



**SOLIDARITÉS**  
INTERNATIONAL

## OUR EXPERTISE

# FOOD SECURITY & LIVELIHOODS



In the world today, 842 million people are undernourished<sup>1</sup>. For this reason, **SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL** is working on the ground with those populations which are most vulnerable to food insecurity. In the 18 countries where we currently intervene, our local and international teams are recognized for their professionalism, as well as the quality of their technical and social expertise, which they adapt to each context.

**SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL** is committed to continuously improving the quality of its programs to best respond to the most urgent food needs and to improve populations' livelihoods over the long term. Our actions contribute to achieving the first of the 8 Millennium Development Goals, which aims to halve the number of people suffering from hunger by 2015.

1 | *The State of Food and Agriculture*, FAO 2013.

## STEP 1

### MEETING EMERGENCY FOOD NEEDS

In the event of a severe humanitarian crisis (natural disaster, conflict), and in order to prevent malnutrition, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL facilitates secure access to an adequate quantity and quality of food for women, men, girls and boys. Different types of support strategy exist, and the decision of which to employ is made according to the local context. The choice is generally guided by factors such as the level of food vulnerability of the affected population and the functionality of the local market. In recent years, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL has implemented more and more cash transfer programs.

When food insecurity is caused by a problem of accessibility to food and not availability, we prefer distributing money or vouchers equivalent to the market value. These will be exchanged for food or basic necessities from local markets, which in turn stimulates the local economy. Such responses are becoming more frequent since beneficiaries can use our help in the manner that best suits their real needs (1). Giving affected populations the choice is a step towards recovering dignity. These distributions can be conditional ("cash-for-work" or "cash-for-shelter reconstruction") or unconditional. It is only as a last resort, when there is not enough food locally available, that SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL implements direct food distribution (2).

#### 1 | BANGLADESH

##### CASH TRANSFER PROGRAM JAMALPUR

In Jamalpur district, heavy rains in June and September 2012 caused flooding that resulted in significant losses in agricultural production, livestock and infrastructure (houses, roads). Following a needs assessment and context analysis, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL implemented a combination of activities to transfer money to 3600 affected families through i) "Cash-for-Work" for the rehabilitation of roads and dykes and the raising of foundations for homes, ii) "Cash-for-Training" allowing women to acquire knowledge in order to be better prepared for natural disasters and iii) unconditional cash transfers for physically weak individuals unable to participate in other activities. This intervention had the dual purpose of improving beneficiaries' food security while rehabilitating access roads and basic infrastructure. Through this kind of emergency response, efforts are made to strengthen communities' capacity to prepare for future natural disasters.



#### 2 | MALI

##### FOOD DISTRIBUTION TIMBUKTU

The 2011 drought in the Sahel resulted in a large deficit in agricultural production. People in northern Mali saw their food reserves completely exhausted. Additionally the conflict in the Timbuktu region in March 2012 disrupted markets and led to a sharp rise in the price of basic foodstuffs. Thousands of households were unable to meet their basic needs and risked adopting detrimental coping mechanisms. In response SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL distributed over 55,000 food rations between August and December 2012. In addition, more than 4,000 pregnant and lactating women and 12,000 children received special rations to prevent malnutrition. In 2013, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL - while continuing to help improve access to food - started assisting with the recovery of agricultural production and fishing activities.



## STEP 2

### SUPPORTING THE REVIVAL OF FARMING AND ANIMAL REARING

Once the essential needs of the population are met, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL focuses on strengthening populations' livelihoods through the provision of support for their economic activities. Depending on the context and needs, different types of interventions are possible: cash transfer programs, the distribution of agricultural inputs (seeds and tools) and livestock (3), allowing households to regain their productive capacity.

Access to some essential services, such as immunizations and veterinary products, can be improved through specific support (4). Locally-recruited agricultural technicians can spread sustainable farming practices adapted to each situation. Simple improvements to technological processes, made without any additional cost to the farmer, can often lead to a significant and long-term increase in crop yields. Our programs also take into account water management problems in order to restore, improve and create efficient and economical water irrigation systems.

