

ANNUAL
REPORT
2015

Always there,
also when the cameras
have gone





26.660

SYMPATHIZERS
PROVIDE US WITH
FINANCIAL BACKING

300

VOLUNTEERS
AND MORE HELP WITH
THE RECEPTION OF ASYLUM
SEEKERS IN BELGIUM

350.000

VICTIMS
OF THE EARTHQUAKE IN NEPAL
RECEIVE EMERGENCY AID
THROUGH OUR CARITAS NETWORK

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31 December 2015

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A word from the president



Dear reader,

Escaping war or intolerance, refugees play a primary role in our annual report for 2015, a year remembered, here and elsewhere, as "the worst refugee crisis since the Second World War".

I met hundreds of refugees in camps in Jordan and in the gardens of parishes in Amman. With approximately twelve square meters per family, they have been waiting since August 2014 for a visa that can offer them a safe haven, schooling, medical care... In short, they are waiting for a dignified life for their children. Do these refugees not remind us of those who, on the eve of the two world wars, fled the invasion on our roads, in long lines, suitcases in hand or piled on handcarts? Not a great deal has changed since then, but not everything has remained the same either. We now have a Pope who, with determination and by example, is returning the Church to the hour of the gospel. To rediscover the essence of the gospel, to preach love before rules, to look at human beings without prejudice or judgments, is this not precisely the work of Caritas around the world?

In Belgium, as elsewhere, Caritas feels it is important that all teams are made up of people who want to achieve a common goal: to help the most vulnerable people, the excluded, to sustainably integrate and to participate in a more just society. These people come from different backgrounds, have different skills and even different convictions, but together they form the real teams of this armada for peace and justice that must be the social arm of the universal Church.

However, such a fleet could not stay the course without well-organized logistics, a constant supply of help for castaways adrift. It is you who make this possible, you who in 2015, with great success that exceeded our expectations, heard our calls in favour of migrants and the education of refugee children in Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon. It is you who have responded with commitment and boundless generosity, far from clichés and slogans, giving your time, money or lending your voice to those who do not have one. To change lives for the better, in both the North and the South. You will discover the extent of this in the following pages.

You may note that the structure of this report differs from previous ones. Instead of focusing on their own activities, the departments have chosen to highlight the ones they share, the ones that bring them closer. The 2015 activities of the full team of Caritas International are organized into themes for you to read about, two of which are education and advocacy, areas in which Caritas International shows a renewed commitment to help build a world of peace and justice, in which we are all members of one human family.

Happy reading,

Michel Verhulst, ir,
President of Caritas International



Acknowledgements

• All of our private donors

• All of our enthusiastic volunteers and supportive property owners

• The bishops, parishes and religious congregations

• Businesses, foundations and non-profits

• Our umbrella organisations: Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen / CIRÉ / 11.11.11 / CNCD / Ngo-federatie / AcODEV / Concord / Voice /

• The media, and in particular: Kerknet, Kerk en Leven, Braambos, Médias Catholiques (Dimanche and RCF) and La Libre Belgique (Move with Africa)

• Caritas Internationalis, Caritas Europa, Caritas in Belgium, Network Rechtvaardigheid en Vrede, Brabantia, the ERSO network, the Belgian Consortium for emergency situations and all of our partners in Belgium and abroad

• The schools and youth movements that participated enthusiastically in our activities

• Our collaborators in Belgium and abroad who, day after day, make our commitments a reality

• Our institutional sponsors:

The European Union

ECHO / DG Devco / Fonds européen pour les Réfugiés / Fonds Européen pour le Retour / Asylum, Migration and Integration fund (AMIF)

The Federal Government

Direction de la Coopération au Développement (DGD) / Fonds Belge pour la sécurité alimentaire (FBSA) / Agence fédérale pour l'accueil des demandeurs d'asile (Fedasil) / Ministère de la Justice (service des Tutelles) / Secrétariat d'Etat à l'Asile et la Migration, à l'Intégration sociale et à la Lutte contre la pauvreté / Centre pour l'Egalité des Chances et la Lutte Contre le Racisme (Fonds d'impulsion)

The Flemish Community

Departement Internationaal Vlaanderen: Vlaams Agentschap voor Internationale Samenwerking (VAIS) / Departement Leefmilieu, Natuur en Energie

The Wallonia-Brussels Federation and Walloon Region

Wallonie Bruxelles International (WBI)

The Brussels Capital Region

Actiris, Office régional bruxellois

The provinces

Vlaams Brabant and Luik

The towns and municipalities

Brasschaat / Diksmuide / Hoogstraten / Ingelmunster / Kapelle op den Bos / Kasterlee / Kruishoutem / Menen / Ohey / Olen / Oud-Turnhout / Overpelt / Schoten / Stabroek / Tervuren / Tielt / Wortegem-Petegem

Caritas International

Who we are

Caritas International is a Belgian non-governmental organisation. Within Caritas Belgica, it is the Belgian member of a global network of 165 Catholic organisations working together in 200 countries and regions.

Our vision

Caritas International works towards a world of peace, solidarity and justice, in which the dignity of each person is a fundamental value and wealth is shared between everyone. Caritas International is inspired by a Christian vision of man and society, based on the gospel. Every person, wherever they live, has the right to a dignified life and should be able to enjoy their fundamental rights. Access to healthy food, clean drinking water, medical care, education, employment and decent housing should be guaranteed.

Our work is founded on the values of solidarity and subsidiarity. No country or organization can solve all problems on their own. Only by joining forces can we expect to achieve sustainable solutions.



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Our mission

Caritas International gives support to victims of war, natural disasters and poverty, whether they are in their country of origin or migrants on the run. This is done in collaboration with the national and international networks that Caritas International is a member of. We carry out our mission irrespective of one's background, nationality, sex, political, philosophical or religious beliefs. Caritas International helps the most vulnerable people and supports them in finding durable solutions.

Caritas International and our partners provide effective assistance in the case of crisis. Following the initial emergency phase, we set up rehabilitation and development projects in order to enable the beneficiaries to become self-sufficient.

Caritas International receives asylum seekers and defends their rights as migrants with material, social and legal aid, whether in Belgium or in their country of origin. We fight against the injustice and difficulties that our beneficiaries face and work to improve the process and find solutions. We use our expertise to provide the public all over the world with information and education.



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01

Always there, also when the cameras have gone

In the spotlights

1 Crisis in the Middle East

Syria is in ruins. The conflict is bloody and persistent. For the past five years, cities and villages have been bombed daily. Some twelve million men, women and children have fled. The neighbouring countries are crumbling under the pressure of millions of refugees. Within the Syrian borders, many are deprived of help.

Helping, even in particularly difficult conditions

Sébastien Dechamps regularly visits the Middle East to meet and discuss with our Caritas partners on the ground. What he sees in the field are refugees who are trying to survive with the little bit of hope they have left and Caritas teams who risk their lives to give hope for the future.

Sébastien, is it still possible to work in Syria?

Yes, but it is not easy. It is still possible, because Caritas International collaborates efficiently with Caritas Syria. Caritas Syria is well organized and has proven to be a reliable partner, but needs a lot of additional support from the Caritas network to be able to adequately respond to the humanitarian crisis in the country. Caritas International finances the assistance of people who have fled from the inland areas towards the coastal regions. But we have to admit that the danger from violence and the large demand make the work in Syria particularly difficult, mainly in the regions controlled by Daesh and al-Nusra, where we cannot sufficiently assist the population. The crisis also affects the colleagues and volunteers of Caritas. In order to protect their families, some of them consider fleeing themselves, if they have the money.

And in the neighbouring countries?

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, Caritas International has been able to contribute assistance in the region from the start. For close to five years, we have dedicated 2.3 million euros to projects for refugees in the Middle East – in Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. But not only for refugees. Caritas International, like other organizations in the region, ensures that a portion of the budget – at least 20% – is devoted to the most vulnerable among the local population. The crisis also affects them, as jobs are lost due to the influx of cheap labour in the market and rent prices skyrocket due to the large demand. It is important to avoid tensions between different communities as much as possible.

Today, we mostly talk about the war in Syria, but the needs in Iraq remain equally important...

Hundreds of thousands of Syrians have fled to Kurdistan in Iraq, a region that is relatively autonomous in the political landscape, but which feels the consequences of the conflict more than other regions in Iraq. Based on estimations, the region also hosts 2.8 million Iraqis, Yazidis and Christians, who have fled Daesh after the fall of Mosul. Some refugees are housed with friends or family, while others are packed into abandoned or unfinished buildings and small apartments. A small number lives in camps, totally uprooted: they speak another language and have different cultures. In short, the living conditions are miserable, despite humanitarian assistance.

With the support of Caritas International, amongst others, Caritas Iraq concentrates on the small communities. The situation on the ground is particularly difficult and often discouraging, especially for the refugees. They are starting to realize that it is unlikely that they will be able to return home soon, or reunite with family and friends. This is also the case for many Caritas colleagues, who continue to motivate and commit themselves to their teams, despite having also fled dangerous areas.

“The international community seems unable to find adequate solutions while the arms dealers continue to achieve their interests.”

Pope Francis during the meeting on the humanitarian crisis in the Middle East, organized by the Pontifical Council Cor Unum, where the bishops of the region shared what they have witnessed. Many other Catholic organizations also participated, including Caritas International. September 17, 2015.

