

Annual
report
2023



 **LOUVAIN**
COOPERATION

 **UCLouvain**

Louvain Coopération complies with the ethical codes in force in the development cooperation and social economy sector, guaranteeing respect for donors, beneficiary populations and fundraising ethics. Our accounts are audited annually by an independent auditor and are available free of charge at the **National Bank's Central Balance Sheet Office** or at www.donorinfo.be.

Design and coordination:

Emilie Stainier

Text by:

Christine Baggio, Augustin Bedidjo Djamugisa, Dominique De Jaeger, Juliette Delvaux, Zoulikha Faraj, Antonio Garcia Velásquez, Adélie Iradukunda, Charline Lebrasseur, Nina Laouane, Sergio Martinez, Béatrice Minh, Bopha Noun, Maixent Ogou, Amaury Peeters, Jean-Michel Pochet, Charlot Razakharivelo, Pierre Schmit et Emilie Stainier.

Photo credits:

For Louvain Coopération : Christine Baggio, Régis Binard, Isabel Corthier, Patricio Crooker, Focus Multimédia, deBro's Production, Emilie Stainier.



A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR
4-5

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE
LC IN FIGURES
6-7



8 **BENIN**
Preserving mangroves to improve living conditions

12 **PERU**
Facing the challenges of climate change

14 **MADAGASCAR**
Supporting agricultural cooperatives



9 **TOGO**
Joining mutual health systems to access healthcare

10 **BURUNDI**
Raising awareness of gender-specific diseases and improving healthcare

15 **CAMBODIA**
Strengthening local mental health systems

11 **DRC**
Developing alternative incomes for women mineworkers

13 **BOLIVIA**
Creating an ecosystem for employment and entrepreneurship

GCSE
16-17

R&D
18-19

COM' UNI4COOP
20-21

FINANCES
22-23

THE NGO AND ITS UNIVERSITY
24

TOWARDS 2024
25-26



A new breeding ground for our association

Dear friends of Louvain Coopération,

Our previous Activity Report announced the imminent move of our headquarters to the Mundo LLN. Those of you who have moved in your lifetime know, as we do, that it is a hectic time of preparation. It is the perfect opportunity to get rid of cumbersome and unused items, to question ourselves, to imagine other ways of managing our time, and even to change certain habits.

Well, that is more or less what our association experienced when it moved into the Mundo LLN in December 2023. We took the opportunity to become an affiliated entity of Circle-U, a European association of universities, and thus strengthen our international links through UCLouvain.

We also dared to invest, with the support of the European Union, by setting up a new office in Kinshasa to support our many initiatives in the DRC, particularly in terms of support to civil society organisations and the social and professional integration of vulnerable groups.

In addition to our traditional structuring alliances, such as Uni4Coop, we wanted to explore unusual ways of working closely with new stakeholders to meet the global challenges of cooperation. These include La Chaloupe, a Belgian Non-Institutional Educational Action Organisation, Rotary Clubs For Development, a Belgian NGO that wants us to resume its activities, and some brilliant young international researchers.

Having redefined our mission, our vision and our values in 2022, we have now tried to translate these into the reality of how we operate, by rebalancing the relationship between headquarters, the national offices and our partners. To take this a step further, we have decided to lay the groundwork of strategic thinking, aimed at aligning who we are with who we want to become.

We believe that daring to step out of your comfort zone is a winning strategy, as demonstrated by the increase in our activities, the trust you continue to place in us, and the confidence we have built up new major funding partners.

Rest assured that all the members of our team, working in close collaboration with local stakeholders, remain fully committed to ensuring that these often forgotten groups are able to address their legitimate concerns for themselves over the long term.

To find out more, take a look at our Activity Report and know that we remain at your entire disposal to discuss this subject.



Jean-Michel Pochet
General Director

OUR VISION

We want to co build in a conscious and critical way a sustainable, fair and solidary world

OUR MISSION

To reduce inequality and poverty, we seek innovative, replicable, and impactful solutions while mobilising the thinking power of our partners and the academic community

OUR VALUES



Solidarity

Solidarity is at the heart of our commitment. We join forces and work with our different partners for a sustainable and fair world.



Impact

In everything we do, we seek to achieve tangible, sustainable and equitable results.



Partnership

The multi-actor partnership is at the heart of our action. Actors of change who meet, learn from each other, co-build solutions with the objective of amplifying them.



Learning

Our actions are part of a critical and experimental approach. To do so, our collaborators and partners are encouraged to show humility and to regularly question themselves in order to remain in a continuous learning process.



Innovation

Innovation is a daily ally and is at the heart of our learning process. We open our horizons and look at problems and solutions from an innovative perspective.

DISCOVER HERE
OUR NEW VIDEO
OF PRESENTATION



Louvain Coopération runs around sixty projects in 9 countries on 4 continents, **focusing on 8 major themes.**

