



Photo: © Helvetas/PatrickRohr

URBAN ENGAGEMENT

We are living in an ‘urban century.’ Over half of the world’s population already live in cities, with this amount predicted to reach 70% by 2050.

Helvetas promotes sustainable and inclusive urbanisation. We support cities to improve living conditions for their citizens, develop policy frameworks, strengthen food systems, secure access to education and jobs and harness the benefits of rural-urban linkages.

ABOUT HELVETAS

Helvetas was founded in 1955 as the first private organization for development cooperation in Switzerland.

It has since grown to become a global nonprofit with sister organizations in the U.S. and Germany. We support projects in 30 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe.

We are a member of the Alliance2015, a strategic network of eight European non-governmental organizations with an annual programming budget of over €640 million.

For over 65 years, Helvetas has been contributing to efforts to alleviate poverty, working to advance human rights, and fighting injustice across the globe.

HOW WE WORK

Helvetas is initiating real change in the lives of over three million disadvantaged people each year.

We are engaged in the three working areas 1) Skills, Jobs and Income: 2) Voice, Inclusion, Cohesion and 3) Water, Food and Climate. Urban engagement is one of our cross cutting topics, together with advocacy, gender and social equity, youth as well as learning & innovation.

We create synergies through strategic partnerships. Helvetas is a member of 77 professional networks and alliances and works with over 850 local partners to ensure solutions are locally owned.

ABOUT HELVETAS' URBAN ENGAGEMENT

Reflecting the global trend of urbanization, HELVETAS has, since 2016, strategically shifted its approach to better account for urban dynamics and interactions between growing urban centres and rural spaces. Recognising that the increasing proportion of the global poor is living in urban areas, HELVETAS further builds its understanding of urban poverty, innovates and refines its approaches to engage in (peri-)urban contexts and their interlinked rural areas and establishes partnerships with organisations having complementary expertise.

Our Approach

HELVETAS focuses on making cities better places to live for the poor and marginalised. In line with the New Urban Agenda and SDG 11, we engage in processes of urbanisation and in urban areas to ensure cities are inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Geographically, we focus largely on secondary cities, which deliver important services to citizens and are closely connected to rural areas. We follow three interrelated workstreams to reach this aim and address the complexity of cities (taking a systems approach):

