



CAPABILITY STATEMENT

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MIGRATION: MAXIMIZING BENEFITS AND REDUCING RISKS

The world has never been as mobile as it is today. Major global trends such as urbanization, the changing nature of work, climate change, demographic shifts and increasing conflict are all contributing factors. In this evolving context, migration is a key issue of our time and for international cooperation.

Helvetas develops and supports initiatives aiming to maximize the benefits and reduce the risks faced by migrants and host societies.

ABOUT HELVETAS

For 70 years, Helvetas has been contributing to efforts to promote equality and equity, advance human rights and enhance justice across the globe. We support sustainable development and humanitarian response in 35 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe and the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) region.

Founded in 1955 as the first private organization for development cooperation in Switzerland, Helvetas is now a global nonprofit with sister organizations in the U.S. and Germany. We are active in the areas of voice, inclusion and cohesion, focusing on migration, governance and conflict transformation; water, food and climate; and skills, jobs, and income, including responsible private sector development. Gender and social equity, alongside advocacy and policy dialogue, are priority transversal themes.

ABOUT OUR WORK ON MIGRATION

Helvetas adopts a holistic vision of migration with the view to leverage its development potential and reduce the risks and challenges it poses for migrants, communities and societies. Throughout the whole migration cycle, we rely on our partners and our wide thematic and sectoral expertise by covering the multi-faceted migration phenomenon (e.g., labor migration, forced displacement, climate-linked mobility, urban migration) across the world through standalone and migrant-inclusive interventions. Advocacy work and the promotion of an objective vision based on facts and evidence are integral.

Our approach

- The working field places people at the centre by adopting a **human-rights based approach**. It aims, on one hand, at strengthening both public and private sector duty-bearers to provide better services to migrants. On the other hand, it aims to self-empower the right-holders, i.e. the migrants and their families to know and claim their rights.
- Closely linked, we apply an inclusive **systemic approach** aiming to achieve meaningful and sustainable results, leading to profound and lasting changes.
- We promote a **migrant-centred approach** to analyse the implications of migration on the context and adapt our interventions accordingly. This approach is crucial since migration in its different forms is a reality in all contexts of Helvetas' programs.
- Projects focusing on migration also develop innovative solutions to the challenges of migrant inclusion and cohesion with receiving communities. In this sense, interventions promoting **social cohesion** are instrumental.

HOW WE WORK

Our primary role is to be a temporary facilitator. With our support, key system actors from local communities, public institutions, private sector and civil society work together to identify the causes of system failure and to transform those systems to serve people living with inequality and fragility.

The impact of our work is the product of a three-pronged approach — project work, thematic and methodological advice, and policy dialogue — at local, national, regional and international levels.

We foster synergies and promote learning and innovation through operational and strategic partnerships. Helvetas is a member of 77 professional networks and alliances and works with over 1,100 local partners to ensure solutions are locally owned.

Impact

- Helvetas has directly supported more than **1,340,000 migrants and/or their family members** (40% women) in 2023, facilitating their access to quality protection services and strengthening their skills and capabilities for accessing more decent and dignified employment and better managing their remittances.





Projects with Internally Displaced People in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Myanmar, Pakistan and Ukraine



Support to refugees and people in need of international protection in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Jordan, Moldova, Peru, Pakistan and Poland



Climate change and migration in Bangladesh, Madagascar, Mali and Honduras



Safe labor migration in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Nepal, Tajikistan



Children and youth on the move in North and West Africa

SAFER MIGRATION PROGRAM (SAMI) – NEPAL

Funding: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

Duration: 2011 – ongoing (phase IV)

Volume: CHF 38,328,521 (phase budget)

Institutional anchoring for safer migration in Nepal

The [Safer Migration \(SaMi\) program](#) is a joint initiative of the governments of Nepal and Switzerland. It aims to make labor migration safer and more beneficial for Nepalese migrant workers and their families, as well as for society as a whole. The program focuses on five main components: i) access to quality information and advice on safe labor migration, ii) access to legal services, iii) support for psychosocial services, iv) financial education and v) skills development.