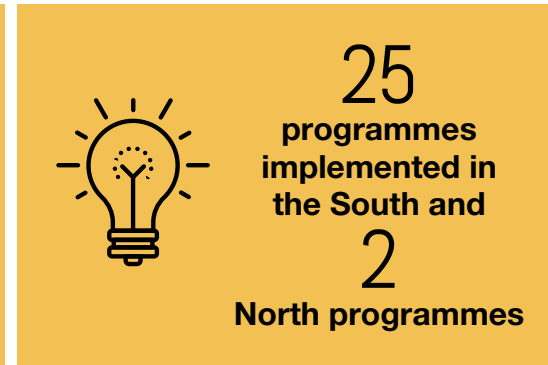
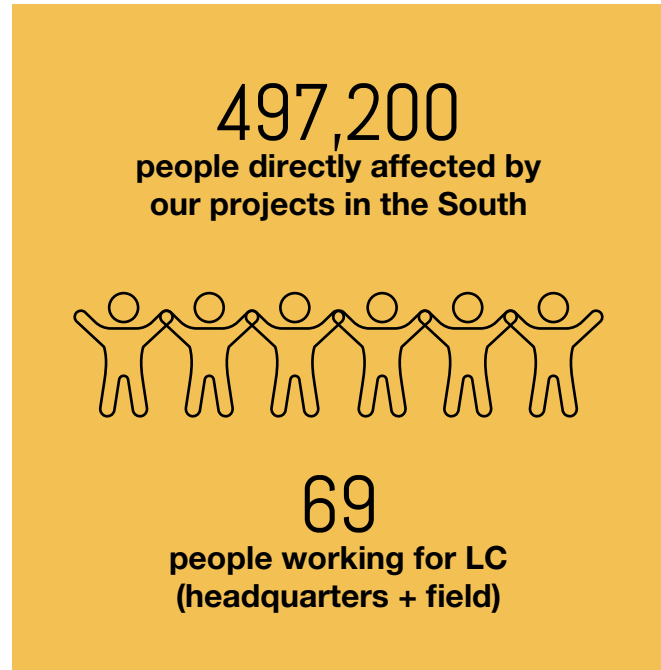
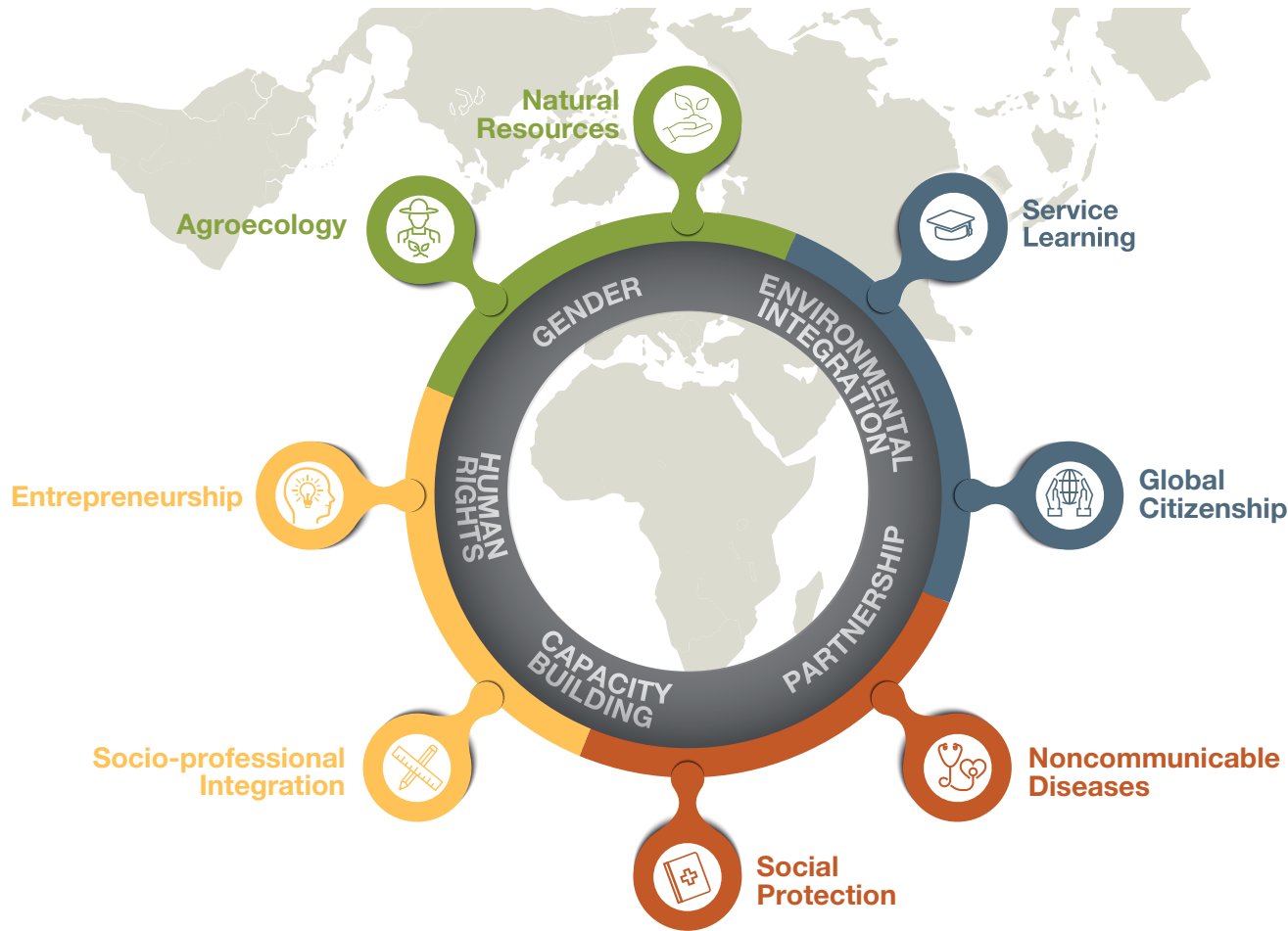
We also pay particular attention to:

- **gender**
- **environmental integration**
- **partnership relations**
- **the human rights approach**
- **mutual capacity building**

Our initiatives often combine several themes and explore **interdisciplinary issues.** They also take into account and build on the **knowledge** of civil society stakeholders and local associations.

This cross-disciplinary approach in our programmes aims to bring about concrete and lasting social change.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OUR EXPERTISE





NATURAL RESOURCES

In Benin, our efforts in relation to natural resources focus mainly on the preservation and sustainable management of mangrove ecosystems. This mission actively involves local communities and authorities in awareness-raising and training programmes. Maixent Ogou, Executive Director of the NGO Action Plus, one of our partners in the field, gives us a detailed overview of these initiatives.

MAIXENT OGOU

Preserving mangroves to improve living conditions

Preserving mangroves is vital. Located in specific saltwater areas, they are essential for birds and other aquatic species. They also help to reduce wind pressure, which in turn helps to reduce coastal erosion.

This ecosystem is also of great interest to the local population because of its socio-economic value. It is therefore crucial that it continues to play its role for the benefit of all. However, in recent years, the degradation of mangroves has worsened because locals are not using these valuable resources properly.

We are therefore working with communities to raise awareness, defuse destructive processes and seek alternatives to improve their living conditions. This action on the ground is essential to

explore the sustainable use of resources. A case in point is the work done by salt producers, who now use solar tarpaulins and low-cost stoves to continue their activities while limiting their need for firewood. Louvain Coopération identified us on the field to act as an operational relay. As well as providing technical support, they work with us to improve our practices and methods, with the aim of making our interventions more effective and impactful. Their approach is based on coaching, whether it is capacity building or the introduction of appropriate tools to transform local dynamics.

IN BENIN, WE ARE WORKING ON THE FOLLOWING THEMES:



AGROECOLOGY

115HA
DEVOTED TO
AGROECOLOGICAL
PRODUCTION.



NATURAL RESOURCES

11HA
OF MANGROVES
RESTORED.