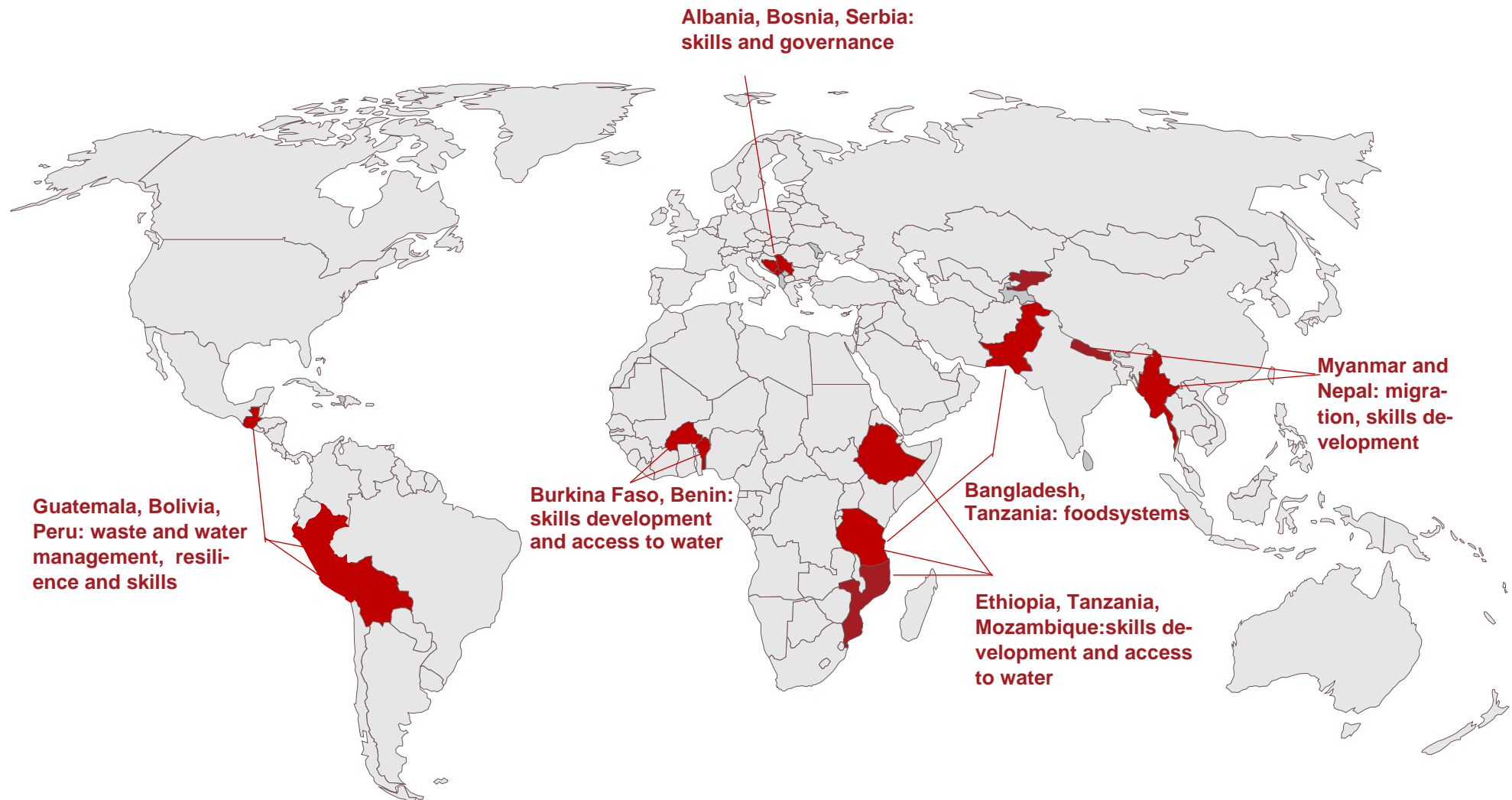
- **Integrated urban development and governance:** focusing on fostering cross-sectoral collaboration, coordination between different levels of government, multi-stakeholder engagement, inclusive processes, coordination and capacity building of multiple stakeholders.
- **Resilience:** focusing on resilient city-region food systems, provision of urban infrastructure and basic services (i.e., water sensitive urban planning, solid waste management), and risk reduction in relation to climate change
- **Migration and youth:** focusing on safe and secure jobs, protection of migrants including access to employment services and training opportunities

Our Outreach in 2021

Currently HELVETAS implements 18 projects dealing with urban processes and working with cities across all our geographical regions.

- In 2021 we secured a total funding of almost 24 million CHF with our urban projects.
- HELVETAS is engaged in waste management and improvement of access to water and sanitation in urban areas in Latin America and African countries.
- Several of our projects foster integrated approaches to urban development by encouraging multi-stakeholder engagement and collaboration across different levels of government
- We collaborate with a wide range of international and local partners to use synergies and maximise our impact to serve as many disadvantaged people as possible.

WHERE WE WORK IN URBAN ENGAGEMENT



WHAT WE DO IN URBAN ENGAGEMENT

CIUDADES RESILIENTES, BOLIVIA

CLIENT/ FUNDING SOURCE: FUNDACION ESPERANZA, SDC PROGRAM CONTRIBUTION

DURATION: 01/2019 – 12/2022

VOLUME: 560'404 CHF

Making cities resilient

In Bolivia 70% of the population is settled in urban areas, mainly consolidated by rural migration generating a spontaneous and horizontal urban growth. The demographic pressure, socio-economic shocks and climatic dynamics have led to increasing socio-spatial inequalities, mainly for vulnerable populations living in informal and risky settlements. The project contributes to an increased level of resilience of the city of Sucre (urban space and surrounding areas) and improves citizens' welfare in the peripheral neighborhoods. It reduces the negative effects of urban growth based on participatory planning, and the development of a municipal integrated urban agenda. HELVETAS implements other complementary urban projects in Sucre with focus on youth entrepreneurs, waste management and sanitation, in addition to resilient cities.



