



## Climate and Environment Approach and Practice Paper



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*Cover photos: Alhaji harvests tomatoes grown on Tawuya farm, Sierra Leone.*

*CREDIT: Olusoji Seye*

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# Introduction



*Eulalia is a farmer in Alta Verapaz, Guatemala.*

*CREDIT: Montserrat Fernandez*

CAFOD is committed to working alongside our partners to respond to the cry of the earth, as well as the cry of the poor through our Integral Ecology Programme Model. We are now faced with the 'triple planetary crisis' of climate change, nature loss, and pollution. Currently, one million of the world's estimated 8 million species of plants and animals are threatened with extinction; climate-related disasters have tripled over the last 30 years; and it is estimated that there will be 1.2 billion climate refugees by 2050. At CAFOD, we recognise that those who are most affected by these issues are those who have contributed to them the least. Whilst we have worked with our partners for decades on environmental and climate issues, in the face of the triple planetary crisis, we recognise the need to scale up our climate and environmental action, whilst also ensuring communities' rights are respected and natural resources are equitably managed.

This paper has been written to highlight how CAFOD and our partners approach programming on climate and environmental issues. The first section outlines CAFOD's commitments, strategy, risk management processes as well as how we understand our environmental work.

The second section provides practical examples of CAFOD and our partners' contributions to responding to the cry of the earth under three of our six thematic areas: climate & environmental justice, resilient livelihoods, and emergency preparedness, response, and recovery.

## SECTION 1: CAFOD'S Approach

*Farmers in Marsabit County, northern Kenya are learning more about growing crops and raising livestock to diversify their income and support their families through the climate crisis.*

CREDIT:  
Zachary Lenawamuro



### Organisational Level Commitments and Initiatives

In 2020, CAFOD launched our strategic framework '**Our Common Home**' (OCH), which takes its name from Pope Francis' Encyclical **Laudato Si'** - On Care for Our Common Home. The launch of our strategy coincided with the beginning of the COVID pandemic – a global tragedy that impacted us all and reinforced our understanding of progress: that everything is connected, those who experience poverty, vulnerability, and exclusion suffer most, and collective action is vital, and possible, to achieve global solutions. Since 2020, climate chaos has continued to destroy lives, environmental destruction has hit the poorest the hardest, reminding us of the ever more urgent need for action.

Since 2020, CAFOD has stepped up our environmental and climate action. At the organisational level, OCH recognises the interconnectedness of environmental and social crises and poverty; we have an **Environmental Stewardship Group**, which has been working towards reductions in flights, energy use and waste, as well as ensuring that environmental and climate concerns are embedded within our governance structures and programming. We have also developed an Environmental Policy, signed up to the Climate & Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organisations and are committed to the **Core Humanitarian Standard's (CHS)** environmental standards.



**We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combatting poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.**

**POPE FRANCIS,  
LAUDATO SI' #139**

CAFOD's response to the inseparable 'cries of the poor and the earth' is grounded in the principles of **Catholic Social Teaching**, including the 'common good', the 'universal destination of goods', the 'preferential option for the poor', 'subsidiarity', and the intrinsic value of all Creation. As a faith-based organisation, and member of the **Caritas Internationalis (CI) Confederation**, the largest faith network in the world and the second largest aid network, we strive for deeper engagement and understanding across donors of the role that the Church plays in society, not only in implementing development and humanitarian programmes, but in changing social norms and in speaking out against injustice in places where few others speak. CI is committed to tackling issues related to environmental degradation and climate change and has a particular focus on how these issues impact the most vulnerable, who often have to leave

their homes to escape the consequences of globally increasing temperatures and environmental pollution, including diseases, drought, floods, heavy rains, lack of food and drinkable water, and coastal erosion. Where possible, we work with the local Church giving a long-term rootedness in communities. Local priests, sisters and Church structures are already in the community and will remain long after a project has ended.

### CAFOD's International Programme: Integral Ecology Programme Model



*Mabinty, Yarie and Mariama with their harvest of tomatoes and peppers on the farm at Tawuya, Sierra Leone.*

*CREDIT:  
Olusoji Seye*

CAFOD's **Integral Ecology Programme Model (IEPM)** is our organisational approach to how our International Programmes will contribute to achieving the vision, mission, and commitments of **Our Common Home**. Integral Ecology, popularised within Pope Francis' 2015 Encyclical *Laudato Si*, is a lens through which we must understand and respond to the complex and interconnected cries of the poor and the earth.

Integral ecology recognises that everything is connected. It helps us to understand that the good of people and the good of the earth are inseparable. That caring for the earth is integral to tackling global poverty, vulnerability, inequality, injustice, and exclusion. That ultimately, no one can truly flourish if another person is hungry, lost or abandoned, nor can humanity flourish while our common home is degraded and exploited for the good of the few. Integral Ecology can inspire our individual and collective transformation (our 'ecological conversion'). To think of ourselves differently, in a humbler, more fruitful way. To have the courage to make radical changes. To become vital agents of change. Integral Ecology can inspire individual and collective action to address the symptoms of the social and environmental crisis, and more critically, its causes – to transform the world's broken social, economic, political, and cultural systems, structures, and behaviours, with power held in ways that serve the common good.

With the launch of the IEPM across CAFOD's International Programme, there has been an increased focus on programming that specifically tackles environmental degradation and supports communities to adapt to climate

change. Core programmes have been developed across Asia, Middle East, Latin America and Africa, using the IEPM framework. The strategy development process prompted teams to consider environmental issues both in terms of causation and in terms of impact. This has meant that every core programme team has embedded environmental and climate concerns across their programme, as well as having at least one outcome statement in their programme strategy that includes considerations on the environment. They are standalone outcomes in some cases (e.g. water management, adaptation to climate change) or integrated into resilient livelihoods projects (mainly under agroecology practices and market-based approaches), emergency preparedness and response, water and sanitation, and land/human rights (human rights defenders working on environmental issues) and land rights and human rights work, often involving environmental rights defenders.

We have developed 10 Integral Ecology characteristics (IECs), to help our programme teams, partners and supporters understand what Integral Ecology really means. The characteristics supported teams to design their programming. 2 of the 10 have an explicit focus on the environment:

- We respond to the inseparable Cries of the Poor and the Earth and focus on the poorest, most vulnerable and excluded to support their survival and long-term flourishing.
- We protect and actively seek to regenerate the environment.