SOCIAL PROTECTION

6,965
BENEFICIARIES
OF MUTUAL HEALTH
SYSTEMS.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP

80%
OF LITERATE LEARNERS
CAN NOW READ AND WRITE IN
THE LOCAL LANGUAGE.



SOCIAL PROTECTION

In terms of social protection, we are actively supporting the development of the mutualist movement in Togo to ensure easier access to quality healthcare. This is achieved through advocacy and awareness-raising activities, while strengthening the capacities of the Unions and Federations of mutual health systems. Passimsiue Pesse, a beneficiary of the Blitta mutual health organisation, shares her experience with us.

PASSIMSUIE PESSE

Joining mutual health systems to access healthcare

I have been benefiting from the services of the mutual health system for six years now. I chose to join because I believe in the power of solidarity, and the mutual health system raises our awareness of how to look after our children and obtain quality care. As mothers, we are reassured to know that if our child falls ill, we can count on the mutual health system to cover the cost of care. One day, my son was bitten by a snake and, fortunately, the mutual health organisation acted quickly to take care of him. He was taken to hospital and received the necessary treatment. Treatment that I would not have been able to afford on my own. It is thanks to these mutual health organisations that I did not lose my child. They were a great help to me, even in the years

when I could not afford to deal with other health problems. Mutual health organisations also cover care for women during pregnancy and childbirth, as well as care for newborn babies afterwards. This comprehensive cover is very reassuring for women. Many of us join mutual health organisations to benefit from it. It is essential that we continue to take action to reach the whole population. Personally, I am involved in these awareness-raising efforts. As women, we form groups and organise information sessions to encourage those who have not yet joined the mutual health organisations. It is an approach that works well

IN TOGO, WE ARE WORKING ON THE FOLLOWING THEMES:



AGROECOLOGY

24HA
OF FRUIT TREES
AND FERTILISING
SPECIES REFORESTED.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP

1
DIGITAL PLATFORM
FOR MARKETING
AGROECOLOGICAL
PRODUCTS CREATED.



SOCIAL PROTECTION

6,414
BENEFICIARIES
OF MUTUAL HEALTH
SYSTEMS.



AGROECOLOGY

18,180€
IN "GREEN LOANS"
GRANTED TO 25 VEGETABLE
PRODUCERS COMMITTED
TO AGROECOLOGY.



SOCIAL PROTECTION

In Burundi, our social protection programme aims to facilitate access to quality healthcare, in particular by promoting the development of mutual health systems in the country. With the help of our partners, we are raising community awareness of the importance of health coverage and conducting prevention campaigns on various diseases. Since April 2023, Dr. Adélie Iradukunda has been the medical adviser to the mutual health organisations we support. She tells us more.

ADÉLIE IRADUKUNDA

Raising awareness of gender-specific diseases and improving healthcare

People in the informal rural sector generally do not benefit from the coverage of formal social security systems. Because they have no financial resources, or because these resources are unevenly distributed over the year, mutual health systems enable them to access healthcare without delay, thereby reducing the cost of care and improving their health. In the long term, they also contribute to economic development and improve quality of life. My role includes taking part in screening for breast and cervical cancer, two very common diseases that cause a large number of deaths in the country.

Because of our low socio-economic level, many patients show up too late for consultations and treatment. Some women say they have heard of these diseases, but know very little about them. They fear them, but are still unaware of their symptoms, risk factors, prevention methods and the benefits of early detection. That is why our awareness campaigns are so important. Women are open to discussing sexual matters, which shows their desire to acquire more knowledge in this area.

IN BURUNDI, WE ARE WORKING ON THE FOLLOWING THEMES:



SOCIAL PROTECTION

7,629
CARE COSTS COVERED BY OUR MUTUAL HEALTH ORGANISATIONS.



NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES:

26,511
PATIENTS TREATED FOR MENTAL HEALTH-RELATED ILLNESSES.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP

9,248
JOBS CREATED OR CONSOLIDATED.



AGROECOLOGY

80
ORGANISATIONS SELECTED FOR TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Since February 2023, Louvain Coopération has been supporting projects run by Congolese civil society organisations (CSOs), thanks to funding from the European Union. The SAIL programme provides local support for local CSOs, in particular through a National Support Desk for Local Initiatives and a pool of coaches. A first cohort of projects has been selected for 2023. Augustin Bedidjo Djamugisa is head of the "Réseau des Femmes Engagées dans la Mine pour la Paix et Développement". Here is what he has to say.



AUGUSTIN BEDIDJO DJAMUGISA

Developing alternative incomes for women mineworkers

Mining work is extremely arduous and particularly dangerous for women, who suffer rape and gender-based violence. The aim of our project is to improve the socio-economic living conditions of women working on the Djugu mining sites in Ituri Province, by setting up small-scale economic activities for women as an alternative to mining work. In concrete terms, the aim is to enable women to organise themselves within Rural Savings and Credit Associations (RSCAs), but also to inform and train them in alternative and less dangerous work opportunities. It is also important to inform them of their rights.

Louvain Coopération plays an essential role for our organisation, providing local support to achieve the objectives and expected results. Currently, 200 women are involved in alternative economic activities, such as selling spiced beans, doughnuts, cassava flour and bread. Some have opened small canteens. This enables them to meet their daily needs without having to engage in dangerous mining activities.

IN THE DRC, WE ARE WORKING ON THE FOLLOWING THEMES:



SOCIO-PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION

508
VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE INVOLVED IN A SOCIO-PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION PROGRAMME.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP

106
MICRO-ENTREPRENEURS HELPED TO DEVELOP THEIR BUSINESS.



NATURAL RESOURCES

628
HOUSEHOLDS BENEFITING FROM AGROFORESTRY SEEDLINGS FOR THEIR PLOTS.



NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

500
DIABETIC PATIENTS SUPPORTED IN MANAGING THEIR DISEASE.



AGROECOLOGY

In Peru, Louvain Coop eration contributes to the development of small-scale family farming and to improving the quality of life of rural populations by helping them to increase their income. This is achieved through training, technical assistance and the provision of technologies adapted to the conditions of rural families, with the aim of making the transition to agroecology. Family micro-enterprises run by women are also supported. Antonio Garc a Vel squez, Executive Director of El Taller, our partner, explains these projects in more detail.

ANTONIO GARC A VEL SQUEZ

Facing the challenges of climate change

Our partnership with Louvain Coop eration is an important alliance for us. The approaches and areas of work covered throughout our interventions are part of a continuous training and learning process to achieve our objectives, which are very ambitious. The current climate change context poses a series of new challenges. They call for greater capabilities, particularly in terms of the co-creation of knowledge, based on participatory research, in order to identify crop varieties that adapt to the new climate conditions of each region.