Waiting line in front of an MRC in Sindhuli district.

Selected results

- SaMi has supported the establishment of 48 [Migrant Resource Centers](#) (MRCs), 18 sub-MRCs and one national MRC (NMRC) from 2011-2024. These centers provide the full range of labor migration services, including the processing and transmission of legal complaints and referring migrants to specialized entities where necessary.
- During this period, over 2 million individuals received information on safe migration through MRCs, while 960,832 people were reached through community outreach.
- SaMi staff collaborate closely with the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security and other relevant government entities at all three levels (federal, provincial and local),

which has helped improve Nepal's foreign employment system for enhanced protection of migrant workers.

Key insights

- It has been crucial to anchor the project's interventions at the institutional level to ensure significant and scalable impact as well as long-term sustainability.
- The three levels of government have increasingly taken ownership for improving labour migration governance by increasing budget allocations, integrating services, and strengthening inclusive policies, both within and beyond SaMi program areas.
- While 156 local governments (LGs), 38 districts and 5 provinces have been supported over the past 13 years, the current phase aims to gradually extend migration-related services to all 7 provinces, 77 districts and 753 LGs.

ENFANTS ET JEUNES SUR LES ROUTES MIGRATOIRES (EJM) – NIGER, MALI, GUINEA, TUNISIA, MOROCCO

Funding: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

Duration: 2022 – 2025 (phase I)

Volume: CHF 21,700,000

Transforming migration-related systems

Helvetas coordinates the [EJM regional project](#) that aims to support children and youth along migration routes in west and northwest Africa. The goal is to ensure that pilot countries have and apply a normative framework and capacities to guarantee children and young people on the move (CYM) protection, access to education and vocational training, and to improve their opportunities for a dignified life. EJM tests pilot approaches (community-based protection, inclusive education, MHPSS, migration route), including digital. These can be replicated and/or upscaled in future programmes.

Selected results

- EJM promotes an approach that strengthens existing initiatives, local systems and actors. By the end of 2024, more than 50 protection structures had been reinforced and about 1,500 actors had improved their skills.

- EJM provides direct support to CYM for case management and protection, access to education and socio-economic opportunities, reaching about 30,000 by late 2024.
- The needs of CYM are increasingly integrated into national and local policies and strategic plans.



Mobilization meeting with youth migrants in Bamako, Mali.

Key insights

- The [voice and participation of CYM](#) is of paramount importance and promoted at various levels: bottom-up advocacy, project governance, inclusion into national strategic processes (e.g., laws and strategies), and participatory action research.
- The project aims to [integrate these populations into existing educational and vocational training systems](#). An innovative conceptual framework has been developed to promote access to education and training in the context of mixed migration.

PANI JIBON – BANGLADESH

Funding	Own funds, CJRF
Duration	2012 – 2023 (3 phases)
Volume	CHF 3,700,000

Addressing migration in the context of climate change

This project aims to build resilience and reduce the loss of well-being for climate change-affected communities in the disaster-prone areas of southwest Bangladesh. It supports people in changing their approach to growing food and managing their water resources in response to changing climate con-

ditions. Helvetas also supports families to make informed choices about [migration](#). It involves informed decision making and skills development so families can also opt to earn a living without migrating or find a decent employment once they arrive in a new place. It also includes helping households make economically informed decisions about migration through smarter use of remittances.

Selected results

- Over 15,500 women and youth have made informed migration decisions.
- More than 78,000 people have been supported to carry out various activities (e.g. cultivating saline tolerant seeds, plinth raising, preserving rainwater) to improve their capacities to adapt to climate change.
- More than 1,200 local service providers and private sector partners have been engaged in climate actions.



A couple going to a different place for work from their house in Bardutola, Morrelganj in Khulna.