## **How do we understand our environmental work across the International Programme?**

### **Environmental Classification Tool**

As CAFOD and our partners work in diverse contexts and geographies, we do not have one approach to integrating environment and climate within our work. As a result, the Environmental Classification Tool (ECT) was developed by CAFOD's Environment Advisor, with the support of International Programme colleagues. The tool's purpose is to help CAFOD evidence our progress against Integral Ecology Characteristics 1 & 3 to help CAFOD evidence our progress against the Integral Ecology Characteristics above, both of which have an explicit focus on the environment. It was designed to highlight best practice in environmental programming across the organisation and facilitate reflection amongst programme teams. The Tool is a project level self-assessment, asking programme teams to choose from the definition statements below to classify their project's environmental impact. Projects demonstrate that they are functioning at one of three levels: demonstrating environmental awareness, environmental stewardship/protection, or environmental regeneration / restoration, as in the diagram below:



As a minimum, we expect all projects to demonstrate environmental awareness.

## How do we manage Environmental Risk?

### Environmental Stewardship Tool

The impact of programme activities on the climate and the built and natural environment may be unnoticeable at first but could have long term impacts if not closely analysed at the beginning. **The Environmental Stewardship Tool (EST)** was developed by the Caritas Interagency Group on Resilience and Disaster Risk Reduction to strengthen environmental stewardship in programme activities and complements other environmental impact assessment tools.

The tool was designed to help teams screen for environmental risks as they design programmes and activities, ensuring we not only do no harm, but also support environmental outcomes, restoration, and regeneration efforts. The main objective of the EST is to ensure that the preservation of natural resources (such as forests, wild animals, water, soil etc.) is done in a sustainable manner alongside all activities involving the natural and built environment (such as shelter and infrastructure construction). It also includes guidance on how to reduce potentially negative environmental and climate effects from how we do our work, by considering the impact of our operations.

### WHAT is the EST designed to do?

The Environmental Stewardship Tool (EST) is intended to enhance programme quality and improve the accountability of humanitarian and development programmes (e.g. Food Security & Livelihoods, DRR, Markets & Cash and Voucher Assistance, Shelter & Settlements and WASH sectors) to improve, rather than degrade the natural environment. The tool allows for the rapid identification and registering of the risk level of key environmental issues which could be experienced by natural and manmade systems as a result of activities.

For the purposes of this tool, Environmental Risk is defined as the actual or potential threat of adverse effects on living organisms and the natural environment arising out of planned activities. Tier 1 of the EST provides a series of statements to consider when designing a programme. Tier 2 supports teams to rank the level of risk each action may have on the environment and the individuals and communities living in those programme areas. Tier 3 helps mitigate risks by prompting the design team to reflect on measures that are environmentally responsible and regenerative, with sector specific guidance provided in the accompanying tabs.

### WHEN is the EST used at CAFOD?

We have developed guidelines for when the EST should be used by CAFOD programme teams. The EST is required when project activities have a large interface with the environment and meet a pre-specified budget threshold.

The tool should be used during the programme design phase and prior to implementation to inform stakeholders of both the risks of potentially negative environmental impact, along with the possible benefits of activities which could restore or regenerate the natural environment. The tool can also be used during project implementation as part of a continuous improvement towards programme quality and for monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning purposes.

The tool has supported the Syria team to integrate additional environmental concerns into their WASH programming, the Ukraine team to reconsider items distributed as part of humanitarian response, and our Afghan partners to support farmers with more sustainable agricultural practices.

## Bringing together programmes & policy

CAFOD's policy team focus on **Economic Justice, Local Leadership in Humanitarian Response, Land & Food Systems, Climate Change and Business & Human Rights**. The roll out of the Integral Ecology Programme Model has led to more joined up working between CAFOD's policy teams and international programmes teams. In particular, the development of the Global Advocacy Programme (GAP) on Food Systems has provided a mechanism for closer collaboration between policy and programme teams. The GAP includes CAFOD's programmatic work with partners across Bolivia, Brazil, Bangladesh, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe. It supports smallholder farmers' movements to create an enabling environment to build local economies that respect their rights, ensuring food sovereignty, and enhancing resilience to climate and economic shocks. Our strategy for achieving this transformation centres on implementing agroecological principles and harnessing the knowledge and experience of farmers to influence local, national and global policy and practice. The GAP has provided advocacy accompaniment to partners, which has proved fruitful in the first two years of implementation, with several partners attending UN COPs on climate and biodiversity, and resulting in major gains in local policy. For example, our partner CENDA has made significant progress on seed sovereignty in Bolivia. CENDA has advocated

for the development of local seed laws to protect native seeds, particularly in Cochabamba. Through collaboration with municipal leaders, legislation is being drafted to give farmers more control over their seed resources. Another example is the popular campaign and policy influence targeting the Fisheries Act in Sri Lanka. Our partner NAFSO's network strength in citizen groups and fisher organisations throughout Sri Lanka enabled rapid mobilisation to counter damaging legislation in the proposed Fisheries Act. On World Fisheries Day 2023, over 650 fishers submitted petitions demanding changes that protect small-scale fishers. Following these actions, the Ministry of Fisheries has agreed to review and revise aspects of the Act. The GAP not only brings CAFOD's policy and international programme teams together, it also involves our campaigns teams. As a result of the Fix the Food System Campaign in 2023, over 70,000 people in 763 parishes stood in solidarity with Salina, a small farmer from Bangladesh who is calling on the World Bank to protect farmers' rights to freely access their own seeds.

CAFOD also supports regional advocacy work with faith-based groups in Africa. The Africa Church Advocacy Programme (ACAP) has supported environmental awareness campaigns, as well as the integration of environment and climate considerations within Church structures and processes. By fostering partnerships and engaging in global dialogues, CAFOD works to influence policies and funding flows towards sustainable and resilient food systems, pushing for greater recognition and support of agroecology within international frameworks such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

## CAFOD's Value Add on Climate & Environment



### 1) Locally-led

All of our work is co-designed with our partners, who are on the ground and know their local environment. Our Catholic identity and work within church structures and with long-term partners allows us to better understand the context and which interventions are most appropriate within specific regions. Our commitment to local leadership, voice and agency means that we recognise that those who have the solutions are often rooted within the community. This means much of our work on climate and environment is community based, but with connections to national and global advocacy spaces.



### 2) Integral Ecology Approach

Our Integral Ecology approach means that when we approach environmental and climate issues, we do so from a holistic perspective. This means we can tailor our approach to specific contexts and integrate advocacy, governance and capacity strengthening activities from the get go. We ensure activities to regenerate or conserve nature are beneficial for local communities and respect their rights. We foster a culture of encounter and invest time in learning and adapting as projects are implemented.



### 3) Sector-leading Approach

We have robust environmental risk management processes in place. The Environmental Stewardship Tool (EST) which we co-designed with our Caritas sister agencies, Catholic Relief Services, Caritas Australia and Trócaire, is sector leading and has been recognised by the United Nations, European Union, Interagency Standing Committee, the Climate & Environment Charter and the Réseau Environnement Humanitaire (Environmental Humanitarian Network) (See p5 for more info on the tool).