This will enable us to take advantage of the positive aspects that climate change could bring to areas with extreme climates. We also need to identify agroecological practices that enable effective management of pests and diseases, in order to speed up the process of adapting the agroecosystems of farming families, while promoting the agroecological transition that goes hand in hand with adaptation to change. The partnership with Louvain Coop eration is a key factor in achieving these objectives.

IN PERU, WE ARE WORKING ON THE FOLLOWING THEMES:



AGROECOLOGY

418

PRODUCERS SUPPORTED IN THEIR AGROECOLOGICAL TRANSITION.



AGROECOLOGY

79

PRODUCERS HAVE MADE COMMITMENTS TO LIMIT THE IMPACT OF THEIR ACTIVITIES ON THE ENVIRONMENT.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP

35

ENTREPRENEURS TRAINED IN MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORTED IN DEVELOPING THEIR BUSINESS.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP

29

WOMEN SUPPORTED IN THEIR PROCESS OF PHYSICAL, ECONOMIC AND DECISION-MAKING AUTONOMY.



SOCIO-PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION

In the south of Bolivia, access to employment is very difficult for young people. Tens of thousands of them find themselves unemployed, despite holding a diploma. In Tarija, our partner Esperanza Bolivia is working with us to tackle this problem. Supported by the European Union, this local NGO is launching a major project aimed at the socio-professional integration of young people, to which we will be contributing our expertise as a university NGO. Sergio Martinez, Director of Food Safety and Environment at Esperanza Bolivia, tells us all about it.



SERGIO MARTINEZ

Creating an ecosystem for employment and entrepreneurship

The lack of jobs for young people is one of the main problems we face in southern Bolivia. It is caused by the decline in oil and gas production, which a few years ago provided jobs through the public system. This decline has led to a lack of employment opportunities for young people, exacerbating the region's economic situation. The aim of the project we are running with Louvain Coop eration is to revive the economy, focusing on young people and women and promoting activities that respect the environment. This initiative involves the collaboration of four main stakeholders: government and local authorities, companies looking for labour, the employment system and the private sector, the education sys-

tem and young people looking for work. Together, we will work to improve the training and skills of young people to meet the needs of private companies, creating ecosystems of employment, employability and entrepreneurship. It is essential to stimulate the economy with local and sustainable jobs, as the gas industry is not a long-term solution. Louvain Coop eration has worked with us on this project. They will be working on more specific questions and carrying out analyses of different aspects of employment in Tarija. They will also help us create a reference base for the various indicators linked to the project's objectives, so that we can monitor our progress.

IN BOLIVIA, WE ARE WORKING ON THE FOLLOWING THEMES:



NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

1,022

HEALTHCARE WORKERS TRAINED IN THE TREATMENT OF NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE.



AGROECOLOGY

220

PRODUCERS INVOLVED IN THE AGROECOLOGICAL TRANSITION OF THEIR FOOD PRODUCTION SYSTEMS.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP

163

MICRO-ENTREPRENEURS HAVE COMPLETED A BUSINESS TRAINING COURSE.



AGROECOLOGY

In Madagascar, Louvain Coopération is working to develop sustainable food systems by supporting producers and their agricultural cooperatives, particularly in the groundnut sector, but also in mangrove ecosystems. Farmers receive technical training and are helped to manage their cooperatives. Ernest Mandrosoa is a farmer and secretary of one of these cooperatives. Here is what he has to say.

ERNEST MANDROSOA

Supporting agricultural cooperatives

Climate change is mainly caused by human activity. These disruptions cause lakes to dry up, with serious consequences for agriculture. These include soil degradation and crop losses, which translate into lower incomes. The lack of water also prevents animals from being fed, leading to a reduction in livestock numbers. Working with Louvain Coopération enabled us to set up our association and benefit from an apprenticeship in “farmer field schools”. We learnt farming techniques and received the seeds we needed to run the fields. We also received production equipment such as solar lamps, wheelbarrows and peanut shelling equipment.

Thanks to these efforts, our productivity has increased. For example, lands that were once very degraded are now of better quality. Their fertility has improved, as has our production in terms of quantity and diversity of products. The members of our association decided to build a storage facility, to which Louvain Coopération contributed. This storage facility enables us to choose the best times to sell our produce and to obtain better prices. The successful sales have enabled everyone to improve their farm incomes.

IN MADAGASCAR, WE ARE WORKING ON THE FOLLOWING THEMES:



AGROECOLOGY

318

FARMERS TRAINED IN AGROECOLOGY.



NATURAL RESOURCES

45.6HA

OF REFORESTED LAND (MANGROVES AND DRY FORESTS).



ENTREPRENEURSHIP

19

FISHERMEN TRAINED AND SUPPORTED IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT OF THEIR COOPERATIVE.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP

202

ADULTS TAUGHT TO READ AND WRITE.



NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Louvain Coopération has co-constructed the Cambodian Ministry of Health’s strategic plan for mental health. Published in 2023, it aims to ensure the resilience of the mental health system and governance, develop the mental health workforce and improve the quality and safety of care and treatment. Bopha Noun is a social worker with Trans-cultural Psychosocial Organization, one of our partners in Cambodia. She explains her work to us.



BOPHA NOUN

Strengthening local mental health systems

I work at the Chamkar Leu referral hospital and in five health centres. I provide support and advice to the mental health unit staff in these establishments. I train them on how to carry out consultations, counselling, psycho-education and home visits. I organise technical staff meetings to discuss complex cases. At community level, I visit patients, their families and neighbours. I provide counselling and psycho-education to reduce stigma in the community. I am also responsible for training village health support group volunteers in mental health first aid. I also organise community campaigns to share information about mental health, raise awareness of the issue and direct people to the care they need.

Finally, I plan meetings between mental health staff and the volunteer network to find a way of supporting patients who are suffering from economic difficulties. My work is important because it enables patients to get the treatment they need. Some time ago, a patient went to Kampong Cham provincial hospital for help and received treatment for psychosis. As she was not recovering, she decided to go to the Chamkar Leu referral hospital, in the mental health unit. After four counselling sessions, she was diagnosed with depression and given the appropriate treatment. Today, she is better and no longer engages in self-harm.

IN CAMBODIA, WE ARE WORKING ON THE FOLLOWING THEMES:



NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

753

NEW MENTAL HEALTH PATIENTS TREATED.



NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

2,997

CHILDREN TAKING PART IN INCLUSIVE PLAY, LEISURE, HEALTH AND HYGIENE ACTIVITIES.



AGROECOLOGY

931

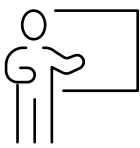
FARMERS SUPPORTED IN FARM MANAGEMENT AND TECHNIQUES.



AGROECOLOGY

33

FARMS EQUIPPED WITH IRRIGATION SYSTEMS.



Louvain Coopération works actively with UCLouvain's students to strengthen their capacity for individual and collective action in society. The main themes addressed are based on strong, transformative values: feminism, ecology, anti-racism and decolonisation.

In 2023, our Global Citizenship and Solidarity Education (GCSE) team was once again very active and creative. Here are just a few of its achievements.

Multiculturalism in training

The Faculty of Motor Sciences (FMS) and Louvain Coopération have set up a number of initiatives to raise students' awareness of multicultural issues and global citizenship. Dominique De Jaeger, Professor at the Faculty, explains: *"At the Faculty of Motor Sciences, the student body is particularly homogeneous and does not reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity that exists within the Belgian population. However, our graduates will be required to develop the motor skills and preserve or restore the motor potential of a population whose relationship with the body may be very different from their own personal experience. The FMS' Internationalisation Commission has decided to work on integrating modules into the training programme to raise students' awareness of these multicultural issues. The global citizenship and solidarity education activities developed by Louvain Coopération appear to be an opportunity to achieve this objective. For example, the **Inter'discours** activity, which aims to stimulate reflection and open debate on issues linking gender and sport, has been offered to our students. Through the **Uni4Coop and Enabel Teacher training module**, students were able to understand the relationships of domination and global inequalities, to question the role of teachers and schools in combating these inequalities, and finally to discover and experiment with teaching tools that they will be able to incorporate into their courses later*

*on. Finally, the **IngénieuxSud** course, which has existed for several years at UCLouvain, will now be offered to FMS students for the 2024-2025 academic year".*

Equity, diversity and inclusion

From 16 to 20 October 2023, UCLouvain organised a series of meetings in Louvain-la-Neuve called the "États Généraux", focusing on the themes of equity, diversity and inclusion. The aim was to come up with a collective plan for the university. Fiona Nziza, in charge of the Global Citizenship and Solidarity Education programme for Louvain Coopération, had the opportunity to speak on the theme of "Roots (what grounds us) and wings (what carries us)". She explored the notion of diversity and discussed its connotations and terminological implications. During this reflection, she specifically challenged the audience to consider whether this term encompasses the inclusion of a whole category of people perceived as different. To support her argument, she cited Marie DaSylva's definition of the norm, suggesting that it confers the power to define what is different from oneself, to hierarchise, to marginalise, and to confer the privilege of being at the centre, of being considered neutral and universal. In conclusion, she stressed that the effort to include diversity amounts to an attempt to integrate marginalised people into a system that fundamentally excludes and discriminates against them.

Welcoming international scholarship holders

In October 2023, Louvain Coopération and the Commission for the Development of the UCLouvain Health Sciences Sector (CD3S) organised a welcome event for scholarship students in the health field at UCLouvain. Juliette Delvaux, who is in charge of this project for Louvain Coopération, explains: *"We wanted to create a space where people could meet and exchange ideas in order to facilitate the integration of international scholarship holders into the academic community. Around fifty people came together to share their knowledge and feelings on the concept of "global health". This widely studied concept covers all the elements that "surround" health, not just medical considerations, but also the vision of health from a global perspective. With this in mind, we felt it was important to bring together people from the four corners of the world, to compare our points of view and open up to the different realities of the medical sector. From both a practical point of view (equipment, location, climate, economic opportunities, etc.) and an ideological point of view (consideration of so-called "alternative" medicines), we have a lot to learn from meeting and listening to the life stories of (future) international doctors.*

Opening up to alterity is also a process of decentralisation which, we hope, will make it possible to confront persistent intercultural problems in Belgium, particularly racism and inequalities still visible today within the medi-

cal sector.

This evening gave us the opportunity to welcome the international scholarship holders from the medical sector who have come, sometimes from far away, to specialise at UCLouvain, but above all to begin a process of reflection that is continuing on the Alma campus."

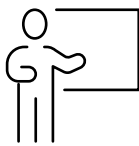
Escape Game

Louvain Coopération, the Maison du Développement Durable (MDD) and UCLouvain Transition have joined forces to launch, with the support of the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles and Mindchangers, an innovative escape game project that takes a playful approach to the ma-



for challenges facing our planet. Since February, this escape game "La Pendule de Vitruve" can be played in Louvain-la-Neuve. It is an educational tool that provides an interactive approach to the themes of ecological and social transition. Béatrice Minh, coordinator of the Mindchangers project for the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, explains: *"The game deals with subjects such as the Anthropocene (geological era in which the human influence on the biosphere is predominant), energy, digital technology, natural resources, the loss of biodiversity, climate justice, decolonial ecology and ecofeminism. Thanks to this game, these themes are presented in a way that is accessible to a wide audience, particularly students".* This project was made possible by Mindchangers, a European Union call for projects that specifically targets associations and local authorities, encouraging them to develop innovative strategies

for working with young people on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Mindchangers brings together 9 partners from 6 European Union countries and aims to mobilise young people.



Our unique university approach translates into a critical, reflective, continuous learning process and the involvement of academic communities in the South and the North. Our Research and Development team takes particular care to meet these objectives. Here are a few of its achievements in 2023.



SECORES Seminar

In December 2023, SECORES, the Belgian network on socio-ecological resilience, co-founded by Louvain Coopération through Uni4Coop, held its second seminar in Brussels. Socio-ecological resilience is defined as “the capacity to adapt or transform in the face of changes in socio-ecological systems, so as to continue to support human well-being”. This seminar focused on how we can understand and assess socio-ecological resilience in the field. Different tools and methods were presented and compared, in the light of testimonies of their practical application in the field.

Intervention in the curriculum

Among our contributions to the curriculum, we would like to highlight the one given during the course “Natural resources: land grabbing and resistance” of An Ansoms (UCLouvain). At the heart of this presentation was the concept of socio-ecological resilience in relation to mangrove ecosystems, and Louvain Coopération’s intervention strategy in this area. Johan Slimbrouck, coordinator of SECORES, and Constant Setonde Gnansounou, a PhD student at UNamur engaged in research on this theme [→ SEE PAGE 19], took part in the debate.