Our projects in 2015

Iraq

Adapted diet, nutrition classes and medical assistance

- Northern Iraq (Erbil, Alqosh, Kirkuk) and Baghdad
- 27.425 people
- July 2015 to June 2016
- Caritas Network: € 2.165.667
- Caritas International: € 450.000

Jordan

Nutrition and basic needs, medical and psychological care

- Different cities (Amman, Irbid, Zarqa, Madaba, Karak, Mafrq)
- 24.000 people
- January to December 2015
- Caritas Network: € 2.139.950
- Caritas International: € 150.000



Syria

Nutrition and basic needs, medical and psychological care, 500 school kits

- Coastal regions
- 20.000 displaced persons
- August to December 2015
- Caritas International: € 100.000

Uniforms, school supplies and financial contribution for classes

- Damascus region
- 710 students in vulnerable situations
- Caritas International: € 50.000

Lebanon and Jordan
(regional project)

Schooling, basic psychosocial needs, social cohesion and income for vulnerable families

- Lebanon (Mount Lebanon) and Jordan (Amman, Balqa and Zarqa)
- 8700 children aged 3 to 15 (70% Syrian refugees, 30% local population)
- October 2015 to October 2018
- Budget for 1 year: € 2.759.569, of which € 150.000 was financed by Caritas International in 2015
- Interim results: by the end of December, 250 students returned to school in Lebanon. In Jordan, there were 1400. Caritas pays for their schooling, uniforms, textbooks and transport. The schools receive educational materials and their recreational classes are reinstated, which benefits the academic community as a whole.

Campaign 'Finding the way to school again'

600.000 Syrian refugee children in Jordan and Lebanon do not attend school. Without basic knowledge, nor social skills, they are condemned to a second class existence. Caritas International wishes to fix this. And so it became the goal of our campaign in September: to allow 8700 children in Lebanon and Jordan to find their way to school again.

For this occasion, we unveiled a new logo and a new house style, the results of a long reflection in regard to our identity, our mission, and our strategic choices.

On September 1, 2015, more than 200 volunteers and collaborators kick-started the campaign. They 'found the way to school again' by asking parents and grandparents in front of school gates in Belgium to support their campaign. 35 schools declared solidarity by attaching our campaign pamphlet to their class photos. With a television commercial, a letter to our supporters, publications on our website and a reworked campaign magazine, we tried to collect the necessary funding. Musicians, jubilees, parishes, and schools spontaneously jumped into action to help our schooling projects.

The campaign was crowned a success. In addition to our loyal donors, we received 5436 new expressions of solidarity. With the proceeds – € 1.531.734 – more children than expected can find their way to school again, both in Lebanon and Jordan, in Iraq and even in Syria, for several years to come.

Education on global citizenship:
Christmas on the run

Giving children a glimpse into the life of young Syrian refugees and inviting them to send messages of hope in a creative way: that is in short what Christmas on the run does. In collaboration with Caritas Lebanon, we have organized this act of solidarity for the second consecutive year. Children at school, in youth movements, in catechism classes together reflect on the situation of young Syrian refugees in Lebanon and the reasons that pushed them to leave their country. An informative folder is given to the supervisors. Then, the children get to work: they write a letter or card to a child their age in Lebanon.



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"We are also confronted with the question of the meaning, from a human point of view, of an appeal from a country that attracts and invites migrants because they would be, at times provisionally so, economically interesting and above all useful. We may wonder whether it is justified, in a general migration policy, to 'weigh' and select people on the basis of their material utility for our country. Attracting highly qualified migrants from 'third world' countries means an impoverishment of their country of origin. Does a human being have real value when it constitutes an economic gain for our country? Such a policy would wind up welcoming certain people and refusing others, even though these less qualified people and their country of origin could be helped if they underwent training in our country. It might perhaps be more appropriate, based on our Christian principles, to welcome the more vulnerable migrants who would not be welcome anywhere else but here."

Living together with refugees and migrants,
our brothers and sisters
(Declaration of the bishops, October 2015)

This second edition was a success: 3770 children together wrote 2368 cards. The letters and cards are full of drawings, photos and hopeful messages. "I hope the war stops soon and freedom returns to your country," wrote Ali. "We are all equal in this world," says Elisabeth. Caritas Lebanon distributed these letters and cards among a thousand young Syrian refugees in different centers and organized various educational activities around them in 2016.

The bishops call for solidarity

Invited by the Catholic Chaldean Church, Mgr. Harpigny, Mgr. Lemmens and Mgr. De Kesel left in September on a solidarity trip to northern Iraq. Their goal? To direct the attention of believers and, more broadly, the public opinion to the enormous pressure that weighs on religious diversity in Iraq, Syria and other countries in the region.

The bishops visited projects supported by the Church, Caritas International and the Jesuit Refugee Service. Rudi Vranckx, a journalist from the Belgian National TV, reported on their visit. The written press reported on the event as well. The bishops were astonished by the desperate situations of the refugees and by the atrocities that they had gone through. But the warmth with which the victims were welcomed gave them hope again. Upon their return, they raised awareness, called for prayer and asked for our solidarity.

As requested by the Episcopalian conference, the donations from Christmas 2015 were designated to Christians in the Middle East and refugees in Belgium, 45% of which will be dedicated to Caritas International's assistance programs. Furthermore, the bishops of Belgium openly took a courageous stance in the migration debate. At the end of 2015, they published a statement in which they questioned the migration policies that were based on the "economic value" of a human being and spoke in favor of the reception of people, including those with little qualifications.

2 Reception crisis in Belgium

Chronology of an announced crisis

In April 2015, the number of migrants leaving from the coast of Libya in a desperate attempt to cross the Mediterranean grew significantly. The number of shipwrecks also increased. By the end of April, more than 1500 died from drowning in only a few days.

On the ground, workers from Caritas described the situation: "For the moment, we are housing around 450 migrants from Eritrea, Somalia, and Syria in our three reception centres," explained Anna Cullotta, head of Immigration at Caritas Palermo. "Almost all of them wish to go to Northern Europe. But organizing the reception of such a large group, mainly with volunteers and without the necessary infrastructure, is exhausting. We have been working in urgent conditions for more than a year without seeing the light at the end of the tunnel."

Migrants flock to Italy as well as Greece. On the islands of Lesbos, Chios, Kos and Rhodes, the situation is alarming. Most of the migrants want to continue their journey towards Northern and Western Europe, along the Balkan route through Macedonia, Bulgaria, Albania, and Serbia. All of them are looking for safety. Caritas International supports Caritas Greece in the reception of refugees. The workers and volunteers of Caritas Greece distribute food and hygiene kits, provide legal information, offer social guidance and organize housing for hundreds of refugees.

"In the Middle East, as long as it is at war, a large number of people will wait to cross the Mediterranean: these societies are deteriorating and are being distorted completely. The combination of two factors is creating huge problems: the fact that the number of refugees who wish to flee the Middle East has increased, and the fact that a large number of people and especially children are not registered, either at birth or in exile."

Sébastien Dechamps,
Middle East expert for Caritas International

The situation at Europe's borders is alarming, but the European Union stays impassive. By closing and controlling its external borders, the EU forces migrants who need international protection to take routes that are even more dangerous, sometimes with the "help" of smugglers who are all too happy to exploit them.

Increase in asylum requests in Belgium

What happened was bound to happen. In July 2015, 2979 asylum requests were filed in Belgium compared to 1313 in January. The increase between April and July amounted to 130%, a record high. The majority of asylum seekers come from Syria, Iraq, Somalia, and Afghanistan.

In no time, workers on the ground and the Belgian government understood that the capacity of the reception network for asylum seekers (around 16.200 places and 2000 buffer places) was not enough. At the end of August 2015, the council of ministers decided to create emergency reception places for asylum seekers who fled war zones. "In the weeks to come, the total reception capacity in Belgium will go up to 28.200 places," State Secretary for Asylum Policy and Migration, Theo Francken, indicated at the end of August. The government called upon Caritas International to participate in increasing the capacity of the reception network.

The number of asylum applications registered in 2015 is 35.476. More than double the number of applications filed in 2014. Such a large number has not been seen since 1999 (35.778) and 2000 (42.691), at the height of the war in the Balkans. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that while the annual number of new asylum applications increased by 4 percent in Belgium between 1998 and 2014, it increased by 100 percent in Europe during the same time period according to Eurostat.

In line at the Immigration Office

In Belgium, the Immigration Office is a mandatory point of passage for all asylum seekers. There is only one office for the whole country, on the first floor of the building near Maximilian Park. The office registers applications five days a week. In one day, an asylum seeker can request asylum and have his fingerprints taken there, while lung X-rays scan for possible tuberculosis which, if detected, would force the asylum seeker to remain in quarantine.

At the beginning of August, some families were denied registration of their asylum application at the Immigration Office due to an overload of applications. They received a letter telling them to come back later. Because of this, these families did not receive the right to housing. With the help of Father Hugo, a local priest, we were able to offer vulnerable families – around thirty people – a place to sleep in the Church of Saint-Roch. Emergency reception at Maximilian Park took place in parallel with a huge wave of solidarity from Belgian citizens of all stripes. Elsewhere, Caritas International does everything possible to find other solutions for those it cannot house immediately.

A chaotic line

Quickly, we understood that the morning line at the Immigration Office was chaos. A large number of people are there, often with their (young) children. Many are sick or hungry, uninformed, and have been waiting standing up for hours.

We decided to put in place a team that is present 4 days a week to inform people about the queuing system and to explain the rules, but most of all to guarantee that the most vulnerable persons are cared for that day. Registering an asylum application is required to have a place at a reception location.

An improvised camp

In the weeks that followed, the reception structure was overwhelmed. At the end of August, a camp was formed in Maximilian Park. Asylum seekers were forced to sleep on the street. Furthermore, the Immigration Office reduced the number of possible applicants a day from 250 to 150. More and more people did not have the opportunity to register their request. The following September, the WTC II-building opened its doors and served as a pre-reception, managed by the Red Cross. We continue to inform the people in line in order to point them towards the emergency pre-reception locations.

More than 1800 informed

Caritas International started its permanency in the Immigration Office line at the beginning of September. In 2015, we informed more than 1800 people in total. Thanks to the collaboration with the Red Cross, we succeeded at guiding people towards pre-reception locations.

On December 20, Deborah, a Caritas worker, told the cameras of the Flemish television station VRT: "We are trying to identify the most vulnerable persons in line in order to allow them to enter the Immigration Office first, to ensure that they do not have to wait in line for hours. With 'vulnerable persons', we mean, for example, pregnant women, families with babies and people with a disability."