### 4) SADI

Any of our work on the environment is carried out within our SADI framework. SADI is CAFOD's approach to ensuring Safe, Accessible, Dignified and Inclusive programming. For every project, programme teams are required to complete a question that assesses whether their project can be considered environmentally aware.

## How do we tackle climate and environmental issues within the International Programme?

Whilst **Climate & Environmental Justice** is one of six themes that we focus on, our Integral Ecology approach means that environmental and climate concerns are integrated across our programmes. Core to the Integral Ecology approach is the understanding that the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth are interconnected. Whilst environment and climate concerns are key within **Climate & Environmental Justice, Emergency Preparedness and Response and Resilient Livelihoods** thematic areas; there is also a significant overlap between our work on climate and environment and programming that contributes to outcomes on **Gender Justice, Peacebuilding Governance & Accountability and Local Leadership, Agency and Voice**.

**CAFOD's International Programme spans 6 key thematic areas:**

1. Climate & Environmental Justice
2. Resilient Livelihoods
3. Emergency Preparedness and Response
4. Peace building, Governance & Accountability
5. Local Leadership, Voice & Agency
6. Gender Justice

In section 2, we will be presenting examples of our climate and environmental work under the first 3 thematic areas.

## SECTION 2: Our Work

### Contribution 1: Climate & Environmental Justice

Environmental Justice is the goal of promoting justice and accountability in environmental matters, focusing on the respect, protection and fulfilment of environmental rights, and the promotion of the environmental rule of law<sup>1</sup> Climate Justice is a branch of Environmental Justice that recognises the climate crisis as a social and political problem, as well as an environmental one. It acknowledges that different communities feel the effects of the climate crisis differently, and that responsibility for the crisis rests with some countries and companies more than others.<sup>2</sup> Climate & Environmental Justice requires a rights-based approach, in which communities are supported to understand and fight for their rights

#### WHAT THIS WORK LOOKS LIKE AT CAFOD:

Advocacy

Environmental Defenders

Legal Support

Strategic Litigation

Environmental Awareness & Education

Land Rights

Community-led Natural Resource Management

#### CASE STUDY: Defending Land, Territory & The Environment

Latin America is the most dangerous region in the world to be an environmental and human rights defender (HRD). According to the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, between 2015 and 2019, 1,323 defenders were killed, including 166 women and 22 young people. 933 of these were in Latin America. Threats and attacks against HRDs are intrinsically linked to unequal control over and access to land and natural resources, highlighting the interconnections between human rights, environmental rights, and women's rights.

CAFOD's **"Defending land, territory and the environment - promoting the work of defenders in Latin America"** project, which was implemented from 2019-2022, is an excellent example of environmental justice in action. This **EU-funded** project supported over **1,500 defenders and over 100 organisations and communities across six countries**. The project provided training to defenders on 1) documentation, analysis, and systematisation of human rights violations, to increase their knowledge and use of mechanisms to defend and protect land, territory, and the environment; 2) production of information for communications and advocacy; 3) provision of material to report and pursue complaints; 4) improving protection strategies to address threats, criminalisation and stigmatisation faced by HRDs and male and female leaders.

Activities ran in seven countries and involved indigenous, afro-descendant, and small-scale farmers' communities, especially women and young people, as well as CAFOD partner organisations in the region. Most of the activities took place in **Colombia** and **Guatemala** during the three years of the project, however organisations from **Bolivia, Brazil, Honduras, Nicaragua** and **Peru** also participated.

<sup>1</sup> UNDP (2022). Environmental Justice: Securing our right to a clean, and sustainable environment.

<sup>2</sup> Friends of the Earth, What's climate justice? [groups.friendsoftheearth.uk/resources/whats-climate-justice](https://groups.friendsoftheearth.uk/resources/whats-climate-justice)



### Key Successes

- **74%** of defenders increased their knowledge of human rights mechanisms and guidelines, developing greater technical, political, and methodological capacities to exert their rights around situations of abuse, contamination, criminalisation, and impunity.
- **12** local human rights initiatives were provided with legal and technical support.
- **5** macro cases (**3** in Colombia and **2** in Guatemala) demonstrated significant progress in information gathering, reconstruction of memories and legal actions.
- **7** community healing processes were supported with use of human rights mechanisms, legal and juridical actions, including strategic litigation methodology.
- **21** cases were accompanied in Colombia and Guatemala in which legal administrative mechanisms were implemented to defend communities and their territories.
- There were **2** emblematic sentences in the case of femicide and violence against a young Mayan woman defender.
- All participating organisations improved capacity to respond to the risks associated with their work.
- **17** representative cases carried out advocacy to position them in public opinion and spaces for conversation with decision makers.
- Exchanges at regional, sub-regional and national levels supported peer-to-peer learning processes on protection, resistance, advocacy, and strategic litigation strategies.
- Publication and dissemination of 'Protecting Our Common Home' Regional report, a key tool for local, regional and international advocacy in which 5 key cases were positioned. Dialogue with the UN Special Rapporteur, Mary Lawlor, contributed to raising awareness of the vulnerability of defenders.

The Human Rights Defenders project offers a good illustration of how multiple interconnected or cross-cutting themes are woven into CAFOD and our partners' work. Although this project was primarily focused on environmental justice, it approached this through multiple angles.

**Local Leadership, Agency and Voice Angle:** The design of the project was rooted in CAFOD's commitment to local agency, voice and leadership. HRDs help to keep governments and businesses in check, ensure models of development that put people ahead of profit and protect our planet. HRDs are already leaders in their communities. Yet for their work, they often face criminalisation, harassment, and violence- even death. The project evaluation found that: "The voices of communities played a key role, not only as beneficiaries but also as central characters in cases." The project placed importance on adapting activities to the spirituality and worldview of indigenous and Afro-descendant participants in the project.

**Peacebuilding, Governance & Accountability Angle:** Accountability is at the heart of this project. It has been designed to support defenders to hold responsible parties to account, whether they are multi-national corporations, criminal actors, or government bodies. Through this work, communities hope to achieve more equitable governance of their natural resources and territories.

**Gender Justice Angle:** All of the project activities to promote the right to land, territory and the environment were planned from a gender and intercultural standpoint. In practice, this meant linking indigenous women's organisations; meetings between women defenders; a wellbeing grant to promote women's participation; using an Emergency Protection Fund for the Wayuu Women's Force organisation (supporting the femicide case); preparing and submitting the Women: Bodies and territories dispossessed in Bajo Atrato report to the JEP (Special jurisdiction for Peace); the Kankuama and Wiwa Women's Commission documenting violence against women; the prosecution of a femicide case; developing gender-based self-protection strategies; women leaders participating in opportunities to be spokespeople for their communities; and the link developed between violence against women and protection and self-protection strategies for women defenders.

