advocacy and local social change projects initiated by our delegations.

The acceleration of climate change, the impacts of which affect the poorest first, forced us to go even further.

Therefore, in 2023, Secours Catholique's board of directors sought to invite the entire network to start a journey of ecological conversion and transformation from three perspectives: personal, collective,

political, and according to a bottom-up and learning methodology, i.e. building on experiences and reflections already carried out, both in France and internationally.

“THE URGENT CHALLENGE OF PROTECTING OUR COMMON HOME INCLUDES UNITING HUMANITY IN THE SEARCH FOR SUSTAINABLE AND INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT, BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT THINGS CAN CHANGE. ” LAUDATO SI'

Under the slogan RevE, as an ecological revolution for a fair and fraternal world, five main areas of work have been identified.

- 1. Support, awareness-raising and mobilisation** of delegations and teams. With the provision of an educational tool kit, the establishment of a national network and support for the organisation of events to highlight flagship projects: eco-places, charity baskets, the 1DigneToit scheme, etc.
- 2. Seeking to set an example in our internal practices** on a daily basis from the starting point of our carbon assessment carried out in 2021.
- 3. Taking into account the relationship between the fight against poverty and ecology** as a lever to revitalise volunteer activity and commitment.
- 4. Advocacy for a fair ecological transition** with a view to bringing about structural changes with the creation of a global-local transversal space for reflection on these issues.
- 5. Preparation of a reference text on this question**, based on the experiences of the delegation, the reflection carried out with our international partners and the one currently being undertaken by the national council, which largely involves people with experience of vulnerability. ■



CHRISTOPHE HARGOUES / SCCF





ELEONORE HENRY DE FRAHAN / SCGP

REGION



LA CASÈLA, A SHELTER FOR WOMEN IN VULNERABLE SITUATIONS IN TOULOUSE

For nearly two years, La Casèla in Toulouse has been opening its doors to women in very vulnerable situations. Hakima and Fatima go almost every morning to this loft-like space run by Secours Catholique, located in the heart of the city. It was there that the two women, who arrived last spring from Algeria, became acquainted and became friends. The Casèla serves as a place of respite, resource and mutual aid for them, as well as for the forty or so other women in hostels or on the streets, who spend a large part of their day outside. At La Casèla, the armchairs invite you to discuss, listen and rest. *"We noticed that women didn't go to the city's day care centres very often,"* explains Pascale, the volunteer in charge of the place. *"A study was then carried out among these shelters and the need emerged to create a specific place for women."* Here, they can have a hearty breakfast, shower, wash their clothes, collect clothes or hygiene products. They can also get a makeover, like Nathalie, her hair wrapped in a towel, who is waiting her turn to pass into the hands of Anahite, the volunteer hairdresser. *"It feels good to take care of yourself,"* says this single mother of two children.

"At the moment, it's very tense," continues Pascale. *"We are seeing more and more families with young children who have been put back on the street."* This is what awaits Julienne, sitting on a sofa, who has just learned that she has to leave the home where she has been sleeping with her 19-year-old daughter for 14 days. *"I'm enjoying the heat a little bit because, tonight, we're going back to the street. We have been calling 115 all day."* ■



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CHRISTOPHE HARGOUES / SCCF

ACTION AND ADVOCACY FOR ACCESSIBILITY TO LOW EMISSION ZONES

Secours Catholique – Caritas France is delighted with the environmental and health benefits that the introduction of low emission zones (LEZs) could bring, while recalling that in the logic of fair ecological transition, it is necessary to seize the opportunity offered to develop mobility solutions accessible to all and, in particular, alternatives to the car. The study we published in 2022, in collaboration with Emmaus France and the Climate Action Network, highlighted the mobility problems that LEZs could pose to the poorest and proposed a series of recommendations to improve consultation and put forward solutions. This advocacy continued in 2023, in line with the delegations' actions such as microcredit or helping hands, around the accessibility of help to buy and loans, to enable access to a clean vehicle for beneficiaries who have no other ways to travel.

SEMINAR ON MOBILITY IN RURAL AREAS

Mobility also has its 'dead zones', particularly in rural and hyper-rural areas where the most vulnerable people find themselves isolated, without any means of access to their rights, employment, health or indeed any aspects of daily life. This situation was further exacerbated in 2023 due to the rise in fuel prices. Currently, the majority of requests for financial aid made to Secours Catholique teams in these regions are linked to mobility expenses. Their volunteers help out by setting up charitable transport or car-sharing groups and call on the public authorities to support. But to change things from a systemic point of view, it became urgent to carry out advocacy at the national level.

In 2023, a working group was set up and field studies and activities launched in several departments (Aveyron, Pyrenees, Gascony, Allier, Tarn, Saône-et-Loire, Côte Roannaise), in order to establish a precise diagnosis of travel needs and existing means

of transport. At the same time, a seminar was held on 5 and 6 December. It brought together about fifty people from our network. Its objective: to produce a report by 2024 proposing courses of action to enable people to travel in rural areas whilst respecting the limits of the planet.

VEHICLE DONATIONS FOR THE BENEFIT OF SOLIDARITY GARAGES

The Federation of Solidarity Garages Solidarauto, of which Secours Caritas-Caritas France was president in 2023, has been supporting around 5,000 people a year with mobility problems for over 10 years. In 2023, a new garage in Betton, near Rennes, joined the federation and another is being considered near Orléans. But the highlight of the year is the launch of a national vehicle donation platform:

donnezvotrevoiture.org. Created to provide garages with vehicles to be refurbished and offered at advantageous prices, this platform allows individuals or companies to combat exclusion from the labour market through mobility while benefiting from tax deductions.

The vehicles obtained in this way are then distributed to the accredited garages. In November 2023, a targeted communication operation in Maine-et-Loire made it possible to test and verify the appetite of the general public for this type of solidarity approach. In the same year, the platform was nominated for the Grand Prix for the Committed Brand. ■

DEVELOPING A SOCIAL ECONOMY BASED ON SOLIDARITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

A NEW ECO-RESPONSIBLE IMPETUS FOR CHARITY SHOPS

In the textile sector, the Agec law (anti-waste for a circular economy) supports the social and solidarity economy sector with up to 5% of the taxes levied on new clothes placed on the market. Since 2023, Secours Catholique – Caritas France has been one of the six associations that benefit from this reuse fund. The agreement signed on 16 October 2023 with the eco-organisation Refashion, manager of the fund, covers amounts established according to the tonnage of clothing received by our association. They amounted to €542,000 in 2023 and are expected to reach €620,000 in 2024 and 2025.

According to the agreement, these funds are intended in part for the traceability of incoming and outgoing textile volumes. They will also be used to finance the projects devised by our delegations and our 810 shops and fashion exchanges, following a call for expressions of interest in four main categories: education and training, refurbishment or transformation of clothes, improvement of the quality of charity sales and conviviality of shops, creation of new structures. The first call for expressions of

interest was launched in November 2023. It demonstrated the value of the approach to boost our textile activity: eco-solidarity labelling of shops, creation of mobile or pop-up shops, in a process of reaching out to people in vulnerable situations, financing of sewing workshops to promote talent and develop the power to act.

All these actions are in line with the drives initiated by Secours Catholique to combine the fight against vulnerability and for ecology, a theme that also promises to mobilise volunteer commitment ■



SEBASTIEN LE CLÉZIO / SCCF

COMBATING FUEL POVERTY

SUCCESSFUL ADVOCACY FOR THE RENOVATION OF THERMAL SIEVES

By launching the experimental 1DigneToit programme in 2019, Secours Catholique – Caritas France and the Ecohabitat Network were betting on the fact that the energy renovation of homes could be an option for the poorest, with an appropriate financial aid scheme and not only technical but also social and fraternal support for people. Our objective was to support 200 households, as part of a social impact contract (CIS)¹ with the National Housing Agency (Anah), but also to model a new mode of action to combat fuel poverty that could be taken up by the public authorities.

At the end of 2023, after five years of testing, the pilot proved conclusive. The programme has inspired the creation of other charitable structures such as Stop Energy Exclusion, which aims to support 3,000 households over three years. Above all, it has made the government move forward on this subject, since a reform of the scale of aid for energy renovation was announced on 11 October 2023. As of 1 January 2024, the rate of subsidy given by Anah, for very modest

households that opt for an efficient renovation of their home, increased from 50% to 90% of the work for an amount capped at €70,000, compared to €35,000 previously.

Our advocacy has also led to recognition for the Mon accompagnateur Rénov' scheme, where funding has been increased from €850 to €2,000 per application, but also to the gradual introduction of the reinforced Mon accompagnateur Rénov': approved operators with technical skills, whose services will be financed to the tune of €4,000 per application. Secours Catholique and its partners will of course remain attentive to the effective implementation of these announcements, the resources for which have been greatly reduced by the budget cuts decided by the government at the beginning of 2024. They also insist on the need to increase the number of approved operators. These essential links for vulnerable households remain too few in number in the country today. ■

TACKLING HOMELESSNESS

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR ADMINISTRATIVE ACCESS FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE

As a member of the national housing collective, Secours Catholique – Caritas France has been advocating for several years on the subject of administrative registered address, an insufficiently funded system that is essential to guarantee homeless people access to their civic, civil and social rights. In principle, the communal social action centres (CCAS) or the intercommunal social action centres (CIAS) have the legal obligation to house people who are severely excluded and who are attached to their region. However, due to a lack of resources, this mission is too often delegated to approved bodies such as Secours Catholique, who are supposed simply to supplement this common law system for those people with no real connection

to the territory of a municipality or particularly vulnerable groups who need a temporary residence before the statutory housing scheme.

Secours Catholique and its partners have been heard. Indeed, the Solidarity Pact presented by the government at the end of September 2023 includes not only the renewal of credits dedicated to approved housing organisations, to the tune of €10 million in 2024, but also the creation of a €1.5 million pilot funding for CCAS/CIAS. This amount will make it possible to finance a dedicated post in about forty CCAS/CIAS in 10 volunteer departments. The aim is to guarantee the right to housing for 127,000 additional people per year, in addition to the

¹ The CIS is a financing mechanism for the social and solidarity economy that allows a social innovation to be pre-financed by a private investor and finally to be paid for by public funds and become systemic, if it manages to demonstrate its effectiveness after evaluation.



VINCENT BOISOT / SCCF

180,000 already housed nationally. Even if it remains in favour of a rebalancing towards the CCAS/CIAS in relation to the approved bodies, Secours Catholique welcomes this first step, although it is not yet a question of a generalised strengthening of local authority resources. Provided that the guidelines defined are compatible with the requirements of respect and unconditionality for the reception of those housed, this new funding offers the network's delegations an opportunity to improve their reception: fitting out the premises to be friendlier and allow better confidentiality of exchanges, development of interpreting, training of teams, etc.

LAUNCH OF A SECOND FIVE-YEAR "HOUSING FIRST" PLAN

The Housing First policy aims to provide direct access to dignified and permanent housing for people who are homeless or accommodated. Tested for about fifteen years in Europe, it has proven its effectiveness in eradicating homelessness. Secours Catholique – Caritas France has been advocating for the past ten years for this policy to become the norm in France. More qualitative and humane for people, it is also more economical than the care provided by emergency accommodation structures.

This advocacy has been successful since a first five-year plan for Housing First was adopted during Emmanuel Macron's first five-year term, a plan that has enabled 440,000 additional people to access housing over a five-year period, but also the creation of 40,000 additional places in temporary accommodation and 7,200 places in guest houses. After more than a year of negotiations with the government, on 20 June 2023, Secours Catholique and its partners secured the launch of a second Five-Year Plan for Housing First as a systemic response to homelessness. With a budget of €44 million in 2023, this new plan will be topped up by €29 million per year for five years, until it reaches €510 million. However, the plan includes many blind spots.

We are particularly unhappy with the insufficient resources allocated to the social housing sector to produce new social housing accessible to households with very low resources, while production reached the lowest levels ever recorded in 2023, leaving 2.6 million people waiting for housing. Other important advances have however been

“A STRUCTURAL RESPONSE TO HOMELESSNESS.”

secured: support for social monitoring structures (outreach, day shelters, 115/SIAO, etc.), the creation of a National Observatory on Homelessness, the continued development of adapted housing (boarding houses, social residences, hostels for young workers and temporary accommodation), as well as the accelerated implementation of the Housing First policy in 44 territories that have volunteered. ■

DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF MIGRANTS



ELEONORE HENRY DE FRAHAN / SCCF

STATE OF PLAY AND OUTLOOK FOR “LEARNING FRENCH”

Learning French is the second activity carried out as part of the reception of migrants at Secours Catholique – Caritas France. Across our network, it involves 300 teams supporting 20,000 learners thanks to the commitment of 3,000 volunteers. Noting the strong expansion of this activity, but with the practices and means varying greatly from

one delegation to another, in 2023, we launched a national questionnaire to better understand the needs of our volunteers and the people we support and to better meet those needs. This survey, to which large numbers of the teams responded, was a rich source of information. On the whole, the delegations report a good understanding of the meaning of this activity for Secours Catholique and of its interest for the migrant students (learning French is part of our global and fraternal support), just as

they adhere to our positioning: to act in addition to public measures and first and foremost for people who are excluded from them. While it appears that our French language teams have been able to forge alliances with local associations, they remain very far from the national networks, such as the French for All collective, and testify to a lack of interaction with the other teams, employees and office members of their delegation.

These results have made it possible to identify several areas of work, including the expansion of a training course in the techniques of running a French workshop, the need to create spaces for the exchange of practices and ideas locally, in delegations, in the regions and at national level. Accordingly, following on from the Île-de-France region, the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur regions have set up such spaces. These allow for the emergence of new projects such as, in Île-de-France, the launch of a training course on digital technology and learning French.

LOCAL AND NATIONAL MOBILISATION AGAINST THE 'IMMIGRATION LAW' PROJECT

2023 was marked by debates around the immigration law, announced in the summer of 2022 and adopted a year and a half later in a considerably tougher version. Secours Catholique – Caritas France has been committed, throughout the process, to making the voices of those affected heard. At local level, dozens of events were organised by our delegations to enable parliamentarians to meet first-hand with migrants, and to better understand the impact of the project on their situation. Some delegations joined forces with other charities by signing press releases or co-organising demonstrations.

Our mobilisation was also continuous at national level, with the personal involvement of our president, Véronique Devise. We participated in consultations with the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Labour and directly challenged many elected officials via our "parliamentary friendship group", particularly around access to learning French and residence permits. A "living library" deployed in the National Assembly gave substance to the realities experienced by migrants. On 8 December, we co-signed, with major charitable networks, an opinion piece published in *Le Monde* and on 18 December and another in *La Croix* with several Christian organisations.

However, neither our voices nor our arguments were heard, since the text of the law adopted on 19 December by the senators and then by the deputies fails to respect many of the fundamental rights of those concerned.