"There were lines of 300 people starting at 6 in the morning. The office doesn't open until 8. And in the waiting room, there were not enough chairs. People had to wait standing up... there were a lot of women and children. It was chaos."

Nadir, originally from Aleppo, Syria, in the beginning of August.



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A motivated team

Caritas International personnel showed an enormous amount of flexibility: social workers and coaches of various teams assisted the social services with their permanence in line at the Immigration Office. This enthusiasm and commitment illustrates the human qualities and motivation of our personnel.

Reception of asylum seekers

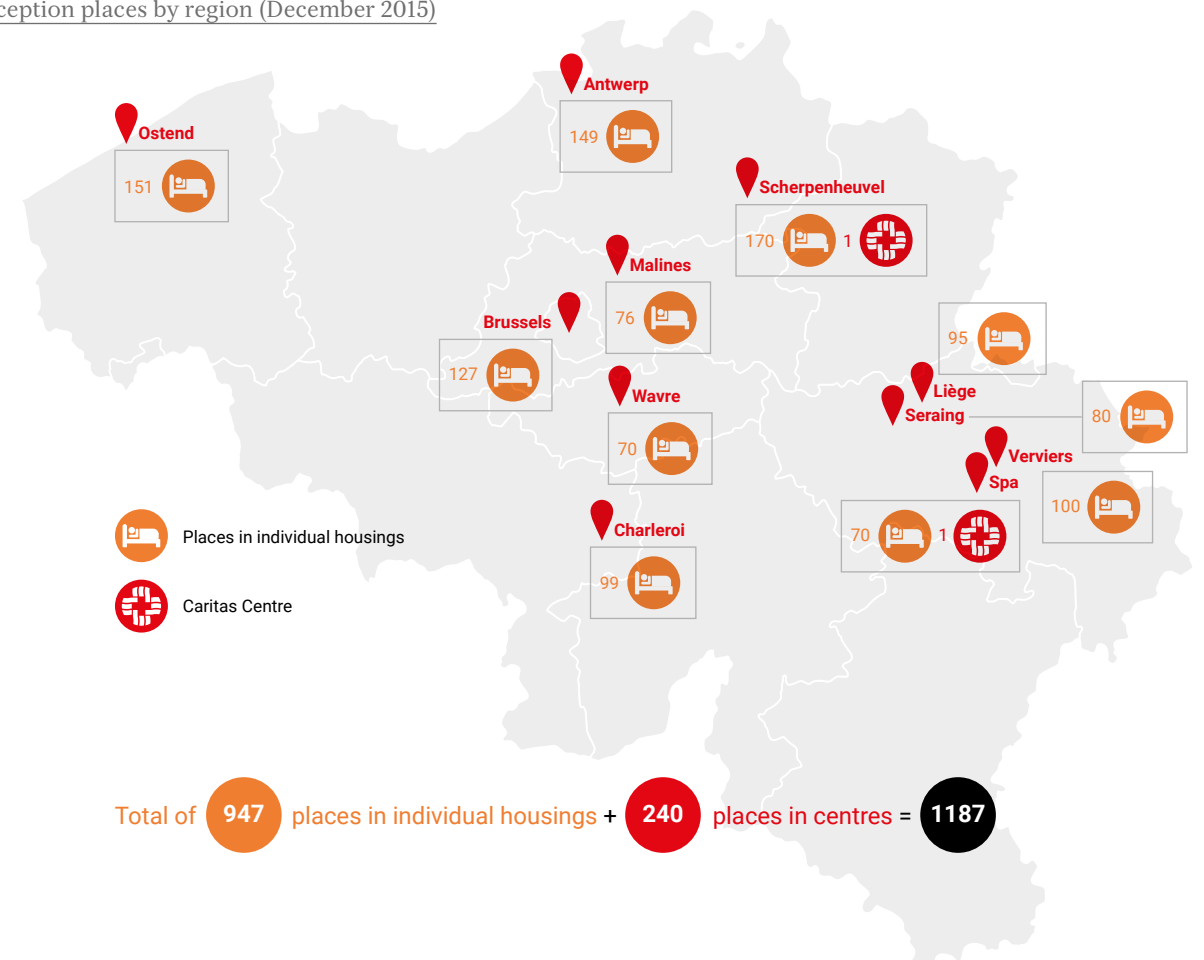
Emergency individual housing

In July 2015, Caritas International managed 461 places in individual housing. In the month of August, the 199 buffer places, also managed by Caritas International, were opened as well. Soon, we understood that it would not be enough. Caritas International started searching for supplementary individual housing.

Via our umbrella organizations, CIRÉ and Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen, we signed an agreement with the Belgian government that allowed the opening of 150 supplementary places. From August to December, we were constantly looking for additional accommodation to house asylum seekers.

By the end of December 2015, Caritas International had management over a total of 947 places in individual housing.

Reception places by region (December 2015)



Call for supportive property owners

On August 21, 2015, Caritas International, with the support of the bishops of Belgium, launched a call for supportive property owners. Their goal was to find property owners who wanted to rent out their place to us and help us cope with this reception crisis.

This resulted in a large surge of solidarity, with almost 500 additional rental properties made available. Our housing management contacted the landlords and visited properties every day in order to verify whether they corresponded with the legal criteria and to see if they were situated in the regions where we are active: Brussels, Liege, Seraing, Verviers, Charleroi, Malines, Antwerp, and Ostend.

"We were moved by the situation in Syria and wanted to help in concrete terms," commented Catherine, a supportive landlord. "We heard the call of Caritas who were looking for landlords and we passed it on to our friends. Thanks to our network, we found a charming little house to renovate. A group of motivated volunteers was formed and was willing to receive a family in Beauraing."

By the end of 2015, we had placed 134 people in 76 of these properties.

Emergency camping

The reception in individual housing was not sufficient to respond to the urgent needs of the moment. In fact, in August, almost 5000 people requested asylum in Belgium. We had to find other solutions urgently in order to avoid that families would have to sleep on the street.

This is why Caritas International signed an agreement with Fedasil, aimed at the urgent reception of a maximum of 750 people in 3 campsites in the Liege region until October 30, 2015.

These campsites are situated in Sart-lez-Spa (with a total capacity of 300 people), in Polleur (150 people) and in Amblève (150 people). The three reception structures opened in mid-September of 2015. Very quickly, our teams on the ground were supported by a large number of volunteers and local associations.

Initially, asylum seekers were accommodated in caravans, which allowed families a certain amount of autonomy and respect for their privacy, an obvious requirement in these difficult circumstances.

Later, the reception was also organized in heated tents. The network being saturated, this solution was better than refugees having to sleep on the street. But given the Belgian climate, this type of accommodation could not continue after October 30. For the people sheltered in these tents, we immediately started looking for alternative solutions. The first was to open collective reception centres in Scherpenheuvel and Spa.

"I had to help place children and pregnant women in these tents, in the middle of autumn. To see refugee camps in Belgium, it is unheard of. I never imagined I would see this in my life."

André, volunteer in one of our campsites



© Isabel Corthier

Urgent reception in collective centres

In Scherpenheuvel, an old nursing home allowed for the reception of a maximum of 174 persons. In Spa, a vacation site allowed us to host around 70 people, in collaboration with the Salvation Army.

In order to best inform the neighbours of these new centres and to try to respond to all concerns and questions, we organized information sessions and distributed information door-to-door. Here as well, colleagues from various departments came to give a hand.

"An exceptional response to an exceptional situation," commented Florence Lobert, head of Housing Services. "We always prefer individual housing but the conditions are such that other solutions are necessary. What is important for Caritas International is that we offer quality guidance to everyone that we receive in a way that is humane and allows them to live with dignity."

Integration of recognized refugees: housing priority

The Integration cell of Caritas International offers customized assistance to recognized refugees throughout their integration process. Two groups are targeted: recognized refugees with increased vulnerability (single mothers, persons recognized in a detention centre, the sick,...) and unaccompanied foreign minors (UFMs).

The Integration cell has several goals:

- To facilitate access to housing: bring people into contact with landlords, find a solution for the rental guarantee, educate on housing management...
- To facilitate access to services (the Public Centre for Social Welfare, community facilities, insurance, banking...)
- To help to activate a local network (direct people to local organisations, for example young mothers to a nursery...) and to enhance the social capital of the person (additional language courses, find a godmother or godfather who can support the person...)

Since July 2015, the number of asylum seekers has risen. Within a month, the recognition rate exceeded 60%. All these recognized refugees have to find housing. That is why, since August 2015, the Integration cell has focused on access to housing.



© Pauline Willot

#housing4refugees

"Everything starts with housing," comments Ariane Dewandre, coordinator of the Integration cell. "Once you are recognized, you have two months to find housing." But to find housing in the local market without knowing the language, without money is a very difficult challenge. "This is where we step in."

"Without housing, it is impossible to think about integration. Without housing, it is impossible to request integration revenue from the Public Centre for Social Welfare. And without integration revenue, it is impossible to convince a property owner to let his place to you. Caritas International forms the link in this, attempting to fill this 'gap' between material and financial aid. We can stand with and help refugees in their administrative procedures. We also help them move into their new homes, offer them hygiene kits and basic kitchen kits. Even a mattress if necessary."

Thanks to our call for supportive property owners, Caritas International has been able to offer a large amount of housing to recognized refugees or to those who receive subsidiary protection. From September to December 2015, the coaches of the Integration cell visited 6 to 7 units per week. A total of 76 moves were achieved, giving a roof to 131 people.

"We also work in collaboration with 12 Fedasil reception centres which also send us people searching for housing," says Ariane Dewandre.

Housing Café

In order to help refugees in their housing search as best as possible, Housing Cafés were launched in Liege, Brussels, and Antwerp, and are organized six times a week. During these meetings, volunteers and Integration coaches help refugees search for housing: through the Internet, by phone or by walking around.

Thanks to our volunteers and their local network, a number of families have already been helped.



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Resettlement

Resettlement consists of transferring refugees from a country where they have sought protection to a third country where they can receive the right to permanent residence. This measure offers a solution for people who cannot return to their country of origin but also cannot receive protection or prospects for integration in countries of first asylum. Resettlement is one of three durable solutions for victims of persecution, next to return to the country of origin and integration in the host country.