Conference on global health

Louvain Coopération took part in the 13th European Conference on Global Health, aimed at reflecting and exchanging ideas on the future of equitable and sustainable global health. 5 submissions were accepted for posters and presentations in which LC was involved, on mental health in Cambodia and Burundi. It is vital to share the studies we have carried out on our interventions at international conferences, so that we can disseminate the lessons we have learned from them and enrich them with the feedback we receive.

Research and Study Day on Service Learning

Two students from UCLouvain travelled to Madagascar and Benin on a research mission on the practice of Service Learning. They conducted a large number of interviews at local universities that are partners of Louvain Coopération in order to document and understand how service learning is practised there.

In November 2023, in collaboration with the Chair in Ethical Service Learning at UCLouvain, we organised a study day on “Service Learning: For an interdisciplinary exploration”. Among the initiatives highlighted was an Amorce project set up by Louvain Coopération and UCLouvain. It aims to create a network around Service Learning between several Congolese universities, which will be connected to UCLouvain, in order to develop tools relating to this type of learning

FIND OUT MORE



Louvain Coopération pays particular attention to the learning and knowledge that exists and is produced during the actions implemented, how this is taken into account at operational level and how it is disseminated. This is reflected in the production of numerous documents accessible to all via our website. Here are a few examples of our publications in 2023.

Assessing the economic cost of mental illness from the patient’s perspective in Burundi

By *Alain Ndayikunda*

The main objective of this study was to evaluate the total economic cost of mental illness for Burundian patients in 2022, taking into account their socio-demographic characteristics, as well as the direct and indirect costs associated with this illness. It was carried out on the basis of data on the cost of care for 6,143 patients, involving 24,321 outpatient visits and 2,967 inpatient admissions. According to this analysis, the average annual direct cost of mental illness for a patient is around USD 355.8, with an average annual indirect cost of USD 28.8. The sensitivity analysis carried out by the author highlights the significant impact of the cost of medication and the number of contacts with the healthcare system on the overall economic cost. These results highlight the need to improve the care of mentally ill patients in Burundi, in particular by reducing the cost of medication and optimising the effectiveness of mental health interventions.

The role of local deities and traditional beliefs in promoting the sustainable use of mangrove ecosystems

By *Setondé Constant Gnansounou, Kolawolé Valère Salako, Corentin Visée, Farid Dahdouh-Guebas, Romain Glèlè Kakaï, Patrick Kestemont, Sabine Henry*

The study examines how local deities and traditional beliefs in Benin can help protect mangroves from human threats and better manage natural resources. It uses twelve indicators to assess different categories of mangroves and finds that the most destructive practices are associated with non-sanctuarised areas, while sacred areas and sanctuaries are less impacted. Local deities may therefore play a role in preserving mangroves. Salt producers and residents with large families are also identified as key users and should be involved in community efforts to ensure the sustainable use of mangroves.



Louvain Coopération is a preferred partner for a number of students for their end-of-study dissertations, and here is an example from this year:

Organisational learning during programme evaluations in indirect cooperation

By *Astor Maes*

The author explains the contribution of evaluation processes to the collective learning of stakeholders in Belgian NGOs. It is based on the ideas of Stanislas Dehaene, who describes the assimilation of information by the brain in terms of four pillars: attention, active engagement, feedback and consolidation of learning. The author examines organisational learning during programme evaluations in the light of these four pillars. In particular, he concludes that stakeholder participation is crucial if evaluation is to be useful in development cooperation plans. Indeed, greater stakeholder participation in the evaluation



process seems to promote acceptance and ownership.

In 2023, our Communication, Marketing and Fundraising department has undertaken a large number of initiatives to promote the mission of Louvain Coopération and fund our projects. Here are a few examples.

Cycling for LC

At the end of 2023, Yonas and Corentin, two former UCLouvain students with a passion for cycling, embarked on an ambitious project: to reach Malaysia by bike. To give meaning to this project, they are offering to sponsor their trip in aid of Louvain Coopération, their university's NGO.

During their visit to Cambodia, they visited our projects to see how the funds raised were being used, while at the same time raising public awareness of their initiatives in the field.



ated, 10 cooperation projects were supported and 27 student initiatives were financed and encouraged.

The initial project remains unchanged: to support and encourage young idealists who want to make the world a better place. Over time, it has adapted to the needs of students, now focusing on the Solidarity Fund and offering a training programme on global solidarity to young project leaders.

In 2022-2023, the Solidarity Fund supported a borehole project in Cameroon and an ecological oven project in Benin.

SusTech4Benin: 1st edition with LSM

Sustainable Technology for Benin is a project of our partner, Ondernemers voor Ondernemers, which aims to support and promote sustainable entrepreneurship in Benin. In 2023, Louvain Coopération joined forces with the LSM (Louvain School of Management) to involve students in the SusTech4Benin boostcamp, as junior coaches. Two students, Grace and Clémence were selected.

DISCOVER



SAKIFE photo exhibition

SAKIFE is an exhibition-reportage project by photographer Christophe Smets in collaboration with journalist Olivier le Bussy. It takes place in the provinces of North and South Kivu in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and highlights the many facets of women's health. In 2023, this exhibition took place in the university halls of UCLouvain, after an evening opening attended by a large number of supporters. It was then exhibited in various locations in Belgium and abroad.



In 2023, our 4 French-speaking Belgian university NGOs continued their work within the Uni4Coop consortium. The result: the implementation of several ambitious projects informed by university expertise, in particular around the preservation and restoration of mangrove ecosystems.

At the end of November 2023, a dozen or so people in charge of the "socio-ecological resilience of mangroves" programme, funded by the Belgian Cooperation, met in Senegal to analyse the initial experiments carried out in the four intervention zones (Benin, Guinea, Madagascar and Senegal) and to draw lessons for the coming years.

The discussions were enriched by various contributions, including those from a project manager working in DRC on practices in the Mangrove Marine Park, at the mouth of the majestic Congo River. Experts shared a number of project mana-

gement tools. As a university NGO, we encourage research in each of our projects, so through regular activities or ambitious PhDs, we analyse and explore the future together.

Finally, field visits and discussions with the people who work on a day-to-day basis in the Bamboing protected area and the Palmarin Community Nature Reserve have given concrete expression to the already tangible results of the various projects, but also to the challenges ahead!



