



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

World Service

Member of **actalliance**

FOR HOPE AND A FUTURE

LWF WORLD SERVICE
2023 ANNUAL REPORT



Cover photo:

In this village, LWF World Service supports 15 gardeners with cash to purchase adequate equipment. Milamem Peladji (pictured) is one of them.

*Photo: LWF/
M. Renaux*

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IMAGE LEFT

Photo: LWF World Service staff with migrants at the Arauca-Casanare route from Venezuela to Panama. The dangerous route across Colombia is travelled by thousands of refugees every month. LWF World Service provides material and psychosocial support along the road, and a map on where to find essential services.

Photo: LWF/A. Calma



The victims of war are among the most vulnerable people in the world.

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Welcome

Humanitarian response is the reason LWF World Service was created after the Second World War: to respond to the needs of populations displaced by conflict and violence, and to help rebuild lives after devastating wars.

In the many years since its founding, LWF World Service has continued to respond, but for some decades it seemed that the major humanitarian crises resulted from natural disasters such as tsunamis, floods, droughts and earthquakes, rather than war or conflict. Refugee numbers declined, and conflicts were resolved and temporarily displaced people could return home.

Unfortunately, the positive trends of several decades ago have been reversed. The past years have seen a rapid rise in man-made disasters, conflict and war, often lasting decades without peace agreements or political solutions. Mass displacement, suffering and need are growing fast on a global level. The face of conflict has changed. Crises have become protracted, with warring parties often splintering and re-aligning, making it difficult for humanitarians to navigate in the rapidly changing environment. Wars are often fuelled by natural disasters, combining the effects of extreme weather-related needs with armed conflict, and civilians caught up in dire circumstances in inhospitable places in hard-to-reach areas.

2023 saw several such situations deteriorate. Eastern Chad received over 500.000 refugees fleeing the collapse of Sudan and the return of the Darfur conflict. Ethiopia's ongoing internal

conflict re-ignited and many areas experienced repeated cycles of extreme violence, combined with acute hunger and displacement. In November 2023, the long-simmering tensions between Israel and Palestine exploded into atrocities so extreme, that the international community has been entirely lost in how to imagine a meaningful response.

Our operational environment has in many places become so dangerous that humanitarian operations have needed to be suspended, re-directed or even completely stopped in places where we cannot provide adequate access or protection to our staff or the affected populations. Safety and security measures have become an unavoidable expense in budgeting for response, and unfortunately humanitarian workers are increasingly targeted by warring parties, despite being protected by International Humanitarian Law.

And yet, working in these places is why LWF World Service was created. The victims of war are among the most vulnerable people in the world, and LWF World Service continues to seek them out, offer them support and empowerment in the worst conditions. In these places, the motto of LWF World Service, *For Hope and a Future*, provides comfort and direction. Thank you for your support.

Maria Immonen
LWF World Service Director

IMAGE RIGHT

Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya.

Photo: LWF/
Albin Hillert





About us

In 1952, LWF World Service was established as the aid and development arm of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). Seventy years on, our name and mandate remain the same. We have since expanded to 26 countries across five regions in the world.

In 2023, LWF World Service served 2.6 million people in 18 Country Programs and Emergency Operations in 26 countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

This work was supported by 6,964 staff, of whom 99.4 percent were local employees, volunteers and incentive workers. Conflict continued to drive the increase in the number of people served in 2023. The Sudan crisis caused refugee displacement to Chad and South Sudan,

where we scaled up emergency responses. We continued to respond in Ukraine, Ethiopia, Colombia-Venezuela and in Haiti, all crises caused mainly by conflicts and exacerbated by climate-induced vulnerability, economic crises and/or marginalization.

A steady decline in humanitarian funding for the protracted and “forgotten” crises around where LWF World Service is operational led to a decline in the provision of humanitarian, protection and resilience assistance and support. This was particularly acute in places like Uganda, where refugees suffered massive ration cuts which they could not cope with.

IMAGE LEFT

LWF Country Representatives and LWF World Service staff from Geneva serving at the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Thirteenth Assembly, held in Krakow, Poland on 13-19 September 2023 under the theme of One Body, One Spirit, One Hope.

Photo: LWF/M. Renaux

Through our distinctive Rights Based Approach Local to Global, we empowered the people to advocate for their rights, for the duty bearers to fulfil their obligations and partnered with like-minded organizations to call for lasting solutions, increased allocation of development funding and urgent action to combat gender and climate injustices globally.

LWF World Service often begins new operations during an emergency phase at the request of a member church. We remain in that country for an average of 23 years, working closely with communities, member churches, duty bearers and civil society organizations. Our localization framework guides us to empower communities to address the challenges that face them, link local voices to global advocacy initiatives, support local and national actors to strengthen their own capacity, build partnerships on mutual accountability, and strive to establish fully localized and independent organizations where possible.

OUR VISION

Our vision is for all people to live in just and peaceful societies and be united in diversity. We want them to meet their basic needs and achieve their full potential to improve their quality of life individually and collectively. To do this, we value dignity and justice as universal rights inherent in each person, where they can meaningfully participate in transparent and accountable programs. We are driven by a deep sense of compassion for, and a commitment to, all people, and subscribe to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence, with a particular focus on gender justice and climate justice.

WHO WE ARE

Our focus is on refugees, the internally displaced, returnees, host communities, and those at risk of suffering from the effects of disasters, conflict, displacement and marginalization. We work with these communities, civil society, LWF member churches, governments, ecumenical and interfaith communities, related organizations, United Nations agencies, and global networks to ensure the voices of individuals and communities are heard at the highest level.

People we serve:

2,628,939



Total Refugees: 1,226,284

Total IDPs: 233,153

Total Returnees: 45,347

Total Local/Host Community: 1,124,155



Total Women/Girls (all ages): 1,443,442

Total Children (5-18 years): 840,740

Total Infants (under 5 years): 341,431

Total staff:

6,964

HQ Geneva staff: 50 (0.6%)

LWF field staff: 6,914



National staff: 2,246

International staff: 41

Incentive staff: 4,504

Volunteers: 123

OUR STRATEGY

In an ever-changing context, our strategy allows us to adapt our responses, as we saw this year. Nevertheless, the strategy is still firmly centered on the programmatic areas of Protection and Social Cohesion, Quality Services, and Livelihoods, the latter of which is the focus of this Annual Report. These three areas cut across the humanitarian, recovery, and development phases of our work at individual, community and institutional levels.

It also focuses on systems and practices by aligning support structures, mobilizing and managing finances, nurturing strong relationships with all stakeholders, strengthening our approach to safety and security, and maintaining a high level of quality and accountability in all that we do.



26 countries



2.6m Served



6,964 Global Staff



71 Years

VOICES OF HOPE

"I cannot be ill.
I am now mother,
father, and
grandmother
to them."

**Nataliia Zhuzha, 65, Ukrainian
refugee in Poland, who came with
her two grandchildren (8 and 10)**

Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert



Emergencies

2023 was marked by significant violence and turmoil. The year began with a massive earthquake in Syria and Turkey and ended with the deadly conflict in Gaza, which claimed over 20,000 lives by year's end. Violence erupted in Sudan, displacing hundreds of thousands into neighboring countries, while Haiti continued to struggle with severe gang violence in its capital. The war in Ukraine entered its second year with no resolution in sight.

IMAGE ABOVE

Ngueli Bridge camp, N'Djamena, Chad: Following the floods at the end of 2022, LWF World Service, supported 2,000 affected households with relief goods and livelihood support.

Photo: LWF/ M. Renaux

LWF World Service, in collaboration with its partners and donors, responded to these crises despite facing immense challenges, particularly in regions where the principles of International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law are increasingly under threat.

However, high-profile conflicts and disasters often overshadow the violence and natural disasters in regions lacking Western media

coverage, leading to severe underfunding of essential humanitarian aid, especially in East and Central Africa.

The disaster that unfolded in Sudan and the Horn of Africa went almost unnoticed by the rest of the world. A key strength of LWF World Service is our unwavering commitment to these underreported emergency settings, where we provide crucial assistance to those in need. Much of this work is carried out on the frontlines by local staff—many of whom are from the affected populations themselves—who continue to serve because their own communities are impacted.

IMAGE RIGHT:

Destruction in Aleppo after the second aftershock in March 2023.

Photo: ACT/FCA



SYRIA EARTHQUAKE

Since the onset of the Syrian crisis in 2012, LWF World Service has been working in Syria. On 6 February 2023, two earthquakes of 7.8 and 7.5 magnitude hit northwest Syria causing significant destruction and loss of life. Strong aftershocks placed tens of thousands of people at risk and threatened further damage to buildings and public infrastructure.

