

# Food justice – now!

Annual Report 2023



Online Annual Report  
[fastenaktion.ch/JB2023](https://fastenaktion.ch/JB2023)

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Jean Pierre Ospina Ante,  
Colombia

## Dear reader

2023 has shown once again how necessary the action of Fastenaktion is. Hunger in the world is increasing rather than diminishing. Ever rising temperatures, droughts, heavy rainfall and natural disasters, but also wars and conflicts reduce the harvest yields – people have to either go hungry or become indebted. Because food prices have increased in many places due to scarcity, inflation and higher energy prices.

Last year, Fastenaktion provided emergency relief in several acute crises for the people in our projects, for example in Nepal after a severe earthquake or in Burkina Faso as a result of terror and forced displacement. However, the media focused on different disasters, such as the earthquake in Syria and Turkey, or the war in Ukraine. This meant that fewer donations went to organisations like Fastenaktion, which are engaged in the world's poorest countries in the long-term fight against poverty and hunger. This led to a negative financial result of around CHF 700,000 in 2023.

And the future holds more challenges when it comes to finance. From 2025, the Federal Council plans to use the funds from the development cooperation budget for reconstruction in Ukraine. This would have consequences for all Swiss organisations active in development cooperation, including for Fastenaktion. It would mean that there would be considerably less money available for long-term, sustainable development cooperation. While it is important to help Ukraine, this must not happen at the expense of the poorest in the world. We therefore call on the Federal government to provide additional funding.

Your commitment is all the more important. Thanks to your tremendous support, Fastenaktion was able to work effectively in 2023 and improve the living conditions of a total of 2.7 million people in the global South.

Many thanks!



Cordially,

*Bernd Nilles*

Bernd Nilles, Director Fastenaktion

# Impact worldwide in 2023

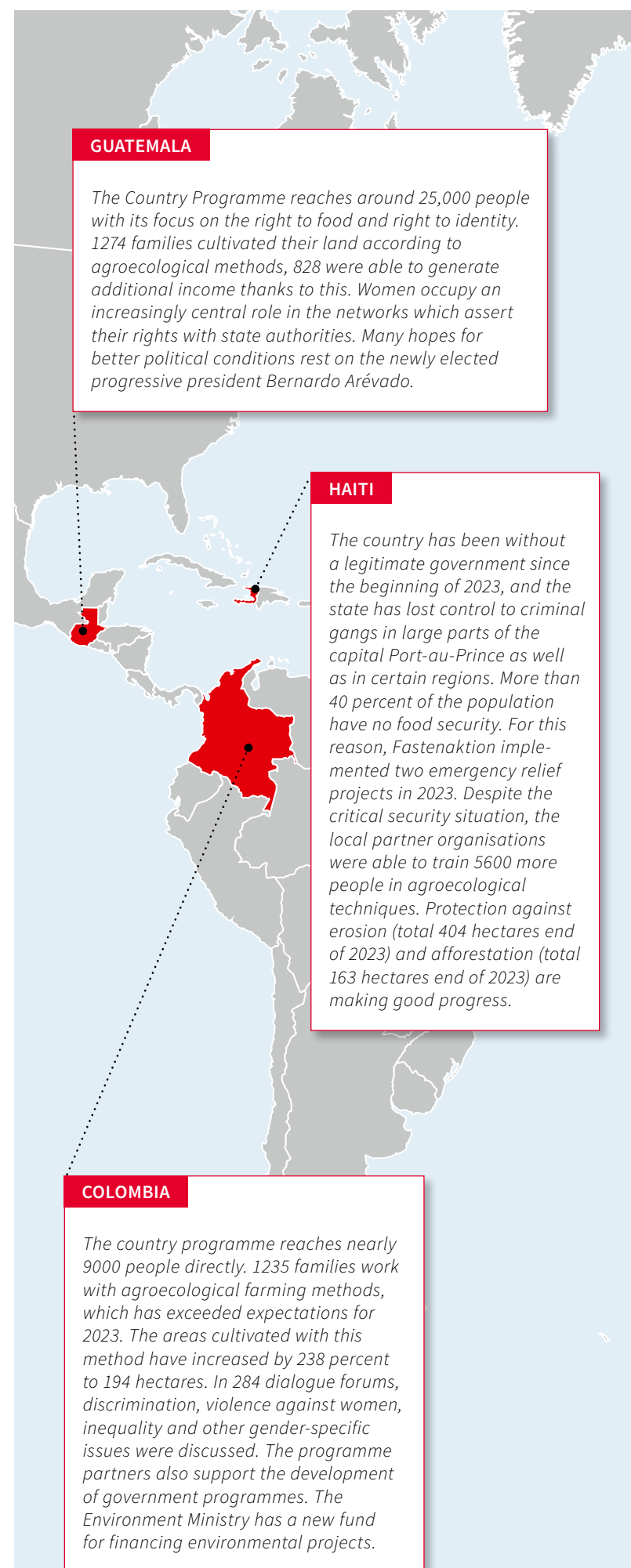
**Fastenaktion reached more than 5.2 million people last year with its projects and programmes as well as its information, campaigning and awareness-raising work. Together with small farmers' networks, solidarity groups, church and civil society organisations, we have implemented a total of 347 projects – and helped to make the voices from the global South heard at the international level, for example at the World Climate Conference in Dubai or at the UN in Geneva.**