In light of the crisis in Syria, Belgium increased the quota of people to resettle to a total of 300 refugees in 2015. These are Syrians who fled the conflict in their country and took refuge in Lebanon, and Congolese refugees in Burundi.

These 300 people were added to the 66 others whose resettlement was planned in 2014, but could not be carried out until 2015. In 2015, 276 of the 366 people were resettled in our country. "Administrative delays in obtaining EU funds for the 2015 quota and the difficulty of obtaining exit-permits from the Turkish government for the 2014 quota caused many Syrians to arrive in Belgium very late," commented Elisabeth Verniers, head of the resettlement program of Caritas International.

In 2015, the Integration cell of Caritas International helped 167 people with their resettlement.

Caritas International works to integrate resettled refugees in collaboration with the local partners of the Public Centre for Social Welfare, using coaches and cultural mediators, 'life experts' who speak the refugee's native language and have the same cultural background.

Elisabeth Verniers: "We pay regular home visits, organize group gatherings between people of the same origin, offer legal and social support, and assist those resettling in finding housing when they have to leave the accommodation provided by the Public Centre for Social Welfare (after 12 months)."

Since 2009, Belgium regularly implements resettlement operations, in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the European Union. In Belgium, the partners are the CGRA, Fedasil, Caritas International and Convivial.

Between2worlds: the refugee crisis explained to students

Between2worlds is an animation aimed at students aged between 14-18. It encourages students to reflect on many questions: Why are there so many refugees in the world? Why is there a recent increase? What are the steps that an asylum seeker has to take once he has arrived in our country? What is really hidden behind these numbers? Why is this crisis going on?

This animation is also an opportunity to discover the story of the asylum seekers that Caritas International supports, as well as the migration stories of the students themselves, their family or their friends. In fact, schools often request that we visit classes with an asylum seeker or recognized refugee.

In 2015, 1299 students participated in 57 workshops organized all over Belgium.



© Johanna de Tessieres

3 Humanitarian crisis in Ukraine

The hostilities between pro-Russian separatists and government troops continued in 2015, resulting in different flows of refugees. In Ukraine alone, 1.2 million people have fled. The instability and human rights violations are not the only major problems near the front line in the region. Houses, schools, hospitals and orphanages are in ruins. Food, water and medicine are rare. The electrical lines and water pipes are damaged. In the best-case scenario, the authorities are overwhelmed with requests – in the worst-case scenario, they are paralyzed. Ukraine is experiencing inflation and a financial crisis that is all but paralyzing the economy. At the end of 2015, the number of Ukrainians in need of emergency aid due to the cold and violence was estimated at 5 million.

Caritas helps the most vulnerable victims

Caritas Ukraine brought a massive amount of aid to the center and east of the country: distributing food and water, clothing, hygiene kits and diapers for babies. They brought medical care and medicine to the sick and wounded. Furthermore, they organized psychological aid for children and adults. Thanks to financial assistance for rent, repairs or heating, they tackled the housing problem.

Caritas International maintained its winter program that reached 17.475 vulnerable victims: single mothers, households with more than three children or family members with a mental or physical disability, as well as elderly people without familial support. They live in the countryside close to the conflict areas and receive little or no support in comparison with people looking to find refuge in the city. People also moved further inland and are dispersed over almost the entire territory. Again, the local Caritas offices were involved to lend their assistance.

“We want to intervene where the needs are greatest. Among other things, this means that we bring aid to the elderly at home and we do not expect them to come to us for distributions. Today, we also remain true to our social vision. And we will always be there, even when the international organizations have left our country once again.”

Andriy Waskowycz, president of Caritas Ukraine



© Gilles Cnockaert

Informing and fundraising

The conflict is dragging on and although its political significance makes the news, international aid is lagging. This is why Caritas International organized, in collaboration with Caritas Europa, a visit to our partner Caritas Ukraine in the Kharkiv region. Eight journalists had the opportunity to see the humanitarian crisis firsthand and to discover the assistance offered by Caritas Ukraine. The crisis was also addressed in 'One Humanity, Zero Poverty' on RCF radio – a monthly half-hour program where we can bring up the topics we want.

The call for help by our Caritas partner, which for lack of financial means was not able to provide the necessary assistance, motivated us to raise funds using a mini-campaign. We did this, among other things, through advertisements published in *La Libre Belgique* and *Humo*, publications that give editorial attention to the situation. However, the earthquake in Nepal suddenly required our full attention. We had to change course and the response was lower than expected: € 36.000.



© Gilles Cnockaert



© Caritas

4 Global solidarity with the victims of the devastating earthquake in Nepal

On April 25, an earthquake measuring 7.9 on the Richter scale and several aftershocks caused countless amounts of damage in the cities of Kathmandu, Pokhara and the surrounding areas. Official figures cite nearly 9000 deaths and 23.000 seriously injured. The damage is considerable. When the earthquake hit, Nha Truc Le – our regional manager for Asia – was 50 km outside the capital of Kathmandu, attending a meeting with twelve Asian partner countries. “The quake was particularly strong. Everyone ran out. Dust and collapsed houses were everywhere. The oldest part of our hotel did not resist and collapsed. Fortunately, all participants are safe, but we were very afraid.”

First emergency services

From day one, Caritas Nepal used all means available. The organization knows the population and speaks the language. The teams were already prepared for possible disasters and to minimize the consequences thereof. Quickly, volunteers came forward to clear the rubble, host people, and distribute food. However, an earthquake of such extraordinary magnitude required global solidarity.

Over 30 organizations in the Caritas network offered financial support and/or expertise in the first few months. In collaboration with Caritas Nepal, we provided vital assistance in 15 of the most affected districts. This meant providing material for constructing tents, blankets, mattresses, hygiene kits and water purification kits. All of this was done in consultation with the authorities and other aid organizations. During this first phase, the Caritas network provided aid to 350.000 people.

The public is generous

A large number of people gave a donation or launched an action. The public could read on our website how the aid was organized and find stories and photos of the disaster areas. When we personally addressed our supporters and asked for their help, they responded overwhelmingly.

Caritas International also set up a campaign with the Consortium 12-12, which for the past 30 years has come together in times of crisis. This collaboration presented numerous advantages. We chose to speak with one voice and did not need to pay multiple times to obtain a presence in the media. This allowed us to save money that instead could be used on the ground. Different media outlets supported our call. The donations were divided up between the members according to an agreed allocation key: Caritas International, Médecins du Monde, Handicap International, Oxfam, Plan Belgium and Unicef. The total amount of donations following our campaign and that of the consortium reached a total of € 1.337.668.

The Consortium 12-12 aspires to be as transparent as possible. It regularly provides the media with narratives and financial overviews. The goal of the press trip to Nepal in October (six months after the earthquake) was to show what different organizations had achieved on the ground. A fuel shortage caused by border closings (see below) limited the program and unfortunately, no Caritas project was covered in the reporting.



© Caritas

Integrating street children

Since March 2015, Caritas International has been working with the organization CPCS (Child Protection Centres and Services). Social pressure, family violence, unemployment, poverty and fatigue in school push many young people to leave for the city. They often end up in the street, where they are exposed to drugs, violence, crime, exploitation, discrimination and abuse. We want to provide street children in Nepal with the necessary care so that they can be reintegrated into society. The project – in Kathmandu (Dillibazar) and Dolakha – has three components: accommodation and psychological support, socialization and education, and family reunification.

Reconstruction and resistance

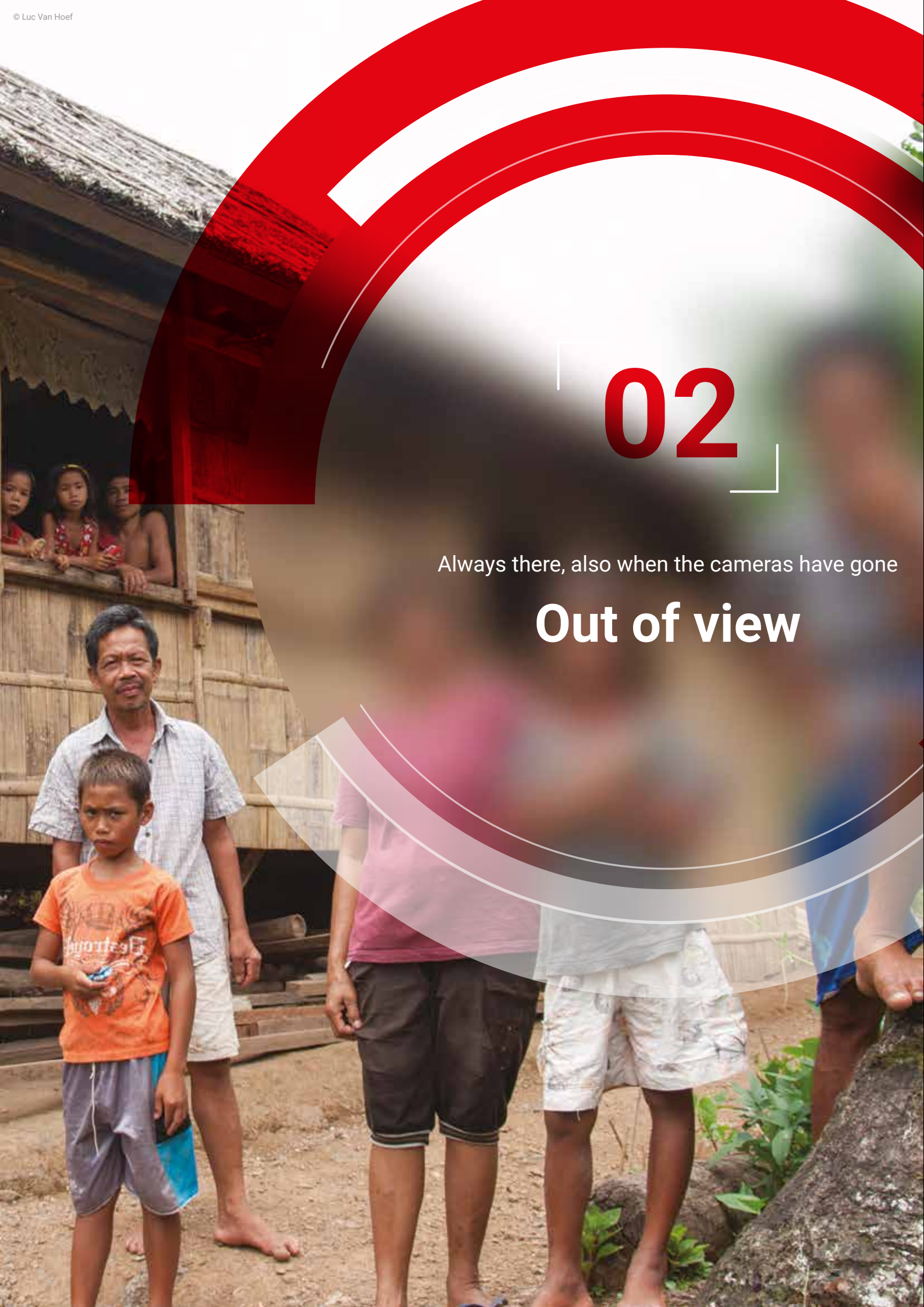
A thorough study of needs was the basis of the Caritas network reconstruction program supported by Caritas International. It took place in the most affected districts: Dolakha, Sindhupalchok, Kavrepalanchok, Sindhuli and Rasuwa. We constructed earthquake-resistant housing, installed latrines and water tanks, and created income-generating opportunities. We supported the local population in their struggle for land rights and their fight against discrimination. We also offered them psychosocial support. One of the highlighted axes was the focus on how to manage this kind of disaster in the future, in order to work together to increase the strength of people and societies. It is the local populations