### SPOTLIGHT ON BRAZIL: Goldmining, drones, and protecting the Amazon



*Deforestation in the Amazon rainforest, Brazil.*

**CREDIT:**  
Evilene Paixao, Partner  
Hutukara Yanomami  
Association (HAY)

CAFOD has been working with Hutukara Yanomami Association (HAY) for over fifteen years. HAY is a non-profit organisation, created in 2004, which brings together the Yanomami and Ye'kwana peoples of the Yanomami Indigenous

Territory (TIY), located in the far north of Brazil, on the border with Venezuela. The territory covers more than 9.6 million hectares – the size of Portugal – and has a population of 31,000 inhabitants, divided into 380 indigenous communities. It's the largest indigenous land in Brazil.

Illegal gold mining grew on an alarming scale in Yanomami Indigenous Territory (TIY) between 2018 and 2022. **In those four years, the area in TIY destroyed by mining reached more than 5,000 hectares – equivalent to more than 7,000 football pitches.** Gold mining has severe impacts on the health, livelihoods and environment of indigenous communities, such as the Yanomami and Ye'kwana people. During this four-year period, **16,000 indigenous people were impacted by disease, violence, murders and displacement.**

Together with HAY, CAFOD addresses the urgent needs and rights of indigenous people living in Yanomami Indigenous Territory (TIY), with a particular focus on increasing indigenous women's voice and participation, aligning with our commitment to put the most vulnerable and excluded first. For many years CAFOD has supported HAY's advocacy efforts to ensure authorities act on the violation of their ancestral land rights, reflecting our mission to challenge and transform unjust social and political systems.

These advocacy efforts were directly attributable to the launch of the Lula government's national operation to remove illegal goldminers at the beginning of 2023. This was a key milestone for the entire Yanomami and Ye'kwana population. Governmental initiatives were implemented to tackle the health crisis, such as child malnutrition and a malaria epidemic, caused by water contaminated by mercury, food insecurity and contact with external invaders. As a result, there is some evidence of natural regeneration in previously degraded areas, while improved measures for waste management and access to drinking water have had an impact on communities' quality of life.

In April 2024, **research into heavy metal contamination analysed hair samples of 287 Yanomami people, and revealed that 100% were contaminated with mercury used by illegal miners to extract gold.**<sup>3</sup> Indigenous people with higher mercury levels showed cognitive defects and nerve damage in their limbs, and samples from fish, and from river water and sediment, confirmed that the mercury contamination came from the river that the Yanomami depend on for drinking water and fishing. By 2024, there were more than 400 field actions to monitor water and soil quality, and the 'Yanomami Indigenous Territory Environmental Monitoring Network' was set up, funded by the Environmental Ministry with R\$6.4 million (£914,000), to continue to monitor mercury levels in rivers and fish, and community exposure, and create action plans in response to recover indigenous autonomy and ways of life in TIY.<sup>4</sup>

In an externally funded project, **"New technologies and new generations for forest protection against illegal mining in Yanomami land"**, CAFOD and HAY are contributing to improved environmental protection in TIY through training young indigenous leaders on how to use drones to monitor and protect their lands against invasions of illegal goldminers.

Mauricio Ye'kwana, a previous director of HAY, met Pope Francis in May 2024 during a Climate Summit held at the Vatican on the theme: 'From Climate Crisis to Climate Resilience.'

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<sup>3</sup> The study 'Impact of Mercury on Protected Areas and Forest Peoples in the Amazon: An Integrated Health-Environment Approach' was conducted by the Sergio Arouca National School of Public Health (Ensp/Fiocruz), in partnership with the Joaquim Venâncio Polytechnic School of Health (EPSJV/Fiocruz), with the support of another CAFOD partner, the Socio-Environmental Institute (ISA). See link: [Yanomamis from nine villages harassed by illegal mining are contaminated by mercury](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Dois anos de ações federais na Terra Yanomami: garimpo ilegal despenca e mortes por desnutrição caem 68% — Secretaria de Comunicação Social](#)



**Mauricio Ye'kwana, a former director of CAFOD partner HAY meets Pope Francis in May 2024.**

CREDIT: Vatican News.

During this global event he and two other Indigenous leaders from Brazil delivered a joint letter to the Holy Pontiff highlighting the recent climate crisis. They raised their concern about the vulnerability of their communities to the impact of climate change and the loss of biodiversity, which they bravely protect in the face of external invaders on their lands, for the well-being of all humankind.

In their message, they raised awareness about how climate change mitigation policies discussed in international platforms and fora do not reach the territories they manage. They also expressed their concern about the aggressive attempts to reverse their constitutional rights by the Brazilian authorities. The letter calls on the Pope to advocate to the Brazilian Congress to respect and protect indigenous rights, lands, and lives. Mauricio has also been sharing his message within global advocacy spaces, having attended COP16 in Cali, Colombia in 2024. The struggle for climate and environmental justice for the Yanomami and their ancestral lands continues, however Mauricio's message has been heard loud and clear:

*"Illegal mining has brought with it many changes to the biodiversity of the Yanomami Land, from the decrease in available food (hunting) to the season of the crabs (which we Ye'kwana observe by the constellations); new birds appearing (which sing at night) and over the years we've seen many plagues (locusts) and people are afraid of catching fish from the Uraricoera River - because they know that mercury accumulates in the fish."*

Whilst the primary theme of this work is on Climate & Environmental Justice, it is a truly integrated approach. Promoting local leadership, voice and agency is central to this work, as is accountability and governance. CAFOD's support to Yanomami women and young indigenous leaders also aligns with our organisational commitments on gender and inclusion.



**Young female indigenous leaders are learning how to use drones to monitor and report to authorities on deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon.**

CREDIT: Evilene Paixao, Partner HAY

### SPOTLIGHT ON SRI LANKA: Locally led Environmental & Gender Justice

*CAFOD's partner MONLAR work on the transformation of food systems, highlighting the importance of food sovereignty and environmentally friendly farming methods in Sri Lanka.*

CREDIT: Monlar



Our programme in Sri Lanka highlights how environmental and gender justice, local leadership and governance approaches can complement each other. In 2024, a coalition of women supported by CAFOD partners through a network of active citizens groups in Sri Lanka, successfully fought off the domination of exploitative loan companies in poor and marginalised rural areas, through a campaign of advocacy, education, and practical support, thereby preventing women becoming trapped into inescapable cycles of debt and its destructive **economic, psychological, social, and environmental** impacts.

The collaborative actions of a network of **politically active, determined and courageous women** demonstrate the fruit of long-term programming by partners to strengthen and empower active citizens (and particularly women), as agents for change. The voice and agency of women such as these is critical for charting a **pro-people and pro-planet development** path for Sri Lanka, and changing interconnected structural and systemic issues which keep people impoverished and endanger the natural environment. This delivered significant impact for thousands of the most poor and marginalised citizens (particularly women), ending exploitative practices which had been causing ever more extreme vulnerability and desperation, and in contrast supporting the viability of livelihoods of small-scale farming and fishing communities, connected to the land and in harmony with the environment.