In the hope that this subject, which puts the fate of thousands of people at stake, can be dealt with in a rational and peaceful way, Secours Catholique committed in 2023 to holding a citizens' convention

on migration where these issues would be debated in an assembly representative of the diversity of the French population, rather than in parliamentary forums whose members can be caught up in political posturing.

In 2024, we plan to make a national information webinar available to our delegations and training to equip our teams with knowledge of the practical consequences of the law on the lives of the people we welcome and therefore on our support.

SITUATION OF MIGRANTS AT THE BORDERS

Co-founder and member of the Coordination of Actions at the Internal Borders (CAFI), Secours Catholique – Caritas France closely monitors the treatment reserved for people exiled at the French-Italian, Franco-Spanish borders and on the Franco-British coast and passes on its findings at national level. In 2023, the situation in Calais was once again at the heart of our concerns. This year has been marked by the continuation of the zero-tolerance policy implemented since 2017, which has resulted in daily evacuations and a heavy police presence. In addition, a record number of deaths has had a strong impact on the morale of exiled people and associative supporters, including Secours Catholique which, within an inter-associative space called Groupe Mort, compensates for the shortcomings of the public authorities by making the link with the families and acquaintances of the deceased, arranging burials or repatriations. The Secours Catholique day care centre, run by a team of seven employees and about sixty volunteers and open every afternoon, remains one of the few on-site facilities still present. In a particularly difficult context,

“20,000 LEARNERS
THANKS TO THE COMMITMENT
OF 3,000 VOLUNTEERS.”

it remains a haven of peace, allowing exiled people to sit down, rest, recharge their mobile phones and obtain information on accessible services and their rights. As in previous years, it has experienced a very high number of visitors (between 400 and 800 people per day), which increased sharply in late summer and throughout the autumn, particularly during the severe flooding that hit the territory in November and January. Appeals made at that time to the public authorities to provide migrants with shelter, in the

same way as the rest of the affected population, went unheeded – an ordeal for the outreach teams, helpless in the face of the spectacle of tents taken over by puddles and people wringing out their belongings in the morn-

ing. In this context, we have not ceased, together with our local associative partners, to draw attention to the living conditions imposed on exiled people and to demand that their fundamental rights be finally respected. Numerous letters, press releases and meetings with the public authorities have had few results, but have been useful in continuing to highlight the harshness of public policies against exiles stranded at the Franco-British border.

CALL FOR A VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF MAYOTTE

At the end of April 2023, faced with the insecurity reigning on the island of Mayotte, the government deployed a large-scale operation called "Wuambushu" ("taking back control" in Mayotte), whose stated objective was the destruction of slums, the expulsion of thousands of illegal immigrants and the dismantling of delinquent gangs.

During this police deployment, the result of which was an aggravation of tensions and calls to hatred, Secours Catholique – Caritas France teams still managed to maintain their reception activity. At national level, on 24 June, while the Minister of the Interior was visiting the island, Secours Catholique and other associations and NGOs, including Cimade, Médecins du Monde and the Abbé-Pierre Foundation, published an opinion piece in *Le Monde* proposing another reading of the situation on the island. Instead of the government's choice of a purely security option, the signatories proposed a real vision for the

future of the island and the Comoros archipelago by recalling the fundamental problems that should be tackled: the great insecurity of the population, the deep social inequalities, the high rate of school dropouts, the bad housing, lack of access to health and drinking water, inadequate public services... The signatories undertook to continue to contribute to Mayotte, as in all territories, to the implementation of concerted responses in the interest of the most vulnerable people.

STOP VIOLATIONS OF THE RIGHTS OF UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

The reception of unaccompanied minors (UMs) is one Secours Catholique – Caritas France's major areas of focus. In 2020, we defined a national advocacy position in the face of serious violations of the principles that should guide the care of these children given their extreme vulnerability.

In 2023, the Committee on the Rights of the Child confirmed our analysis by condemning France for its failure to respect the guarantees attached to the best interests of the child in its practices vis-à-vis these unaccompanied young people of foreign nationality. Secours Catholique, and several other associations such as Cimade, the Group for Information and Support of Immigrants (GISTI) and UNICEF, provided some answers in its report "End violations of the rights of unaccompanied minors". It includes 90 proposals for the dignified reception of unaccompanied minors, from their entry into France to their exit from the child welfare system, including their health, their schooling or their protection under asylum. These proposals are a demand for an end to the practices that are at the root of the most serious rights violations, namely: being sent back at the borders, the generalised questioning of civil status documents, administrative confinement, the use of bone testing and forced returns. ■

“ RAISING THE ALARM CONCERNING THE LIVING CONDITIONS EXPERIENCED BY EXILED PEOPLE. ”

SUPPORTING FAMILIES

COMMITMENT TO THE RIGHT TO HOLIDAYS

A long-standing advocate of the right to holidays, Secours Catholique – Caritas France commits funds every year (€1.22 million in 2023), to allow children, families and single people to go on holiday.

Although people, especially when they don't have a job, think they are not entitled to them, holidays are essential to get away from the difficulties of everyday life for a while, create links and regain self-confidence.

In 2023, Secours Catholique continued one of its historical activities, the Accueil familial de vacances (AFV), organising stays for families and isolated individuals, with a minimum out-of-pocket expense for them, thanks to the donation of €423,155 from the ANCV (National Agency for Holiday Vouchers), and enabled around 400 young people to go to holiday camps as part of our partnership with the National Union of Outdoor Sports Centres (UCPA).

SUCCESSFUL ADVOCACY FOR FAMILIES

In 2023, we feared that in its new Objectives and Management Agreement (COG), the CNAF would direct the entire budget of the family branch towards the public service of early childhood. We shared our concerns and see that the COG 2023-2027 includes an package dedicated to supporting parents and renewing the National Parenting Support Fund.

The family centres, run at the national level by Secours Catholique – Caritas France and the Apprentis d'Auteuil foundation, are cited in the document as examples of structures that can be financed by this fund, which confirms the support of our contacts at the CNAF for these unique spaces that allow families to develop their power to act, and which are complementary to the other structures or mechanisms of common law with which they work in partnership.

For several years, Secours Catholique has been involved in the High Council for the Family, Children and Age. In 2023, we collaborated on the report "The purchasing power of families", published in December, and supported several of the proposals proposed therein. ■



ELÉONORE HENRY DE FRAHAN / SCCF

ATILIO, TALKING ABOUT HIS UCPA CAMP

“MY STAY BROUGHT ME HAPPINESS AND JOY. I DID A LOT OF ACTIVITIES: KAYAKING, WINDSURFING AND CATAMARAN SAILING. I MADE A LOT OF FRIENDS. IN ADDITION, IT ALLOWED ME TO MAKE PROGRESS IN FRENCH.”



COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

CONTRIBUTION TO THE THIRD NATIONAL PLAN AGAINST EXPLOITATION AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

On 11 December 2023, the Minister for Gender Equality and the Fight against Discrimination, the Secretary of State for Children and the Minister for Labour, Full Employment and Integration presented the third National Plan to Combat Exploitation and Human Trafficking, one of the government's priorities in terms of protecting and promoting human rights and fighting organised crime. Secours Catholique – Caritas France, with the Together against Human Trafficking collective that it coordinates, has made a major contribution to the reflection carried out upstream of this plan, within the framework of a broad consultation with civil society. The text includes several of our recommendations, but without giving the necessary means to achieve them, or the indicators that would make it possible to evaluate them. However, we are pleased that it has included different forms of exploitation, while the preceding

version referred mainly to sexual exploitation, concealing exploitation for economic and labour purposes, coercion to commit crimes or the obligation to commit crimes by begging. A greater emphasis is also allocated to children, especially those under

the influence of drugs, although without addressing the risks incurred by migrant children who may be sent back to the street when they reach the age of majority.

It took two years for this third plan to see the light of day, and above all the strong mobilisation of civil society as a whole: associations like ours, trade unions and the independent observer on human trafficking at the National Consultative Commission on Human Rights (CNCDH). We will monitor its implementation and ask to be involved in the most urgent measure of the plan, the national mechanism for identification, guidance and protection of victims. We will also ensure that sufficient resources are allocated

to communication and training of all actors, otherwise this mechanism will not be effective.

PEOPLE TRAFFICKING AT THE GLOBAL FORUM ON MIGRATION

In parallel with the Global Forum on Migration held in Geneva in December 2023, Secours Catholique co-organised an event on the prevention and fight against the exploitation of refugees. Speaking on behalf of the global Coatnet network, hosted by Caritas Internationalis, we showed how our research on human trafficking in conflict and post-conflict situations enabled our teams to respond from the first days of the war in Ukraine, to prevent the risks for people fleeing the fighting. Our advocacy also focused on the need for good practices to be put in place in the context of the Ukrainian conflict to benefit people fleeing war or climatic events, regardless of their nationality and country of origin.

PREVENTING INCREASED RISKS OF EXPLOITATION IN THE RUN UP TO THE 2024 OLYMPIC GAMES

In anticipation of the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games, Secours Catholique – Caritas France, as part of the Together Against Human Trafficking collective that it coordinates, has designed a campaign to raise awareness of the risks of exploitation alongside major sporting events. Available in eight posters, under the slogan "We would all like it to be a celebration", and an educational document, the campaign illustrates, through life stories gathered in 2023, all the forms that trafficking can take. Launched at the beginning of 2024, it aims to alert individuals, but also to mobilise institutions and make game organisers, companies and private partners, in particular digital platforms, accountable. ■

“A THIRD PLAN THANKS TO THE STRONG MOBILISATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY.”

DEFENDING THE RIGHTS AND EMPOWERING OF PRISONERS



GAËL KERBAOL / SCCF

INCREASE IN THE “NEST EGG” GRANTED TO THE POOREST PRISONERS

In October 2021, Secours Catholique – Caritas France and Emmaus France published a new study on poverty in prison. This confirmed our intuition that prison is the last rung on the social ladder, with a quarter of incarcerated people having no resources and receiving no help from outside. To the poorest among them, the prison administration allocated a monthly cash aid of €20, which was the subject of one of the 25 proposals made by the inmates themselves in the context of the survey. The request was twofold: indexation of the aid to the cost of canteens and increase in the threshold of resources allowing access to it. It was partly heard. In March 2022, through the publication of the circular to combat poverty, the prison administration increased this aid to €30.

Admittedly disappointing compared to the €50 requested, this increase denotes awareness of the extreme vulnerability of prisoners. When the renewal

of the national agreement was signed in November 2023, the director of the prison administration confirmed to us that he had entrusted our report to his teams in the autumn of 2021 to support the increase in this aid contributing to the fight against extreme poverty in prisons.

The survey continues to be presented, recently at the National School of Penitentiary Administration (ENAP) and serves as a support for our other advocacy in favour of effective and dignified access to work, a right to a fair pension contribution and solutions to over-indebtedness in prison.

CONTINUED ADVOCACY FOR SUPERVISED INTERNET ACCESS IN PRISONS

In 2022, the #InternetEnPrison collective, of which Secours Catholique – Caritas France has been a member since its creation, published an open letter to the Prime Minister in the newspaper *Le Monde*. The approach having made some progress, the

collective wanted to consolidate this in 2023 through a campaign in three key phases. On 16 February, an online conference was held, organised by the OIP (International Observatory of Prisons) with several speakers, including members of the collective. On 13 March, they published an opinion piece in the daily newspaper *Ouest-France* to raise awareness among the general public about the consequences, in the digital age, of the impossibility of access to the Internet for prisoners. Finally, on 27 September, a press release was distributed to various organisations and ministries. Three occasions to highlight that the Internet is an essential means for prisoners today to access their rights, maintain family and friendship ties, benefit from online training, all levers that promote self-determination instead of assistance, make it possible to prevent social exclusion and recidivism, and thus to get prisoners out of the vicious cycle of prison and poverty.

EUROPEAN REFLECTION ON THE MEANING OF PUNISHMENT

Secours Catholique – Caritas France is one of the initiators of the European Community of Practices (COP) prison-justice, which has been advocating and acting on the concept of self-determination in prison for the past eight years, along with several Caritas in Europe. Our various networks all make the same

Jean-Rodhain Foundation conference. In October 2023, a first draft text on the meaning of punishment was sent to Caritas Europa for amendment. The finalised text is intended to be transmitted to the Dicastery for Integral Human Development. Our objective is to obtain a text at the highest level of the Catholic Church, which can forcefully affirm that it is in the interest of society, in France as elsewhere in the world, to apply sentences that lift people: "for a sanction that renews rather than a sentence that breaks".

TRIBUTE TO THOSE WHO DIE IN PRISON

On 7 June 2023, at the Place d'Italie in Paris, the collective Les Morts de la prison, of which Secours Catholique is one of the core members, organised, for the 15th consecutive year, a tribute to the people who died in detention during the year.

A largely unknown reality, every two days on average in French prisons a person dies, by killing themselves in the vast majority of cases (125 suicides recorded by the prison administration in 2023 – the highest rate in Europe). Through these tributes, the collective seeks to raise public awareness on the issue of suffering, illness and death in prison, and to remind people that every person remains a person until the end of their existence, no matter what crime they may have committed.

Elected officials, artists, anonymous people and volunteers committed to the inmates took part in this tribute... In turn, they read the names of the deceased, specifying their age and the date of their death, and laid a rose in memory of each one. ■

“ANY DEATH IN PRISON IS A FAILURE FOR THE PRISON ADMINISTRATION AND OUR SOCIETY AS A WHOLE.”

ROBERT BADINTER, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL COUNCIL AND FORMER MINISTER OF JUSTICE, DURING THE 2022 PUBLIC TRIBUTE

observation: prison sentences, as they are carried out in Europe, often lead to the opposite result to the one intended.

They cause suffering, undermining the dignity of the people they "break", which produces recidivism and exclusion, especially for the poorest. The COP has therefore launched a reflection on the meaning of criminal sanctions, relaying the findings at the 2022

DEALING WITH EMERGENCIES



GAËL KERBAOL / SCCF

SUPPORT FOR RESIDENTS AFFECTED BY THE EARTHQUAKE IN CHARENTE-MARITIME

On 16 June 2023, the municipalities on the east of Aunis Atlantique, in the Charente-Maritime department, felt the earth shake. This earthquake, whose epicentre was in the commune of La Laigne, caused great damage to the structure of the buildings, most of whose inhabitants had to be evacuated for an indefinite period. The system set up by the Secours Catholique – Caritas France National Emergency Team France (ENUF), at the request of the Charentes delegation, was the largest deployed in 2023. For six weeks, from the beginning of November to mid-December, our volunteers visited 500 households in the three most affected municipalities (La Laigne, Cram-Chaban and La Grève-sur-Mignon), responding to a very strong demand to be listened to and for comfort from people who were still in a state of shock and many of whom had not been able to return home. As the earthquake had a major impact on the structure of the buildings, the ENUF

commission aid mission has only had to deal with about ten files for the purchase of equipment. It also responded to a collective request for the purchase of Christmas trees to brighten up the mobile home camps where people who cannot return to their homes are still housed.