themselves who establish a plan for their village. Caritas supports this process and identifies opportunities for cooperation with local and national authorities.

As already mentioned, the closure of the Indo-Nepalese border and general insecurity considerably slowed reconstruction. With their action, the Madhesi, an ethnic group living in the plains and related to the Indians on the other side of the border, protested against Nepal's new constitution. They chose a strategic location for their protests: the border near Birgunj, a border post through which 70 per cent of all imports enter the country. This is the only border crossing with a road wide enough to allow for the passage of heavy weight vehicles and tankers. The barricade was finally lifted on February 9, 2016, after 179 days of protests. They had an especially large impact on the delivery of fuel and materials, with reconstruction finally able to gain momentum in 2016.



© Tim Dirven



02

Always there, also when the cameras have gone

Out of view

1 Supporting vulnerable refugees

Social Services: frontline of reception

Caritas International acts as the frontline of reception for all foreigners, regardless of their status or nationality. Migrants are helped by our frontline services (for voluntary return, family reunification or any other questions about the asylum procedure) and are redirected either to our specific projects, or to other departments or institutions.

Since 2015, a decentralised branch of this frontline service was established in Antwerp in collaboration with the association De Loodsen.

Family reunification

When family members have been separated in different countries, family reunification offers them the possibility to be reunited.

In 2015, the service that deals with family reunification handled 908 cases, including 346 new cases opened in 2015, which is an increase of nearly 15% compared to 2014 (779 monitored cases, including 250 new cases).

Family reunification is most often requested by nationals of Guinea, Syria, Belgium, Democratic Republic of Congo and Cameroon.

“The number of Syrian cases has increased,” commented Steven Valckx, head of frontline reception. “The war in Syria has produced large displacements of the population, primarily in the neighbouring countries. The majority of those who arrive in Belgium receive subsidiary protection or recognized refugee status. If their immediate family members are still in Syria, their principal preoccupation is to get them to Belgium quickly. As the Belgian embassy in Syria is closed, the people have to go to Jordan, Lebanon, or Turkey. Submitting a visa request requires a minimum of documents, such as a passport or a birth certificate, or even a marriage certificate. In reality, obtaining these documents from the Syrian authorities as well as legalizing them presents a real challenge and can often even be a risk for applicants.”

In order to best inform applicants about family reunification, Caritas International organized 16 information sessions in French and 12 in Arabic. These sessions were attended by a total of 274 people.

Visits to closed centres

Foreigners residing in Belgium or arriving at the border without the necessary documents are likely to be held in closed centres. These are managed by the Immigration Office.

Caritas International has received authorization to access closed centre 127bis. However, Caritas International opposes the detention of foreigners for reasons of migration policy, but since the practice is common in Belgium, it is essential for Caritas International to visit them. These regular visits are intended to inform detained migrants about their situation and their rights, break their isolation, provide sociopsychological and legal support, and observe their conditions in detention.

In 2015, workers of Caritas International followed up on 148 people held in closed repatriation centre 127bis.

Reception of women and single mothers

Since 2010, Caritas International's Logis de Louvranges has assisted single women with their asylum procedure. The project consists of guidance during their asylum procedures. These people are in vulnerable positions because of their experiences in their country of origin or their journey in exile.

The 21 fully private apartments are located on the same site, which gives the location a collective dimension and reduces the sense of isolation of these women. The main objective of the guidance work is to promote their autonomy and their empowerment, to prepare them for the future "after Louvranges", in Belgium or elsewhere, as best as possible.

In 2015, we received 28 new arrivals accompanied by 46 children. The total number of people accommodated during 2015 is 46 women and 73 children.

Five years already!

On the occasion of its 5th birthday, the Logis de Louvranges held a celebration on Sunday, September 13. The program for the day: a small market with second hand clothes, books, toys and various activities for all ages – cooking workshops, photo exhibits, visits to the apartments, wooden games, and a bouncy castle. The group of musicians Colombia Tropical was in charge of livening up the atmosphere.

The festive mood gave all parties the opportunity to get to know each other, and allowed the Logis team to explain the work they do and increase interaction with the neighbourhood.

Privileged partner: CAP Brabantia

First-line reception, guardianship of UFM's and visits to closed centres are made possible thanks to the close collaboration between Caritas International and CAP Brabantia, a branch of Caritas International. This branch is located in the same building as Caritas International, which makes continuous exchange and constant collaboration possible.



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Guardianship of UFM's

In 2015, guardians of the cell UFM's (unaccompanied foreign minors) followed up on 151 minors. The most represented countries are the Democratic Republic of Congo with 23 minors, Syria with 19, Afghanistan with 13 and Guinea with 9.

By the end of 2015, 68 young people obtained temporary residence, while 37 received a permanent residence permit. Unfortunately, 46 minors ended the year without a residence permit.

New project: tutors coached by professional tutors

In April 2015, the UFM cell initiated a coaching project for French-speaking tutors, funded by the Department of Justice.

Despite the quality of the initial training provided by the Department of Guardianship prior to final approval, it is not uncommon in the field that an inexperienced tutor quickly gives up, often bewildered by the complexity of individual situations they encounter and the difficulties in access to rights that each UFM is likely to face.

The project consists of several components: a helpdesk, individual support, thematic training and a quarterly newsletter.

In the first nine months of the project, the Caritas International team had contact with 44 tutors: 36 of them asked questions at least once by telephone or email and 19 received individual support.



© Isabel Corthier

2 Reintegration does not stop at the border

Voluntary return

During their stay in Belgium, special circumstances lead some migrants or (former) asylum seekers to consider returning to their country of origin, sometimes after many years of exile or a long stay in Belgium. To ensure a dignified return and sustainable reintegration, it is necessary to prepare them for their departure and to support them after they return home.

In 2015, the social service opened 590 cases for voluntary return, compared to 471 in 2014. The people who requested voluntary return mainly originated from Ukraine, Brazil, Armenia, Morocco, and Pakistan. The number of Ukrainian files almost doubled, going from 121 in 2014 to 207 in 2015.

Reintegration after return

Starting in 2004, Caritas International has run the project "Sustainable reintegration" alongside its voluntary return service. This project aims to support people who wish to return voluntarily with their reintegration into their country of origin. To do this, Caritas International works within the structures of the Fedasil Reintegration Fund, the Return Fund and the Immigration Office, and has created a large network of partner organisations that support returnees in their efforts to reintegrate.

Flexible and tailored reintegration that meets the specific needs of each candidate upon return guarantees a successful return. In 2015, Caritas International organized post-return reintegration support for 366 people, compared to 430 in 2014 and 762 in 2013.

Of the 366 people that received assistance, 143 were referred to the reintegration cell by social services (the frontline reception as described above). The others were sent by social workers, collective reception centres for asylum seekers or Fedasil 'return' facilities.

The top 5 countries for reintegration after return are Russia, Georgia, Armenia, Ukraine and Pakistan.

Two partner weeks

In 2015, Caritas International's Reintegration cell organized two partner weeks. The first was centered on the exchange of good practices. The second one was based on the same theme but directed more specifically towards the local partners from African countries.

The participants at the partner week in June were representatives of local partners from Georgia, Russia, Albania, Bangladesh and representatives of the pilot return program for MICAR (Cyprus), Caritas Norway and Caritas Poland. On the agenda for the week were meetings and discussions with Fedasil, a visit to the reception center Petit Chateau, information sharing concerning the new criteria for voluntary return and vulnerable groups, and discussions around the qualitative framework put in place in order to optimize and evaluate the guidance upon return.

"The goal for this week is to support and strengthen the local partners," commented Sofie De Mot, the Reintegration cell's coordinator. "But also to discuss the good practices of different organizations and give them information on the situation in Belgium. For our employees here in Belgium, it is also an opportunity to discuss more informally with colleagues from the countries of origin and assure the continuation of guidance upon return."

During November's partner week, devoted to Africa, the following organizations were present: Caritas Dakar (PARI), CADEV Niger, Caritas Kinshasa (DRC), CCEY-CA (Cameroon), Ligue Iteka (Burundi) and Friends Peace House (Rwanda). The focus of this week were discussions on the qualitative framework, a presentation on the migratory routes in Africa, information on Belgium's asylum system, a training session on setting up small businesses upon return and other numerous interesting discussions.