In this example the economic vulnerabilities of the women intersect with lack of voice and participation in a poor governance context and a patriarchal society, and with the vulnerabilities of the livelihoods of small-scale farmers and fishers resulting from decades of erosion of traditional farming/fishing practices, poor protection of rights, the disproportionate power of largescale chemical-based agribusiness, and the impacts of environmental degradation and the climate crisis.

Through decades of citizens' empowerment and mobilisation, partners have inspired and supported people to understand the systems and structures underpinning their lived experiences, to articulate the alternatives they want, and to act to achieve those. Prior to the partners' interventions, the women in this example had no civic role outside the home, and no influence in governance or policy spheres. With partners' long-term support they are now politically active, confident and courageous, and having influence on policies, structures, and practices, from local to national, and international levels. By increasing the economic viability of small-scale farming and fishing practices, they are enabling these farmers/fishers to remain on their land, contributing

to food sovereignty, practicing environmentally respectful and agroecological approaches, in turn protecting and regenerating the natural resources and ecosystems. Partners and their active citizens are achieving all this through challenging and changing power dynamics inherent in every system, shifting the power to the people and building the critical yeast of hope, determination, and action for change.

### **SPOTLIGHT ON WEST AFRICA: Empowering Communities through Caravans for Land Justice and Environmental Protection**

In West Africa, vulnerable communities often face significant challenges related to land rights, access to safe water, and environmental degradation. In response to these pressing issues, our partner RECOWA through a regional coalition of CSOs, faith-based actors, and social movements initiated a series of advocacy caravans that unite local communities, civil society organizations, and government representatives. This case study explores the impact of these caravans on asserting the rights of marginalised populations and promoting sustainable resource management.

The caravans serve as a platform for dialogue, education, and collective action among communities directly affected by key issues. Traveling through defined routes in affected regions, these caravans engage local populations in discussions and policy dialogue about land justice, agroecology, natural resource extraction, and environmental protection.

#### **Objectives of the Caravans**

- Advocate for secure land tenure rights for marginalised communities, ensuring they have a legal claim to their land.
- Highlight the importance of safe water access and work towards the establishment of water points in vulnerable areas.
- Encourage sustainable farming practices that support both food security and environmental health.
- Address the root causes of environmental crises by promoting awareness and collective action among communities and respective government representatives.

The caravans travel through a predetermined route through affected local communities and provides communities with a platform to share their stories directly with government officials, including Regional Governors and Ministers, presenting specific demands. Each stop includes **community meetings**, gatherings where local voices share their challenges and propose solutions; **workshops** on land rights, water management, and sustainable practices and **advocacy opportunities** to engage with local and national political powers to influence policy changes that protect community rights and promote sustainable management of resources.

The caravans have strengthened community ties, fostering a sense of solidarity and collective agency. Our partner RECOWA reports that participants in caravans express feeling more empowered to advocate for their rights and address local challenges. So far, they have helped in legal and policy reforms in at least 4 countries that are now protecting the rights of pastoralists and nomadic communities to access and use land and water resources. The outreach efforts have raised awareness about land tenure issues and environmental challenges, leading to greater community participation in local governance and advocacy initiatives. Representatives from 3 national bishop conferences have reported that communities are adopting agroecological practices, reducing their environmental footprint and enhancing resilience to climate change impacts.

The caravans represent a significant step toward empowering vulnerable communities in West Africa to advocate for their rights and protect their resources. By fostering dialogue and collective action, the caravans are not only addressing immediate needs but also laying the groundwork for sustainable change.

### WHAT THIS WORK LOOKS LIKE AT CAFOD:

Agroecology

Locally-led Climate Solutions

Market Systems

Enterprise Development

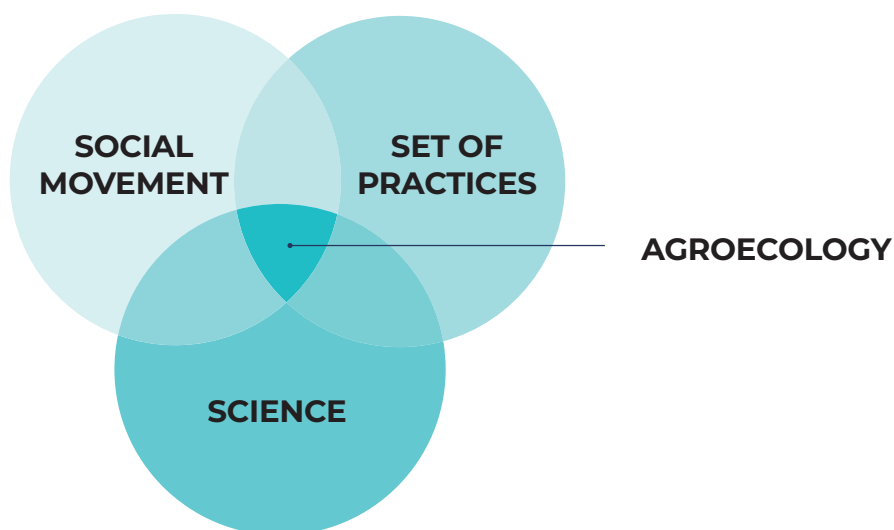
Self-Help Groups and Village Savings & Lending Associations (VSLAs)

## Contribution 2: Climate, Environment & Resilient Livelihoods

Environment and climate considerations are integrated across CAFOD's Resilient Livelihoods portfolio, with many programmes seeing their livelihoods work as a vehicle to restore and regenerate the natural world and support communities to adapt to climate-related shocks and stresses. We recognise that climate change is destroying many traditional livelihoods, as well as centuries-old ways of life and cultures. Key to our Resilient Livelihoods work is the understanding that livelihoods must be environmentally friendly, and if possible, regenerative. Many (but not all) of our resilient livelihoods projects focus on agricultural livelihoods.

### Agroecology

Agroecology is differentiated from other related concepts (e.g., sustainable agriculture, climate smart agriculture, nature-based solutions, organic agriculture) by the uncompromising commitment to each of the ecological, social, political, and cultural dimensions of sustainability, addressing power imbalances and centring the agency, voice and knowledge of local people, peasant farmers and Indigenous communities.<sup>5</sup> Agroecology combines three disciplines, as demonstrated by the diagram below. As a science, it draws from the field of ecology to understand the relationships between different aspects of the agroecosystem. As a social movement, it aims to influence policies and systems and economic structures that impact farmers and consumers. It seeks to move away from a model centred on food security to a model based on food sovereignty and social justice. As a set of practices, it minimises external inputs, and includes practices that benefit ecosystem health like polycropping, agroforestry, no-till and integration of animals (as well as off-farm activities).