Publication

The first chapter of UNamur PhD student Setondé Constant Gnansounou's thesis on the *"The role of local deities and traditional beliefs in promoting the sustainable use of mangrove ecosystems"* has been published in the journal *Forest Policy and Economics* [→SEE PAGE 19]

READ THE ARTICLE



SUPPORT THEM



The Solidarity Student programme is 10 years old

Launched at the start of the 2013 academic year, the programme invites UCLouvain students to become stakeholders in sustainable and fair solidarity. Since the beginning of the adventure, no fewer than 14,574 Solidarity Students partici-

2023 : the rise of our first ambitions

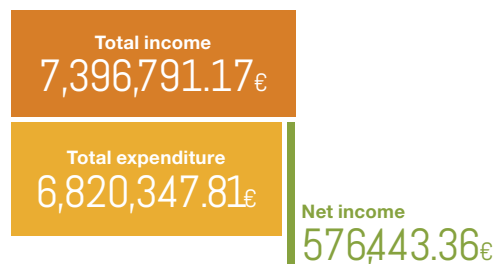
While last year we were in a period of transition with the launch of the new DGD 2022-2026 programme, in 2023 we were able to increase our volume of activities to over €7M (compared with €5.9M in 2022). This is thanks, among other things, to the launch of our new activities in Kinshasa (support for civil society organisations with the EU, socio-professional integration of vulnerable young people with Enabel and the Brussels-Capital Region), as well as new contracts with the EU in Burundi, PASCALE-B (biodiversity) and SESA (cassava sector). This growth demonstrates our credibility in the eyes of particularly demanding donors, but above all confirms the recognition of our high-quality work in the field. These new projects have also enabled us to start balancing the sums we receive from different public bodies.

This growth phase has enabled us to achieve a current operating profit of €76k for 2023, whereas we had budgeted for a profit of around €48k.

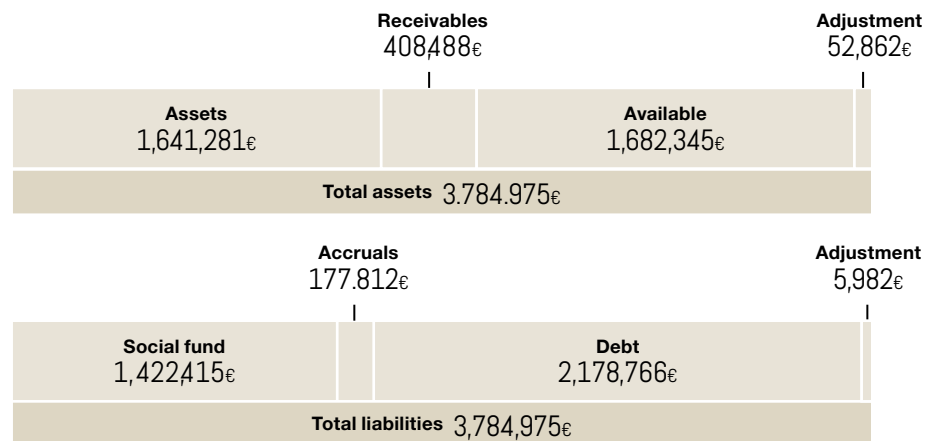
In addition to this profit on ordinary activities, we made an exceptional profit of €500k, corresponding to the conversion - after negotiations with UCLouvain - of a subordinated loan (quasi-equity) into equity. This clarification of our balance sheet has enabled us to increase our equity capital to over €1,400k, an important factor in our ability to participate in major international tenders.

These good results, combined with a prudent provisioning policy since 2022 (building up reserves in the event of ineligible expenditure being rejected), mean that we can be confident about the execution of our current and future programmes, in the service of vulnerable populations and the agents of change who support them.