FLOODING IN HAUTS-DE-FRANCE

At the end of 2023, at a time when several municipalities in Pas-de-Calais were experiencing unprecedented flooding, the National Emergency Team of Secours Catholique – Caritas France was contacted by the Pas-de-Calais delegation to think about a post-emergency system to be set up in early 2024. As part of the national authorisation of the Ministry of the Interior's Orsec system (support for disaster victims and supervision of volunteers), from which the Emergencies France department benefited until September 2023, the National Emergency Team is responsible for intervening after emergency staff (firefighters, civil security, etc.) on the ground in

>>> IN BRIEF

RHÔNE: A COOKING AND EXPERIMENTATION WORKSHOP

"Aprons on, we're going to start!" A dozen women meet once a month at the Cuisinons ensemble workshop organised by Secours Catholique in a district of Vénissieux. On the menu: a Portuguese salad proposed by Joaquina, and for dessert, a Napoleon, an Armenian cake prepared by Anahit. While the vegetables are cooking, the participants are thinking about setting up a preserving workshop. *"We decide which seasonal products we will buy before we put them in jars,"* says Violaine Martin, in charge of access to decent food. *"The idea is to allow people who rely on food banks to have healthy, quality food in their cupboards. A concrete way to regain control over their diet."*

VAUCLUSE: COMBINING STUDY AND EATING WELL

In Avignon, Secours Catholique is organising a distribution of charity baskets for students in vulnerable situations. Every Tuesday, about twenty of them come to pick up their organic and local vegetables at a lower cost: 3 euros instead of 10 euros thanks to the association's support.

"This initiative allows me to eat well and save money," explains Coralie, 18. At the same time, a cooking workshop is organised once a month to teach students simple recipes with the contents of their basket. *"The goal,"* says Estelle, a volunteer, *"is to encourage young people to cook and have a good time together."*

INDRE-ET-LOIRE: REGAINING CONFIDENCE TO RETURN TO EMPLOYMENT

In Tours, the Secours Catholique employment centre provides support for professional integration or reintegration. Every week, the team of five volunteers receives about ten people with or without a work permit for individual appointments. *"Those we welcome often face life events such as a dismissal, a prison sentence, a divorce,"* says Claudine Burguet, a volunteer. *"These people accumulate difficulties and let themselves sink."* In order to reorient them towards work, the place offers training workshops on CV writing and cover letters, job interview simulations as well as personalised follow-up in the job search. *"We make sure that they reclaim their skills. Consequently, they regain confidence in themselves and the desire to return to employment."*

LEARN MORE



the first weeks to support those affected. Our volunteers position themselves, once all these services have been withdrawn, to visit the affected people, for as long as they need to be listened to and comforted.

TRAINING VOLUNTEERS FROM THE FRANCE EMERGENCY TEAM

Across the country, the Secours Catholique – Caritas France National Emergency Team France has about forty supervisors, employees or volunteers, responsible for the systems and welcoming volunteers when the time comes.

In 2023, they met twice, outside of their interventions, to work on the operational tools necessary to set this up. These were important times for exchange and contact, not only to train and take stock of training needs, but also to create links between the volunteers and teach them to work together, all essential to make things as efficient as possible and be ready for D-Day. Faced with the already very perceptible reality of climate change, no region is immune to events that are often shorter but more numerous, and which cause significant damage. It is therefore essential that our team is ready. ■

PURSUING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WORLDWIDE

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to look back at 2023 without mentioning the major political and environmental events and their unprecedented impact on the most vulnerable, poorest, and fragile communities. This news underlines the relevance of the strategic choices made over several years by Secours Catholique – Caritas France in its action and international advocacy to promote social transformation. Starting with the communities themselves, who have knowledge in terms of water, land, and forest management and who develop resilient agricultural practices, getting them to talk to researchers so that together we can find a way to a fair ecological transition is the challenge and success of our Resilient Communities programme, whose first phase ended in late 2023. Documenting real issues such as environmental migration, the human impact of certain carbon offset projects, and violence against women is the ambition of the reports published this year which fuel our advocacy. Strengthening civil societies and enhancing their ability to defend their rights is what projects like those in Palestine or Colombia are all about, supporting women whose lands are being plundered. And supporting our partners who are closest to populations affected by the war in Ukraine and the Middle East.



PROMOTING A FAIR ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION

MULTI-YEAR RESILIENT COMMUNITIES PROGRAMME

Droughts, floods, fires, extreme weather events... the effects of climate change are here. They primarily affect the most vulnerable populations, who are already mobilising and already have solutions in place. For several years, Secours Catholique – Caritas France and its partners have been helping them defend their territories through agroecology projects, land rights defence, and resilience to climate change. Since 2022, we have given a new dimension to these projects within the framework of the Joint Partnership Agreement signed with AFD to define a shared vision of a fair ecological transition.

"There are not two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but a single, complex socio-environmental crisis." This notion of integral ecology, as defined in Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si'*, aptly summarises the objectives of this multi-stakeholder

programme, the first two-year phase of which ended in late 2023.

These first two years have proven that it is possible to think, collaborate, and move forward with 23 partners from 18 countries (including France) to provide an integrated response to the social, economic, political, ecological, cultural, and spiritual challenges posed by establishing a fair and sustainable development model.

At national level in 2023, the programme enabled 23 field projects and experiments, which feed into the joint reflection on our vision of a fair ecological transition. These include projects to promote agroecology, training for farmers in new production methods, action research to define a more resilient form of development and training to help our partners and the communities they support to structure their advocacy on these themes and defend their land rights and set up systems of autonomous governance.

At regional level, in 2023 partners participated in initiatives focussing on a particular theme and in interregional exchanges aiming to share best practices.

- ▶ In Latin America, eight partners defending indigenous peoples conducted discussion projects on protecting shared assets such as water, forests, and seeds (*see p44*).
- ▶ In Africa, the regional project brought together six Sahel countries around the theme of agroecology to reflect together on topics such as supply chains or changes in consumer behaviour (*see opposite*).
- ▶ In Asia, two regional dynamics were conducted simultaneously. The first on a fair ecological transition in rural areas based on indigenous peoples' land rights which are being undermined by agro-industry or intensive tourism. The second on developing sustainable and inclusive cities and empowering poor populations to access essential services (*see p47*).
- ▶ In Palestine, the programme is helping women engaged in market gardening move towards more sustainable and resilient methods, gain access to land, and document the land violations they suffer from Israeli settlers.
- ▶ In France, delegations involved in local social change projects participated in a meeting on 27 September with international partners who worked on international migration issues (*see p 62*). Another meeting took place from 10 to 13 October as part of the "Living well and eating well together" programme (*see p21*).

On an interregional basis, three partners from Senegal, Bangladesh, and Honduras conducted a study on environmental migration, documenting the reality of population displacement affected by climate change. Published on 27 September 2023, it aims to fuel our joint advocacy with concrete examples (*see p.47*).

Globally, several research activities were carried out during the programme's first two years to compare empirical knowledge with more theoretical knowledge.

- ▶ With our partner Ciedel, four experience capitalisation workshops were held in 2023. Their goal: to empower partners and communities by transforming lived experiences into shareable practices.
- ▶ In September, the Gemdev (Study Group on Globalisation and Development) hosted two days of work on the Condorcet campus in Aubervilliers

with the aim of advancing the structuring research conducted within the programme.

The first day brought together research members of the scientific committee responsible for validating the programme's scientific approach. The second day gathered members of the stakeholder assembly made up of representatives of all international partners involved in the programme, research and advocacy specialists, and an external specialist, CCFD Terre solidaire. The programme included "Controversies and debate" workshops on agroecology, cross-study findings on Bolivia, Senegal, Bangladesh, and Brazil conducted during the programme's first two years, and researchers' presentations.

“REFLECTING,
COLLABORATING, AND ADVANCING
WITH 23 PARTNERS FROM 18
COUNTRIES.”

AGROECOLOGY IN THE SAHEL

To address the issues of declining arable land in the Sahel, Secours Catholique – Caritas France and its local partners are promoting the development of agroecology in Senegal, Benin, Mauritania, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Togo. Launched in 2022, the agroecology programme in the Sahel (Paes) saw a number of highlights in 2023.

In February, representatives of Secours Catholique and partners from Togo and Niger attended a meeting organised as part of the Dynamics for an Agroecological Transition in Senegal¹. These valuable face-to-face exchanges allowed for better understanding of the organisation of various local authorities and NGOs, their common positioning, and also sharing observations of the populations concerned on sometimes very specific topics such as the necessary involvement of local elected representatives for agroecological transition. A series of three videoconferences on farmers' seeds took place in the spring, including a session with our partners from the broader programme on fair ecological transition in Asia and Latin America in order to share experiences more widely.

In May, those involved in the programme in Togo

1 A network of producers', consumers' and rural women's organisations, NGOs, research institutions, civil society networks, a network of local elected representatives, businesses, etc.



CHRISTOPHE HARGOUES / SCDF

joined those in Benin to take part in the seed fair held there. Finally, in June, a six-day regional meeting of the Paes programme was held in Lomé, Togo. It was an opportunity to capitalise on actions and advocacy conducted so far. An article published in *Résolutions*, the *Secours Catholique* magazine, reports on the richness of dialogue that took place during the field visits.

Throughout this second year of the programme, our various partners were supported by a consultant, based in the region, on administrative and financial matters to strengthen their skills in these areas.

RESEARCH AND ACTION ON SHARED ASSETS IN LATIN AMERICA

Shared assets are an important theme in the reflection that *Secours Catholique – Caritas France* conducts as part of its multi-year programme. The participatory research and action launched in 2022 and completed in 2023 is one of the programme's achievements. It involved eight organisations from four Latin American countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Peru, and Colombia, each choosing a community and a shared asset (water, seeds, forests...) to work on. The objective was to analyse how the management of these shared assets has evolved from the 1950s to today and how communities are becoming

aware of and protecting these shared assets.

The research and action were conducted in three stages. The first part included training for those responsible for field investigations within the communities and workshops with these same communities. The second part focused on a more detailed study of a family production unit selected within the communities by each investigator, in particular to analyse its level of autonomy in its mobilisation for the defence of the chosen shared asset. Finally, a section was dedicated to the presentation of the research results to the communities so they could reclaim their history and define action plans for the future. This last part took place in September 2023 in Peru during the programme's regional assembly with all the participation of all those involved in the study, which will be published in 2024.



CHRISTOPHE HARGOUES / SCSF

INTERVIEW

EMMANUELLE D'ACHON VICE-PRESIDENT OF
SECOURS CATHOLIQUE – CARITAS FRANCE

“INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS ARE OURS”

In 2023, a year in which the international news has been very worrying, with a setback to the important achievements of the past and an irreversible advance in climate change, Secours Catholique – Caritas France reiterates its values, its positions and the interconnection of crises, in France and internationally.

How do you view the past year?

In 2023, the world experienced political and environmental events that I would almost describe as tragic. From the violent reactivation of conflicts thought to be dormant, as in the Middle East, to wars that are becoming entrenched or intensifying, as in Ukraine, and destabilising manoeuvres of all kinds, a number of past achievements, such as multilateralism, have been called into question. We are witnessing a return to competition between powers that are now more numerous, on economic and sometimes military fronts.

The United Nations Security Council is prevented from playing its role by the vetoes of China, Russia and even the United States, including on the Palestinian question. At a time when the looming crises are more global than ever, nationalism is resurfacing, jeopardising the peace guaranteed by the solidarity between countries established after

the war. We are witnessing rivalries between great powers to which we were no longer accustomed. The antagonism between China and the United States is escalating. Russia and the West describe each other as enemies rather than partners, as was the case just a few years ago. The threat of nuclear war, which we thought had been definitively buried since the end of the Cold War, is being raised again.

This uncertain and troubled world saw its natural environment deteriorate sharply in 2023, the hottest year on record.

What can Secours Catholique do in such a situation?

Our presence around the world, through our long-standing network of partners, particularly local Caritas groups, gives us the capacity and the duty to act. We have done so in 2023, with all the care we give to the most vulnerable. I'm thinking of the projects carried out in Ukraine with children, poor families, the elderly, people with disabilities or people isolated by the conflict, in rural areas often forgotten by humanitarian aid. And of course, in the Middle East, where we have been operating for almost 60 years.

Since 7 October, we have been witnessing a fratricidal war, which began with the horror of massacres and continues with bombings, mass exoduses, destitution and now famine. Secours Catholique has roundly

condemned the Israeli massacres and hostage-taking perpetrated by Hamas. It has also reiterated the sanctity of all human life and called for a ceasefire, demanding that a humanitarian corridor be set up to prevent the human toll from rising still further. We have continued to provide financial support for the projects of around ten Israeli and Palestinian NGOs working to establish dialogue, combat inequality and injustice, by forging links between communities and promoting solidarity.

The House of Abraham, set up in East Jerusalem by Mgr Jean Rodhain at the request of Pope Paul VI, has remained open and has continued to play its role of social integration for the poor Palestinian population of the neighbourhood.

Not forgetting other tragedies, such as in Lebanon, where flooding is adding to the serious political and financial crisis; in Colombia, where despite peace agreements, violence and land appropriations continue; in Africa, in the Sahel region, which is being ravaged by drought, and in Mauritania. We are also active in Bangladesh, which is regularly hit by floods and cyclones, in Vietnam and even in Russia, working with prisoners.

A total of 350 projects have been carried out in 52 countries in 2023. We are able to do this thanks to the generosity of our donors, who enable us to take action both in France and overseas, and to whom I would like to express my deepest gratitude. Increasingly so, thanks to the grants, we will be seeking to roll out multi-country and multi-continent programmes, such as the one we are running with 23 partners in 18 countries as part of the CPP (multi-year partnership agreement) signed with AFD (Agence Française de Développement) in 2022.

What is Secours Catholique's international vision?

We remain faithful to the founding principles of our mission and to the inspiration of our founder, Mgr Jean Rodhain. Our action, he said, rests on two pillars: the national and the international. Today, they converge on many points, due to a new reality: the socio-environmental crisis to which Pope Francis alerted us in 2015 in his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, and the urgency of which he reminded us in his apostolic exhortation *Laudate Deum* last October on the global climate crisis. "There are not two separate crises, one environmental and one social, but a single, complex socio-environmental crisis", this is how he defines the notion of global ecology that has inspired our Resilient Communities programme: define a fair

vision of ecological transition in which the world's poorest communities, the first to be affected by climate disruption, can see themselves.

Every day, our actions and those of our partners remind us that international problems are not far from us; on the contrary, they are our problems. The environmental migration suffered by populations whose land has become uninhabitable, or as a result of violence and war, now also on our doorstep, affects us and compels us, since half of the people welcomed in France by Secours Catholique are of foreign origin. The local and the global become one. The drought in many regions is now affecting Spain and the whole Mediterranean basin, and floods are no longer sparing anyone. Here, in the north of France, as in Bangladesh, they are exacerbating inequalities and creating poverty.