<sup>5</sup> Anderson, C.R., Lamine, C. & M. Caswell (2024). Agroecology. In: Holloway, L., Goodman, M., Maye, D., Kneafsey, M., Sexton, A. and A. Moragues Faus (Eds). Elgar Encyclopedia of Food and Society. Elgar Publishing.

Agroecology promotes **representation, inclusion of women and marginalised social groups and exchange of knowledge**, as well as the **value of traditional knowledge and practices**. Even though women make up 43% of the global agricultural workforce, less than 15% of all landholders are women and only 2% of organisations governing food systems in low- and middle-income countries are led by women. In response to this, as a movement, agroecology is dedicated to empowering women and ensuring they actively participate and shape the global food system. 2 of the 13 principles of agroecology reflect this: Fairness & Participation. There is much potential for agroecology, not only towards climate change mitigation, adaptation, poverty reduction, biodiversity conservation, and health, but also to support female empowerment on a global scale.

CAFOD has adopted agroecology as a key approach to caring for the environment within livelihoods work. Some teams are explicit in their approach to agroecology, whilst others may not reference agroecology directly but are exploring integrated **conservation livelihoods approaches, regenerative agricultural practices, permaculture**, and other approaches which build climate resilience at ecosystem and community level. Teams working on agroecology do so in two main ways:

### **1. Increasing partner and community capacity on agroecological practices:**

In contexts where agroecology is not a well-known concept and partners have limited agroecology expertise, teams have focused their programme approaches on increasing knowledge, skills, use and promotion of agroecological practices, both at partner level and within communities. Agroecology is integrated within their rural livelihoods work.

### **2. Promoting the uptake of agroecology as a model for food systems transformation:**

Many teams (especially those in Latin America and Asia/Middle East) already work with partners that have expertise in agroecology. In these contexts, the focus is on continuing to promote the use of agroecology at community level while advocating for its adoption into policy at various levels of governance. This links to CAFOD's Global Advocacy Programme (GAP) on Food Systems and Land Use.

## **Agroecology in Action**

### **CASE STUDY: Using vermicompost to strengthen livelihoods, food sovereignty and climate resilience in Bangladesh**

The 'Increasing marginalized household participation in climate resilient livelihoods in the southern coastal belt of Bangladesh' or '**Proyash**' project, as it was known locally, was implemented in the southern coastal region of Bangladesh, which is particularly vulnerable to climate change. It suffers from the effects of cyclones, tidal surges, salinity, floods, and droughts. Implemented by Caritas Bangladesh from 2019-2024, the project aimed to support the most marginalised households to become more resilient through livelihood diversification and adopting environmentally friendly agricultural practices. The project built upon a previous programme titled Climate Resilient Agriculture: **Transforming the Livelihoods of 450,000 Poor Women, Men and Children in Rural Bangladesh, Kenya, Myanmar and Zimbabwe which took place from 2015-2018.**

Project activities were focused in 15 villages of Latachapli union of Kalapara sub-district in Patuakhali district. **A total of 3,000 households took part, covering 14,250 people, (7,525 male and 6,725 female)** including landless farmers, women headed households, people with disabilities and extreme poor communities. One particularly successful activity has been training

participants to make vermi-compost (product of the decomposition process using various species of worms), which has allowed them to increase vegetable production, improve soil health and earn additional income by selling it to local fertiliser dealers and farmers.



### Key Successes of the PROYASH project

- **5,058** people attended training on various livelihood-related skills including production of organic fertilizer, market information, climate and weather information, input production, agricultural tools and equipment.
- A total of **3,400** project participants were able to sell their agricultural products and a total of 41,512 community people bought different products through Women Business and Information Dissemination Centres.
- **3,223** people have benefitted from seed banks, including **2,550** farmers.
- A total of **851.47 MT** of compost fertilizer was produced of which **501.04 MT** were sold and **350.43MT** were used by farmers to produce organic crops and vegetables. Each family produced **851.47 kg** of vermi compost and earned BDT. **17,029** from production of vermi compost along with other regular works.
- **407** neighbouring community members not enrolled in the project have started to produce vermi-compost by sharing knowledge from the project's participants.
- **363** community members not enrolled in the project are growing vegetables using agroecological techniques, through learning from project's participants in Farmers Field Schools.
- **160** non-project community people of neighbouring village are practicing triple cropping pattern instead of their traditional single cropping pattern and **333** community people that were not enrolled in the project have started to produce general compost by sharing knowledge from the project's participants.



*Salina, a farmer from a village in Central Bangladesh stands next to her seed storage room.*

*CREDIT: Amit Rudro*

**Gender Justice Angle:** In this project, Caritas Bangladesh worked with the extreme poor, focusing on women, widows, women with disabilities, divorced women, and female-headed households. 2,218 of the direct participants were women. 232 participants were from women-headed households and a total of 156 elderly women and 291 pregnant women participated in income generating activities. A total of 218 women took part in the executive committee of 120 Farmer's Field Schools. The project impacted women's lives in different ways:

- **Increased Household Income:** Women's participation in income-generating activities led to a significant increase in household income, improving their economic well-being. -Enhanced Market Access: Women have gained increased access to markets, enabling them to sell their products directly and negotiate better prices with dealers.
- **Strengthened Bargaining Power:** Women's economic empowerment has strengthened their bargaining power within their households and communities.
- **Improved Healthcare Access:** Women and their children have improved access to healthcare services, leading to better health outcomes.
- **Reduced Financial Burden:** Women no longer need to rely on others for purchasing daily necessities, enhancing their financial independence.

**Local Leadership, Agency and Voice Angle:** The local communities fed into the design of this project, ensuring that it responded to their needs and preferences. Through supporting the economic and human development of marginalised households, Proyash made significant contributions to the agency, voice, and leadership capacities of participants, particularly women and marginalised groups. Notable examples include the 77 women who were selected as chairs of Farmer Field School executive committees, which gave them an opportunity to exhibit their leadership skills and lead on decision-making within their communities. The project participants also established 10 income generating activities that allowed unemployed women and disabled participants to get involved with income generating activities.

### SPOTLIGHT ON GUATEMALA: Empowering women through agroecology and ancestral practices

*Teresa is a farmer and is learning how to better adapt to climate change in Alta Verapaz, Guatemala.*

*CREDIT: Pastoral Social  
– Caritas, Diocese of  
Verapaz*



Many of the partners in Central America advocate for an inclusive food system that places the needs and rights of smallholder farmers, local communities and, in particular, women (including youth, people with disabilities, people living with HIV, and others) at the centre, enabling them to fully participate in and have control over their land, livelihoods and decisions about their future. These same partners promote a system with a diversity of crops and of farming techniques in harmony with indigenous peoples and local cultures, where farmers own and save their own native seeds, enhance local biodiversity, and promote equality between women and men. Partners and communities encourage a system in which decisions are made in the interest of the common good to promote human flourishing, address climate change and care for our common home.