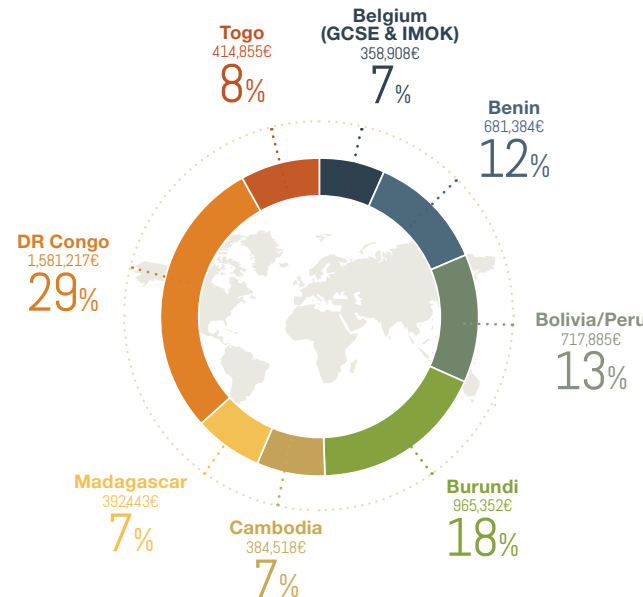
Income statement



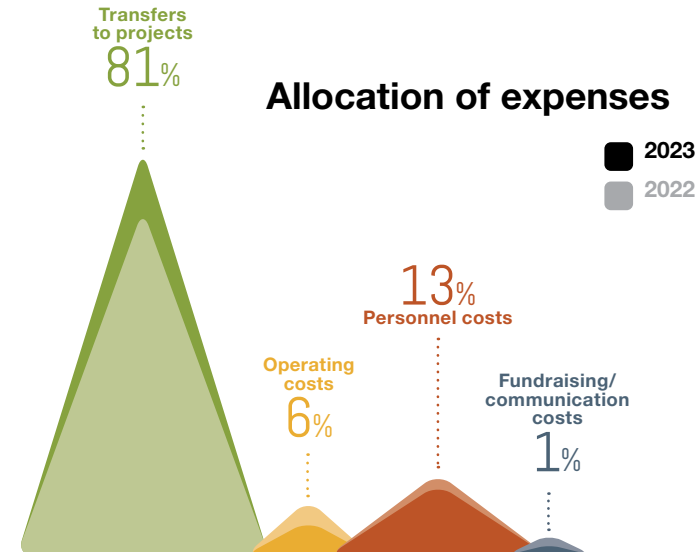
Balance sheet 2023



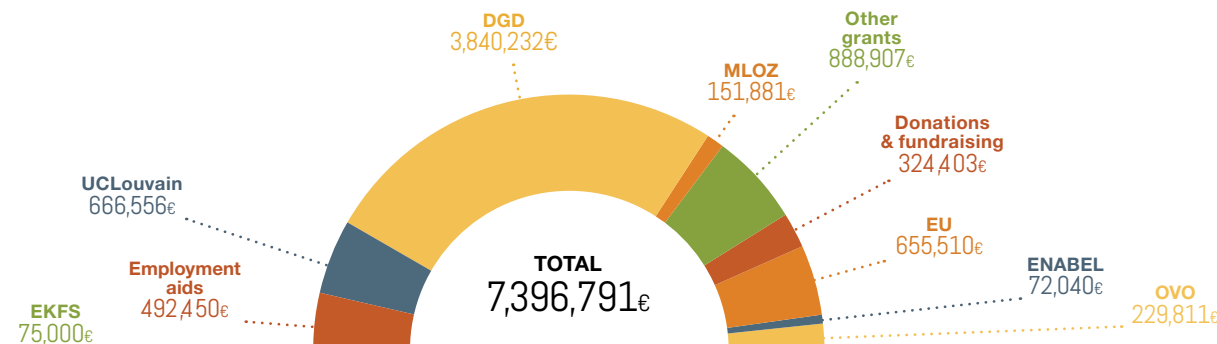
Geographical allocation of projects



Allocation of expenses



Sources of funding



Here are some of the fruitful collaborations between UCLouvain and Louvain Coopération, its NGO, in 2023.



Circle U and the Seed Funding programme

Louvain Coopération is an associate partner of CircleU, an alliance of nine European universities including UCLouvain. Together, these institutions combine their strengths and interests to create an inclusive European university focused on interdisciplinary research. As part of Circle U's Seed Funding programme, Louvain Coopération has been selected to contribute to two pilot projects in 2023, the first, *"Toppling the totem pole: How to identify and overcome hierarchies preventing interdisciplinary research work"*, and the second, *"Epigenesis of organic architecture"*.

Hosting 2 PhD students as part of the Circle U programme

Also as part of the Circle U programme, two international doctoral students, Elle and Anita, visited Louvain Coopération's headquarters in June. Anita Priyadarshini, a PhD student at the University of Aarhus in Denmark, worked on the digitalisation of our Environmental Integration Tool-Producers, which measures the impact of our activities on the environment. As for Elle Hill, a PhD student at King's College London, she worked with us on analysing the data collected on the agroecological transition of projects aimed at developing sustainable food systems.

Nexus

Since the academic year 2022-23, Louvain Coopération has been collaborating on the Water-Energy-Food Nexus Master's degree, offered by UCLouvain and ULiège. The aim of this Master's programme is to enable participants to adopt a holistic and sustainable approach to problems by carrying out an integrated analysis of aspects relating to water, energy and food. In 2023, LC presented two multidimensional and multi-actor tools used in our actions. We also hosted interns in Togo and Burundi. The first one produced an analysis of

the rice supply chain in the Savanes region, using a WEF Nexus approach to optimise it and make it more sustainable. In Burundi, the aim was to manage and assess the socio-economic impacts of irrigated rice-growing in the Imbo-Nord plain. This collaboration materialises our links with the University and our contribution to its teaching mission, and also allows us to reflect on our interventions in the light of the global approach proposed by the WEF Nexus.

The SPIN Masters

The SPIN2MC Master's degree, offered jointly by ULB and UCLouvain, provides a "specialisation in public health - analysis and evaluation of international health policies, programmes and systems". Louvain Coopération contributes by proposing subjects related to its projects, but also by taking part in the debates organised and in the evaluation of students' work. These subjects offer students the opportunity to put their theoretical knowledge into practice in the context of an integrated project where evaluation estimates have to be carried out. This year's 2023 themes were mental health, strengthening community health in Benin, the role of mutual health organisations in preventing and promoting diabetes and hypertension, and reproductive health in Benin.

This report highlights the main events of 2023, but with 2024 already well underway, we cannot resist the pleasure of sharing a few of this year's major projects with you.



Stronger together

2024 has enabled us to forge new collaborations that strengthen us and open up our horizons even further. With La Chaloupe, a Belgian Non-Institutional Educational Action Organisation, we are developing exchanges between young people from Benin and Belgium (a mix of university and non-university students) to foster better intercultural understanding and tolerance towards others. This alliance has prompted us to extend the deployment area of our Global Citizenship and Solidarity Education programme to the South.

The Belgian development NGO Rotary Clubs for Development has chosen Louvain Coopération to resume its activities in Kinshasa. This will enable us to benefit from new projects, but also from the expertise acquired over more than 40 years of existence.

We are also able to work together on a daily basis thanks to our new workplace. Louvain Coopération's headquarters has taken up residence in the brand new Mundo in Louvain-la-Neuve, which is home to several Belgian associations, helping to forge links between people with the same convictions and associations that are driving change in our world.

New growth-generating projects

This new year has seen the start of activities in the field linked to three key projects, carried out with the support of the European Union. In Burundi, 'PASCALE-B', in collaboration with the Belgian NGO Join for Water, aims to strengthen civil society organisations and support them in developing activities linked to the protection of biodiversity and natural resources, the local environment and sanitation. 80 associations have already been identified to be supported in their mission. Also in Burundi, the SESA project (Support for entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector) was launched this year. As part of a Belgian-Burundian consortium of 6 partners, we are working on the cassava, poultry and vegetable sectors. In concrete terms, the aim is to improve production, processing and marketing techniques for these products, while promoting the development of a circular green economy. A comprehensive training and support service will be developed to empower and build the capacity of entrepreneurs. We are also working to improve access to finance for rural businesses. Finally, training courses, particularly on good nutritional practices, are being developed.

Finally, after a start in minor mode, the SAIL project will be rolled out at cruising speed throughout the DRC, to support civil society organisations. [→SEE PAGE 11]



A promising reunion

We will not end this Annual Report without mentioning our strategic workshops in March 2024. For a fortnight, we welcomed 25 colleagues working in the field on a daily basis. Together, we thought about the future of our association, our work themes, our projects, our internal workings and the changes we want to bring about. In addition to the strategic interest of this exercise, it was also a great human adventure,

allowing us to put aside the video conferences to talk face to face and get to know each other better. We shared this adventure with you on March 28th, at the *“Rencontres de Louvain Coopération”*.

This evening was open to all of you who, in one way or another, support our mission. It was an opportunity for everyone to find out more about our fight for a sustainable, fair and solidary world.



FOR
LEARN MORE





LOUVAIN
COOPERATION

Avenue de Cîteaux 114 - 1348 Louvain-la-Neuve
tél : 0032(0)10/390.300 - info@louvaincooperation.org
www.louvaincooperation.org
Thank you for your support: BE28 7323 3319 1920