More than ever, we cannot turn a blind eye to or disassociate ourselves from the plight of those who are suffering. Their plight is our concern and we must help them, whether we are in Paris or in the provinces, on our borders or in the interior of the country. Through our actions, we are trying to find solutions to the problems that affect our society, which affect communities here and elsewhere, and we are doing so in keeping with our values, with our message of universal brotherhood, which I am proud to help convey. ■

“ MORE THAN EVER, WE CANNOT TURN A BLIND EYE TO OR DISASSOCIATE OURSELVES FROM THE PLIGHT OF THOSE WHO ARE SUFFERING. ”

DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE CITIES IN ASIA

Today in India, Bangladesh and Cambodia, cities are literally exploding, due to the influx of people from rural areas whose land has been rendered unusable by floods or droughts. This situation, which further increases the vulnerability of slum dwellers, has prompted some of Secours Catholique – Caritas France's partners in Asia to become involved in urban projects. They fight to guarantee access to basic services and defend the rights of vulnerable urban communities by supporting advocacy actions carried out for and by them, and by documenting their situation.

In response to these challenges, in 2022 we decided to launch a regional project, 'Sustainable and Inclusive Cities', involving our partners in India, Bangladesh and Cambodia. Its objective is to contribute, through the action of our partners on the ground, to the creation of a community dynamic in shanty towns to encourage the people who live there to become involved in urban governance on issues such as sanitation and waste management, and the development of practices to prevent risks linked to climate change such as flooding.

We suggested to our partners that this project should have a regional dimension, to encourage the exchange of best practice on these urban issues. By linking up, the partners will be able to work together to develop a strategy for cities where overpopulation will become insurmountable in ten years' time.

A REPORT TO HELP UNDERSTAND ENVIRONMENTAL MIGRATION

Whilst it is difficult to estimate how many of the 281 million or so international migrants, listed in 2020 by the International Organisation for Migration, have left their country for environmental reasons, we do know that most of them are particularly disadvantaged people, forced to live in the areas most exposed to extreme climatic events. We also know that if nothing is done to tackle the causes of climate change, environmental displacement will affect 216 million people by 2050². Secours Catholique – Caritas France has a long-standing commitment to migrants and to helping them gain access to fundamental rights. We therefore wanted to gain a better

understanding of these new migrations by investigating real-life situations that our partners informed us about: Ovivashi Karmi Unnayan Program (Okup) in Bangladesh, Investigación y Comunicación (Eric) in Honduras and Caritas Sénégal in Senegal. The report "Free to Stay, Free to Go: Protecting Human Rights in the Context of Environmental Mobility" is the result of this study. Through personal accounts, experiences and analyses, it documents the complexity of the socio-environmental crisis we are experiencing and highlights the extent to which the people affected have no adequate protection, either in their own countries or across borders.

Faced with these realities, our four associations advocate a human rights-based approach to environmental mobility. This involves implementing legal frameworks and agreements to guarantee safe migration routes for people who want to leave, and at the same time taking action against the causes of the changes that are making the land uninhabitable, so that those who want to stay can do so. Secours Catholique supports this advocacy at international level, and each of the three partners supports it in their respective countries.

At the time of its publication on 25 September, the report received extensive media coverage and was the subject of a number of events,

including one organised at the Académie du Climat in Paris on 26 September, with the three partners taking part.

The report's findings and recommendations fed into the plea made at the Global Forum on Migration and Development summit in 2024, chaired by France.

“281 MILLION OR SO INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS HAVE LEFT THEIR COUNTRY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL REASONS IN 2020.”

2 Source: World Bank Groundswell report (2021).

THE RISKS OF CARBON OFFSET, THE BACASI CASE STUDY



ÉLODIE PERRIOT / SCCF

In 2021, the Diocesan Commission for Justice and Peace (CDJP) alerted Secours Catholique – Caritas France and CCFD-Terre solidaire to the impact of the Bacasi (Batéké Carbon Sink) reforestation plan being carried out by TotalEnergies in Congo-Brazzaville. According to the company, the objective of this project is “the sustainable development of a 55,000-hectare area, including the conservation of remaining forests, the planting of 38,000 hectares of trees over ten years and 2,000 hectares of agroforestry managed with local people”. According to the company, this project would enable “the capture of more than 10 million tonnes of CO₂ over twenty years”. But at a time of climate emergency, this practice is controversial not only because of its inefficiency, but also because it detracts from the efforts needed to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A dialogue was initiated in 2022 with the people in charge of the project at TotalEnergies and field missions were carried out by the local partner, CDJP. In March 2023, Secours Catholique and CCFD-Terre solidaire took part in a factfinding mission to interview people affected by the project. The testimonies gathered and discussions with the project leaders highlighted the failure to comply with several stages of the sequencing process imposed by the United Nations’ guiding principles: the Clip (free and prior informed consent of the population) and the environmental impact study.

Presented at a press conference in October 2023, the report entitled “Carbon offsetting at the cost of human rights” had a twofold objective. On the one hand, to support those affected by trying to change the project, and on the other, the documentation of a concrete case to feed our international advocacy

aiming at highlighting these false solutions which allow companies to compensate for their CO₂ emissions instead of implementing an effective reduction of their greenhouse gas emissions. These projects to offset carbon through afforestation must not be carried out at the expense of human and environmental rights, and their effectiveness over the very long term (10 to 20 years) is uncertain, given the extreme vulnerability of artificial forests.

PROGRESS MADE AT COP 28

In 2023, Secours Catholique – Caritas France took part in COP 28, which was held from 30 November to 13 December in Dubai, UAE. With our partners, we reiterated the urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions worldwide and called for regulation of the carbon market and the resulting offset projects, such as afforestation. We also supported the associations that have long been working to set up a special fund to compensate for losses and damage, both material and non-material, on land that has already been lost or will be lost in the future.

These proposals were defended by the Climate Action Network (a group of French associations of which SCCF is a member) at a press conference for the opening of COP 28, in which Secours Catholique took part. Secours Catholique, along with other experts, also took part in a one-hour radio programme on RCF recorded live from Dubai.

While the commitments made in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions have been very disappointing, we must nevertheless acknowledge the major advance in terms of climate financing, through making the fund work to finance losses and damage linked to the effects of climate change. The creation of this fund, with an immediate addition of 770 million, marks the culmination of 30 years relentless struggle by developing countries.

However, the value of the first one-off contributions remains derisory in relation to the needs of vulnerable countries to cope with the most severe impacts of climate change. Secours Catholique and its international partners will continue to monitor its implementation and management, which is temporarily entrusted to the World Bank. ■

DEFENDING RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS



ÉLODIE PERRIOT / SCSF

DEVELOPMENT OF THE AFRICA-EUROPE NETWORK FOR HUMAN MOBILITY

Established in 2021, the Africa-Europe Network for Human Mobility (RAEMH) is a continuation of an older network, the Regional Program for Human Mobility, of which Secours Catholique – Caritas France has been a member from the start. This network brings together ten countries from Southern Europe, North Africa, and West Africa, in other words the main departure, transit, and arrival countries for people on the move. Its objective is to enable all field workers to operate in a coordinated manner, develop action synergies, better understand political and economic contexts at regional, national, and local levels, and thereby continuously improve the quality of welcome and support for people at different stages of their migratory journey.

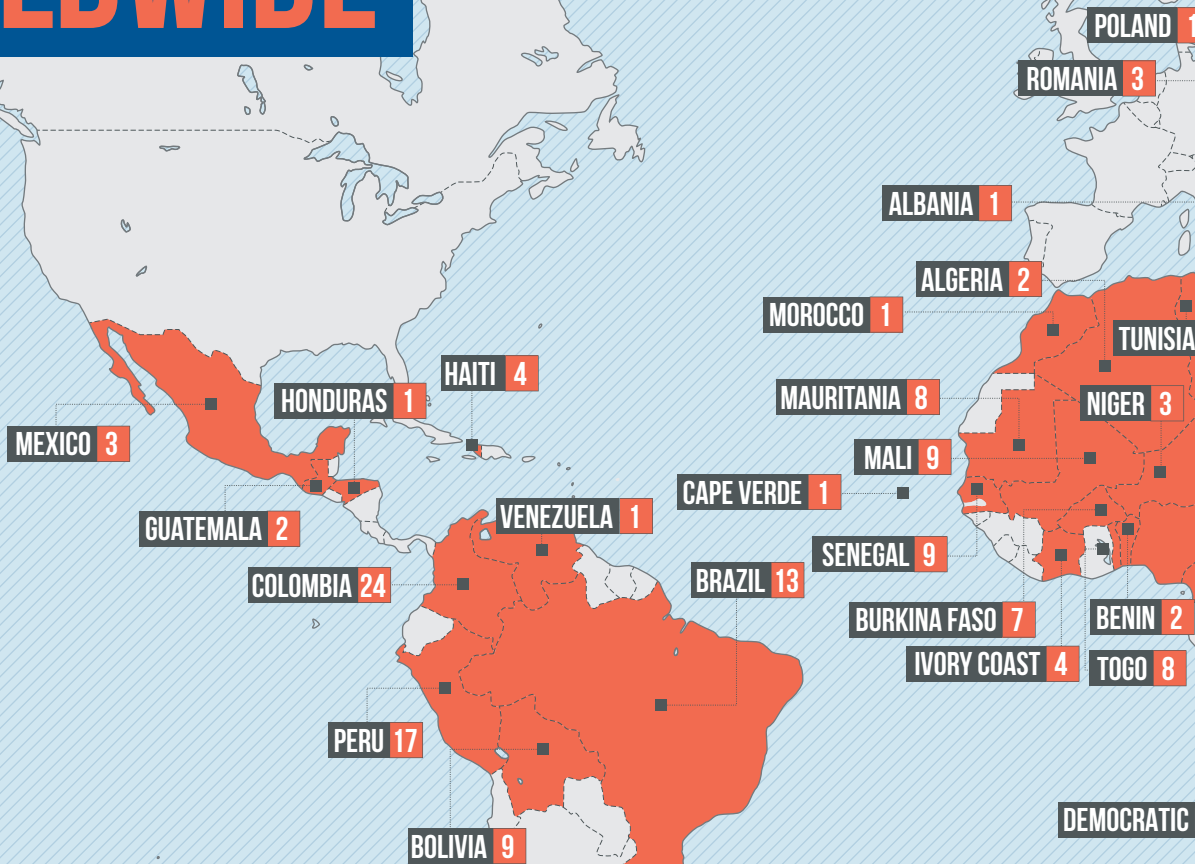
In spring 2023, an initial meeting of all member organisations was held in Senegal. It brought together around forty people, including Véronique Devise, President of Secours Catholique. Various themes were addressed, from data confidentiality and protection to the issue of returning to the country of origin and dealing with disappearances and

bereavement in the migratory context. The meeting also aimed to construct a “new narrative” around human mobility that is more respectful of people’s dignity.

That same year saw the creation of a dynamic internet page regularly updated with podcasts, videos, various articles, and a monthly newsletter. A data collection platform project was launched in several member countries: Morocco, Senegal, Guinea, and Côte d’Ivoire. Inspired by the system successfully implemented by Caritas Italy, it will allow teams at reception points and centres to record individuals’ data (identity, follow-up proposed by the organisation, needs identified, etc.) to improve tracking and keep a record in a secure manner. Another multi-country project is in preparation: it addresses civil status and registration of births at various stages of the migratory journey.

Various specialist missions were carried out during the year, including those of Caritas Mauritania in Senegal, Caritas Côte d’Ivoire in France, and Caritas Guinea with the partner in northern Morocco. »»

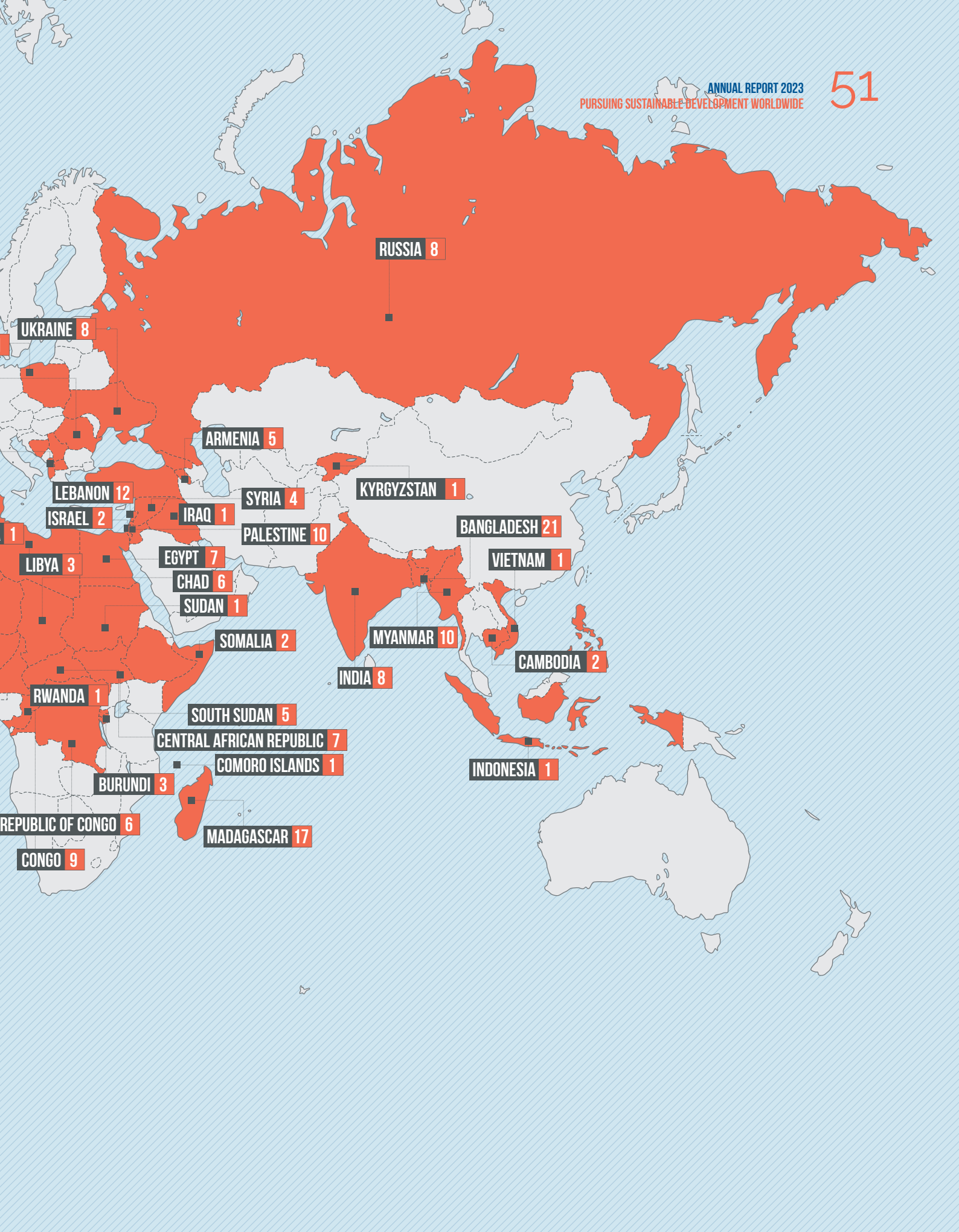
349 PROJECTS SUPPORTED WORLDWIDE



PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY REGION/INTERNATIONALLY

AFRICA REGION	11
LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN REGION	6
ASIA REGION	4
EUROPE REGION	8
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA REGION	5
INTERNATIONAL	19

COUNTRY NUMBER OF PROJECTS



COMBATING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION OF AFRICA

» As part of a program to combat violence against women, Secours Catholique – Caritas France published a survey in 2020 conducted with 1,800 women in Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In 2023, a similar survey was conducted in Burundi by our new local partner. These publications form the basis of the program to combat violence against women, whose objective is to address the root causes of violence and transform behaviours at all levels of society by developing genuine shared practice in the border regions of Rwanda, DRC, and Burundi.