Gratien Mundia, Caritas Kinshasa: "These discussions have not only allowed us to learn from each other, but also to share information with the African associations in Belgium in regard to voluntary return."

Travel story: Hermien in Nepal

Hermien Wittouck, reintegration coach at Caritas International, travelled to Nepal to meet with migrants who voluntarily returned to their country of origin with the support of the reintegration program implemented by our organization.

Prasad and Indra: two quite different stories

"Today: travel to Bhaktapur to meet two people who voluntarily returned to Nepal. Prasad returned in 2012, following a short stay in Europe. Meanwhile, Indra returned in 2014 after living in Belgium for seven years. For the latter, this was a very difficult decision to make at the end of procedures. Together, they opened two boutiques, linked between them. It is striking to see how different their lives are after returning and reintegrating: Indra, manager of a small business of school materials, is constantly thinking about Europe and suffers from the huge contrast between his country and Belgium. He still feels a connection to Belgium, where he lived for many years, and says he feels "lost" in Nepal. It's hard to stay positive: he has difficulty adapting to this country without clear rules, poor infrastructure and constant chaos. He receives little support from his family and is in need of a helping hand and encouragement from our social workers.

Meanwhile, Prasad quickly chose to return home after a short stay in Belgium in order to find his wife and daughter, hoping to have more opportunities in Nepal than in Belgium. Today, he manages a supermarket together with his sister. Having invested his reintegration budget into his business, he has set clear goals for the future. With the support of his family and his perseverance, he is hopeful for the future.

It's amazing to see how these two life stories – similar at first – are actually quite different! Once again, I realize that it is essential for reintegration support to be individual and tailored to the specific needs of every individual."



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3 Producing food in the green belt of South Sudan

In the first half of 2015, around 300 farmers transformed 40 hectares of forest into agricultural land with the help of Caritas International. They planted varieties of high yield seeds such as peanuts, corn and sorghum. In the second half of the year, unfortunately, war returned to our areas of intervention.

The violence remains limited

The city centers of Maridi and Mundri are in large part destroyed. Caritas helped around a hundred fleeing people, offering them tarps, mats and blankets. Fortunately, the majority of the surrounding villages were spared and the farmers could harvest their crops. The agriculture project went, more or less, as planned. At the end of 2015, the farmers sold a part of their crops in the form of food aid designed for people in the cities who lost everything. A good deal for the buyers and the sellers: it was a lot more interesting to buy local food assistance and for the farmers, it was a good alternative. They needed it, because merchants avoided the dangerous region. Finding financing for our intervention is not obvious, because the most important needs are in the north. But after some lobby work, the Swiss government will finance our project.

Following up on the agriculture program in Uganda

In Uganda, the program aimed at Sudanese refugees has finished. We launched an agricultural development project that covered the whole West Nile region, the second poorest region in Uganda. The ground there is mainly cultivated by hand, as in South Sudan. The expertise that we have acquired is very useful here. Our partners in the dioceses of Arua and Nebbi concentrate on agricultural mechanization with the help of cattle, improved farming techniques, better seeds, irrigation and proper storage.



© Ward Tanghe

Development aid and emergency aid, hand in hand

Ward Tanghe, project manager: "In July, Maridi was plundered and the population fled into the forest. As outsiders, we often think that war in a certain region affects everything and everyone. That is not always the case. When I was in Maridi in August, I was amazed to see that life was following its normal course as close as five 5 kilometres from the city centre. But for the last suburb, everything seemed normal, although the city itself was virtually deserted. This reinforces my belief that development aid and emergency aid go hand in hand. If a war breaks out somewhere, economic life often stops. The people without incomes are quickly drawn into an armed conflict. The 'normality belt' surrounding Maridi allowed the local youth to avoid the rebellion and forced government troops to limit their looting of the city. Since 2014, Caritas has supported around 300 farmers in the Maridi area. None of them have joined the rebels. In December, they had already sold more than 100 tons of food – partly as food aid for the urban population."

4 Liberia: medical care, also for non-Ebola patients

By the end of 2014, the sanitation structures in Liberia were overwhelmed by people who had contracted the Ebola virus. Due to a lack of material protection, knowledge and experience, certain doctors and nurses were also infected. Out of fear of infection, the nursing staff and the public increasingly avoided hospitals, some centers even closed. Sick people who showed clinical symptoms different from Ebola, had almost no possibility of receiving medical care.

Easing the fear of Ebola

The Catholic medical centers play an important role in health care in Liberia. If we wish to guarantee medical care to the grand public, it is crucial to regain the confidence of the nursing staff and the public. How should we do this? By organizing a screening before all hospital admissions, organizing a place for temporary quarantine and, when appropriate, referring people to specialized Ebola centers. All of this in order to be able to handle non-Ebola patients without fear of contamination.

Medical care for 48.000 people in the Greater Monrovia district

Victims of the Ebola virus live primarily in very densely populated regions. Saint-Joseph, a reference hospital in the Great Monrovia district, had to close its doors due to the Ebola epidemic after 50 years of service. In November 2014, thanks to combined efforts, it was able to reopen. Caritas United States (CRS) is active in this hospital in the selection of Ebola and non-Ebola patients. They also organize training sessions regarding patient treatment for the extremely contagious and the necessary protective materials. The supply of water and hygiene also plays an important role.

With the expertise of Saint-Joseph Hospital and Caritas, as well as financial support from Wallonie-Bruxelles International, Caritas International ensured access to two other hospitals in Greater Monrovia (Holy Family Health Clinic and Benedict Menni Health Center). 40 people learned how to curb infectious diseases and take necessary hygiene measures according to

the curriculum of the Ministry of Health of Liberia. A smartphone data collection system was established in order to respond appropriately and as quickly as possible.

Our approach contributes to the eradication of the epidemic

On November 20, 2015, we noted that a fourth wave of the Ebola virus struck Liberia. Fortunately, after December 3, no more new cases were identified. The speed at which the spread was stopped this time shows that our approach, shared by all actors in the field, is working.



© Caritas

5 Philippines: reconstruction for and alongside the poorest

On November 8, 2013, typhoon Haiyan swept across the Philippines, affecting 14 million people. During the first five months following the catastrophe, the Caritas network including Caritas International helped 75.294 vulnerable families. In the meantime, reconstruction is in full swing.

Reconstruction and employment in the Antique province (Panay Island)

In collaboration with our local partner and Caritas Italy, we created employment opportunities. We distributed 100 fishing boats and supported the existing fishers' association. We provided garden tooling, distributed 92 pigs and transformed 31 hectares of land into farming land. The algae production has taken a new start, with 870.000 m² of the seafloor again covered in algae by the end of 2015. 30 people took masonry and carpentry training. 42 women started a small business and 2 groups of women created a solidarity fund, which facilitates savings and loan. With the construction of an evacuation center and training sessions, we hope to limit the consequences of a possible future disaster. We also provided a boat for the inhabitants of the island, allowing them to transport the sick and injured to a health center on the mainland.



© Luc Van Hoef

Housing and income in the Aklan province (Panay Island)

Our five-month long pilot project, that ended in 2014, served as the base of construction of 116 new houses and the repairs of 91 houses (completion planned in 2016). Respect for the techniques and traditional materials used by the local population of Libacao is the common thread. The residents are involved in the whole process, starting with the design of the new house and throughout all the important stages of construction. This way, we guarantee the sustainability of the houses. Additionally, some decisions about improved features (an example is the construction of a toilet on a raised floor) then inspired neighbors who were not directly involved in the project. Meanwhile, 54 people took carpentry training, and 6 took foreman training. They gained practical experience during our first construction activities and can now be employed as paid labor in future work. 16 new houses were built and 6 houses were repaired. Along with those concerned, we are involved in obtaining the property rights for indigenous peoples.

The people of Libacao are poor. Creating jobs and achieving better results in agriculture through improved agrarian technology is a priority. A demonstration farm, the creation of a rice growers association and an irrigation group are all a great help. Meanwhile, we launched a pilot program on fishing in inland waters. This program is the result of collaboration between Caritas France and our local Caritas partner.



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Luc Van Hoef, logistics specialist, met Lorita in the summer of 2015 in Aklan, the Philippines. He was on site for an interim evaluation of our reconstruction program.

Lorita and her husband are farmers. "We mainly grow rice. We have a buffalo to work the land. We sell abaca [fibres from a specific banana variety] and the fish we catch." Their house along the Aklan River was destroyed by the typhoon. "Only the roof of the structure was still usable. We stretched a tarp over it and lived for 15 months under a 'roof tent'." With technical assistance from Caritas, Lorita and her husband were able to build a new house with local materials. "There was not enough room in the tent and it was very hot. It was not easy to live. That is why we are very grateful to have been able to get our lives back on track."



© Caritas

6 Rural development in DR Congo, Burundi, Rwanda and Haiti

An external evaluation by the DRIS office in 2015 demonstrated that our agriculture program (2012-2015) in the Great Lakes regions has contributed to a better harvest and more diversity in cultivated food. It has also allowed farmers in Rwanda, Burundi and in the DRC to increase their income. The results were achieved thanks to support by the federal authorities (DGD) who financed 80% of the total budget (€ 4.212.836). We raised the remaining 20% with the support of our donors.

Caritas International stays as long as necessary

The evaluation also allowed for the identification of factors that slow further development. In Congo, the transformation and marketing of cultivated food must be improved. More opportunities for credit and the extension of cooperative activities can make a difference in Rwanda. In Burundi, the risks associated with the specialization in pineapples need to be monitored and marketing needs improving here as well. If we want to strengthen the capacity of our local Caritas partners, we must create even more opportunities for exchanging experiences at the local level, but also between different countries involved. These challenges are the basis for our future operations.