#### 3 | CHAD

##### AGRICULTURAL FAIRS BATHA

After a disastrous agricultural season in Chad's Sahelian strip in 2011, many farmers in the Batha region ate their seed stocks and sold their tools to meet their food needs during the lean period. In order to revive their agricultural activities and mitigate the impact of the drought in the medium term, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL organized fairs for agricultural inputs (seeds and tools) in several localities of Fitri department. 3000 vouchers were distributed to farmers who exchanged them for seeds and tools of their own choice. This mechanism, which is subject to strict controls to ensure price stability and the quality of seeds, also helps to boost the local economy by supporting selected local suppliers.



#### 4 | SOMALIA

##### CATTLE DEWORMING CAMPAIGNS CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN SOMALIA

Semi-nomadic pastoralists living in the arid lands of central and southern Somalia are exposed to many constraints: demographic pressure, insecurity, weather, price fluctuations, etc. The drought that hit the Horn of Africa in 2011 led to a sudden rise in malnutrition rates. The main objective in this region is thus to strengthen the capacity of residents to cope with recurrent shocks, including droughts. For most people, livestock is the main source of income and food. To strengthen the livelihoods of pastoral households, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL trains community veterinarians to organize cattle deworming campaigns. In 2012, 120,000 animals benefited from veterinary care, resulting in a reduction in the number of deaths among the animals belonging to transhumant communities.



# STEP 3

## PROMOTING INNOVATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS



In the long term, our programs aim to strengthen populations' livelihoods and their ability to deal with sudden crises. In rural areas, our programs focus on improving and securing yields on the one hand and on increasing revenue and helping diversify farmers' and herdsman's sources of income on the other hand, while preserving the environment (5). We support the improvement of processing and commercialization techniques for farming products through training, access to loans and the development of farmers' groups (tree growing, market gardening, dairy processing, crafts etc.). To protect ecosystems which are degraded and fragile from overuse of resources, activities aiming to promote the long-term management of natural resources are designed at the community level, respecting local customs and existing legislation. Considering the strong demographic pressure on urban zones in developing countries<sup>1</sup>, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONALE has launched livelihood projects in urban areas to reduce people's exposure to natural and social risks by diversifying household incomes through the development of job opportunities (support for micro-enterprises, urban agriculture promotion) (6) and improving their living conditions (infrastructure, access roads, markets).

1 | 1.2 billion people live in slums. By 2030, that figure will be 2 billion (source: UN-Habitat).

### 5 | AFGHANISTAN

#### COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES BAMYAN

Present in Afghanistan since 1980, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONALE works with farmers and cattle herders in the province of Bamyan. In order to secure and improve the livelihoods of the population, while respecting the natural resources that are increasingly threatened by climate change and over-exploitation, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONALE supported the establishment of a community-based system for the sustainable management of natural resources in the upper catchments of the Kunduz river, where about 74,000 people live. A participatory process has led to the creation of community groups to manage water resources and pasture use, and to promote agricultural techniques for the preservation of the environment. Innovative techniques are also developed with households to reduce energy dependence primarily related to wood (improved stoves, passive solar houses).

### 6 | KENYA

#### URBAN "BAGRICULTURE" NAIROBI

More than 60% of the 3.5 million inhabitants of Nairobi live in slums. Farming plots are scarce and the price of land is very high. After the rise in food prices in 2008, which led to the rapid deterioration of household food security, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONALE implemented a unique and very successful program: "bagriculture". Supported by our technical teams, families grow short-cycle vegetables (spinach, cabbage and amaranth) in pierced bags filled with soil. Three bags produce three to four meals per week for a family of five. 80% of the production is directly consumed, whilst the surplus is sold to cover other expenses such as education for children or healthcare. Women's and youth groups have been created around this innovative technique, which is cheap and has a high economic and social impact.



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