In this year of fund-raising for the programme's continuation, a regional coordinator was recruited. Based in Kigali, her mission is to ensure coordination between the three countries, monitor capacity-building activities for stakeholders, and support partners with their fundraising in their area.

At the end of September 2023, Secours Catholique conducted a one-week training programme on site. This training was intended for the accountants and coordinators of the three partners to harmonise their practices on all administrative and financial issues and to encourage exchanges at this level within partner organisations. The aim of this training was also to secure the continuation of funding for the programme. In fact, partners are encouraged to diversify their sources of funding and to turn to local donors or organisations like the European Union or even UN Women by responding to calls for projects on themes relating to gender-based violence. The coordinator will assist them in this, as well as facilitating networking with NGOs working on the same topic.



ÉLODIE PERRIOT / SCCF

WOMEN VICTIMS OF CONFLICT IN COLOMBIA HAVE THEIR SAY

For 50 years, the Bajo Atrato region (Chocó and Antioquia departments) in Colombia has been plagued by armed conflicts between guerrilla groups, paramilitaries and drug traffickers for control of the territory. The peace agreement signed in 2016 with FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) has not put an end to this violence. This highly fertile and strategic territory, with its access to the Caribbean Sea, is much sought-after by large landowners who join forces with armed militias to take over the land of the local population.

In 2022, as part of the "Ensemble pour la paix" programme, run by a consortium of 23 organisations led by Secours Catholique – Caritas France, our local partners Cinep/PPP (Centre de recherche et d'éducation populaire/Programme pour la paix) and CDJP enabled a group of women to produce a report on the violence suffered during the conflict and the dispossession of land. This was handed over at the end of 2022 to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), one of the transitional justice bodies created under the peace agreement. Throughout 2023, awareness-raising events were held to publicise and disseminate the report. Carmen Maryinys Berbel Martinez, one of the report's contributors, came to France in February to make the voices of Colombian women heard. In November, the presentation of the report resulted in exchanges in the field between the French embassy, the general delegate of Secours Catholique and the women who testify.

SUPPORTING MIGRANT WORKERS IN RUSSIA AGAINST A BACKDROP OF CONSTRAINTS

For several years now, Secours Catholique – Caritas France has been supporting a programme to coordinate six NGOs working to defend the rights of migrants in their countries of origin – Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan – as well as in Russia, the country of arrival.

Creating a network enables these people to receive legal support and be informed of their rights and obligations in terms of migration in order to facilitate their integration in Russia. The return movements to the countries of origin witnessed at the start of the war in Ukraine slowed down or reversed in 2023, despite the risks of forced or abusive conscription.



but also to individuals. Those who are registered as “foreign agents” must make reference to this in all their communications, particularly on social media. As for the organisations themselves, many of them are no longer authorised to hold a foreign currency bank account (euros and dollars). This constriction of civil society is obviously detrimental to the smooth running of the programme, which is nonetheless being maintained. Because more than ever, migrants, who are officially welcome on Russian soil, are in fact faced with legal obligations (medical check-ups, registration, etc.) which, if not carried out correctly, can make them illegal. ■

during the administrative registration of new arrivals. But this resurgence in departures for Russia is happening against a backdrop of ever-increasing pressure on migrant aid organisations.

In Kyrgyzstan, 2023 was marked by debates on a new law, which was passed at the beginning of 2024, which obliges NGOs receiving funds from abroad to register as “foreign agents”. This measure is based on a law that has been in force in Russia since 2012 and was further toughened in 2023. Today, this “foreign agent” law applies not only to legal entities

BUILDING A STRONG CIVIL SOCIETY

TURNING THE PAGE IN CHAD

Co-created by Secours Catholique – Caritas France, the ‘Tournons la page’ citizens’ association in favour of democratic change has become the hub of a continental movement made up of 15 coalitions in French- and English-speaking Africa. The movement was most prominent in Chad in 2023. Faced with young people’s lack of interest in public policy issues, the coalition has endeavoured to make them aware of the risk of their disengagement being exploited, with a particular focus on the issue of gender, and in particular the inclusion of girls and women in participation in public policy issues. Three types of activity have been carried out in this regard. There was a radio programme to debate the conservation of civic space in Chad, with contributions from leaders of civil society associations. Despite the absence of invited government officials, the debate was intense and reached 500,000 people. A caravan to promote peace and stability in the Sahel region and in Chad left N’Djamena to travel through the

south and then the centre of the country. It opened up a dialogue between the authorities, the military and the communities in order to develop trust between the citizens and the armed forces with a view to improving social cohesion.

Finally, educational debates have been held in schools to discuss with young people, the potential drivers of socio-economic and cultural change in the future, and to reflect on issues related to living together.

EMPOWERING DISPLACED PERSONS IN EGYPT

The desire to contribute to social change and to empower communities is at the heart of all the projects supported by Secours Catholique – Caritas France in the Middle East and North Africa. The project carried out in Egypt in 2023 is part of this approach, focusing on improving the living conditions of migrants.



PAFA

Stars, an association 85% of whose members are former beneficiaries, supports around thirty local organisations in Cairo and its suburbs, small communities of refugees from the same country of origin, whose action and advocacy contribute to changes at neighbourhood level. One aspect of the organisational support project is to foster genuine participative governance by our long-standing partner so that it maintains its uniqueness as an organisation run

by and for displaced people. This is a guarantee of effectiveness in responding to the needs of displaced people, as the staff and volunteers of Stars are or have been confronted with the

same challenges. The project also aims to improve the actions and advocacy of the association so that it responds holistically to the protection needs of displaced persons and to empower the community organisations it supports. Finally, in line with Secours Catholique's strategic objectives of going beyond the North-South development paradigm, the project aims to disseminate Stars' best practices through its networking with French delegations and international partners of Secours Catholique.

“SPORT IS A VEHICLE
FOR LIBERATION.”

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH SPORT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

This new project, developed in 2023 by Secours Catholique – Caritas France and its partner FSGT (Fédération sportive et gymnique du travail), targets very vulnerable individuals due to their disability, gender, or refugee status. Entitled "Sport for All," the project was launched in 2023 and will run for three years in Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, and Jordan. It is based on the unique approach to sport that FSGT has been developing in Palestine for the past 40 years and Secours Catholique's aim to promote social transformation in the Middle East by focusing on individual liberation and community mobilisation. Sport acts as vehicle for liberation because by claiming their right to participate in sports, individuals realise they can mobilise to claim other rights in different areas of their lives.

The project will provide the five participating associations with tools to help them support the most vulnerable local communities in developing their power to act. Several activities are planned: theoretical training, practical experiments in liberating sports activities for all, and work to capitalise on the social

change observed. The long-term goal is to harmonise the intervention strategies of all partners, define a common foundation for regional actions, and facilitate the exchange of practices and South-South training, as well as with the French networks of the two project leaders: Secours Catholique and the FSGT. ■

MAINTAINING A BOND OF FRATERNITY

TESTIMONY FROM THE OPENING OF THE MAISON D'ABRAHAM

It was at the request of Pope Paul VI that, in 1964, Mgr Jean Rodhain, founder of Secours Catholique – Caritas France, created a place of welcome and accommodation for disadvantaged pilgrims of all religions on the Mount of Olives in East Jerusalem. Named Maison d'Abraham after the father of believers – Jews, Christians, and Muslims – this house is intended to be a space for fraternal encounters for all. Secours Catholique also provides social support to local communities facing difficult situations. The house is run by a multicultural team composed of a chaplain, Dominican sisters from Colombia and Africa, French-speaking volunteers, and Palestinian employees. Until October 7, 2023, the activities of Maison d'Abraham were steadily increasing, particularly with pilgrimages of people in vulnerable situations from the Saint-Laurent network, biblical sessions for volunteers and employees of Secours Catholique, and the development of support actions for Palestinian women in the neighbourhood. At the end of September, a two-day seminar organised

by Yisca Harani, an Israeli university specialist in Christianity, hosted about thirty Israeli Jewish people. Thanks to the open-mindedness of the participants and the Palestinian employees of Maison d'Abraham, this event was a success. A few days later, its happy memory was struck by the full force of an unprecedentedly violent war.

Maison d'Abraham was determined to remain open as a sign of support to its neighbours and partners. Its raison d'être in this environment of extreme tensions between communities and the exploitation of religions for political ends appears more evident than ever. If so many interfaith encounters can take place here, it is a testament that something is possible on a local scale. Thus, the veranda and the outdoor kitchen created in 2022 for local associations are fully operational. Several activities are organised there every week: educational workshops for children, professional training for women, and cultural events for neighbourhood families.

The war also confirmed the close ties between Maison d'Abraham and the French Consulate General through numerous exchanges, financial support for the house's female empowerment activities, and the recent establishment of a partnership to designate Maison d'Abraham as a gathering centre for French citizens in the event of extreme emergency.

Secours Catholique believes that Israel will never be safe as long as Palestinians do not live in peace and security in a recognised and viable independent state. ■



FRITS MEYST / MEYSTPHOTO.COM





ÉLODIE PÉRIOT / SCOP



REGION

IN PHNOM PENH: DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF SLUM DWELLERS

In Phnom Penh, the Cambodian capital, corrugated iron houses of the poorest neighbourhoods suffer from the rainy season and poor waste management. STT (Sahmakum Teang Tnaut), a partner of Secours Catholique – Caritas France, is working to improve the living conditions of residents by renovating houses with better quality materials or, as in Prek Takong 3, by building a wooden bridge to allow slum dwellers to avoid walking in sewage flowing from the high-rise buildings above them. *“The development of big cities like Phnom Penh benefits only the rich,”* observes Saran Soeung, director of STT. *“Businesses with money become owners of land where the poorest used to live.”* STT is fighting so that the poorest communities are not excluded from development policies that push them out of the city, sometimes 40 kilometres from their homes, in areas where infrastructure and public services like schools, access to water, electricity, and healthcare are sorely lacking. *“The insecurity of land rights for the poorest is a challenge in Cambodia, as are their living conditions,”* continues Saran Soeung. *“The poorest live near main roads; they suffer from health problems due to a dirty and polluted environment.”* To enable communities to improve their living conditions, STT is training about forty of them in environmental management and defending their land rights to obtain legal title to their land. Together, they advocate with public authorities for development that takes into account the poorest. ■



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RESPONDING TO EMERGENCIES

HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN PALESTINE

Since 7 October 2023, the date of the deadly attack on Israel by the armed wing of Hamas, the Israeli army has been carrying out an unprecedented response in Gaza. By the end of 2023, tens of thousands of people had been killed and injured, and nearly 2 million displaced in the south of the Gaza Strip, while the Palestinian population of the West Bank also faced violence and attacks from the Israeli army and settlers. Faced with this unprecedentedly serious situation, Secours Catholique – Caritas France has chosen to implement a three-pronged response.

A humanitarian dimension, through support for a two-part project with Physicians for Human Rights Israel (Phri), an Israeli medical NGO aiming to guarantee universal access to healthcare in Israel and the Palestinian territories. The first part involves a six-month medical response, in the form of the purchase of medicines and medical equipment for hospitals in Jenin, Hebron and Tulkarem, for a total amount of around €80,000. The second consists of looking after isolated people in one of Phri's mobile clinics in the West Bank, a service which has not

been able to continue in Gaza since 7 October, due to the drastic restrictions on the flow of humanitarian aid imposed by the Israeli authorities, and which has therefore been extended to the West Bank.

An Access to justice dimension through support for the Palestinian NGO Al Haq (which means "right" in Arabic) in its field investigations into crimes, as defined by international law and international humanitarian law, committed on the Israeli and Palestinian sides since October 2023. The documents produced will be used for legal research, as well as for advocacy and awareness-raising with stakeholders and international officials, including the UN and other institutions such as the International Criminal Court.

Finally, an awareness raising dimension in France with a public presentation of the Résistances Palestiniennes notebooks. Co-produced and

financed by the Euromed France network and Secours Catholique, these notebooks contain 21 articles, written in 2022 and published in three languages (Arabic, French and English), which evoke the daily reality and movements of Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza and Israel. Secours Catholique also chose to maintain the salaries of the teams of its partner in Gaza, the Near East Council of Churches (NECC), until the end of 2023, even if they were no longer active.

HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE GROUPS IN UKRAINE

In the early months of the war in Ukraine, Secours Catholique – Caritas France's strategy was to respond to emergency humanitarian needs and those of its partners on the front line to manage the influx of refugees or to help those who remained behind. But the war continues, affecting access to healthcare and other basic services more and more severely, and exacerbating pre-existing inequalities. The risk of exclusion is increasing for children, including displaced children, whose fathers are on the front line, for the elderly, or single people without resources, or people with disabilities, especially in the regions close to the Russian border, which have been subjected to occupation. The psychological situation of children is becoming particularly worrying, with emotional wounds leading to trauma, anxiety and loss of identity, while schools remain closed or have been destroyed.

In addition to emergency aid, in 2023 Secours Catholique has chosen to focus its support on projects run by national Caritas organisations and our other partners aimed at these particularly hard-hit groups. As a result, children from very disadvantaged backgrounds, some of whom are disabled or orphans, have been able to go on holiday camps. Isolated elderly people living in rural areas were able to spend the winter in acceptable conditions. Finally, thanks to the construction of underground shelters, schools have been reopened to pupils, and 16 "child-friendly" centres have been supported throughout the country.

Other projects, scheduled for 2024, have been developed over the past year. Multi-faceted psychosocial

“SOME ISOLATED ELDERLY PEOPLE WERE ABLE TO SPEND THE WINTER IN ACCEPTABLE CONDITIONS.”



CARITAS UKRAINE

support for traumatised children, assistance for isolated elderly people and the setting up of a rehabilitation centre for people with disabilities, offering speech therapy, assistance with mobility, etc. In 2023, we also supported the organisation of some of our partner associations so that they have the capacity to approach other sponsors and ensure the sustainability of their actions.