Financing is not obvious

Every organization that wishes to be considered for public financing starting from January 2017, must file for recognition. Each applicant organization is evaluated on the basis of their record in ten proposed areas, including financial management, personnel, strategy and risk management. The result of this evaluation is expected in 2016. Caritas International hopes again to organize a multi-year partnership with the DGD. Meanwhile, in 2015, we continued our work on food security with a transition program for 3500 families. Duration: mid-2015-2016. Total budget: € 3.346.985, with the DGD co-financing. In 2015, Caritas International invested € 400.000. Besides the three aforementioned countries, Haiti is also included in this program.

Haiti, even after 5 years

Caritas has been actively involved with the Caritas network in emergency aid and reconstruction following the devastating earthquake that struck Haiti in 2010. Contrary to a large number of international organizations that left the country a long time ago, Caritas International is still present. Today, we are working with our local partners towards improved food security and better living conditions in Port-au-Prince, Jérémie and Cayes. To cite some of our activities: training and technical accompaniment, terracing to prevent soil erosion, building fences for small animals and cows, composting and communal nurseries. Local solidarity – those involved regularly pay a small contribution to a capital fund – allows for the financing of employment on a small scale. As a result, more than 400 families now look at the future with hope.

Unfortunately, some families lack food due to the severe drought in 2015. Along with our local partners, we distributed food to the most vulnerable people in order to overcome this period until the next harvest.

Move with Africa

Move with Africa is a project from the newspaper La Libre Belgique in collaboration with several NGOs. Six students of St. Quirin Huy College were selected to go to Congo with Caritas International. They found out what life is like in Congo and discovered how Caritas International improves the living conditions in collaboration with the local population and Caritas partners. For the students, this immersion trip was preceded by many months of preparation and fundraising. Helping young people understand the world, so that later they can take responsibility and improve global citizenship: that is what it is all about. For the 2015-2016 edition, we will go to Rwanda with students from the Saint-Roch Institute in Theux.

7 Palestine: improving living conditions in the occupied territories

The Israeli military occupation has significant socio-economic effects on the life of Palestinians in the occupied territories. Unemployment is high. It is estimated that in Jenin, in the West Bank, one in four people lives in poverty. Families of six have to get by on as little as € 150 a month.

Jenin: developing the local economy and promote collaboration

In the fall of 2014, Caritas International and Caritas Jerusalem launched a new program to develop the local economy. It was mainly financed by the Belgian authorities (DGD), for a period of two years. We support the launch of small family businesses, which create new income opportunities and greater diversity in the supply of goods and services. We also hope that the authorities, associations and the private sector will work closely and effectively together thanks to the experience that they gain through joint projects.

2015 Results

In 2015, we supported more than 40 family projects in 11 selected villages. 80% were related to agriculture and livestock, such as greenhouses or livestock for meat and dairy products. Additionally, a sewing workshop, a hair salon and a day care were set up. 56% of people who received assistance were single parent families with a woman as the head of household. To ensure the sustainability of activities, all families participated in a training course on how they can manage and further develop their business.

Caritas gathered the residents and local authorities around a series of community projects: purchasing materials for a center for people with a disability, the refurbishment of a football field, and repair work for the streets in the center of town. All of this allows multiple communities in densely populated and complex region to live together in peace, despite the numerous administrative, physical and psychological obstacles.

Jenin: repairing houses

The residents of the occupied territories often live in close quarters. In addition, poverty prevents necessary repairs, which makes their living space even more limited. Houses with water leaks for example, become inhabitable over time. Together with the residents, we renovated 15 houses in Jenin – we renovated bathrooms and kitchens, repaired roofs, replaced doors and windows. For houses occupied by less mobile persons, we installed ramps. At every possible moment, the affected families did the work and were equal participants in the financial input.

Guarantee access to land

Access to agricultural land and pastures remains a problem for Palestinian farmers, especially those south of Hebron and in the villages between Nablus and Ramallah. They are physically threatened during their work or their land is unlawfully seized. Since 2011, Caritas International has supported the work of Rabbis for Human Rights. This group tries in part to invoke the problems of access to the West Bank security forces. When the rights of those concerned are not respected, they undertake legal action. Whenever vandals strike, they plant thousands of olive trees on the contested land. This is a way for them to allow the victims to work again.



International cooperation



Emergency aid
Reconstruction



Emergency aid
Reconstruction
Development



Development

Asia
Sri Lanka

Europe
Albania
Greece
Ukraine

Middle East
Iraq
Jordan

Africa
Burundi
Central African Republic
DR Congo
Guinea
Liberia
Niger
Uganda
Rwanda
Tanzania
South Sudan

Asia
Philippines
Mongolia
Nepal

Europe
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Serbia

Middle East
Lebanon
Palestine
Syria

Africa
Benin
Ethiopia
Cameroon
Kenya
Mali
Nigeria
Sudan
Togo
Chad
South Africa

Asia
Bangladesh
Cambodia
India
Indonesia
Thailand

Europe
Armenia
Kosovo
Montenegro

Latin America
Haiti



Overview of 2015 Activities

Co-financing Programs (equity and institutional funds)

Emergency aid and rehabilitation

Country	Project Title	Date	Budget	Donor	2015 expenditures in euro
Bosnia	Emergency aid and rehabilitation for flood victims	2014	100.000,00	VAIS	15.250,00
Burundi	Improvement of living conditions for repatriates, displaced persons, and residents of the Burundi-Tanzania border, Ruyigi Province	2013-2015	575.000,00	DGD	73.358,58
DR Congo	Reintegration of 5650 displaced and returned families, and rehabilitation of a stretch of an agricultural service road, Orientale Province	2012-2014	1.009.195,00	DGD	14.443,32
DR Congo	Food security for displaced/returned populations following the violence in 2010, Equateur Province	2013-2014	1.009.448,00	DGD	29.784,65
DR Congo	Multisector aid project for 3000 vulnerable families in the Kilwa and Kasenga dioceses	2013-2015	770.500,00	DGD	113.631,89
Lebanon	Emergency aid for vulnerable Syrian refugees.	2013-2014	533.750,00	DGD	74.418,46
Liberia	Restarting medical care in a leading hospital in Monrovia	2015	200.000,00	Brussels Capital	180.000,00
Niger	Emergency aid for vulnerable Syrian refugees.	2013-2014	1.577.571,00	DGD	56.811,33
Syria	Emergency aid for displaced families received by the local population.	2015-2016	150.000,00	VAIS	100.000,00
Serbia	Emergency rehabilitation aid for flood victims	2014	100.000,00	VAIS	15.250,00
South Sudan	Semi-commercial food production in the green belt of South Sudan to prevent food shortage	2015-2016	859.959,00	Switzerland	110.083,59
Total					783.031,82

Development

Country	Project Title	Date	Budget	Donor	Contribution of Caritas International	Contribution of Caritas International
Burundi	Sustainable improvement of food security in Muyinga province, phase 2	2012-2015	1.776.041,86	Fonds Belge pour la Sécurité Alimentaire	315.185,11	15%
Burundi	Integrated development in Kasenga (PADI)	2010-2014	525.413,28	DGD	52.947,43	20%
Burundi	Multi-actor programme for improving food security in the Cendajuru, Gisuru and Kinyinya communes	2013-2018	1.764.706,00	Fonds Belge pour la Sécurité Alimentaire / CTB / WBI	384.237,17	15%
DR Congo	Project synergy II, second fase of a project that supports farmers' organisations	2015-2016	144.000,00	DGD	47.773,47	
DR Congo - Burundi - Rwanda	Support programme for rural community development in the Great Lakes region, phase 2	2012-2015	4.212.836,26	DGD (Plan Trienal) / WBI / Wereldmissiehulp	46.535,72	20%
DR Congo - Burundi - Rwanda - Haïti	Support programme for rural community development	2015-2016	3.346.985,00	DGD/ Caritas Linz	1.548.249,57	20%
Ethiopia	Food security for vulnerable families in the Ganta-Afeshum and Gulomakda woredas (eastern Tigray)	2009-2014	3.495.600,00	Fonds Belge de Survie / provincie West-Vlaanderen / Ondernemers voor Ondernemers	96.955,69	15%
Ethiopia	Sustainable agriculture and more food security by supporting integrated self-reliance	2014-2016	3.300.000,00	UE /SHARE	219.963,83	10%
Mongolia	Develop the capacity of cooperatives in the rural regions of the Gobi-Altai province	2013-2016	500.295,62	UE	30.000,00	10%
Niger	Participative and decentralised food security project in Dakoro	2014-2016	1.885.455,41	FBSA	774.633,65	15%
Palestine	Strengthening the local economy in the territories of east Jenin	2014-2016	251.559,87	DGD	76.156,00	20%
Palestine	House renovation	2015	52.160,00	Abbé Pierre	30.018,15	20%
Rwanda	Food security in Bugesera (PASAB II)	2009-2014	3.229.493,00	Fonds Belge de Survie / WBI	62.190,99	15%
Total					3.684.846,78	



Equity Programs

Emergency programs with the Caritas network

Country	Crisis	2015 expenditures in euro
Albania	Floods	10.000,00
Burundi	Humanitarian crisis and floods	15.440,00
Central African Republic	Humanitarian crisis	50.000,00
DR Congo	Humanitarian crisis (Burundian refugees)	19.322,79
Greece	Humanitarian crisis (Middle Eastern refugees)	38.000,00
Guinea	Ebola crisis	25.000,00
Iraq	Humanitarian crisis	450.000,00
Jordan	Humanitarian crisis	150.000,00
Lebanon	Humanitarian crisis	150.000,00
Liberia	Ebola crisis	20.000,00
Mongolia	Storm	5.000,00
Nepal	Earthquake	369.521,00
Niger	Humanitarian crisis Diffa	30.000,00
Palestine	Rehabilitation Gaza	5.000,00
Philippines	Rehabilitation typhoon Haiyan	566.743,98
Rwanda	Humanitarian crisis (Burundian refugees)	50.000,00
South Sudan	Humanitarian crisis	10.640,38
Sri Lanka	Humanitarian crisis	5.000,00
Syria	Humanitarian crisis	100.000,00
Tanzania	Humanitarian crisis (Burundian refugees)	10.000,00
Uganda	Humanitarian crisis (South Sudanese refugees)	25.687,00
Ukraine	Humanitarian crisis	36.000,00
Total		2.141.355,15