With its activities in the twelve Country Programmes and the three International Programmes, Fastenaktion directly reached around 639,000 people in 2023, of whom 58 percent were women. They especially have improved their access to sufficient and healthy food. All in all, around 2.7 million people in the Global South were able to positively change their living conditions. We reached around 2.5 million people with our information and campaigning work in Switzerland.

The focus of the Country Programmes is to ensure people have sufficient and healthy food and to reduce the risk of further impoverishment. Thus, in eight programmes, around 181,000 women and 150,000 men benefit from the sustainable management of natural resources such as soil and water. The agroecological techniques used are environmentally friendly and adapted to the local situation; they improve the harvests and help with the adaptation to global warming. In addition, Fastenaktion promotes the necessary regulatory frameworks in the programme countries. To this end, a total of approximately 295 meetings took place there with representatives of public authorities.

The International Programmes make the voices of the affected communities from the global South heard at the international level and in Switzerland. In addition to the Ecumenical Campaign, other awareness-raising work took place, for example a communicative focus on World Food Day on 16 October and an effectively used advent calendar for the end of the year, which gave an insight into our work and projects. A highlight was the first action forum in Solothurn: Around 60 people from the church-related environment gained an insight into our work.

Fastenaktion systematically investigates reports of corruption, abuse or sexual harassment and punishes proven abuse. In 2023, 13 new compliance cases were reported to us. We were able to complete 11 cases. At the end of the year, 10 cases remained open. Moreover, we provide information about our commitment against the abuse of power on an annual basis.



For more information about our country programmes, go to [www.fastenaktion.ch/laender](http://www.fastenaktion.ch/laender)

## INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES

**The International Programmes (IP) of Fastenaktion are dedicated to improving the political and economic conditions worldwide and make a contribution to system change.**

### Energy and Climate Justice

Fastenaktion strongly supported the new Climate Protection Act, for example with the memorial service for the Morteratsch Glacier in May. In the referendum in June, 59 percent of the Swiss population approved the law. At the climate conference in Dubai we were able, in cooperation with our partner organisations, to contribute practical text proposals for the final document. Our good reputation also led to a large media presence during COP28.

### Food Justice

With our work on the rights of farmers, we were able to ensure access to important negotiations at international level for voices from the global South. For example, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food directly accepted various inputs from our partner organisations. With our involvement, we also contributed to the move by the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva to appoint a group of experts responsible for monitoring the rights of peasants, which effectively strengthens those rights.

### Mining and Human Rights

Our study of gold mining in a Colombian conflict region met with considerable response. It shows that the mining negatively affects the livelihoods of the people living there. Moreover, it illustrates the lack of transparency and control of the Swiss gold hub when importing gold and other raw materials. The study was picked up by major Swiss media and helped our Colombian partners in the negotiations about positive changes in gold mining.

#### BURKINA FASO

The security situation in the country remains fragile in the aftermath of the 2022 coup on the one hand, and due to terrorism on the other. Around a third of the country is facing an emergency situation. Fastenaktion has implemented four emergency relief projects in order to strengthen the resilience of the population in the programme areas who are threatened by forced displacement. Despite these difficult circumstances, the country programme has achieved its objectives. It reaches around 6000 people directly, strengthens their food security and enables them to increase their income. Thanks to political lobbying, more than 150 women now have access to land for cultivating their own food crops.

#### SWITZERLAND

The new 'Fastenaktion' brand has established itself, the feedback from the donors was also positive. Despite this, we have lost public recognition. Our activities focused on change towards sustainability and global justice – we have raised people's awareness about this throughout the year. The first action forum in Solothurn was well attended.

#### NEPAL

The country programme progressed well and reached a total of 18,351 people. 1,248 new kitchen gardens were established, and the existing ones are being steadily expanded. Thanks to successful lobbying work, the authorities allocated a total of CHF 17,800 to agroecological matters, which supports the farmers' efforts. In addition, 17 municipalities are providing around CHF 40,000 for combatting child marriages, three are preparing a regulation on this subject. After an earthquake, Fastenaktion successfully provided emergency aid for the poorest.