LWF World Service provided multi-sectoral assistance in Aleppo, one of the hardest-hit regions, together with partners in the ACT Alliance.

Interventions:



Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), education, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), shelter, and health services.

Outreach:

25,857 individuals

Budget:

1,290,814 EUR



CONFLICT IN GAZA

The war that started on October 7, 2023 has led to the killing of 1,200 Israelis and more than 20,000 Palestinians in Gaza by end of 2023, with more than 77,000 injured.

Since the beginning of the hostilities, checkpoints to the Gaza strip were closed, allowing neither for people from Gaza to access medical treatment at Augusta Victoria Hospital in East Jerusalem or in the West Bank, nor patients that had been outside Gaza for treatment when the war started to return home.

AVH has been providing temporary accommodation, personal items, meals, and intensive psychosocial support to 74 people since the Gaza war started, and continues to try and send medication into the Gaza strip.

Interventions:



Health; medical treatment, accommodation, psychosocial support, relief goods

Budget:

796,326 EUR

IMAGE RIGHT

Food distribution in one of Kharkiv's "heating points". Frequent attacks on the city's infrastructure leave people without electricity and heating. LWF together with local organizations organizes warm meals and a place where people can charge telephones.

Photo: LWF/
Anatoliy Nazarenko



UKRAINE

The war in Ukraine went into its second year in February 2023. More than 14.6 million people, roughly 40% of the Ukrainian population, needed humanitarian aid, with over 3.3 million living in front-line communities in the east and south of the country.

LWF World Service responded to the crisis in Kharkiv and Kharkiv Oblast by providing shelter rehabilitation, humanitarian assistance, psychosocial support, and livelihood assistance. Collaborating with local authorities, they expanded their efforts to include emergency education centers.

In Poland, the support to refugees shifted from urgent aid to recovery. Refugees faced barriers accessing healthcare, education, and integration due to language, bureaucracy, and limited accommodations. LWF focused on integration, psychosocial support, and socio-economic inclusion.

Interventions:



Shelter, humanitarian assistance, psychosocial support, protection, education, health, relief goods

Outreach:

Ukraine

46,107 individuals

Poland

107,825 individuals

Budget:

Ukraine

4,382,392 EUR

Poland

4,696,981 EUR

SUDANESE REFUGEE CRISIS

On April 15th, 2023, violent clashes between government and paramilitary forces erupted in the Sudanese capital Khartoum, and quickly spread to the rest of the country, resulting in the displacement of more than 8.6 million people, including internally displaced people (IDPs), asylum seekers and refugees.

LWF World Service responded in neighboring countries Chad, Ethiopia and South Sudan. The LWF Chad program provided food, water and sanitation and other support in the border regions of Ouaddaï, Wadi Fira and Sila, where more than half a million refugees had crossed the border.

In Ethiopia, LWF supports refugees by constructing semi-permanent communal latrines and bath shelters in Kumer refugee camp. In South Sudan, LWF World Service focused in supporting some of the almost 600,000 refugees and returnees at transit centers, including cash assistance, health care, and psychosocial support.

Interventions Chad:



WASH, Shelter, Food, protection health, cash, psychosocial support

Outreach:

Chad **132,800** individuals

Ethiopia **6,004** individuals

South Sudan **32,892** individuals

Budget:

Chad **1,542,215** EUR

Ethiopia **322,702** EUR

South Sudan **659,322** USD

CONFLICT IN NORTHERN ETHIOPIA

Nearly 3 million people remained displaced throughout 2023, following the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in November 2022. While conflicts in some areas eased, a new one broke out within the Amhara region itself. This conflict, involving the Amhara militia and the Federal Government, caused casualties, injuries, and forced tens of thousands of civilians to flee their homes. 2.5 million people were displaced in these regions alone in 2023.

LWF Ethiopia launched various projects in Tigray and the Amhara Region. These initiatives aim to assist internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities, supporting them during this challenging time.

Interventions:



Multi-purpose cash, emergency education, WASH, protection, relief goods, food

Outreach:

232,494 individuals

Budget:

2,868,813 EUR

IMAGE RIGHT

LWF staff distributing sanitary pads to young girls and women in Ruhoko village.

Photo: LWF/
L. Namagembe

EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA

Due to a combination of the El Nino phenomenon and climate change, countries at the Horn of Africa experienced one of the worst droughts in decades, followed by massive flooding. The natural disaster caused the displacement of millions whose livelihood was destroyed, and exacerbated local conflicts.

LWF World Service responded in Ethiopia. Kenya and Somalia mainly with humanitarian aid, water trucking, and rehabilitating water sources through cash for work, providing people with much needed income.

Interventions:



Protection, WASH, Food security, Shelter, cash, seeds and agricultural tools, training in disaster risk response, peacebuilding

Outreach:

Ethiopia
177,153 individuals

Kenya and Somalia
22,473 individuals

Budget:

Ethiopia
920,029 EUR

Kenya and Somalia
368,464 USD
248,441 CAD



CONGOLESE REFUGEE CRISIS IN UGANDA

The volatile and unstable security situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) continues to cause displacement of large populations who seek asylum into Uganda, one of the largest refugee hosting countries in the world.

On 28 March 2022, heavy violence in Eastern DRC erupted and caused an unprecedented influx of refugees into Uganda.

LWF World Service responded with relief goods, water and sanitation, and protection services. As of March 2024, the country hosts 1,645,292 refugees and asylum seekers in originating from more than eight countries and of which 500,000 refugees are from DRC.

Interventions:



Protection, WASH, Shelter & NFI (s)

Outreach:

42,893 individuals

Budget:

1,068,018 USD

IMAGE RIGHT

LWF staff explain to migrants from Venezuela where to find services and support

Photo: LWF/ A. Calma



VENEZUELA REFUGEE CRISIS

Venezuela is experiencing a political and economic crisis, which in the last decade has cause more than seven million people to flee the country.

In 2023, more than 80% of the families in the country were unable to afford the basic services and goods. 5.2 million people needed humanitarian aid in 2023.

LWF World Service continues to serve vulnerable communities mostly in rural areas.

Interventions:



WASH, protection, education, livelihoods

Outreach:

3,105 individuals

Budget:

1,663,515 USD



COMPLEX CRISIS IN HAITI

The situation in Haiti remains dire, armed gangs continue to terrorize communities. Over 362,500 people have been displaced, facing immense challenges in accessing necessities such as food, water, and healthcare.

Humanitarian organizations face supply constraints and transport costs, hindering them to provide vital assistance to those in need. LWF World Service continues to serve vulnerable communities mostly in the rural areas.

Interventions:



WASH, shelter, protection, women's empowerment, livelihoods

Outreach:

6,614 individuals

Budget:

2,300,000 EUR

IMAGE RIGHT

Fully damaged shelter in Basare IDP camp in Sittwe Township.

Photo: LWF camp-based staff



CYCLONE MOCHA IN MYANMAR

Category 5 Cyclone Mocha made landfall in the coastal areas of Myanmar’s Rakhine state on 14 May with strong winds, heavy rainfall and a storm surge. It damaged thousands of private homes and community infrastructure in Myanmar and Bangladesh, affecting about 1.2 million people, including LWF staff.

The team immediately started distribution of relief goods and restoration work in 38 camps for internally displaced people in Sittwe and Pauktaw townships.

Interventions:



Distribution relief goods; Restoration of damaged community infrastructures through cash-for-work; Renovation of temporary learning spaces in IDP camps; Shelter

Outreach:

48,372 individuals

Budget:

988,529 EUR

CHURCHES AND EMERGENCIES



GUIDANCE NOTE

When disaster strikes, churches can provide stability in a world that changes rapidly due to their local presence, their experience in dealing with such shocks, and the potential to remain long after the immediate impact. A Guidance Note developed in 2021 complements this collaboration by providing practical recommendations for engagement between the LWF member churches and World Service country programs.

The Churches and Emergencies initiative has significantly advanced disaster management and support for marginalized and vulnerable communities in Nepal, Venezuela, and Colombia.

GLOBAL REFUGEE FORUM – A FAITH PERSPECTIVE IN REFUGEE PROTECTION

In December 2023, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), alongside Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW) and HIAS, promoted interfaith collaboration at the Global Refugee Forum.

Their joint pledge aimed to equip humanitarian actors with tools to address refugee protection while considering faith-related complexities.

The joint pledge aims to enhance the capacity of humanitarian actors, both faith-based and secular, to integrate faith sensitivity into their work and better engage local faith actors in supporting forcibly displaced populations. It also seeks to bolster the understanding and capabilities of local faith actors and host communities in humanitarian principles, standards, and best practices.