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Socioeconomic projects

Country	Number	2015 expenditures in euro
Burundi	9	36.280,00
Cambodia	2	17.921,00
DR Congo	16	206.568,39
Ethiopia	5	242.829,31
Haiti	1	283.579,93
Indonesia	1	30.000,00
Kosovo	1	10.778,00
Mali	1	5.000,00
Nepal	1	105.000,00
Palestine	3	60.000,00
Philippines	1	5.000,00
Sudan	2	67.016,47
Thailand	1	10.000,00
Total	44	1.079.973,10

Capacity building: Caritas partners

Country	Organisation	2015 expenditures in euro
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Caritas Bosnia and Herzegovina H (CDF)	30.000,00
Burundi	Caritas Ruyigi	5.000,00
Haiti	Caritas Haiti	20.110,00
Lebanon	Caritas Mona	10.000,00
Mongolia	Caritas Mongolia	3.752,00
Montenegro	Caritas Montenegro (CDF)	7.500,00
Niger	Workgroup Sahel	4.000,00
Serbia	Caritas Belgrado	10.000,00
Syria	Caritas Syria	10.000,00
Thailand	Caritas Thailand	5.000,00
Togo	Caritas Africa	10.000,00
Vatican	Caritas Internationalis	3.000,00
Total		118.362,00



Partnership programs

Country	Number of projects	2015 expenditures in euro
Armenia	1	5.806,88
Benin	1	4.280,00
Burundi	1	2.000,00
Cameroon	1	55.000,00
Chad	1	1.380,90
DR Congo	7	66.699,72
Ethiopia	2	24.285,32
Kenya	1	23.590,50
Mali	2	17.488,41
Niger	1	13.403,24
Nigeria	1	1.516,87
Rwanda	4	15.722,04
South Africa	2	12.092,11
Tanzania	1	2.034,49
Togo	1	23.483,68
Bangladesh	1	11.882,38
Cambodia	1	1.453,44
India	4	21.766,14
Lebanon	2	20.329,00
Nepal	1	3.685,44
Philippines	2	13.517,00
Syria	1	28.000,00
Haiti	2	21.277,62
Total	42	390.695,18



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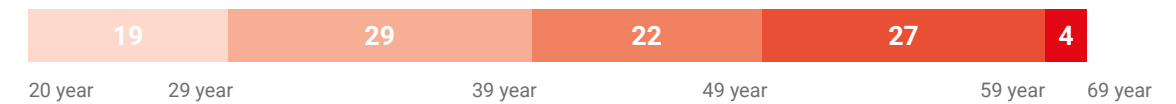
Personnel

Some figures concerning the personnel of Caritas International in Belgium

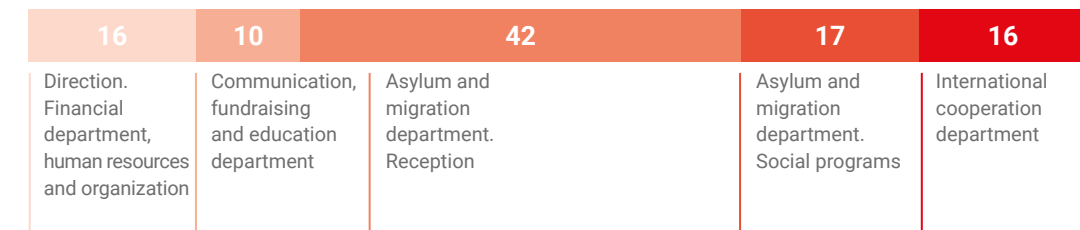
Classification of the **101** workers by gender



Classification of the **101** workers according by age group



Classification of the **101** workers according by department



In	Out	Number 31/12/2014	Number 31/12/15
25	16	92	101

Workers abroad

9 persons (3 women and 6 men) between the ages of 30 and 49 in Burundi (3), DR Congo (2), Niger, South Sudan and the Philippines.

Volunteers

More than 300 volunteers have contributed to the warm reception of asylum seekers and assisted refugees with their integration.



Financial Report - 2015 *

For Caritas International, 2015 was a year marked by certain key factors, some of which were exceptional.

- The decrease in subsidies from the DGD and the BFFS, in particular the non-acceptance of new emergency projects presented to the DGD as well as the freezing of the public funds for the BFFS;
- The increase in activity in the field of the reception of asylum seekers;
- The reversal of provisions concerning an important donation (€ 1.400.000);
- Capital gains that were realised during the sale of certain assets that were a part of our portfolio (€ 760.000)

Nature of Activities

Following the restrictive fiscal policy adopted by the Belgian government and the European Union, the funds available for international cooperation have been reduced.

We intervened in Nepal and the Philippines, providing humanitarian aid and supporting the rehabilitation in these countries. In addition, we intervened within the context of the Syrian crisis, both in Syria as well as Jordan and Lebanon.

In regard to development, our International Cooperation department focused on our multi-year programme in DR, Rwanda, Burundi and Haiti.

Regarding the reception of asylum seekers in Belgium, Caritas International became heavily involved in order to better handle this issue. We adopted several housing solutions all over the country, which led to the mobilisation of various means.

Financing of activities

In order to finance all of these activities, our donors have been generous and together with the donations we received, we were able to collect more than € 6.5 million, most of which had a predetermined designation within the context of the proposed projects.

Our main institutional subsidies come from our partnerships with Fedasil, CIRÉ and Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen. Those related to development cooperation were used to continue existing projects.

In regard to expenses, those relating to the operations of the association amounted to 10.41%, whereas those relating to communication and fundraising came to 4.36%. It should be noted that these two percentages place Caritas International in a weak position for this type of expenses within our sector.

Result

The year 2015 thus ended with a current revenue deficit of € 283.750, meaning that our operating result was negative.

As was mentioned in the introduction, exceptional revenues compensated the operating loss of the fiscal year and generated an accounting profit.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the main changes were related to

- the repayment of a loan of € 2 million (taken out in order to finance works on our asylum reception facility in Louvranges), combined with the ending of an equally important investment.
- the mobilisation of means necessary to accommodate the massive reception of asylum seekers, which made a considerable impact on our treasury while waiting for the reception of the related subsidies.

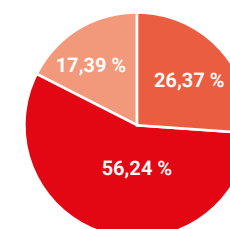
2015 Income statement in euro

Revenue		Expenditure*			
Donations	5.553.782,37	21,46	Reception of asylum seekers	9.773.630,70	37,35
Donations consortium 12-12	345.000,00	1,33	Migrant programmes (firstline, custody, integration, reintegration)	669.915,49	2,56
Legacies	921.591,00	3,56	Reintegration	1.268.958,30	4,85
Flemish Community (VAIS, VL BRAB)	233.000,00	0,90	International aid	10.588.620,00	40,47
Wallonie - Bruxelles International (WBI)	65.695,00	0,25	Communication, fundraising, education	1.140.393,07	4,36
Brussels-Capital Region	200.000,00	0,77	• Education	95.053,69	
Belgian Fund for Food Security (BFFS)	514.016,00	1,99	• Fundraising	341.183,25	
Belgian government - DGD	2.139.104,92	8,26	• External communication	704.156,13	
Multilateral institutions	610.339,18	2,36	Operating costs	2.724.405,84	10,41
Ministry of Justice - Ministry of the Interior	230.190,46	0,89	Total	26.165.923,40	100,00
Fedasil	3.936.359,80	15,21			
Coordination et Initiative pour Réfugiés et Etrangers (CIRÉ)	3.379.866,64	13,06			
Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen	3.254.004,18	12,57			
Foundations, other Caritas organizations, various ...	790.757,97	3,06			
Financial revenue	893.066,25	3,45			
Other operating revenue	1.899.253,70	7,34			
Other	916.146,14	3,54			
Total	25.882.173,61	100,00			

Appropriation of the results

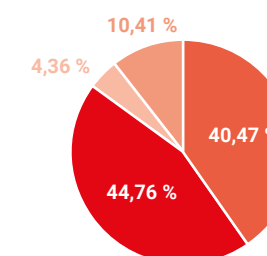
Difference between revenue and expenditure	-283.749,79
Reduction in designated funds (liabilities in balance sheet)	1.519.603,28
Allocation social liability	-220.000,00
Profit to be carried forward	1.015.853,49

Revenue 2015



Public financing	€ 14.562.576,15
Private gifts	€ 6.820.373,30
Other	€ 4.499.226,06

Expenditure 2015



Asylum and migration	€ 11.712.504,49
International aid	€ 10.588.620,00
Operating costs	€ 2.724.405,84
Communication, fundraising and education	€ 1.140.393,07

* Result as presented by the Board of Administrators to the General Assembly of June.

2015 Balance sheet in euro

ASSETS	2015	LIABILITIES	2015
Tangible fixed assets	5.080.236,68	Funds of the organisation	2.880.472,41
Intangible fixed assets	15.072,90	Social liability	2.288.421,09
Financial fixed assets	5.976,34	Designated funds for defined projects	9.521.586,16
Amounts receivable within one year	2.595.437,42	Designated funds for non-defined projects	
Cash investments	5.490.652,40	Profit carried forward	720.190,49
Liquid assets	4.540.775,60	Capital subsidies	14.089,50
Accruals and deferrals	638.064,90	Provisions	1.222.400,00
Total	18.366.216,24	Debts payable after one year	
		Debts payable within one year	1.598.987,46
		Accruals and deferrals	120.069,13
		Total	18.366.216,24

You can help...

- Make a donation
- Share your festive joy
- Organize a fundraiser
- Become a volunteer
- Provide housing
- Organize a workshop on asylum and migration
- Think of Caritas International in your will

With heartfelt gratitude.
www.caritasinternational.be

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