Groups of citizens develop ideas for the development of the city of Sucre. Photo: Helvetas Bolivia.

Expected Results

- **Strengthened urban governance**, through collaborative work between the government, academia, the private sector and civil society organizations. Helvetas supports the participative

process to build the Urban Agenda and include all stakeholders in the urban planning.

- Pilot projects designed by the population for urban development like urban farming, collection points and learning laboratory for e-waste and old electronic equipment, interaction in public space and more are supported.
- Technicians' soft skills in strategic urban planning are strengthened through **capacity building processes**.
- The experiences will be shared with other neighbourhoods in Sucre and at the national level and **will serve as a model for integral development in Bolivian cities**.

Key Insights

The project successfully introduced two pilot interventions in different sectors:

- **Nature Based Solutions** - urban and peri-urban vegetable gardens contribute to Food Security.
- **The Urban Innovation Laboratory and City Observatory** leads to prototype urban solutions based on citizen participation.

DRINKING WATER AND HYGIENE IN SMALL TOWNS OF MOZAMBIQUE

CLIENT/ FUNDING SOURCE: VIVA CON AGUA/DRINK & DONATE, SDC PROGRAM CONTRIBUTION

DURATION: 01/2022 – 12/2025

VOLUME: 1,5 MIO CHF

Safe water saves lives

In the northern areas of Mozambique, Nampula and Capo Delgado, more and more people are moving from rural areas to small regional towns because they find better infrastructure and easier access to education and medical facilities. They also hope to find better employment opportunities.

The authorities face major challenges, as the existing water supply facilities are far from adequate for the growing population. Entire neighborhoods have no access to drinking water, and people therefore

obtain their water from unsafe water points in the surrounding area.

According to Mozambique's water policy, municipal authorities are to cooperate with local water commissions and private companies to ensure that the water supply functions more reliably and is expanded. In the remote north of the country, however, there is little experience available and a strengthening of the actors is necessary.



Safe drinking water from the new build well. Photo: Helvetas/ Simon Opladen

Expected Results

- Five water supply systems in larger settlements have been newly constructed or expanded.
- 4 hygiene campaigns contribute to a lasting improvement in hygiene behavior of 50'000 peoples.
- 10 schools adapted the concept of "Blue schools": water and sanitation infrastructure and hygiene training for a total of 10'000 children and 50 teachers.
- The responsible authorities plan and maintain drinking water systems and sanitary facilities independently.
- 20 water commissions have received various trainings, so that they can support the settlements in water issues and collect water fees or are competent in the maintenance and repair of wells and drinking water systems.
- 10 local companies are capable of maintaining and operating drinking water systems. 10 are trained to improve their business models and management.

Key Insights

In total, around 100'000 people in six districts of the provinces of Cabo Delgado and Nampula are benefiting from improved services around the existing water supplies and from better hygiene

measures by the trained authorities, companies, craftsmen and water commissions.



Water towers ensure a secure water supply in small towns. Photo: Helvetas/Flurina Rothenberger

CITY TO CITY COOPERATION: ZURICH AND FREETOWN

CLIENT/ FUNDING SOURCE:
CITY OF ZURICH
IMPLEMENTED BY: HELVETAS, ERNST
BASLER + PARTNER AND SIERRA LEONE
URBAN RESEARCH CENTRE
VOLUME: 180.000 CHF

Regeneration of the Central Business District – a feasibility study

City partnerships provide an opportunity for cities to connect with each other and gain new perspectives on sustainable urban development issues. Through such partnerships, cities can share knowledge and develop innovative solutions on a range of commonly experienced urban challenges.

Helvetas, Ernst Basler and Partner and Sierra Leone

Urban Research Centre conducted a Feasibility Study on the CBD "Urban Regeneration Programme" of Freetown. This program will focus on creating an enabling environment to revive business activity in the CBD. It aims to reduce congestion, create attractive public spaces and a safer environment for pedestrians.