The small scale 3-year project **"Strengthening the leadership of networks of women and people with HIV, for peace and security in the Diocese of La Verapaz"** demonstrates CAFOD's integral ecology approach, as it brings together issues of peace, gender, inclusion, justice, environment, governance and local agency. In Guatemala, communities face increasingly intense and frequent weather-related extreme events, and are also facing a land rights crisis, characterised by the presence of large-scale multi-national corporations within the extractive industries. This project has contributed to the empowerment of women and vulnerable groups in Alta Verapaz to promote spaces free of violence, stigma and discrimination and to access to health and justice services, based on human rights and safeguards.

A key component is the promotion of Q'eqchi ancestral practices (in agroecology, water-smart practices, agroforestry, silviculture etc) for ecosystem management and restoration, to achieve environmental regeneration, improved livelihoods, and ultimately contribute to vulnerability reduction and resilience of communities. Women's empowerment is at the centre of this project. Through this project, 6 municipal women's networks, set up for the prevention of violence, have been supported to improve their agricultural production, through crop diversification based on agroecological systems and the promotion of

community seed banks. 216 women leaders have been provided with support on soil health, water management, and commercialisation of agroecological products. 100% of the women leaders who have been trained are now providing information and support to others as 'community promoters.' Saving groups have been promoted as part of the project and to date, and so far, 20 women leaders have accessed the fund to support their agroecological activities, having a significant impact on family incomes and wellbeing.

### SPOTLIGHT ON NIGERIA: Livelihoods Support & Environmental Regeneration using Eco-Friendly Briquettes



*Laudato Si' Briquette Factory, Nigeria.*

*CREDIT: JDPCI, Abuja*

Not all of CAFOD's resilient livelihoods programming focuses on agriculture. In Nigeria, the **"Livelihoods Support & Environmental Regeneration using Eco-Friendly Briquettes"** project aimed to make an affordable cooking energy substitute available to consumers. The biomass briquettes are made from waste products from agricultural activities and present a solution to the deforestation caused by overdependence on charcoal burning.

CAFOD's partner, Justice, Development & Peace Commission set up a briquette factory in Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory (FCT). A solar-powered commercial briquette machine was designed, fabricated and deployed to provide cheap energy, and reduce deforestation and desertification. This project is part of CAFOD's contribution to both the cry of the earth and cry of the poor in Nigeria. The Nigerian Bishops Conference of Nigeria recently launched a 5-year tree planting and environmental regeneration strategy. The briquettes project aligns with and fosters this vision for sustainable environmental reorientation and transformation in Nigeria. Over 5,000 households have been reached through this project, which has also focused on providing improved livelihood opportunities to women and young people.



*Biomass briquettes, Nigeria.*

*CREDIT: JDPCI, Abuja*

## Contribution 3: Emergency Preparedness, Response & Recovery

### WHAT THIS WORK LOOKS LIKE AT CAFOD:

Environmental Stewardship in Emergency Response\*

Disaster Risk Reduction

Anticipatory Action

Cash for Work for Ecosystem Restoration

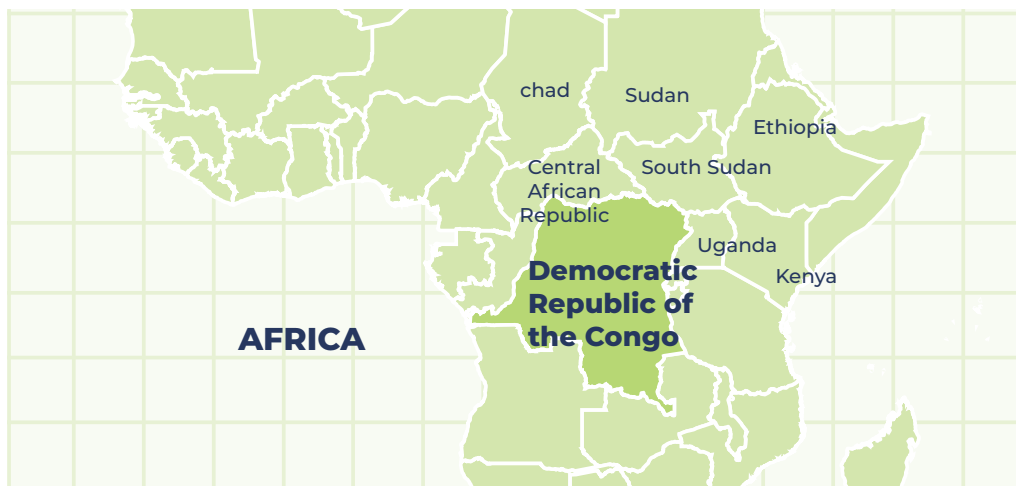
The nature of humanitarian programming, as well as the increased frequency and intensity of climate related shocks, exacerbated by environmental degradation, means that CAFOD's humanitarian work has a significant interface with climate and environmental concerns. CAFOD recognises the failings of humanitarians to adequately address environmental issues and we note that there are many cases in which humanitarian response has exacerbated existing vulnerabilities. In our humanitarian work, we want to go beyond 'doing no harm.' Through the environmental stewardship tool, we aim to integrate environmentally regenerative measures into our humanitarian work, when appropriate.

\*In order to manage environmental risk, large-scale humanitarian projects are required to complete the Environmental Stewardship Tool (for more details see Section 1). Our SADI (Safe Accessible Dignified and Inclusive) approach to programming ensures that communities can feed into the design of humanitarian responses, so they best meet the needs of vulnerable groups, and that gender is considered in the design of responses. As with all of our International Programme, we work through local partners, to ensure local leadership, voice and agency within emergency preparedness, response and recovery.

### CASE STUDY: Anticipating and Responding to Climate Shocks in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Anticipatory Action is a relatively new concept for humanitarians. It refers to any actions taken to reduce the humanitarian impacts of a forecast hazard before it occurs, or before its most acute impacts are felt. Start Ready is a unique financing mechanism that uses advanced planning so that funding can be rapidly released to finance anticipatory actions, thus reducing the impact of disasters. CAFOD received funding from Start Ready in February 2024, when Kindu, in Maniema province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) was hit with Congo river flooding. The model established with Start Ready support had predicted that approximately **7,100 people would be affected by the floods, but they were far worse than expected, ultimately impacting almost 50,000 people.**

This project included disaster risk reduction, water, hygiene, and sanitation (WASH) and cash transfer sectors. 5,257 households were provided with approximately \$140 in cash transfers, via a mobile money transfer. This was to allow them to meet their basic needs. Those benefitting from the cash support included 2,420 girls, 2,352 boys, 22,030 women and 24,450 women and 21,166 men from 5275 Households. Community activities took place in 7 neighbourhoods at risk of river flooding, covering around 247,076 people.