EMERGENCY AID FOR ARMENIANS FLEEING NAGORNO KARABAKH

Since the war in Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020, Secours Catholique – Caritas France has been supporting Caritas Armenia in its work with refugees in the province of Lori. This work is being carried out as part of a Nexus project that combines humanitarian aid to meet people’s basic needs with development initiatives to promote their economic and social integration. Following the sudden war that broke out in Nagorno-Karabakh on 19 September 2023, creating almost 100,000 refugees, we re-evaluated the project in order to meet additional needs, particularly for 2024.

From November 2023 onwards, this re-formulated project was implemented by Caritas Armenia’s network of local and regional actors. It aims to restore

the social and economic autonomy of 190 refugee households in the province of Lori. The Armenian government put in place financial aid to enable families to find accommodation and food for three months. But the refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh are not necessarily aware of this aid or the criteria for receiving it. Caritas Armenia supports them in accessing their social rights, referring them to state and non-state bodies and forming self-help groups. This is a very important step, given that many refugees from 2020 still do not benefit from this aid.

To enable people to integrate on a more permanent basis, our partner also helps them find employment or develop their livelihoods by paying them the micro-subsidies they need to start up a self-employed business.

Finally, the project includes actions to raise awareness in Armenian society of the situation of people affected by the conflict, and to lobby state and non-state bodies to improve access to services for displaced people.

CIVIL SOCIETY BLOCKED IN MYANMAR

In 2023, the humanitarian situation in Myanmar worsened considerably. The intensification of fighting between armed ethnic groups and the country's military forces has been compounded by incessant rainfall, which has caused serious economic and agricultural losses, exacerbating an already critical humanitarian crisis. By the end of the year, the United Nations reported that 2 million people had been

displaced within the country and that it was difficult to help them because of disrupted telephone and internet communications and checkpoints operated by both sides in the conflict zones.

For many years, Secours Catholique – Caritas France has been supporting a number of projects run by local organisations: projects to deal with humanitarian emergencies, but also agro-economic projects and land rights projects. At the same time, we provide support for the development and networking capabilities of the organisations themselves. This is an important issue, given the constraints on our partners since the NGO registration law was passed in October 2022 and came into force in 2023. Once registered, associations are subject to highly intrusive bureaucratic supervision that restricts their legitimate activities and imposes legal penalties for breaches of the regulations. Because of these constraints on civil society, many international NGOs have chosen to base themselves in Thailand, where they can obtain visas for their operational teams. Caritas Myanmar and other Secours Catholique partners are continuing to respond to the humanitarian crisis on the ground, often at great risk, particularly in conflict zones where access to the population is difficult.

OTHER EMERGENCY AND DEVELOPMENT AID

In 2023, Secours Catholique – Caritas France continued to help the victims of crises that have taken a back seat to current events in Ukraine and the Middle East.

Thus, in **Syria**, we continued a project to improve access to water for people in the north-east of the country. Following the earthquake that hit the Aleppo

and Idlib regions at the start of the year, we worked to develop emergency responses to the basic needs of the people affected, such as providing accommodation, food rations and medicines.

In **Somalia**, in an area bordering Ethiopia and Kenya that is subject to violence and climate hazards, we have supported an education project that involves renovating classrooms in schools, training teachers, teaching hygiene practices and raising awareness of girls' access to education. In this region, where the presence of armed groups is strong and that of humanitarian aid workers very weak, this education project offers children a protected place where girls and boys can change the way they see each other. Thanks to the support of the World Food Programme, the children and their teachers receive one meal a day. In **South Sudan**, following a project to help displaced communities in our traditional areas of operation, in 2023 we carried out a project to strengthen community resilience.

This project has several components: access to water, raising awareness of gender-based violence issues, and peace-building activities in a context of inter-community violence and an influx of displaced people from Sudan.

In **Colombia**, in the area bordering Venezuela, we have continued a project to support and promote the socio-cultural and economic integration of Venezuelan refugees, Colombian returnees and vulnerable Colombians.

CREATION OF AN AID FUND IN CASE OF NATURAL DISASTERS

In order to provide the most reactive and effective humanitarian response possible to the populations affected, Secours Catholique – Caritas France set up a fund in 2023 dedicated to international natural disaster emergencies, such as those that occurred at the end of the year in Morocco and then in Libya, where devastating floods left 5,000 dead, several thousand missing and an even greater number of surviving casualties: families left with nothing, no home, no papers, no personal belongings, no food, no electricity, no shelter and often no hope. In the context of this less publicised crisis, the needs quickly became enormous.

In Libya, we intervened via Première Urgence Internationale, an organisation already established in the country, and supported a one-year project

“MAINTAINING AID FOR VICTIMS OF CRISES PUSHED TO THE SIDELINES.”

aimed at restoring health, water, hygiene and sanitation services, a vital priority given the large-scale displacement of populations and the risk of epidemics linked to the destruction of sanitation systems. Apart from disasters like these caused by the elements, Secours Catholique also manages other lesser-known but equally terrible emergencies,

such as drought and lack of access to drinking water, which claim thousands of victims in Somalia and Syria, the cyclones that regularly threaten Madagascar, and the recent floods in South Sudan and the recurring floods in Bangladesh. These are all examples of emergencies where this new fund will help us to be more effective. ■

FRANCE AND INTERNATIONAL CONVERGENCE



XAVIER SCHWEBEL / SCF

APPROACHES TO CHANGE IN COLOMBIA

Secours Catholique – Caritas France has made empowering individuals and groups one of its priorities. Change-oriented approaches (COAs) are one of the management tools used to bring about the changes desired by everyone in a given community or area. They have been tested internationally since 2021 and combined with the ACSL experiments

(support for local social change) carried out by the network's teams in France.

Following on from Togo in 2021 and Palestine in 2022, in 2023 we supported a COA initiative in the Colombian community of Las Pavas. The 1,000 or so people who make up the community had been evicted from their land by the palm oil agribusiness industry, with the help of paramilitaries. Today, under

the legal framework of reparation for the victims of conflicts, these communities are managing to recover their land and hope to live on it (and make a living from it) in a sustainable way.

The COA procedure, supported by our local partner, enabled the members of the community to establish a shared diagnosis of their strengths (faith, resistance and peaceful resistance) and risks (inequalities within the community, uncoordinated actions, etc.). From that point on, they discussed their shared vision of an ideal future and defined the changes each of them could make to bring it about.

In June and October, this inspiring COA approach was presented to new key players in our network by members of the Latin America team and the Territories and Social Development department, as part of a local-global approach that Secours Catholique also wanted in terms of methodologies.

GLOBAL-LOCAL MEETING ON ENVIRONMENTAL MOBILITY

In 2023, Secours Catholique – Caritas France wished to revitalise the international activities within its France network, in order to raise awareness of the local-global challenges of poverty, in line with one of the ambitions voted by the Board of Directors in 2021. The publication of the study “Free to go, free to stay: protecting human rights in the context of environmental mobility” (see p. X) provided the opportunity for a first step in this direction on 27 September 2023:

a meeting between members of the France network and the international partners involved in the study in Honduras, Bangladesh and Senegal. These people gave very concrete evidence of the impact of climate change and environmental damage

to their daily lives. During discussions with the participants, they addressed the issue of the climate vulnerability cycle, a term that refers to the process by which the most vulnerable populations are also the most exposed to the effects of climate change, which further exacerbate their vulnerability and poverty. A number of initiatives put in place by partners to break this vicious circle were presented, including

the one developed in Honduras where, within two weeks of each other, hurricanes Eta and Lota had a major impact mainly on poor people forced to live in areas at high risk of flooding.

LIVING WELL, EATING WELL, HERE AND THERE

Eight million people in France suffer food insecurity, as do 30% of the world's population¹. These staggering figures call into question the viability of a food system that is neither fair nor sustainable at every stage, from farm to fork. How can we change things? By fighting for fair and sustainable access to quality food for all, as Secours Catholique – Caritas France has made one of its priorities, in France and internationally until 2027. In 2023, in order to make as many people as possible aware of the local-global dimension of our food system, we have provided our delegations with a kit in three parts: “Discovering”, “Better Understanding” and “Getting involved”. Interactive navigation between the sections reveals how public policies can contribute to the necessary transformation of the food system, what is the environmental impact of food choices, how to raise awareness and take action locally, and by what concrete actions our international partners and many of our delegations in France are helping to bring about structural change.

The second highlight of the year on this subject was the attendance of a volunteer and an employee from Caritas Brazil at the national session of the “Together, living well, eating well” programme, which was held in Montagnac between 10 and 13 October. The two guests shared their views on the issues of food sovereignty and farmers' struggles - the political dimension of food - and also on the link between ecosystems, food and spirituality. During this week of sharing practices and learning from each other, they were able to meet the teams and volunteers from the Gard and Hérault delegations, who are implementing flagship initiatives in the “Together, living well, eating well” programme, such as food baskets and solidarity grocery shops.

“ SHARED ANALYSIS AND A SHARED VISION OF AN IDEAL FUTURE. ”

1 Source: “Organisation pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture” (FAO).

RAISING AWARENESS OF ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE POOREST PEOPLE

The challenges of climate and fair ecological transition are at the heart of Secours Catholique – Caritas France's local-global approach. This is why international partners are taking part in the 'RevE' programme, developed within the network in France. The Action France and International departments are working together on two RevE initiatives: advocating a fair ecological transition with a view to bringing about structural change within the framework of a local-global cross-disciplinary forum for reflection set up in 2023, and drafting a benchmark document based, among other things, on discussions with our international partners.

To raise awareness of these issues, an event entitled 'La vie d'un jean' (The life of a pair of jeans) was organised during the Vendée departmental days, with a very telling demonstration of the environmental and social impacts of the textile industry through the different phases of the manufacture and life of a garment, illustrated by the Tunisian partner FTDES. The same was true of the Caritas Cap-Vert learning event in Champagne-Ardenne, which included a film-debate on Pierre Jolivet's film *Les Algues Vertes* (Green Algae). It was an opportunity for our partner Caritas Cap-Vert to address the very worrying current issue of access to drinking water.

DEVELOPMENT OF A 'GENDER APPROACH' STRATEGY FOR INTERNATIONAL ACTION

In 2022, the International Action and Advocacy Department (Dapi) of Secours Catholique – Caritas France initiated a gender awareness process in the projects it supports as well as within its own teams. Initially, the aim was to develop a common understanding of the key concepts of the 'gender approach' and its importance for those involved in social change, but also to identify the good practices of our partners, to pinpoint those that are already at work at Secours Catholique and to define the needs and outlook for the future.

Several inspiring projects have thus been identified among our international partners: the programme to combat gender-based violence in the Great Lakes region; the TAM association in Palestine, which implements programmes to emancipate women

and combat violence against them; the 'Together for Peace' programme that Secours Catholique coordinates in Colombia, which pays particular attention to gender equality and women's rights; and finally the projects of our partner in Indonesia, which works to protect female migrant workers. In 2023, Dapi's Gender Approach working group also led discussions with other organisations to find out about their practices in this area and compiled a resource file. This first year has revealed a shared determination to move forward with our other divisions and our network in France. In 2024, we will be supported by the F3E learning network to develop a strategy for integrating the gender approach into our projects and our internal operations at Dapi, in conjunction with the other entities of the association.

The long-term aim is for Secours Catholique to be identified as a legitimate organisation on these gender issues and for this dimension to feed into its work of social transformation.

Also in 2023, work was carried out within the Latin America division to see how to integrate the gender issue into projects carried out by our partners with indigenous communities, while respecting ancestral beliefs and taking care not to harm the balance of communities by disrupting them. This work was based on projects carried out in Peru with Awajun populations, and in Mexico and Guatemala with Mayan populations. ■

“ TO BE RECOGNISED AS
A LEGITIMATE ORGANISATION
ON GENDER ISSUES. ”

AN ORGANISATION THAT ADAPTS TO MEET NEW CHALLENGES

IN 2022 SECOURS CATHOLIQUE — CARITAS FRANCE EMBARKED UPON a fundamental transformation of its operating methods, to ensure that it is ever more in tune with the realities on the ground, and of its management methods, to better integrate, in line with its national vision, the diversity of the players who represent its wealth. This minor revolution, which will culminate in the adoption of new articles of association by 2025, has already borne fruit. For the second time, our delegations submitted their 'outlook reports', demonstrating a real interest in this new steering framework, which enables us to paint a complete picture of what is happening in the teams and the needs that are arising. In 2022, this initiative enabled us to highlight a single priority for the next two years: the development of volunteering. This vast project is underway. We have defined a vision: to enable all those who aspire to do so to have an impact on the spiritual, social and ecological transformation of the world they inhabit. Thanks to a new digital tool, deployed in 2023, we now have a map of the strengths and expectations of our network to harness and build upon these new forces.



CHRISTOPHE HARCOUES / SCCF

THE CHALLENGES OF VOLUNTEERING AND COMMITMENT

NATIONAL PRIORITY FOR DEVELOPING COMMITMENT AND VOLUNTEERING

In 2022, Secours Catholique – Caritas France launched a new management framework in order to better align the directions taken by the head office departments with the reality of what is happening in the network. Each of the delegations and directorates was invited to draw up a 'balance sheet and outlook': an assessment of the year and the outlook for the following year, in terms of actions, needs and ambitions. From the analysis of these assessments and outlooks, a clear priority emerged, at our Board of Directors meeting in February 2023: to make the development of commitment and volunteering the major priority for 2023-2024. Since 2017, the number of volunteers across the Secours Catholique network has fallen from 68,000 to 59,000, a figure that has remained stable since 2022. Yet awakening to solidarity is one of the missions of Secours Catholique as

defined in its statutes: 'Founded on the Gospel, the mission of Secours Catholique – Caritas France is a mission of love and awakening to solidarity, in France and throughout the world. Secours Catholique calls on everyone to get involved so that they can meet others, help each other and share the joy of fraternity. Its members are working to enhance everyone's ability to take action to ensure that everyone has access to dignified living conditions.' By prioritising the development of volunteering over the next two years, we are shifting the balance in this mission.

Defining a vision: our actions are built on a combination of political will and the drive and commitment of those who join us. So now we need to call on this drive and commitment to 'enable all those who aspire to do so to have an impact on the spiritual, social and ecological transformations of the world they inhabit'. That is how we define our vision. The aim is to encourage people of all ages and social backgrounds, students, working people, retired

people and others to get involved, from all regions and areas of France.

Defining a procedure: to answer questions about how to attract and retain these new volunteers, we have decided to look for expertise where it is already to be found: in our delegations. Between May and September 2023, we built an online tool, called GPS, which enabled each delegation to identify where they thought they had good practice to share and on the contrary, where they needed help, based on around sixty questions relating to volunteer recruitment, induction, training, motivation, etc. By the end of the year, the vast majority of delegations had played the GPS game, and a real picture

of the network's expertise had been drawn up. It enables us, on the one hand, to refer the simplest questions from delegations that need help to those that have the skills, in a sort of two-way exchange, and, on the other hand, to identify areas that need to be developed at national level. Some of these already existed and are already underway, such as the 'Tous acteurs' software programme, designed for volunteers' career paths. Others will be launched in 2024: external communication, training courses for employees who work with volunteers and the definition of new actions linked to ecology, a real lever not only for combating poverty, but also to encourage young people to get involved as volunteers. ■

MANAGEMENT AND METHODS OF ACTION REVISITED

REFORM OF THE ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION: COMMITMENT TO MEMBERSHIP

The reform of the statutes of Secours Catholique – Caritas France is another direction that the association set for itself in 2022 in order to adapt its methods of management to two of the main principles of the national project: promoting the involvement of all and developing the power to act.