Key insights

- Promoting the agency of the populations, including the right to stay and the right to move, and applying a human-rights based approach are pivotal to ensure people are supported in their individual and context-specific needs.
- Our [in-depth case studies](#) show that migration is not feasible for everyone. Underserved communities may be less able to migrate since climate change effects impact their assets and leave them without the resources and services necessary to move.
- Adopting a “whole migration cycle approach” with both actions in area of origin and of destination is crucial to enhance coherence and relevance of the action.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF VULNERABLE AFGHAN COMMUNITIES (HRVAC) – PAKISTAN

Funding:	ECHO
Consortium	Handicap International (lead),
Partners:	Malteser International
Duration:	2022-2024
Volume:	CHF 3,029,464

Education for Afghan refugees

The project addresses the immediate and chronic needs of Afghan refugees in six districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The intervention provides health, education and protection services as well as enhances the resilience of vulnerable people affected by [displacement and local](#) hazards.

Helvetas is responsible for the Education in Emergencies (EiE) component of this project. The children of Afghan families are identified to enroll in the non-formal education (NFE) and public school systems through bridging and catch-up programs. A "surge model" approach is employed for the contingency planning and preparedness response in case of a massive influx near the borders. The NFE teachers' capacities are also enhanced in psychosocial support and children with disabilities are provided with assistive devices to enable them to participate.



Afghan children in front of an educational space.

Selected results

- The project provided NFE services to 6,683 vulnerable Afghan refugee children in 13 refugee villages situated in six districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).
- 40 Non-Formal Education Centers (NFECs) were established and equipped with teaching, learning and sports material.

- 70 teachers (39 women and 31 men) were trained in EiE, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), protection and class management.

Key insights

- Social, economic, and political barriers hinder children's education, particularly for girls. Interactive counselling sessions effectively motivate parents to send their children to school.
- Parents prefer nearby gender-segregated schools, leading to increased enrolment.
- Non-formal education complements UNHCR schools, enabling refugee children to complete primary education.

REINTEGRATION OF RETURNEE MIGRANT WORKERS (REMI) – NEPAL

Funding:	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
Duration:	2022-2026 (phase I)
Volume:	CHF 6,800,000

Social and economic reintegration of migrant workers in Nepal

This pilot project addresses the drivers of (re)migration and supports the social and economic reintegration of returnee migrant workers through public employment service centers established at the local government level.

The project adopts a two-pronged approach: (1) it focuses on the services required by returnee migrant workers and their families (demand side) and (2) it addresses the roles of the three levels of government in creating an enabling and protective environment for service provision (supply side), alongside the private sector.



Individuals in front of the information centre

Selected results

- Returnee profiling and case management system was introduced and piloted, reaching over 1,400 returnee migrant workers.
- 20 local governments and two line ministries in Koshi and Madhesh provinces have pledged financial contributions for reintegration and local employment initiatives.
- Pioneering qualitative research on experiences and influencing factors of returnee migrant workers commissioned.

Key insights

- The project applies an integrated approach that considers returning as a sub-system within the entire labor migration cycle, including return and reintegration, for sustained well-being and development.
- The Employment Service Centres (ESCs) at the local government level are the main point of contact and delivery of economic and social services offered by the project.

ECONOMIC RESILIENCE PROGRAM – UKRAINE

Funding: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

Duration: 2023-2025 (ongoing 2nd phase)

Volume: Total program budget – CHF 10,800,000 (Helvetas budget – CHF 1,200,000)

Improved income generation and vocational skills development opportunities for IDPs and conflict-affected population

The project's goal is for IDPs and conflict-affected populations to have stable livelihoods and reduced reliance on cash and in-kind support.

Activities aim to meet the immediate needs of conflict-affected population and strengthen the economic resilience of Ukraine by addressing the following issues: provision of assistance in economic stabilization; support for the sustainable development of small and medium-sized enterprises; mitigating the economic consequences of the crisis.