Organizations plan to conduct pilot projects in Africa, Asia, and Latin America to evaluate the effectiveness of developed materials and tools in enhancing refugee protection and social cohesion. Allan Calma, LWF Global Humanitarian Coordinator, highlighted the pivotal role of local faith actors as initial responders and long-term supporters.

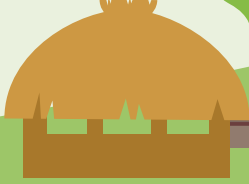
Prior to the Global Refugee Forum, the organizations co-hosted an Interfaith Breakfast with representatives from various faith-based groups, sharing examples of community support. Secular organizations also joined in solidarity.

167,000

households have sufficient food all year round

5,674

Communities with climate change adaptation plans



13,690

People attending LWF (vocational) training facilities

109,247

individuals reported increased income



26,559

Women organized in women's loans and savings groups

22,977

individuals use assets more productively



3,705

households supported in accessing land and land titles



Livelihoods

LWF World Service focuses on vulnerable households facing food insecurity, unstable income, and inaccessible assets.



IMAGE RIGHT

Danamadja returnee site, near Goré, Chad: Returnees attend an evaluation meeting with LWF World Service staff. Since 2018, LWF Chad responds to issues related to the right to land, the livelihoods of refugees and host communities.

Photo: LWF/ M. Renaux

In 2023, the livelihoods of refugees, IDPs, returnees and the communities we work with experienced many shocks. These included climate-induced droughts and flooding, violent conflicts and displacement, drastic reduction of humanitarian aid and funding.

Our Country Programs supported the individuals, households and communities we work with to cope, recover and to strengthen their resilience capacities.

At LWF World Service, our efforts to support livelihoods take shape through vocational training, skill-building initiatives, often paired with humanitarian aid and grants to kickstart small businesses. We are committed to women's economic empowerment and securing equitable access to resources, income and markets.

These activities enabled individuals to secure life's essentials, like food or cash, clean water, shelter, and clothing. They also enabled individuals and households to acquire productive assets such as land or livestock, earn income, learn marketable skills and set off once more on a journey to self-reliance. LWF World Service actively advocates for refugees and vulnerable communities to access the resources necessary for sustainable livelihoods. We weave advocacy for land rights into our rights-based approach, ensuring that everyone can live with dignity.

ACCESS TO LAND

Chad is currently hosting a significant number of refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR) and Sudan. To aid their integration, promote self-sufficiency, and alleviate pressure on host communities, it's crucial they have access to land for farming.

Ensuring access to fertile land lies at the heart of LWF World Service's efforts to support resilience, ensuring displaced communities can enjoy their right to sustainable livelihoods. Through its rights-based approach, the LWF World Service team has been actively engaging with local landowners and host communities, through trainings, awareness raising and advocacy, so land can be allocated temporarily to refugee households, who can then improve their food security and livelihoods. Communities that are generous with their arable land are recognized as "champion villages" and reap the benefits of communal projects. Take the Bétolo village, for instance, where the installation of a drinking water borehole has significantly reduced the residents' previously arduous 14 km trek for water.

Additionally, LWF World Service is advocating for land rights awareness, by providing training on national and international law for both refugees and host communities. Furthermore, LWF World Service acts as a mediator in resolving conflicts and obstacles in the land allocation process.

Thanks to LWF World Service's efforts, 2,768 hectares of arable land have been secured in Chad for Central African and Sudanese refugees.



IMAGE LEFT

Burundi, October 2023. Oda Kanyamateka and her cooperative show the agricultural kit they received in Bumba.

Photo: LWF/ L. Gillibert



IMAGE RIGHT

Nijyar Yacoub in his barber shop.

Photo: LWF/ H. Muhammed Remzi

INTEGRATED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Burundi is one of the least developed countries in the world, and Cankuzo province in the north-east of the country, is the poorest province in Burundi. The local farmers share land and resources with refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo, returnees, and internally displaced persons. The region has experienced severe floods and droughts in the past years. At the beginning of the project, only five percent of the people in the project area had enough to eat.

LWF World Service initiated the Community Integrated Development Project to enable 2,751 families to produce their own food. Three years later, their lives have visibly improved.

Espérance Nekoze, a 26-year-old mother of four and leader of the Turwizumwimbu N'ubukungu ("Let's increase production and have a surplus") cooperative in Mishiha community, reflected on her journey from novice to proficient farmer and community leader.

"Before the cooperative, I didn't know anything about modern farming techniques. I've learned how to run a small business and grow corn using modern techniques." The cooperative not only equipped its members with modern farming techniques but also elevated the status of women like Nekoze, who found empowerment and recognition outside their homes.

"In the past, women rarely ventured outside their homes, but now we're actively involved in a collective. I feel more respected in society and less isolated. Being part of the community allows me to contribute meaningfully. Our family has become

stronger; we have sufficient food and access to healthcare."

The farmer's cooperatives are planning to expand their production and market access. Ms Nekoze wants to buy more livestock and farm machines for the group. The biggest problem however is storage – the old places are too small for the increased harvests.

SKILLS TRAINING AND START-UPS

In Iraq, LWF World Service works in Dohuk and Ninewa regions, where many people started new lives following the IS insurgency ten years ago. Unemployment is high, especially among young people. LWF World Service joined the PROSPECTS initiative, which brings together World Bank, International Finance Cooperation, UN institutions, and smaller NGOs. The program aims to provide employment through business and finance training.

Three years after starting the project, the first businesses have established themselves. Among them the barber shops of Nijyar Yacoub, who had earned a reputation for exceptional haircuts already in 2014, but lost his business after being displaced. As a participant in the LWF PROSPECTS Program, a cooperation between LWF and the international labour organization (ILO), Nijyar Yacoub studied budgeting techniques, effective saving strategies, loan management, and proper documentation. With these new skills, he approached the Middle East Bank, secured a loan, and opened his second barber shop.

Today these barbershops have evolved into vibrant community hubs. They provide employment and serve as an inspiration to others.



IMAGE LEFT:

Saba Raed Abu Hammad, a Jordanian from Irbid, prepares food in one of the cooking workshops.

Photo: LWF/
A. Alsamrah

LWF'S GENDER PROGRAMMING IN LIVELIHOOD PROJECTS IN JORDAN

LWF Jordan incorporates gender programming into its livelihood projects with a multifaceted approach aimed at reducing gender disparities and empowering both women and men and adolescent girls and boys for dignified sustainable economic development.

Recognizing the importance of culturally relevant approaches, LWF World Service tailors its interventions to address the specific needs and challenges faced by women and men in accessing economic opportunities. This includes vocational training, entrepreneurship development, and the establishment of community and home-based businesses. Addressing Gender-Based Violence is a priority for LWF World Service, particularly in creating safe environments for vulnerable refugee and Jordanian women to participate fully in economic activities.

Key strategies include:

- **Tailored Interventions:** LWF World Service ensures that interventions are precisely tailored to address the unique needs and barriers faced by women and men in accessing economic opportunities.
- **Advocacy:** LWF advocates for social reforms that support gender equality in the workforce. This involves collaborating with local government agencies, national and international stakeholders, to eliminate systemic barriers to women's economic participation and advocate for equal pay, maternity leave, and safe working conditions.
- **Community engagement:** LWF also actively engages with communities to transform gender norms and increase women's participation

in economic development. This includes facilitating the formation of networks for women entrepreneurs and leaders, providing mentorship opportunities, and fostering knowledge exchange.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** To ensure the effectiveness of its gender programming, LWF analyzes outcomes through a gender lens, and continually improves its approach to mitigate gender disparities.
- **Humanitarian standards:** LWF adheres to gender inclusion principles outlined in the Sustainable Development Goal 5 on Gender Equality, UN Women's Empowerment Principles, and The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

Ameera Khamees is the LWF Country Representative in Jordan.

SKILLS TRAINING FOR REFUGEES

In Poland, LWF World Service through its community centers offers skills trainings and language courses for refugees from Ukraine. As government support for the refugees has decreased, the refugees are forced to look for employment, but often lack the language skills to work in their old profession. LWF World Service through the centers offers Polish lessons, psychological support to deal with traumatic experiences, workshops and training.

Manicure workshops are very popular, as there is a market for beauty treatments, and the work can be done as a home-based business. LWF's community centers also provide childcare and help refugees with local integration, through cultural activities together with the host community.