Many of our delegations have already been experimenting with shared management since 2021, resulting in a reference document. The reform of our

Articles of Association, which date from 1962, is essential if we are to implement this principle of participative management at national level too.

It therefore involves broadening our membership base and setting up a Board of Directors

that is more representative of the diversity of people who make up Secours Catholique. This reform is also essential to bring us into line with the legal requirements for associations recognised as being in the public interest.

Since 2022, we have consulted our delegations very widely on their vision of these new Articles of Association, particularly in terms of the requirements for joining the association (whether or not to sign a binding agreement, whether or not branch offices have a right of veto, etc.) and to sit on the Board of Directors. The resulting framework will be studied and adopted at the 2024 General Meeting.

The opportunity that will be given to volunteers, whatever their profile, to join the association should encourage the development of commitment, our priority until the end of 2024.

REPORT ON THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE DELEGATIONS' RESULTS AND OUTLOOKS

For the second time in 2023, 68 Secours Catholique – Caritas France delegations and directorates took part in the 'results and outlooks' required as part of the activity management framework launched in 2022. This second round confirmed the delegations' appetite for this approach. This helps them to review the year's activities in each of their local teams, to evaluate their actions in the light of the ambitions of our mission and to establish priorities for the coming year. At national level, this invaluable feedback on the reality on the ground and the priorities that

“MOVING TOWARDS A BOARD OF DIRECTORS THAT BETTER REPRESENTS THE DIVERSITY OF STAKEHOLDERS.”



MATHIEU GENON / SCSF

emerge allow us to identify, quantify, and qualify the support needs expressed, and to implement support measures to address them. The 2023 edition did not conclude with a national dialogue like in 2022, but it did result in a consolidation report of all the assessments and outlooks. Published in December 2023 and distributed throughout the network, this well-written report recounts what the delegations are saying, what drives them, and what they are trying to achieve. The decision to produce this document was inspired by the awareness of having access to a real treasure: the richness of our network. In just two years, the process of our new activity management framework has taken root within the network, also establishing a productive dialogue between local teams and delegations, which together, through a participative process, define their action plan for the coming year.

CONTINUATION OF GOVERNANCE SHARING EXPERIMENTS IN DELEGATIONS

March 2023, the Board of Directors of Secours Catholique – Caritas France decided to prioritise one key area for the next two years: volunteering. Four major topics emerged from the national dialogue

and caught the Board's attention, including governance in delegations. This project began in 2019 when we sought to align our governance methods with one of our core principles: taking into account the voices of those experiencing poverty and developing their power to act. Capitalising on the experience of shared governance gained by several delegations resulted in a benchmark text validated by our Board of Directors in January 2022. In 2023, we continued these experiments in those delegations that wished to do so by referring to this common framework defining our major principles of shared governance. A team dedicated to supporting delegations in this approach was established at the end of 2023. This will enable us to continue observing what happens in the delegations and to capitalise on best practices for the network.

The transformation of the national governance of Secours Catholique, planned for 2026, will undoubtedly raise questions again about the way in which delegations are governed, as the expansion of our membership base is bound to have an impact on the life of the association at local level.

A NEW MANDATE FOR THE NATIONAL ANIMATION COUNCIL (CAN)

The CAN, a consultative body of Secours Catholique – Caritas France, is equally composed of people with experiences of vulnerability, of leadership or administration, or of responsibility. In 2022, it took time to reflect on individual and collective experiences during its first term of office. With this capitalisation work completed, the CAN embarked on a new two-year mandate in 2023. After working on shared governance from 2018 to 2020 and on the advocacy style of Secours Catholique from 2020 to 2022, its 63 members reflected on what an environment serving justice and fraternity could be. This reflection was carried out in two phases: a four-day session in May 2023 in Chezelles, Centre-Val de Loire, and another

in November in Saint-Didier, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur and Corsica region. Wishing to benefit from external contributions and experiences, the CAN organised exchanges in November with palaeoclimatologist Valérie Masson-Delmotte, Director of Research at the French Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission (CEA) and co-chair of Working Group I of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) from 2015 to 2023, as well as with partners such as the Eco-Habitat Network and the National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRAE) during three workshops that demonstrated how social and environmental engagement is lived out in practice. ■

COMMUNICATION AND GENEROSITY

In 2023, a year overshadowed by an anxiety inducing economic context, Secours Catholique – Caritas France capitalised on its "Fraternal Revolution" now supported by actor and comedian Gad Elmaleh and continued to raise awareness about the real-life situations faced by the most vulnerable. This is a winning approach for building donor loyalty at a time when the charitable sector is struggling with a worrying increase in poverty.

THE FRATERNAL REVOLUTION CONTINUES WITH GAD ELMALEH

In autumn 2020, Secours Catholique – Caritas France focused its public communication on a call for a true "Fraternal Revolution", led for three years by

actress Annie Duperey. In 2023, this revolution continued with Gad Elmaleh, who lent his image and commitment to a new version of the film *Fraternal Revolution. What is Fraternity?* In these spots aired in November and December on various TV channels, the comedian, actor, and director joined other actors and volunteers of all ages, origins, and colours to explain what the fraternal revolution is and encourage everyone to get involved. His popularity and high level of goodwill, among the Catholic community and the general public, have brought a high profile to this message of fraternity, which distinguishes us and adds value compared to other associations. Visuals and a radio version of the film were made available to our delegations for broadcasting on their websites, sharing on social media, and airing through partnerships with local radio stations.



A PODCAST TO AMPLIFY THE VOICES OF THE MOST VULNERABLE

As part of its communication strategy aimed at changing perceptions of the poorest, Secours Catholique – Caritas France launched a series of "testimonies" and "reports" podcasts in 2022. The aim was twofold: to amplify the voices, experiences, and expertise of people in vulnerable situations, and

to bear witness to the fraternal revolution at work through the commitment of our volunteers in the fight against poverty. The podcast medium allowed us to share these topics with a new audience (urban, young, and enthusiastic about sound narratives and personal stories) via our website and especially via mainstream podcast platforms. In 2023, following on from the first series entitled *The Experts*, which featured four women in 2022, we produced *Parcours* (Routes. The podcast of lives that have something to tell you). With at least one episode released each month, this podcast aims to establish itself as the documentary podcast of Secours Catholique, raising public awareness of situations of poverty and giving voice to those who experience them through encounters, stories, and plunging into moments of their life. Echoing our 2023 statistical report on poverty, which focused on women's vulnerability, the first episodes of *Parcours* gave an insight into the daily lives of single mothers and the experiences of older women living on very small pensions.

REVEALING REALITY THROUGH FICTION

Released on 20th September, Caroline Glorion's film *Comme une Louve* (Like a She-Wolf) tells the story of a young, single, and vulnerable mother whose three children are to be taken into care. Present from the film's inception, Secours Catholique – Caritas France was very much involved in bringing it to life, notably by allowing the director to compare her script with the stories of the families we support and by participating in its financing alongside Apprentis d'Auteuil. We were immediately convinced of the powerful impact that a fictional portrayal of the challenges of raising children when money is tight, when work hours are irregular, and social services support is lacking, would have. The film's release led to several screenings and debates, providing many opportunities to engage and sensitise the public by introducing them to parents who shared their own experiences and the views held about them, with a highlight in September at the L'Entrepôt cinema in Paris during our traditional back-to-school event, where our partners and donors could interact with the director and Mathilde La Musse, who plays Lili in the film.

GENEROSITY IMPACTED BY THE ECONOMIC CLIMATE

As feared, uncertainties about the future caused by an alarming international context, inflation on energy and food costs, and increasingly tangible climate change have affected the generosity of Secours Catholique – Caritas France's donors in 2023. Donations fluctuated throughout the year, with an upturn from late September following the alarm call by Restos du Cœur and echoed by the entire charitable sector. All charitable organisations face the same dual reality: a sharp increase in needs due to rising vulnerability and an erosion of the donations needed to carry out our actions. The wave of solidarity generated by this call was unfortunately short-lived, and we end the year with a donation amount of €70 million, equivalent to that of 2022, excluding the €6 million of exceptional donations related to the Ukraine emergency, which were not renewed for the 2023 emergencies (earthquakes in Turkey and Syria, then in Morocco in the autumn).

Secours Catholique now hopes for state-level awareness of the limitations of the economic model of our charitable organisations when the combined effect of rising inflation and a tightening social protection system pushes more and more people into insecurity. This is the essence of our advocacy for access to decent income, whether through employment or social benefits, as well as to adequate housing and dignified, quality food.

“THE LIMITATIONS OF THE ECONOMIC MODEL OF OUR CHARITABLE ORGANISATIONS”

SLOWDOWN IN THE ACQUISITION OF BEQUESTS

The value of bequests made in favour of Secours Catholique – Caritas France was nearly €39 million in 2023 compared to €41 million in 2022.

This decline is primarily due to a lengthening of the time needed to process bequests, explained by two factors: the stagnation of the property market (many of our legacies

consist of property assets) and the general lengthening of bequest processing procedures. Bequests remain an important mode of support for Secours Catholique, contributing 27% of our resources. We therefore continue to promote this form of support and have been among the first to do so.

SUBSIDIES

In 2023, subsidies in France reached nearly €10 million, compared to €8.7 million in 2022, confirming the success of the strategy implemented by Secours

Catholique – Caritas France over several years to support delegations in their search for subsidies for their projects or investments through regional communication and fundraising officers. International subsidies fell sharply in 2023, due to the delayed payment of a grant of €1.6 million, which will be paid in 2024.

STRENGTHENING LINKS WITH OUR DONORS

In 2023, Secours Catholique – Caritas France abandoned its big evening of fraternity to get closer to its most loyal donors through events organised throughout the year. They were invited to a conference to mark the release of our statistical report on poverty in France, to evenings on the theme of committed savings and on the participation of people living in vulnerable situations, who came directly to talk about their day-to-day commitment to our teams, or to previews of the film *Comme une Louve* by Caroline Glorion. It is an opportunity to give them a better idea of the importance and diversity of the actions carried out by our network to tackle the various facets of poverty: support for families, access to rights, combating isolation, access to decent, sustainable food, support for people living on the streets... ■

“BEQUESTS REMAIN AN IMPORTANT MODE OF SUPPORT FOR SECOURS CATHOLIQUE.”

PUBLICATIONS

STATISTICAL FINDINGS ON THE INCREASE IN WOMEN'S POVERTY



The 2023 edition of the Secours Catholique – Caritas France report on the state of poverty in France was based on a representative sample of 49,250 households interviewed in 2022. It includes a special report on the growing number of women living in vulnerable conditions and a general analysis describing the socio-demographic characteristics, employment situations and living conditions of the households we visited.

THE CRAZY JOB... OF THE UNEMPLOYED



In 2023, at a time when the authorities claim to be putting the most vulnerable back to work, Secours Catholique – Caritas Catholique – Caritas France and the Aequitaz association have published the results of several years of research to bring into the open invisible and unpaid work (caring for a disabled child, a sick husband, dependent relatives, voluntary work, etc.) of people who are unemployed. This document is part of our call for recognition of these useful contributions that are vital to society.

PROPOSALS FOR A HUMANE RECEPTION OF UAMS



Secours Catholique and several associations such as Cimade, Gisti and Unicef have published a report containing 90 proposals for the humane reception of unaccompanied minors, from their arrival in France to their exit from the child welfare system, including their health, their education and asylum protection.

L'APOSTROPHE N° 12



In this 12th issue of *L'Apostrophe* magazine, the authors, all experts in the vulnerability they themselves are living or have experienced, offer a different perspective on the digital society. They speak of how links are becoming paperless and exclusion is on the increase in a world that is increasingly hiding behind screens.

DOCUMENTING THE PITFALLS OF CARBON OFFSETTING



In 2023, Secours Catholique and CCFD-Terre solidaire took part in a mission with communities affected by the afforestation plan in Congo-Brazzaville by Total Energies with a view to 'sequestering more than 10 million tonnes of CO2 in the course of 20 years'. The report resulting from the enquiry fulfilled its twofold objective: to support local people by changing the project, and to document and alert to the false solution of carbon offsets instead of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

A GROUNDBREAKING REPORT ON ENVIRONMENTAL MIGRATION



Secours Catholique – Caritas France has joined forces with Caritas Senegal, Equipo de Reflexión, Eric and Okup to study the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on the daily lives and mobility of people in Bangladesh, Honduras and Senegal. Through a cross-referenced analysis of these three cases, the report provides policy recommendations based on the reality of what is covered by the notion of environmental migration. ■

THE CARITAS FRANCE NETWORK



The Caritas France Network was created by Secours Catholique – Caritas France to unite the vastly diverse organisations it has helped to create, or which share its values, aims and principles for action that are all committed to fighting poverty for and with the most vulnerable in France and throughout the world, driven by a shared Christian belief and the determination to organise their in-house solidarity to support the spirit of innovation that is characteristic of them. By co-operating and combining the resources and skills of its members in the regions, it aims to promote all-round support and empowerment for people living in insecurity or exclusion. In the spirit of “promoting Christian charity” it is also committed to encouraging solidarity and fraternity with the aim of having an in-depth impact on the causes of poverty. www.reseaucaritasfrance.org

CITÉS CARITAS



Formed on 10 May 1989 by Secours Catholique – Caritas France, Cités Caritas is a not-for-profit association under the law of 1901 which has been working for over 30 years promote the inclusion of people in a vulnerable situation, those excluded from society or the disabled.

Through its activities (medico-social support, social housing, housing for asylum seekers, refugees and disabled people, housing support, adapted housing, adapted working, obtaining employment and integration through work, childcare, vocational training) Cités Caritas is helping to build an inclusive society that welcomes vulnerable people and sees their capacity for action and their participation as a source of wealth and life.

Cités Caritas is active throughout France, developing its activities in a spirit of innovation and seeking to respond to new social needs. Through its 148 programmes, 1,048 professionals and 225 volunteers, the association supported over 19,486 people in 2021. www.acsc.asso.fr

FONCIÈRE CARITAS HABITAT



Established in 2015, Caritas Habitat is a social housing property company which aims to develop low-cost housing that can then be used by non-profit organisations to fulfil their mission of supporting the most vulnerable with housing, accommodation and reception. As part of the social and solidarity economy, from the outset, it draws on personal and institutional solidarity-based savings to invest in property purchases: the construction of new social

housing, renovation or redevelopment of housing stock. These assets enable organisations that specialise in supporting poorly housed or homeless individuals, the excluded or disabled, to continue their projects. These organisations can be members of the Caritas France network (including Cités Caritas), or not.