Selected results

- 98 micro business grants for restoring, expanding, or launching micro businesses and reduce reliance on in-kind support were distributed.
- 1,500+ business received support services through “Resilience Hubs” that provide access to information for entrepreneurs and individuals looking for funding or trainings.
- Support for Diia.Business platform (online platform established by the Ministry of Digital Transformation and run by the Entrepreneurship and Export Promotion Office) to ensure access to livelihoods and vocational training opportunities and capacities of related state authorities are strengthened.



Welding training

Key insights

- This program has been integrating long-term development strategies with humanitarian approaches to enhance sustainable responses to crises and improve the resilience and well-being of affected communities.
- Upskilling and reskilling displaced populations has been instrumental to make them competitive in the job market and the new emerging economic opportunities.
- Participatory community needs assessment was conducted to design appropriate response programme that meets people's needs.

STRENGTHENED AND INFORMATIVE MIGRATION SYSTEMS (SIMS) – BANGLADESH

Funding Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

Duration 2019 - ongoing (phase II)

Volume CHF 13,500,000 (phase budget)

Fostering systemic change on governance of labor migration in Bangladesh

In collaboration with national organizations, Helvetas has worked to increase the benefits related to labor migration and better protect migrants and their families through safer migration practices, effective use of remittances, and strengthened service delivery from both public and private actors. During the first phase of the project, the focus has been on addressing some of the key issues in the pre-decision and pre-departure stage of the migration cycle.

Selected results

- The first phase demonstrated positive results, particularly with regard to migration decision-making and migration awareness. 84,478 aspiring migrants participated in a two-day pre-decision making orientation and 940,000 people reached through mass awareness events on migration.
- In terms of access to justice, more than 2,000 complaint cases were addressed. 3,500 left behind families received financial literacy training to better use remittances and 68% of them established enterprises to reduce dependency on remittances.



A cost-benefit analysis session in Chattogram.

Key insights

SIMS builds on [initial achievements and learnings](#) by both upscaling and streamlining proven approaches, as well as fostering the sustainability and the institutionalization of the project interventions. To do so, the project focuses on promising practices such as:

- Relying increasingly on local authorities and communities in delivering safe migration information. A significant number already established a migration help desk on their premises and allocated specific budget for promoting safe migration.
- Promoting alternative dispute resolution mechanisms as a complement to formal mechanisms.
- Supporting the decentralization of the arbitration system to provide better access to justice.

MORE INFORMATION

Resources

- [Helvetas' migration web page \(including publications\)](#)
- [Blog posts on migration](#)
- [Products from the Safer Migration Project](#)
- [Products from our experience on migration in Sri Lanka](#)
- [Political Economy and Power Analysis \(PEPA\) Manual](#)

Learn more about our work on

- [Voice, inclusion and cohesion](#), including [governance and civic space](#) and [conflict transformation](#)
- [Gender and Social Equity](#) and [Advocacy and Policy Dialogue](#)
- [Urban Engagement and Humanitarian Response](#)

OUR EXPERTS

Our core team consists of highly professional, committed and multilingual advisors with many years of experience working in international cooperation across the globe.



Régis Blanc

Senior Migration Advisor
regis.blanc@helvetas.org



Aline Herrera

Migration Advisor
aline.herrera@helvetas.org



Tajmary Akter

Global Advisor Gender, Social Inclusion, Climate and Migration
tajmary.akter@helvetas.org

Our core team is supported by migration officers in our partner countries and migration-linked topic specialists on gender, human rights, conflict, climate, urbanization, skills, education and more.

WHAT WE CAN OFFER

- Support the design, implementation, adaptation and evaluation of projects.
- Thematic, technical and methodical advisory services and capacity development.
- Learning and innovation through applied research, documentation of experiences, sourcing of good international practices, and facilitating global exchange of know-how.
- Development and contextualization of methods, tools and approaches, including in-house tools to mainstream migration into programming.
- Training, coaching and process facilitation.
- Migration framework conditions and policy analysis, policy dialogue, and strategy support.
- Partnerships in consortia, joint bidding and joint project implementation.