IMAGE RIGHT

Zoreslava Wiencek – a Ukrainian migrant to Poland – demonstrates manicure techniques to a group of Ukrainian refugee women during a training session offered at the LWF community centre in Bielsko-biala, Poland.

Photo: LWF/
A. Chaudhary

94,098

individuals referred to and receiving protection assistance

9,543

Individuals participating in 16 Days activities in 2023

13,231

Individuals trained in protection rights and needs

161,887

individuals accessed psychosocial support services

7,061

Individuals participating in women's day 2023 activities

105,284

Children using child-friendly spaces

30,989

Women attending women-friendly spaces

7,478

individuals trained in joint advocacy activities

Protection and social cohesion

LWF World Service aims to enable individuals and communities to live safe, dignified, and empowered lives, free from all forms of discrimination, abuse, and exploitation.



IMAGE ABOVE:

Registration of a mother and two children at Kalobeyei refugee settlement, Kenya

Photo: LWF/
Albin Hillert

We envision a world where everyone lives a safe, dignified, and empowered life, free from all forms of discrimination, abuse and exploitation.

We support individuals and communities to claim their rights, and advocate for duty bearers to fulfil their responsibilities. We do this by adopting community-based approaches in the protection of children and vulnerable adults, preventing and responding to gender-based violence and in fostering peaceful co-existence and social cohesion wherever we work. We also prioritize mental health and psychosocial support, recognizing that wellbeing goes beyond the physical and biological needs.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

LWF World Service developed a Safeguarding Policy to complement existing policies and guidelines aimed at strengthening the protection and dignity of program participants, particularly those most vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

LWF World Service revised its complaints response mechanism policy and procedures and the investigation guidelines.

One of the main focuses was to better integrate child-friendly reporting mechanisms in the policy and procedures.

Working closely with partners, LWF World Service continued to carry out capacity building of staff in Country Programs and Geneva in Gender responsive programming. Following the launch of the Gender Justice toolbox at the Thirteenth LWF Assembly, LWF World Service staff were continuously trained in Gender Responsive Programming, across the LWF Country Programs.

LWF World Service advocated for protection outcomes in humanitarian and conflict-affected settings including Chad, Sudan, Ethiopia, Israel-Palestine, Ukraine, Poland, Venezuela and Haiti crises. The local-to-global-to-local advocacy work in partnership with civil society partners continued, linking local action with national, regional and global advocacy.

LWF World Service reviewed and obtained feedback on the Protection and Social Cohesion guidance note. The Global Leadership Team Meeting in September 2023 in Prague offered an opportunity for leadership to reflect on concepts like “social cohesion” and to debate on whether it should include peace building in future.



IMAGES ABOVE

Child friendly spaces, like these one in Mai Weyni, Ethiopia, provide opportunities to play and learn while ensuring the children’s protection.

Photos: LWF/
S. Gebreyes

HOLISTIC CHILD PROTECTION

Children are among the most vulnerable victims of war and conflict. Children refugees, during their formative years, experience trauma, loss of family, insecurity, often a lack of education and necessities. Conflict and displacement often leave parents and guardians unable to adequately protect the children under their care. Refugee camps and temporary settlements often lack proper infrastructure, resources, and security, exposing children to overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, and heightened risk of exploitation and abuse.

LWF World Service approaches child protection from a holistic perspective, because vulnerable children face multifaceted challenges that cannot be addressed in isolation.



By collaborating with community leaders, camp administration, and other stakeholders, LWF World Service ensures children are provided with education, secure food rations, and a safe living environment.

In cases of neglect and abuse, LWF World Service helps place children at risk in safe environments, before making their families and homes safe for them again.

In Ajuong Thok Refugee Camp, South Sudan, LWF South Sudan’s child protection staff addressed the plight of Ketty (pseudonym), a 15-year-old girl who lost her mother in the Sudan conflict. Ketty lived with her father and stepmother in the camp, facing neglect and mistreatment.

LWF South Sudan swiftly intervened. Collaborating with community leaders, camp administration, and UNHCR, they ensured her protection, they provided counselling, returned to school, and had her food ration secured. A plan was devised for her reintegration into her family after temporary care under a community leader, with support to improve their living conditions.

This case emphasizes coordinated efforts in child protection, showcasing the effectiveness of a holistic approach in safeguarding vulnerable children in refugee settings.



IMAGE ABOVE:

Ms. Ganga Chaudhary (a PwD), a focal person at the disability help desk of Janaki Rural Municipality in Kailali.

Photo: LWF/
A. Chaudhary

DISABILITY INCLUSION

In Nepal, people with disabilities often face discrimination, not only in their communities but also from local authorities and administration. Overcoming these attitudes is a task that will take many years.

LWF Nepal tries to break the stigma by actively involving people with disabilities in decision-making. In 2023, 184 persons with disabilities took on active roles in their communities.



Twenty-nine community-level cooperatives endorsed policies beneficial to persons with disabilities.

Key priorities included raising awareness about disability rights and combating discrimination, violence, and gender-based violence. They also focused on understanding government legal provisions, training educators and advocates with disabilities, and ensuring disability inclusion in emergency response and recovery efforts.

LWF Nepal also extended support to municipalities and networks for advocacy on disability rights, which contributed to disability inclusion in global advocacy processes such as the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and other reports.

More than 1.5 million refugees from Ukraine are hosted in Poland. While the Polish government is providing all essential services, it is still difficult for people with chronic diseases or disabilities to get the support they need. LWF in Poland provides special support to people with disabilities.

One of them was Zlata, a young girl with Rett syndrome. She needed a special, multifunctional wheelchair which would also prevent additional stress on joints and body systems. The cost of such a wheelchair exceeded the amount provided by the National Health Fund (NFZ). Zlata's determined mother therefore approached LWF Poland. Together with other partners, and using the family savings, it was possible to buy that wheelchair, allowing Zlata to be mobile in school and able to venture outdoors at home.

Where we work

LWF World Service main offices in our country programs and emergency operations



A world map with several countries highlighted in blue to indicate LWF World Service main offices. The highlighted countries are Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Haiti, Venezuela, Colombia, Switzerland, and Cameroon. The rest of the world map is in a light gray color.