CBD showing regeneration zones Graphic: SLURC (Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre)

Results

The **Feasibility Study** provided recommendations to the cities on how the partnership should be organised and what would be the key activities and points of thematic exchange.

Helvetas went onto lead the process of establishing the **cooperation concept** between the two cities.

Key Insights

There are many points of potential exchange between the two cities. Both can learn from each other's approaches and practices. So far, exchanges have focused on participatory practices in urban regeneration with both cities providing inputs on how they do this in different scenarios.



Flower pots, improved greening and new benches in front of the new City Hall. Photo: Helvetas/ Craig Hatcher.

URBAN TRANSFORMATION PROJECT SARAJEVO

CLIENT/ FUNDING SOURCE: SECO

**IMPLEMENTED BY: HELVETAS, URBAPLAN
AND ENOVA WITH ETH-ZURICH**

DURATION: 2021 – 2024

VOLUME: 1.550.000 CHF

Introducing integral urban planning

The Urban Transformation Project Sarajevo supports the establishment of a well-capacitated and participatory, integrated urban planning system.

Today, despite mechanisms for public participation evident in legislative frameworks, processes are not transparent and possibilities to participate in such procedures are limited. With the support of this project, Sarajevo will improve its urban planning and management capacities based on reliable data, good quality analysis and multi-stakeholder engagement.



Public space in the city of Sarajevo. Photo: urbaplan/Ferdinand Boutet.

Results

A multidisciplinary team of urban experts conducted an initial situational analysis to assess weaknesses in the urban planning system.

The project has commenced activities focusing on four specific entry-points mobility, green spaces, public participation and spatial information systems. Within these entry points, the projects aims to strengthen the legislative framework, promote integrated approaches to urban planning, improve government actors' capacities and bolster existing participatory urban planning mechanisms.

EMPOWERING MIGRANTS, MYANMAR

CLIENT/ FUNDING SOURCE: LIFELIHOODS AND SECURITY FUND (LIFT)

IMPLEMENTED BY: Helvetas

DURATION: 10/2019 – 09/2022

VOLUME: 1,900,000 CHF

Supporting migrants through workers' centres

Myanmar is no exception to the global urbanization trends with already 30% of its population living in urban areas. The target area of this project is Shwe Pyi Thar Township in Yangon, which hosts 50,000 migrant workers and also is one of the main destinations of internal migrants in the country.

With four Workers' Centres, the project establishes key contact points for migrants to get knowledge and skills, legal aid on safe migration and decent work. Also, support for better nutrition and hygiene is provided through those centres.

Psychosocial counselling in times of Covid-19

More than 140,000 international migrants had returned to Myanmar by mid 2020 because of the pandemic many do not know how they will ever make a living again. Moreover, the pandemic is taking its toll on the mental health of many and gender-based violence has become a major problem. Therefore, Helvetas has set up psychosocial counselling as a Covid-19 emergency measure as part of this project to help people overcome mental health problems during the pandemic.

Key Insights

The multi-sector intervention covering different aspects has proved successful to reduce the vulnerabilities and therefore contribute to strengthening resilience of labour migrants and their families.

Workers' Centers, especially during the COVID-19 crisis, have become an important point of reference for migrant workers that require paralegal aids and the project significantly contributes to the resilience of internal migrants.

MORE INFORMATION

[HELVETAS.org](https://www.helvetas.org) / HELVETAS' Urban Engagement

OUR EXPERTS

Our team consists of highly professional, committed and multilingual advisors with many years of experience working in international development cooperation across the Globe. Meet the representatives of the interdisciplinary working group on urban engagement:



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WHAT WE CAN OFFER

- Thematic advice on urban development and governance, resilience and migration and youth
- Design, implementation, adaptation and review of projects.
- Development of methodological tools and manuals
- Facilitation of multistakeholder initiatives and city to city partnerships
- Capacity building and support for local partners and authorities