#### LAOS

The food security of the approximately 44,000 people in the country programme has improved: fish farming and goat rearing, as well as vegetable gardens provide for a more protein-rich diet. However, the shortage of water in the north restricts the establishment of vegetable gardens, while other parts of the county were confronted with floods and landslides. Nevertheless, the villages in our projects now have the necessary structures to use their resources more sustainably.

#### PHILIPPINES

32,400 people were reached with the projects on the right to food. 3,200 have newly obtained secure access to natural resources. Agroecological farming is practised on around 53 hectares, around 300 hectares of the coastal and marine area are used sustainably. 49 villages have implemented plans for disaster prevention. The Catholic Church continues to play an important role in the country as a defender of human rights – however, its actors, as well as other environmental activists, are repeatedly threatened as a result.

#### KENYA

The country programme reached more than 20,000 people directly, via solidarity groups, agroecological school gardens, community fora and peace committees. Of 547 solidarity groups, 52 percent were able to provide vital loans for basic needs and emergency cases. 89 percent of the members work with agroecological practices and were thus able to benefit from harvests from kitchen gardens and food forests. The energy-efficient cook stoves, which halve the need for firewood, are proving to be a success – their number increased by almost 3500 to a total of 26,000.

#### INDIA

Although malnutrition is generally increasing in India, the people in the projects of Fastenaktion's partner organisations are experiencing an above-average improvement in their food security and sovereignty. This is helped by the cooperation with state agricultural research services in the field of agroecology. The number of families who practise this type of agriculture has increased by 3,466. 1,628 families newly gained access to land. Almost 52,000 participated in initiatives with the local administration to strengthen the position of the Adivasi and Dalits in society.

#### DR CONGO

The situation in the country remains difficult, with around 6 million people internally displaced and 26.4 million suffering acute food insecurity. Our country programme counteracts this. Almost 13,000 people benefit from more and healthier food, among them 55 percent of women whose social status is making gratifying progress. In addition, numerous agreements with companies have been signed to invest financial contributions from mining profits into social community projects.

#### SENEGAL

There was an impressive financial boost in the solidarity groups. The assets increased by more than 20 percent to around 1.18 million Swiss francs – one third of the increase was due to various economic activities by the groups themselves. There are now 2200 such solidarity groups with more than 73,000 mostly female members (an increase of 10 percent). However, for the first time in 2023, because of a food crisis, more than 50 percent of all loans had to be granted for food items – due to the price explosion on the one hand, and because of poor harvests due to insufficient rain on the other hand.

#### MADAGASCAR

The number of solidarity groups has increased by 968 to 10,845, with more than 156,000 members in total. Nearly 10 percent of them were newly reached in 2023, more than half are women. 17,000 members paid off their debts in 2023. 10 percent of the households were able to improve their food security. Around 2,000 networks have implemented local development projects in their communities, such as the construction of a drainage channel.

## Distribution worldwide

	Projects	Expenditure in CHF
Africa	103	4 854 415
Asia	79	3 048 275
Latin America	57	2 938 611
International	11	326 651
International Programmes	55	2 532 937
Programme Development	19	733 372
Switzerland (incl. share of dioceses)	15	703 645
Directorate	8	197 524
Awareness-raising		3 011 707
<b>Total project expenditure</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>18 347 136</b>

# A climate campaign on agroecology

**For the first time since the start of the pandemic, the Ecumenical Campaign could take place under halfway ‘normal’ conditions. The campaign guests from Madagascar and Kenya met with great interest at organised events and in the media.**

In the third section of our four-year campaign cycle ‘Climate Justice – now’ the focus was on agroecology. Making this complex subject understandable and accessible was certainly a challenge. It was solved by us asking people to trace the journey of an ordinary meal from the plate back to the field. This approach was also used in the Fastencalendar, on the place mats, the food trail and in accompanying materials for church services – for example the 10 Commandments of food.

It helped that all events, soup days and church services could once again take place without pandemic-related restrictions. Fastenaktion and HEKS organised 276 events in the German, French and Italian speaking parts of the country which reached 12,750 people. Some of our staff, speaking at church services, gave an insight into the projects in the global South or explained the campaign theme. The guest tours by Diary Ratsimanarihaja from Madagascar and Stellamaris Mulaeh from Kenya were very well received. At 20 events each, the two women inspired 1,237 people in French-speaking Switzerland and 930 in German-speaking Switzerland. They attracted extensive media coverage and made it possible to reach target groups outside church circles.