GUATEMALA
HONDURAS
EL SALVADOR
NICARAGUA
HAITI
VENEZUELA
COLOMBIA
SWITZERLAND
CAMEROON

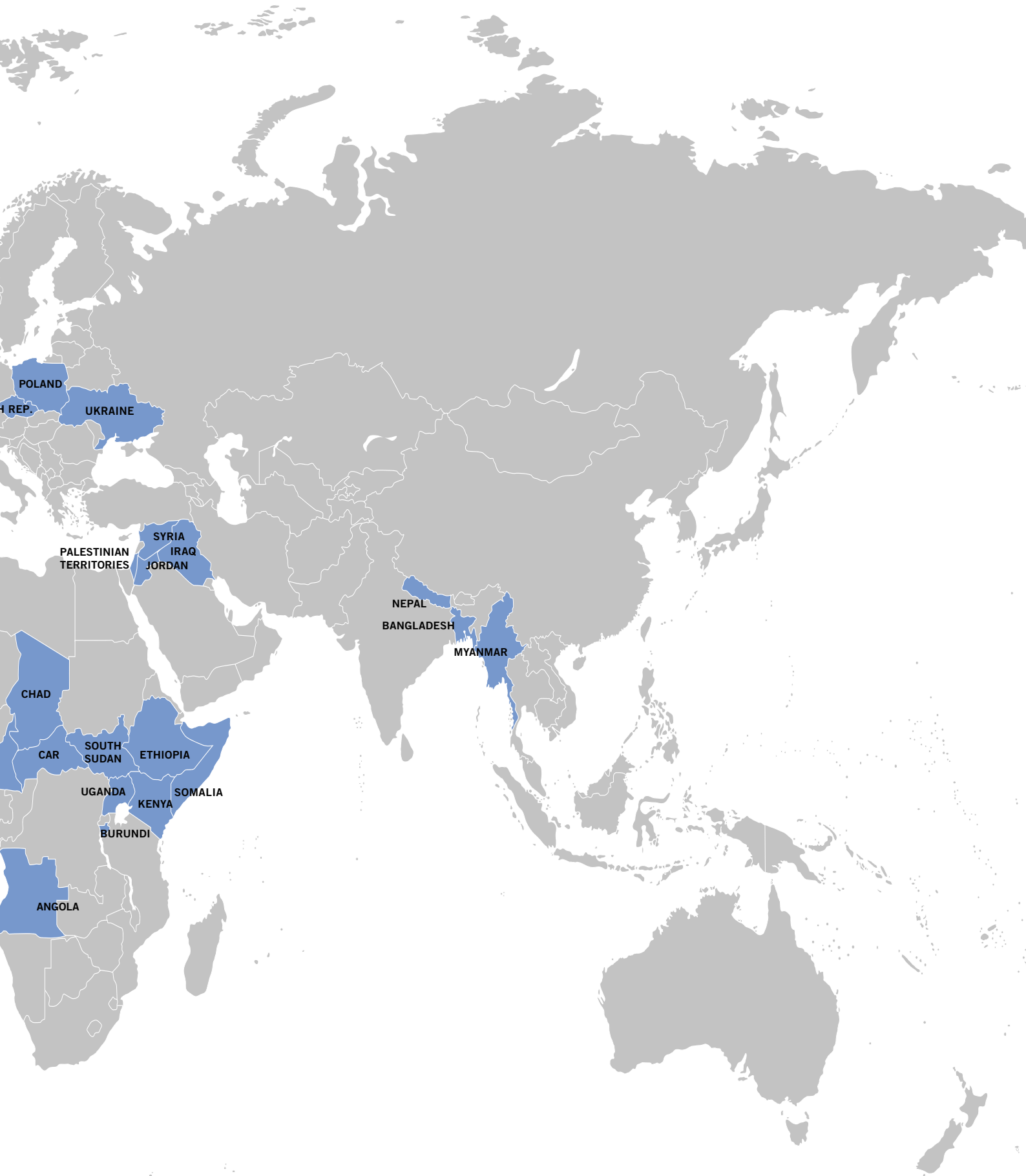




IMAGE ABOVE

Aline Bucumi, trained as an advocate through the LWF Gender Justice project in Burundi, speaks to national media Yaga during the 16 Days Against Gender-Based Violence campaign.

Photo: LWF/L. Gillibert

RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

LWF World Service embraces rights-based approaches (RBA), ingraining Human Rights deep within its identity. Unlike traditional aid models, LWF World Service doesn't just hand out assistance; it empowers communities to assert their rights and organize themselves. This community-centered, rights-focused ethos is woven into every aspect of our work, from immediate humanitarian responses to long-term development projects, and especially in our advocacy efforts for justice and human rights on local, national, and global stages.



At the heart of our mission lie the people and communities we serve, for they are the true architects of their destinies.

Embracing a 'rights-based approach' means championing their autonomy, ensuring their voices resonate in decision-making processes. We walk alongside them, amplifying their concerns on national and international platforms, ensuring their perspectives aren't just heard but acted upon.

But advocacy isn't merely about joining global debates; it's about translating commitments and promises made at the international and national levels into tangible changes in people's lives at the grassroots level. By bridging the gap between international commitments and local realities, we strive to turn words into action, making a meaningful difference where it matters most.

MIGRATION AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

In October and November 2023, LWF participated in the NGO Forum and the 77th Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) in Arusha, Tanzania. It marked the first involvement of LWF with such a large delegation, consisting of 36 members from LWF's World Service Country Programs, representatives from LWF Member Churches, and partners.

During a side event, LWF addressed "Gender-based violence: A silent pandemic among refugees, hosts, and Internally Displaced People in the East and Horn of Africa," engaging with over 60 humanitarian, faith-based, and government actors to advocate for human and people's rights in Africa. It was an opportunity to discuss gender-based violence and the rights of displaced people, issues often addressed separately.

The event concluded with a set of recommendations. Participants agreed on the need to improve reporting mechanisms for gender-based violence (GBV) cases and to enhance the involvement of refugee women in developing these mechanisms. States were urged to bolster protection for refugee women against GBV, such as by providing safe spaces, training law enforcement, and ensuring access to justice. LWF conveyed these demands to State authorities at the ACHPR and is monitoring their actions and commitments.

LWF has been advocating for the implementation of these recommendations to decision-makers.

VOICES OF HOPE

"The establishment of the refugee camps has actually helped our communities, through improved living conditions, and the types of food and seeds that are now available."

Community elder Lokarach Lomongin, a Turkana woman from the area of Nakoyo. The Turkana – a traditionally pastoralist community – form the host community for the refugees living in the nearby Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya.

Photo: LWF/ Albin Hillert



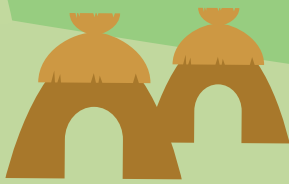
23,049
individuals received
food assistance



26,199
individuals received
essential household items



292,994
individuals gained access
to sufficient drinking water



5,338
children successfully
transitioned to the next
level of schooling

131
individuals receiving
shelter assistance



317,757
children in LWF schools
and temporary learning
spaces (Myanmar)



112,379
individuals applying new
personal hygiene methods



Quality Services

LWF World Service believes that equitable access to education, water, energy, and health care is a fundamental right. It must be claimed by women, men, girls, and boys to enjoy a better quality of life, exercise their human rights, and fulfill their potential.

IMAGE RIGHT

LWF Kenya livelihoods officer Hilda Thuo gives instructions for the distribution of relief goods to refugees at the reception centre of the Kalobeyei refugee settlement near Kakuma refugee camp. Managed by LWF World Service, the reception centre provides initial support to incoming refugees, including meals, necessary household items, pre-registration for refugee status, and referrals for specialist support.

Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert



Governments have the primary duty to provide public and community services such as education, water and healthcare.

However, in many places where LWF World Service works, there is often either a lack of capacity or inadequacy in the quality of services offered or available to refugees, internally displaced persons, returnees and disadvantaged communities. In such situations, LWF World Service temporarily supports and complements the duty bearers to provide these services with a view to eventually handover once the authorities have developed their capacities and institutions.

In 2023, we supported individuals and communities to access adequate quantities of safe drinking water; sanitation and hygiene; health and nutrition; education; energy; shelter and essential household items. The need for these services is increasing, particularly in acute emergencies, in contexts of severe and chronic poverty, or in situations of poor governance and chronic fragility.

EMERGENCY CASH

The Tigray conflict has left countless families struggling, particularly women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Cash grants allow families to make decisions according to their own needs, promoting dignity and self-sufficiency while also boosting

local economies. Often, they are combined with livelihood activities.

In the district of Enderta 385 households received a grant of 4000 birr each, a crucial step in rebuilding lives and restoring hope. This cash infusion helps families access essentials like food, healthcare, and school supplies, and to make their own decisions according to their needs. At the same time, LWF World Service provided training and startup loans to provide people with a stable income for the future.

Take Shishay Kassa, for example, a single mother of three who returned to Enderta Woreda. Initially, she received kitchen sets and multi-purpose cash. Later, LWF Ethiopia gave her three goats and training in livestock management. Additionally, LWF World Service rehabilitated a nearby shallow well that had been damaged during the conflict.



By combining these resources, Ms Kassa was able to start a small coffee and traditional beer trade, not just receiving emergency aid, but also gaining the means to recover and rebuild her life.



IMAGE ABOVE

Visit by Mark Mullan, the LWF Team Leader to meet the families and inspect the apartments to be included in the first phase of LWF's shelter rehabilitation project in Kharkiv.

Photo: LWF/
Anatoliy Nazarenko

IMAGE RIGHT

Apartment destroyed by missile in Kharkiv, Ukraine.

Photo: LWF/
Anatoliy Nazarenko



**WATCH THE FILM
ABOUT OUR SHELTER
REHABILITATION
PROGRAM**

UKRAINE: REBUILDING HOMES AND FAMILIES

Saltivka in Northern Kharkiv made headlines in 2022, when rockets hit residential areas, killing civilians and destroying hundreds of homes. LWF World Service together with the United Nations refugee agency (UNHCR) launched a project to renovate some of these apartments.

Together with two local organizations, and the local administration, they identified people and families in need. Many were elderly, living with disabilities, or who were otherwise particularly vulnerable. "Together with a local partner organization we fixed broken doors and windows, repair water and sanitation, reinstalled electricity and make those homes warm and habitable again," explained Mark Mullan, LWF World Service team leader in Ukraine.

By the end of the year, 525 apartments had been renovated. In addition to restoring the homes themselves, the LWF World Service team also engaged community mobilisers who know the local context and who through trainings have gained additional knowledge in supporting vulnerable and traumatised people. "Our approach has never been just about renovating a family's apartment, their windows and doors and then moving on," Mullan explains. "We also provide a range of integrated services to

support the families, allowing people to return successfully to their homes of origin with dignity," he added.

For the families, returning to their apartment was a moment of celebration. Mykola Tisheninov, a local resident said:

"For us it is not just a home, it is a place of inspiration, a place where our family stories were born and a place of our strength."