After an initial launch, involving a series of acquisitions, Caritas habitat is now seeking new investment partners who, alongside its founding partners, will enable it to continue its work on behalf of the most disadvantaged.

www.caritashabitat.org

FONCIÈRE CHÊNELET



Foncière Chênelet was set up in 2009 to respond to the major social housing issues faced by people on the lowest incomes in rural or suburban communities by offering them high-quality eco-friendly housing. As certified social housing contractors, Foncière Chênelet builds high-quality, low-rent social housing, the majority of which is in rural communities.

www.fonciere-chenelet.org

RÉSEAU ÉCOHABITAT



The Éco Habitat Network was set up as an experimental initiative in 2014 by the delegations of Secours Catholique in Picardy, on the basis of their awareness that many home-owning families in particularly vulnerable situations do not use the public sector schemes available to improve the energy performance of their homes, thereby

reducing their energy consumption. The mission of the Éco Habitat Network is to network local stakeholders in home energy improvement (local authorities, businesses and volunteers) to help households on very low incomes carry out major upgrades that are 90% funded.

www.reseau-ecohabitat.fr

COMITÉ CHRÉTIEN DE SOLIDARITÉ AVEC LES CHÔMEURS



Established over thirty years ago, the Comité Chrétien de Solidarité avec les Chômeurs (CCSC) aims to maintain focus on the consequences of unemployment. By raising awareness in Christian communities and in society as a whole and by combating indifference through the voice of people living with unemployment, the CCSC invites everyone to act so that these people can regain full citizenship. With the support of Secours Catholique – Caritas France, the CCSC has launched a new version of its newsletter, *Vaincre le Chômage*.

www.ccsfrance.com

FÉDÉRATION SOLIDARAUTO



Solidarauto is the name of the network of community garages set up by Secours Catholique – Caritas France delegations in a number of French regions in order to provide people on the lowest incomes with personal mobility and to facilitate their integration into the world of work and society through second-hand vehicle sales, maintenance, repair and rental.

Since 2017, the Solidarauto federation – a network of community garages, an association under the law of 1901, has brought together garages licensed under the Solidarauto brand and supports people with plans for a community garage who wish to open a garage under a Solidarauto licence, in part thanks to the sponsorship of the project by one of its members and the partnership of a local Secours Catholique – Caritas France group. At the end of 2022, the federation brought together eight Solidarauto garages in France.

www.solidarauto.org

THE CARITAS FRANCE FOUNDATION



Founded by Secours Catholique – Caritas France in 2009, the Caritas France Foundation is France's first charitable foundation focused on combating poverty. Its core mission is to encourage the development of philanthropy and combat social exclusion via its member foundations, which currently total more than 100. It gives individuals, families and groups of friends the opportunity to set up their own foundations and ensures their smooth running by supporting the founders (choice of projects, the involvement of friends and family, etc). Its second mission is to raise funds in support of projects run by Secours Catholique- Caritas France, by the Caritas Network in France and internationally, or by other partners. In 2022, two-thirds of the funds raised were redistributed to the Caritas France network and projects elsewhere in the world. The Caritas France Foundation has supported around 1,000 projects in this way since its creation. Lastly, the foundation also supports research and experimentation. It presents an annual award to a young social sciences researcher at the Institut de France symposium.

www.fondationcaritasfrance.org

THE JEAN-RODHAIN FOUNDATION



The Jean-Rodhain Foundation is named after the founder of Secours Catholique – Caritas France. Recognised as a non-profit organisation on 1 July 1981, it honours Jean Rodhain's concern for theological and spiritual reflection on charity, by endeavouring to promote fundamental research to underpin and support the Church's charitable work. By exploring the new faces of charity to demonstrate its social and spiritual benefits, the foundation encourages the cross-fertilisation of experience and knowledge. With a special focus on the voice of the most impoverished and that of people involved with the diaconia, it establishes partnerships and encourages dialogue between theologians, solidarity activists and vulnerable people.

To fulfil its mission, it sponsors teaching and research on charity in seven French theology faculties (Jean-Rodhain chairs in Angers, Lille, Lyon, Paris Institut catholique, Paris Centre Sèvres, Strasbourg and Toulouse). It organises interdisciplinary symposia on themes linked to contemporary expressions of

charity and /or challenging charity's capacity to respond and innovate. It provides financial support for academic work (theses, research seminars, etc.) on charity related themes, with particular emphasis on work rooted in the voice of the people involved. It funds the publication of research work on charity related themes to promote its distribution amongst other researchers and those involved with solidarity and the diaconia. Finally, it supports initiatives aiming to develop a theology based on the voice of the poor, and those aimed at developing a theology based on the word of people involved in diaconia.

www.fondationjeanrodhain.org

www.servonslafraternite.net

THE CARITAS ALSACE CHARITY FEDERATION



Founded in 1903 by Msgr Paul Müller-Simonis to "improve the organisation of Catholic charity work in Alsace", the Caritas Alsace Charity Federation currently comprises 2,000 volunteers and 800 employees and is structured round two main areas of activity: its charitable work carried out by Caritas Alsace, and its facilities and services working in the fields of child protection, disability, the elderly and integration in the broadest sense. On the eve of its one hundred and twentieth anniversary, its new roadmap reflects a desire to open up to civil society, to modernise its operations, to make sustainable development an integral factor in its choices and to develop a new communications strategy. The federation also carries out the work of Secours Catholique – Caritas France in Alsace, working under the name of Caritas Alsace, Secours Catholique network.

www.federation-de-charite.org

UNION DIACONALE DU VAR



Created in 1983, the Union Diaconale du Var is a social and solidarity based economic union made up of 18 associations with a variety of aims (integration, family, accommodation, health, street emergencies) that fight against social exclusion, work together to promote human development and respect for all and take part in the Church's diaconal work in the Var by pooling their skills and know-how thanks to a general secretariat that supports its activities.

www.udv-asso.fr ■

GOVERNANCE AND CONTROL AT SECOURS CATHOLIQUE – CARITAS FRANCE

ON 31 DECEMBER 2023

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY of Secours Catholique – Caritas France has 177 members, including 151 active members (members who have paid their membership fee) – qualified administrators, presidents and vice-presidents from delegations, and one treasurer per region – and 26 honorary members. The age limit is 75 years old. 52% of the active members are men, 48% are women.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ecomprises 21 members, all voluntary; 12 are presidents or vice-presidents from delegations, nine are qualified individuals. They each have a three-year term of office, renewable twice. The board meets six times a year. The committee is made up of a president, two vice-presidents, a treasurer and a secretary. The general chaplain and the secretary general attend committee and board meetings, without voting rights.

OFFICE

President:

Véronique Devise

Vice-presidents:

Emmanuelle d'Achon,
Hervé Bonamy

Treasurer:

Bernard Alet

Secretary:

Régine Galmiche

OTHER MEMBERS

Pascal Bourgue – Gilles Cagnard – Denise Chalaye – Laurent Courcol – Marie-Laure Denès – Jean-François Desclaux – Marie-Annick Joly – Vincent Léonard – Chantal Nicol – Hervé Masurel – Bertrand Parmentier – Daniel Paul

Secretary General:

Adélaïde Bertrand

Chaplain General:

Père Hervé Perrot

Honorary Presidents:

Véronique Fayet et
François Soulage

LINKS WITH THE FRENCH CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS (CEF)

Delegation Presidents and Vice-Presidents are approved by the Board of Directors, subject to the agreement of the diocesan bishop concerned. Administrators, as qualified individual members are co-opted by the Board of Directors, subject to the agreement of the Permanent Council of the French Conference of Bishops and elected by the General Assembly.

The National President is elected by the Board of Directors from among those candidates previously approved by the Permanent Council of the French Conference of Bishops.

The Chaplain General is appointed by the Permanent Council of the French Conference of Bishops. The Executive Officer is elected by the Board of Directors from among a list of candidates approved by the Permanent Council of the French Conference of Bishops. The General Secretariat of the French Conference of Bishops and the National President, Executive Officer and Chaplain General of Secours Catholique – Caritas France meet regularly.

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

These committees offer advice and recommendations on the day-to-day running and plans of the association.

- ▶ Strategy Committee
- ▶ France Committee
- ▶ International Committee
- ▶ Resources Committee
- ▶ Audit Committee
- ▶ Appointments Committee
- ▶ Advocacy Committee
- ▶ National Coordination Committee
- ▶ Treasury Committee

IDENTITY

LE SECOURS CATHOLIQUE – CARITAS FRANCE

Le Secours Catholique – Caritas France is a branch of the Catholic Church in France, a member of the Caritas Internationalis confederation and a recognised non-profit organisation.

THE MISSION OF SECOURS CATHOLIQUE – CARITAS FRANCE

Founded on the Gospel, the mission of Secours Catholique – Caritas France is to offer love and awareness of solidarity in France and around the world. Secours Catholique invites everyone to engage with and support others and experience the joy of fraternity. Its members work to increase everyone's ability to act so that all people can live in dignity. The association fights against the causes of poverty, inequality and exclusion and proposes alternatives that serve the common good.

ACTIONS

In France, 1,060,000 people were supported in 2,500 centres. Internationally, 349 operations were carried out in 2023, in 52 countries or regions, in association with the Caritas Internationalis network (160 Caritas groups in 200 countries). Within one year, 2.6 million people benefited from international aid from Secours Catholique – Caritas France.

ORGANISATION

- ▶ On 31 December 2023 there were 72 delegations, divided into 2,800 local teams in mainland France and French overseas territories, covering the entire country.
- ▶ Network of 58,500 volunteers and 925 employees across the country.
- ▶ Three central facilities: La Cité Saint-Pierre in Lourdes, La Maison d'Abraham in Jerusalem, Le Cedre in Paris.

TRANSPARENCY AND CONTROL

The 2022 annual accounts, including the accounts on allocation of funds, were certified by our auditors, Ernst and Young, then submitted for approval at the AGM on 12 June 2024. They are available on the website: www.secours-catholique.org or can be obtained by writing to: Secours Catholique – Caritas France, 106 rue du Bac, 75341 Paris Cedex 07.

The auditor, in addition to certifying the accounts, carries out checks on 10 delegations every year. Along with the internal audit department, a total of one third of delegations are checked every year.



Give with Confidence

is a non-profit organisation that carries out checks on fundraising activity that targets public generosity. It devises ethical rules, issues the Don en Confiance label to non-profit organisations that apply, and carries out on-going and independent checks on their commitments. They are based on the principles of respect for donors, transparency, and the quest for efficiency, integrity and impartiality in three areas: governance, management and communication. In March 2024, Secours Catholique – Caritas France saw its Give with Confidence label renewed for a further three years.

WE THANK OUR PARTNERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT IN 2023

- ADP
- Afnic
- Agence de l'Eau Loire-Bretagne
- Agence de l'Eau Rhône-Méditerranée-Corse
- Agence de l'Eau Seine-Normandie
- Agence du don en nature
- Agence Française de Développement
- Axa Atout Cœur
- CAF du Loiret
- CGR Cinémas
- COFAQmc
- Comat Alco
- Comat Centre
- Comat Nord
- European Commission (Directorate General for International Partnerships)
- Communauté Urbaine Le Havre-Seine Métropole
- Auvergne Rhone Alpes regional council
- Ile De France regional council
- Pays de la Loire regional council
- DDETS d'Indre et Loire-Loiret
- DDETS du Loiret
- Direction générale de la cohésion sociale
- Charitable donations
- EDF
- Elis
- European Climate Foundation
- Femmes Forum
- Fondation Brigitte-Bardot
- Fondation Bullukian
- Fondation Caritas France
- Fondation CMA CGM
- Fondation Crédit agricole Provence-Côte d'Azur
- Fondation Crédit agricole solidarité et développement
- Fondation groupe EDF
- Région Sud

Foundations under the Caritas France umbrella

- Fondation Avenir solidaire
- Fondation Bruno
- Fondation des Épiniers
- Fondation François-Monique-et-Pascal-Bilger
- Fondation Giraffe-Formations
- Fondation Ponts-Neufs
- Fondation Tolot
- Fondation Xamafra

Foundation under the Trans-Atlantic Fund umbrella

- Fondation Denis-et-Jean-Verspieren

Foundations under the Fondation de France umbrella organisation

- Fondation Afnic
- Fondation Castorama
- Fondation Daniel-et-Nina-Carasso
- Fondation General Mills
- Fondation Guy-Nicolas
- Fondation Hardy
- Fondation JM-Bruneau
- Fonds Meryem

Foundations under the King Baudouin Foundation umbrella organisation

- Fondation Peters

Foundations under the Fondation Notre-Dame umbrella organisation

- Fondation Cesarini
- Fondation d'Orléans
- Fondation H
- Fondation Isabelle-et-Hubert-d'Ornano
- Fondation Macif
- Fondation Michelin
- Fondation Orange
- Fondation Saint-Irénée
- Fondation Sancta Devota
- Fondation Somfy – Les Petites Pierres
- Fondation Suez

- Fondation Vinci pour les cités
- Fonds de dotation Antigone
- Fonds de dotation gratitude
- Fonds de dotation Jeune et innovant
- Fonds Saint-Christophe
- Groupe Atlantic
- Jean-Lutz SA
- Journée mondiale de prière des femmes
- L'Agence nationale pour les Chèques-Vacances
- La Poste
- Le Havre-Seine Métropole
- Le Petit Futé
- Maisons du Monde Foundation
- McMillan Stewart Foundation
- Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères
- Ministère de la Culture
- Moneta
- Ouest-France
- Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities
- Sud-Ouest
- Sygmatel
- Symta Pièces
- Veuve Clicquot
- Fonds nouvelles générations
- Les Centres E. Leclerc

As well as all the authorities (municipalities, joint community authorities and departmental and regional councils) that support us.

We would also like to thank all the companies that support us through skills sponsorship: Atos, Astek, BNP-Paribas, EDF, La Poste, Michelin, Orange, Société Générale.

And, of course, we thank all the individual donors who enable us to carry out our day-to-day activities!



ENSEMBLE, CONSTRUIRE UN MONDE JUSTE ET FRATERNEL

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July 2024

FIGURES



€339M

IN FUNDS INCLUDING 84%
DEDICATED TO SOCIAL PROJECTS

2023 IN FRANCE



1,060,000

PEOPLE SUPPORTED
IN FRANCE



58,500

VOLUNTEERS
INVOLVED



5,000

CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS
SUPPORTED WITH SCHOOLING



2,500

RECEPTION
CENTRES



216,000

FAMILIES
SUPPORTED



80,000

PEOPLE MET ON
THE STREETS



14,000

PEOPLE SUPPORTED
IN COMMUNITY GROCERIES



20,000

PEOPLE SUPPORTED WITH
LEARNING FRENCH

2023 WORLDWIDE



2.6 MILLION

PEOPLE SUPPORTED
WORLDWIDE



349

PROJECTS IN 52
COUNTRIES OR REGIONS



27

EMERGENCY
INTERVENTIONS