**Local communities receiving cash transfers in Maniema province in the Democratic Republic of Congo.**

CREDIT:  
HDV (Haute Digital Video) Alliance Media

The activities with the wider community involved putting in place community Early Warning System for supporting issuing alerts to inform people of the flood risk, as well as the co-development of community-based emergency and preparedness plans. Flood risk mapping was carried out, considering the exposure, vulnerabilities, and capacities of community members, so they are more prepared for flooding in following years (seasons).

Setting up an early warning system involved installing beacons along the river (1 in each neighbourhood at risk of river flooding) to monitor water levels, drawing triggers from local and indigenous knowledge to identify signs of flooding before water levels rise significantly. Additionally, river monitors were supported with capacity strengthening, so they can improve communication with the authorities, co-develop plans and strategies to cope with flooding and hold them to account. Through embedding new capacities at the local level, the community's resilience to all sorts of hazards, not only flooding, has been improved.

Before and after the flood, clean-up activities were carried out, including the clearing of watercourses. Support was also provided for the rehabilitation of infrastructures such as damaged households and latrines of health centres and wells.

Before the project, access to drinking water was limited. Many households were getting their water from the river, however the flood made drinking river water unsafe and damaged many water points. The project rehabilitated 3 wells in 3 communities, serving 11,013 people. The photo below shows the use of one of

the wells built as part of the project in the Lukunda district. One of the flood-affected residents of Lukunda stated “Since the installation of this water well in our community, we are no longer stigmatised in the eyes of our neighbours. The spring provides enough water for everyone. We are very grateful to the organisers for this assistance.”

### Monitoring river levels in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

CREDIT: Caritas  
Développement Kindu



### Key successes of the DRC Start Ready project

- Very high level of satisfaction from project participants. **98%** said they were completely or mostly happy with the support they received
- The impact of the flooding was reduced significantly, and the community is more resilient against future hazards
- Scale of the project and high number of participants reached **247,076** people in total
- Piloting of an innovative anticipatory action initiative. Learning can be used for other programmes
- Disaster Risk Management capacities of communities improved (through awareness-raising and training sessions, during the conduct of PVCAs and the development of Community Plans)
- Improved access to safe and secure sanitation facilities (through the construction of **150** family latrines and **5** public latrines)
- Cash transfers to **5,275** households helped them meet their basic needs such as food, shelter, household items and medicine
- Improvement in access to safe and sufficient water (rehabilitation of **10** water points and construction of **3** boreholes)
- Improvement in environmental sanitation (drainage of **7** gutters; construction of **3** culverts)
- Strong collaboration with humanitarian coordination and community stakeholders, and community ownership of the project

### Pumping water in Lukunda district, the Democratic Republic of Congo.

CREDIT: HDV (Haute  
Digital Video) Alliance  
Media



### SPOTLIGHT ON AFGHANISTAN: Community-led Disaster Risk Management



*Irrigation canal in Samangan Province, Afghanistan.*

*CREDIT: APBHO.*

Climate change is an enormous threat in Afghanistan, with climate disasters regularly causing death and destruction. The ability of community groups to implement disaster mitigation activities is significant in that it allows them to take control over protecting their assets and their livelihoods in a participatory way, based on their own locally rooted experience, **to make disasters less likely and support communities to prepare for hazards before they strike.**

The **DEC crisis response** promoted climate resilience among vulnerable communities in Afghanistan, through participatory Disaster Risk Management (DRM) activities. Four implementing partners formed community committees who were trained in DRM and implemented locally specific climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction projects, protecting their homes and livelihoods from climatic hazards to make their communities more resilient. **36,855 people** from **5,265 households** participated in project activities.

One of the project activities focused on the construction of an irrigation canal in Bulbulan village in Samangan province, as a means of safely diverting flood water. It also allows the irrigation of more than 100 hectares of land, keeping trees alive and promoting air quality. Community members have been able to plant and maintain a new apple orchard, a sustainable income source.

The impact of this change was effective in addressing the interconnected challenges of poverty and environmental degradation. Not only do the DRM initiatives have a positive environmental impact, they also support the economic prosperity of the targeted communities. Cash for work provides short-term financial assistance, while the reduced risk of climate-induced disasters helps to ensure a sustainable basis for livelihoods into the future, making this project truly integrated between humanitarian response and longer-term recovery. This change led to improvement in the natural environment; watershed management approaches such as excavating trenches and terraces promote soil and water conservation, by making water flow more slowly down the bare hillside, thereby reducing erosion. They also allow water to be fed into the ground in a targeted manner, thus leading to a regeneration of the groundwater table and the possibility to cultivate crops on the slopes, which in turn add to the livelihoods of the communities while simultaneously preventing

(fertile) soil erosion and the risk of landslides. Meanwhile, structures like canals simultaneously divert water away from habitation and land to prevent floods, and provide irrigation for trees, orchards, agriculture, and other ways of greening the land.

The project reached the most vulnerable, as the selection criteria specifically targeted IDPs, those with food insecurity, on low income and the unemployed. Similarly, ensuring women are represented in the Community-Based Disaster Management Committees, despite the growing challenges of working with them, meant that gender inclusivity could be maintained – this is especially important considering the disproportionate impact of disasters experienced by women and girls.

### **SPOTLIGHT ON ETHIOPIA: Emergency response, environmental restoration, and climate adaptation**

*Caption: Environmental restoration and adapting to climate change in Ethiopia.*

*CREDIT: CIFA*



*Before*



*After*

Our joint work with Caritas sister agencies Trócaire and SCIAF, (Caritas agencies for Ireland and Scotland respectively) and local partners in Ethiopia provides us with an excellent example of programming that brings together emergency response with care for the environment and adaptation to climate change.

In response to the 2023 drought, the team designed a cash-for-work programme, offering temporary employment to local people, while also fostering long-term environmental recovery and resilience. The project rehabilitated 313 hectares of rangeland from bush encroachment and was enhanced through planting 250kgs of grass seed to enhance the availability of pasture and regenerate vegetation in the area. To mitigate soil erosion and enhance soil health, a total of 10,917 soil & water conservation structures and 4,000 soil bunds were constructed on degraded rangeland. The work provided temporary employment to 974 households, who accessed cash to provide basic food and non-food items for their families. The cash for work approach also prevented the participants from resorting to negative coping strategies like selling charcoal and firewood, which contributes to deforestation and reduces communities' resilience.

In total, the rehabilitation efforts benefited thousands of people and their livestock, stabilised the community's livelihoods and reduced future vulnerabilities to climate-related hazards. The programme exemplifies Integral Ecology by integrating ecological health and human well-being, ensuring that both the land and the people can thrive together. In the photos you can see how the land transformed over the space of one year.