IMAGE RIGHT

A woman pumps water at an LWF-installed borehole in Minawao refugee camp, Far North, Cameroon.

Photo: LWF/ Albin Hillert

WATER AND SANITATION IN CAMEROON

The far northern province of Cameroon is the most populous and poorest in the country. In rural areas, 85 % of the people live in extreme poverty.

Lack of clean water and food insecurity are among the biggest problems. People travel long distances to collect non-potable surface water (open wells and river), and to defecate in the open in the absence of latrines. The lack of water in the Minawao refugee camp for Nigerian refugees makes it impossible for people to wash and clean regularly, exposing the people to water-borne disease.

LWF World Service has been working in the region for years, focusing on improving the water supply, Hygiene and sanitation promotion. In 2023, they constructed two new boreholes equipped with pumps, trained water point management committees, constructed four blocks of double-door latrines and raised awareness on safe drinking water and good hygiene practices. LWF World Service is gradually transforming hand-pump boreholes into a mini drinking water supply system with tower and solar system to reach more people. LWF World Service also trained local community leaders in peacebuilding, as the high number of refugees (many in the Minawao refugee camp) and the lack of enough local resources has a high potential for conflict. 34,317 people benefitted from these activities in the Far North region alone.

IMAGE BELOW

Moussoumba Mecheweneo

Photo: Ezechiel, LWF Cameroon



Moussoumba Mecheweneo (55) lives in the village of Gadala, in the Far North of Cameroon. “The access to drinking water in my village used to be very difficult”, she says. “The climate is harsh and in the past years, Nigerian refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees have moved here because of the Boko Haram terrorist attacks. In previous years, we used to fetch water from the Mayo (river) miles away for work and for drinking.

Since LWF World Service constructed a fountain, women and children no longer travel long distances to find water, we no longer drink water from the rivers, and we no longer have stomach aches due to the bad water we consume. We’re relieved our water problem is solved”, Mecheweneo concludes.



IMAGE ABOVE

Somalia students in a school in Kismayo.

Photo: LWF/
O. Hussein Ali

SOMALIA: EDUCATION

Education is a key priority for LWF World Service's work. In many country programs, LWF World Service manages educational institutions for refugees, displaced people and other vulnerable groups. We manage or support primary, secondary and tertiary education for refugees, internally displaced people, and their hosts in Cameroon, Haiti, Jordan, Kenya, South Sudan, Myanmar, Palestine, and most recently also Somalia.

Providing equal education opportunities for girls and boys is a particular issue LWF Kenya-Somalia addresses. In traditional communities, girls are still often kept at home to help with chores, or married early, depriving them of their right to education. LWF World Service in Somalia works with community leaders and parents, like in the case of Shindes Ahmed Hassan, whose story stands for many others.

Shindes moved with her mother and siblings from Jubbaland in Somalia to an internally displaced persons (IDP) camp in Kismayo. As the oldest child, Shindes she was expected to support her family from a young age, but she

always expressed an interest in learning.

Her mother, Kaltuma Ali, recognized the value of education and made it a priority to send her daughter to school, even if it meant going against traditional values in the community.



Shindes dreams of attending university and becoming a teacher to help eradicate illiteracy among her people.

Her passion for mathematics has made her a role model for her classmates, who admire her focus and dedication. Her own siblings now also demand to go to school.

For girls like Shindes, even primary education is possible only through high dedication. LWF World Service's work complements their resilience and commitment, trying to break the cycle of poverty and give them the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

VOICES OF HOPE

“We have a special relationship with our patients, and often stay in contact for a long time after treatment has finished.”

Dr. Khadra Salami, pediatric oncologist, Augusta Victoria-Hospital in East Jerusalem



Augusta Victoria Hospital

A center of medical excellence

IMAGE ABOVE

Dr Khadra Salami, pediatric oncologist, with a young patient who is being treated for cancer at the LWF Augusta Victoria-Hospital in East Jerusalem.

Photo: LWF/ Atta Jabr.



**VISIT THE AUGUSTA
VICTORIA HOSPITAL
WEBSITE**

QUALITY HEALTH CARE IN THE PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

LWF's Augusta Victoria-Hospital (AVH) on the Mount of Olives in East Jerusalem is a pillar of the Palestinian healthcare system. It provides life-saving cancer treatment and hemodialysis to patients from the West Bank and Gaza, that is not available anywhere else in the Palestinian Territories.

The community outreach program with two mobile clinics raises awareness about breast cancer and diabetes, bringing the opportunity of free examinations close to people whose travel is severely restricted by checkpoints and

permits. The mobile clinics work with West Bank institutions and train local staff. AVH worked on engaging several community-based organizations through implementing a Ramadan campaign.

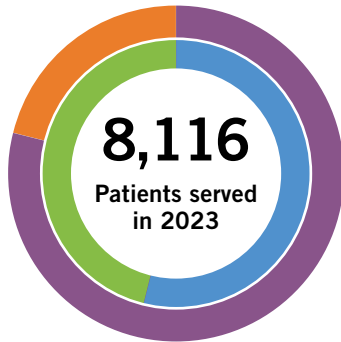
In 2023, AVH served 8116 patients (54% male, 46% female), 6,412 patients from the West Bank including East Jerusalem and 1,704 patients from the Gaza Strip.

As part of its contribution to civil society building and capacity building for the health sector, AVH signed an agreement with the Arab American University to train medical students at the hospital, in addition to training more than 130 medical staff from 30 different hospitals in areas related to infection prevention and control, improving lab diagnostic procedures, and antimicrobial stewardship.

IMAGE RIGHT

Narmeen Awwad, radiation technician, during consultation at the "Pink Bus", a mobile mammography unit dispatched from the LWF Augusta Victoria-Hospital (AVH) in East Jerusalem.

Photo: LWF/ Abdalla Elayyan.



- 54% male
- 46% female
- 6,412 from the West Bank including East Jerusalem
- 1,704 from the Gaza Strip



GAZA WAR

AVH collaborates with the Al Ahli Anglican Hospital in Gaza city. November 30th, 2023 was the date set to launch the cancer diagnostic and treatment center in Gaza. The center was to offer screening, early detection of cancer, advanced diagnostic services, and treatments for cancer patients.



In addition, ten specialized medical staff were fully trained at AVH to provide the same quality services at the Gaza branch.

With the outbreak of the war, not only were the plans of launching the center in Gaza put on hold, but the center was damaged in five attacks on the hospital. One staff lost his life while at work, other staff lost their homes and family members.

Since October 7, 2023, patients from Gaza cannot come to AVH for scheduled medical treatments. A total of 738 patients from Gaza missed their appointments since October 7th. AVH activated its emergency plans; accommodating 99 people from Gaza (both patients and companions) and others from the West Bank in hotels in Jerusalem in order to ensure a smooth and uninterrupted continuation of their treatment.

Similarly, patients and staff from the West Bank faced access challenges to Jerusalem. The unrest in the West Bank, restrictions on movement and access, increase in settler violence and attacks on Palestinian communities affected the work of the mobile clinics. Several communities became unreachable. The mobile clinics teams searched for safer places to resume their work.



15,921
Chemotherapy sessions



29,382
Radiation sessions



22,447
Dialysis sessions



Angola

LWF served the people of Angola 1986-2023.

IMAGE ABOVE

LWF World Service provided water and sanitation for refugees from Kasai, DRC, in Cacanda reception center, Northern Angola.

*Photo: LWF/
C. Kästner-Meyer*

The LWF Angola program holds the distinction of being the longest-serving international NGO in the country, having launched relief operations in 1986.

Over the years, the program has undergone significant transformations, shifting from emergency relief efforts to recovery and reconstruction, and ultimately focusing on long-term development and resilience-building initiatives.

Since the end of the 27-year civil war in 2002, LWF World Service has played a pivotal role in resettling and repatriating nearly 1.2 million people who were displaced by the conflict. Additionally, LWF World Service has been instrumental in supporting returnees in rebuilding their lives and livelihoods in the areas where it operates. With peace gradually taking hold in the country, LWF World Service has been at the forefront of driving development initiatives nationwide.

In eastern Angola, LWF World Service's primary focus has been on empowering the most vulnerable populations to realize their basic rights.

This includes providing emergency assistance during droughts in the south and responding swiftly to the influx of refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in Lunda Sul province between mid-2017 and 2019. LWF World Service remained steadfast in its mission to tackle the root causes of human suffering and poverty by engaging with various stakeholders, including government institutions, the private sector, and other actors. Our approach to improving livelihoods focused on three main strategies.

Firstly, we worked to empower individuals and communities to become more economically resilient and self-sufficient, with a particular emphasis on safeguarding their assets. We also promoted productive activities and entrepreneurship to help diversify incomes.

Also, we aimed to create an institutional environment conducive to resilient and sustainable livelihoods, focusing on securing land rights. LWF Angola identified and nurtured local capacities and initiatives for self-help, protection, and social cohesion.

This included establishing and training Village Development Committees (VDCs), which served as community organizations responsible for addressing the needs of their communities. These VDCs were trained by LWF Angola to design, implement, and evaluate their own initiatives.

Within this framework, LWF World Service prioritized several key areas:

- Upholding human rights for individuals and their families.
- Protecting children while empowering women and youth.
- Promoting social cohesion at the local, national, and global levels.
- Strengthening public policies and government structures to better protect vulnerable groups.
- Building community capacities to manage natural resources and engage more sustainably in agriculture, particularly in the face of climate change impacts.
- Collaborating with other members of the ACT Alliance to respond to emergencies as they arise.

After 37 years of service in Angola, LWF World Service assessed the possibility of continuing its project portfolio through a localized entity. It was confirmed that maintaining project implementation with an independent local organization would be both relevant, efficient, effective, and sustainable.

In light of these findings, LWF World Service made the decision to conclude its programmatic activities by the end of December 2023. Subsequently, a new local organization called the Associação Luterana para o Desenvolvimento de Angola (ALDA) was established as an independent initiative by former LWF World Service employees and other supporters of the organization. It's worth noting that ALDA was not initiated by LWF World Service.

LWF World Service worked to determine the most effective way to engage and collaborate with ALDA, ensuring a smooth transition process. It was made clear that ALDA would operate independently from LWF World Service, managing its own portfolio of local projects and securing its own funding through internal policies and processes.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

"At the age of 23, I embarked on a life-changing journey with the Lutheran World Federation/Zambia Christian Refugee Services (LWF/ZCRS) in Zambia, as a refugee myself. Over the years, I've worn many hats, working in agriculture, environmental protection, livestock, and emergency sectors until February 2003, when the massive repatriation of Angolan refugees reached its peak.

In mid-2008, my path led me to LWF Angola, where I've had the privilege of serving in various senior positions. Eventually, I took on the role of Country Representative in July 2014, a position I proudly hold to this day.

My journey with LWF World Service has been nothing short of transformative, spanning 22 years in total—7 in Zambia and 15 in Angola. Along the way, I've encountered challenges and triumphs, as navigating life's twists and turns is never easy. However, my unwavering dedication to my mission—to assist those in need, just as I was once helped during my time as a refugee—has kept me focused on reaching my destination.

I take immense pride in being the longest-serving Country Representative for the Angola program, with over 9 years of service under my belt. It's been a remarkable journey, and I am grateful for the opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others."

Abrao Mushiwi



40 Years Central America

In October 2023, the LWF Central America program celebrated the 40th anniversary of its presence and service in the region.

IMAGE LEFT

A Maya family in Petén, Guatemala, where LWF supports indigenous communities in obtaining land titles.

Photo: LWF/
C. Kästner-Meyer

IMAGE RIGHT

LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr. Anne Burghardt visited the LWF head office in San Salvador for the celebration of 40 years of LWF in Central America.

Photo: LWF/ Albin Hillert

The LWF Central America program has its roots in the context of the turbulent years and internal conflict experienced by the region in the 70s and 80s.

In 1980, Oscar Romero, Catholic Archbishop of San Salvador and an outspoken advocate against injustice, violence, and government repression, was assassinated. This had a profound emotional impact on many and spurred the Lutheran Church to engage ever more deeply with social justice and peace issues. The local LWF member church asked LWF World Service for support in that challenge. The Country Program's objective was to stand with people in their pain, to help the victims of oppression, to lift the spirits of

communities, and to rebuild their lives, ultimately contributing to the signing of crucial peace accords in the region.

The program swiftly evolved into a regional organization, spanning Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. Early initiatives in Guatemala focused on empowering civil society and engaging with indigenous communities.



In 1998, LWF World Service extended support to hundreds of Honduran families devastated by Hurricane Mitch.



IMAGE LEFT

Two returned migrants review the goods they have received at the LWF community centre in El Guante, Cedros, Honduras.

Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert

IMAGE RIGHT

An indigenous family in Guatemala, where LWF supports communities with livelihoods and land rights.

*Photo: LWF/
C. Kästner-Meyer*

On the threshold of the new millennium, LWF World Service supported families affected by the 2001 earthquakes in El Salvador, collaborating closely with the ACT Alliance. In Honduras, our migration program took flight in 2016 through the 'Return with Dignity and Hope in Honduras' project, a joint effort supported by ELCA and others. Since then, almost 600 young migrant returnees have been empowered, enhancing their livelihoods and prospects.

In 2017, the Jotay Joint Program was born in Guatemala, pooling resources of Act Church of Sweden, Norwegian Church Aid, Bread for the World, and LWF World Service.

During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, LWF World Service swiftly responded with partners to offer crucial humanitarian aid to the Central

American region. Meanwhile, our support for migrants and vulnerable communities continued.

Over 40 years of dedicated service, the LWF Central America Program has touched the lives of over 1.1 million people through emergency relief, livelihood programs, protection efforts, social cohesion initiatives, and quality services. We've also empowered more than 60 civil society organizations, bolstering their capacities for positive change.

Looking ahead, LWF World Service focuses on confronting the challenges of climate change, migration, and gender-based violence, which directly impact communities, especially women, girls, and people with disabilities. Together, we're forging a path towards a brighter, more resilient future for all.

LWF World Service colleagues from the Central America team shared their reflections on the occasion of the 40th-anniversary celebrations:



"Working for the Lutheran World Federation is an enriching and motivating experience ... helping vulnerable people in the Central America region on issues such as migration, gender justice, and human rights."

Francisco Perez



"Placing people, families, and communities at the center of our work means contributing to a sustainable future."

Israel Barahona



"We remain dedicated to easing human suffering and protecting Mother Earth every day. We continue to believe that another world is possible and commit to serving the most vulnerable populations. Together, we strive to create a brighter future for all."

Mercedes Palacios



Safety and security

The operational security context in many countries in 2023 posed severe challenges, including access constraints and security threats for staff, partners, and the population we serve.



IMAGE ABOVE

No arms – sign on an LWF car in Ukraine.

Photo: LWF/
C. Kästner-Meyer

Multiple security threats emerged, including armed conflicts, criminal activities, targeted threats from economic crises, natural disasters due to climate change, stress, and health risks such as epidemics. Additionally, digital threats increased.

The unstable global geopolitical and political situations, marked by coup d'états, violent elections/demonstrations, and disregard for humanitarian principles, led to increased access constraints in many LWF World Service working areas and resulted in temporary suspension of activities and more effort to catch up when access became possible again.

In Chad, regional instability exacerbated the volatile security context, with the Sudan crisis impacting the border, causing tensions due to armed groups' presence. Conflict near the Cameroonian border and the Boko Haram group's presence in Lake Chad, along with political instability and economic challenges in Chad, heightened insecurity.

In Somalia, despite threats from Al-Shabaab and armed forces' proximity, LWF World Service teams continued operations, mitigating risks of crossfire and collateral damage. To enhance their operational safety, they received onsite security training from the LWF Safety and Security team. These are but two examples of particularly challenging local contexts.

IMAGE RIGHT

Street in Guaimaca, Honduras, where LWF works.

Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert



- 27% Other
- 16% Traffic accidents
- 11% Burglary
- 9% Natural disasters
- 9% Near misses
- 7% Cyber threats
- 5% Staff arrest and detention
- 5% Physical assault
- 5% Theft and robbery
- 2% Extortion
- 2% Fire
- 2% Landmines/IEDs, mortar attacks

LWF diligently assessed safety and security risks, implementing appropriate mitigation measures to protect staff and uphold the duty of care principle. Flexible approaches and effective security risk management were crucial in field operations to establish trust and acceptance among project participants and local actors.

ENHANCING SECURITY CAPACITIES AND RESOURCES

Many LWF Country Programs have invested in security in the past year. They shifted from part-time security focal points, allocating only a portion of their time to security concerns to appointing full-time staff. Additionally, country programs allocated more budgets to meet operational security needs.

VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

LWF is deeply concerned about the increasing tendency to attack healthcare centers and critical infrastructure such as water systems in many conflict areas worldwide. These incidents endangered our staff and resulted in the tragic loss of lives. Moreover, they have heightened health risks and led to epidemics, as seen in places like Haiti and Gaza. In some cases, staff have had to limit their time in these areas to carry out their duties safely.

SURGE IN REPORTED LWF SECURITY INCIDENTS

In 2023, LWF launched online LWF Incident Reporting App. A total of 51 security incidents were reported, with one-third of them ranging from serious to moderate impact—a clear indication of the challenges we faced.



Partners

IMAGE ABOVE

On 24 January 2024, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Filippo Grandi visited a shelter reconstruction project that LWF has been implementing for UNHCR, and met families affected by the war in Ukraine.

Photo: LWF/
Anatoliy Nazarenko

RELATED ORGANIZATIONS



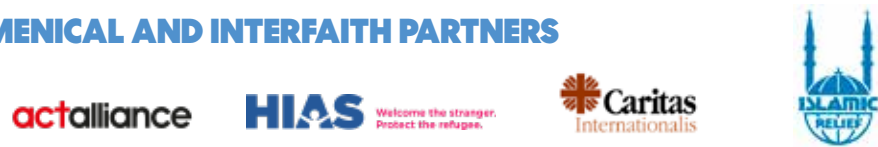
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS



NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS



ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH PARTNERS



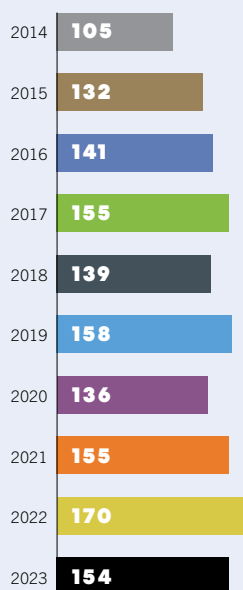
NETWORKS



2023 Financial Overview

Ensuring a sustainable future

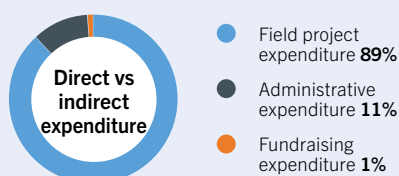
Income trend (in million Euro)



Full financial statements can be accessed through the LWF website: www.lutheranworld.org

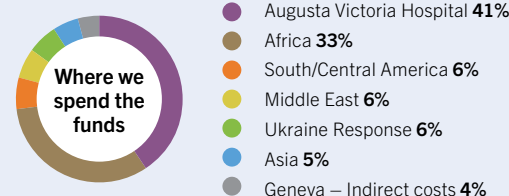
The LWF World Service financial statements consistently show that out of every euro spent, at least 89 cents go directly towards helping the most vulnerable people, the refugees, IDPs, returnees and communities at risk who are at the center of our strategy.

LWF World Service has a proven track record of using donations efficiently and effectively. We keep administrative costs low with a clear objective of putting more funds on direct program expenses.



We are pleased to report that our funding has remained strong in the year 2023, despite a decrease by 9% compared with 2022 from Euro 170 million in 2022 to Euro 154 million in 2023.

The funds came from the long-term supporters, the Related Agencies and the Lutheran member churches who have traditionally funded the diaconal work of the LWF. Other important funding sources were the United Nations and Government agencies who have consistently supported our humanitarian and development work over the years. Expenditures from received funds were in line with the 2019-2024 strategy. We thank you and we cherish all of our supporters.



DISCLOSURE ON EXPENDITURE CLASSIFICATION

In order to provide additional disclosures required by the Swiss ZEW0 certification (standard 9 of Zentralstelle für Wohlfahrtsunternehmen), specific schedules have been added to the consolidated financial audit statements. The expenditure classification is based on the overall LWF financial statements for the year ended 31/12/2023 in euros:

Zewo Classification	Project related Expenditures	Fundraising related Expenditures	Administrative related Expenditures
Staff-related expenditures	44,911,564	1,621,794	14,249,445
Operating expenditures (other than payroll)	101,135,848	538,507	9,156,340
Contributions made to implementing partners	0	0	0
Depreciation of fixed assets	0	0	1,155,298
Total expenses	146,047,413	2,160,300	24,561,083
Share of each category in %	85%	1%	14%

Governance

The Committee for World Service

The Committee for World Service acts as the Board for LWF World Service. It consists of LWF Council members, as well as representatives of related agencies in an advisory role (no voting right).



Rev. Barbara Lund (Chairperson),
Evangelical Lutheran Church in
America (USA)



Rev. Dr. Arnfríður Guðmundsdóttir,
Professor of Systematic Theology at
the Faculty of Theology and Religious
Studies, University of Iceland and
ordained minister within the Evangelical
Lutheran Church of Iceland, since
1987. She is a member of the General
Church Council of ELCI, LWF Council
member since September 2023, and a
Vice-President of the Nordic Region.



Dr. Ikali Karvinen serves currently as
a Deputy Executive Director at FCA's
Service and Accountability Center in
Helsinki. Before the current position,
Dr. Karvinen has been heading the
FCA Country Offices in Somalia,
Cambodia and Eritrea. Mr. Karvinen
holds a Doctorate in Health Sciences/
Public Health and is trained deaconess
and ordained for serving the Finnish
Evangelical Lutheran Church by
external calling from Finn Church Aid.



Rev. Dr. Karin Achtelstetter is executive
director for Canadian Lutheran World
Relief, a related agency of LWF World
Service. Achtelstetter was ordained
to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in
Bavaria (Germany), and is a rostered
minister of the Evangelical Lutheran
Church in Canada. Both churches are
LWF member churches.



Mr. Martin Kessler has been director
of Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe (DKH),
Germany, since 2011. DKH provides
humanitarian aid worldwide and is part of
the Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie und
Entwicklung, the Social Service Agency
of the German Protestant Church. In the
Committee, he also represents Bread for
the World (Brot für die Welt).



Karin Axelsson Zaar is International
Programme Director at Act Church of
Sweden, a role that she has had for
a year. Before, she was Head of the
Middle East unit. She has been with
Act Church of Sweden since 2015.



Michael Stolz has served eight years
on the National Board of the Lutheran
Church of Australia and New Zealand
(LCANZ), and two years on the Board
of Australian Lutheran World Service
(ALWS).



Pepijn Trapman is Chief Operating Officer of Kerk in Actie since February 2021.



Roger Fasth, Programme Director at DanChurchAid (DCA) has over two decades of field and headquarters experience, and has been involved in work in multiple conflict zones and disaster-stricken areas, providing emergency assistance and implementing long-term development projects.



Bishop Steven Lawrence of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia (ELCM) served as Pastoral Adviser, Interim-Administrator/Director and Chaplain in various Diakonia organizations within ELCM.



Tim Götz was elected into the LWF Council in 2023, representing European youth and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria. Mr Götz currently is pursuing a Masters degree in Philosophy at the Free University of Berlin.



Ms Agnes Gabee, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea, is an LWF Council member.



Ms Toromare Mananato, Malagasy Lutheran Church (Madagascar), is an LWF Council member.



Ms Isabella Reinmann Gnas, Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil, is an LWF Council member.



Presiding Bishop Fredrick Onael Shoo, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, is an LWF Council member.

LWF World Service Management Team



Ms Maria Immonen is the Director of LWF World Service. She is also co-chair of the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR).



Chey Mattner until December 2023 was Head of Operations for LWF World Service



Caroline Tveoy (since December) is Head of International Programs for LWF World Service



Lokiru Matendo Yohana (since January 2024) is Head of Policy and Thematics for LWF World Service



Guillaume Rémy is the Global Finance Coordinator for LWF World Service



Dr Petra Feil is Head of Quality and Accountability for LWF World Service.



Mr Bobby Waddell is Global Funding Coordinator for LWF World Service.

BACK COVER IMAGE

A man wears a T-Shirt reading 'En el migrante yo veo al Señor / In a migrant I see the Lord' at a LWF community center in El Guante, Honduras, where LWF World Service works with returned migrants.

Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert



Your donation
in good hands.

**En el migrante
yo veo al Señor.**
(Scalabrini)

Ways to give

Your support is key to our mission to empower people around the world. LWF World Service will use your contribution to support our projects.

Your donations help us protect the most vulnerable, provide emergency relief in times of crisis, build schools, train teachers, and provide quality education to children. They also help us build capacities for adults to improve their livelihoods and food security, ensure better access to drinking water in remote areas, and more.

Your partnership truly makes a difference.
Together, a better world is possible. For hope and a future.

WAYS TO PARTNER WITH US:

ONLINE DONATIONS



SEND A CHECK

The Lutheran World Federation,
Chemin du Pavillon 2,
CH-1218 Le Grand-
Saconnex, Switzerland



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

World Service

Member of **actalliance**