In the church environment, the Ecumenical Campaign attracted considerable attention. In a survey, 97 percent of those asked said that they used some or all of the campaign materials. Around 90 percent implemented the campaign in some form, 86 percent used the Fastencalendar, of which around 1.3 million copies were distributed. The new hunger cloth ‘What is sacred to us?’ by Emeka Udemba in cooperation with Misereor was particularly well received. 400 large and 600 small hunger cloths were sold at Fastenaktion – the meditation about it by Jacqueline Keune made a perfect link to the theme of climate justice. The campaign also found a positive response online. With more than 50,000 people reached, the number of users reached across all channels could be almost doubled compared to 2022.

11  
February



## Senegal’s government supports solidarity groups

The solidarity groups initiated by Fastenaktion in Senegal are a long-term success story. The Senegalese government officially recognised this at the beginning of 2023. The Ministry of Microfinance and the Social Solidarity Economy agreed to support the national Calabash network with means of transport, shelters and loans. While only a small portion of the funds has so far been received, even the moral support of a government is unusual.

17  
April

## International Day of Peasants’ and Farmers’ Struggles

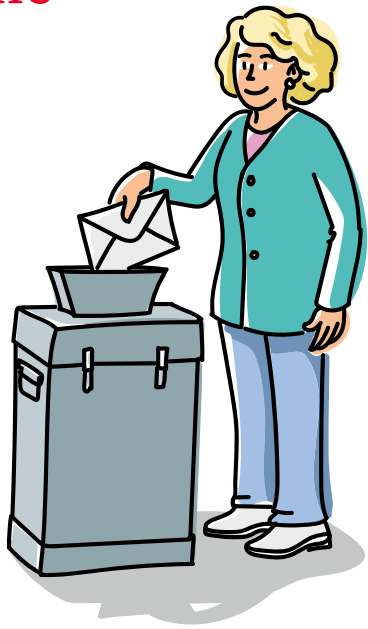
Although small farmers produce around 70 percent of food worldwide, half of them don’t have enough to eat. Their access to land, water and seeds is threatened. They experience marginalisation and violence from their own governments and international agribusiness companies. On the International Day of Peasants’ and Farmers’ Struggles, farmers demand recognition of their rights and solidarity. Fastenaktion works closely with small farmer families in its projects and, as coordinator of the international RAISE project, is actively involved in strengthening peasants’ rights.



# Less is more



18  
June



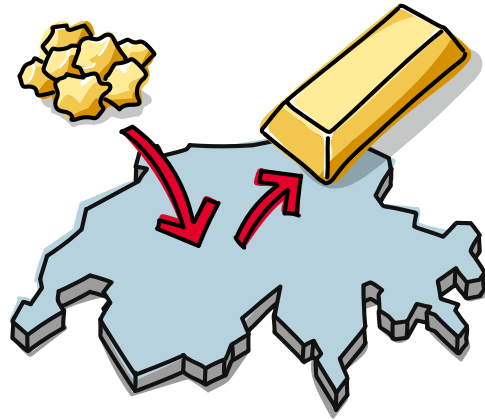
### Yes to the Climate Protection Act

59 percent of Swiss voters expressed their wish for more climate protection at the ballot box. As a result, Switzerland is now obliged to reduce its carbon emissions to net-zero by 2050. Fastenaktion actively supported the new law, which was elaborated as an indirect counterproposal to the Glacier Initiative. To draw attention to the importance of the referendum and the fate of the ever faster melting glaciers across the world, Fastenaktion and other NGOs organised a 'Goodbye Morteratsch Glacier' ceremony on 20 May for the Morteratsch glacier in the Engadine, in which around 150 people participated. Since measurements started in 1878, the ice giant has retreated by around three kilometres and has lost two-thirds of its volume.

12  
October

### Media interest in our gold study

A study by Fastenaktion exposes the negative consequences of gold mining in the Colombian conflict region of Baja Cauca for humans and the environment. Because this gold is processed in Swiss refineries, the study was reported by the major Swiss media such as 'Tages-Anzeiger', 'Le Temps', and SRF (10vor10) and brought us some public attention.



4  
November



### Emergency relief after earthquake in Nepal

A major earthquake destroyed or damaged almost 30,000 houses in Nepal and also directly hit regions in which Fastenaktion is active with its projects. Given the wintry temperatures, it was all the more important to help the roughly 34,000 affected families as quickly as possible. Just a few days after the quake, Fastenaktion and a partner organisation started an aid project for the reconstruction of the houses of the poorest families. This was supported by Swiss donors with more than CHF 40,000.

10  
November

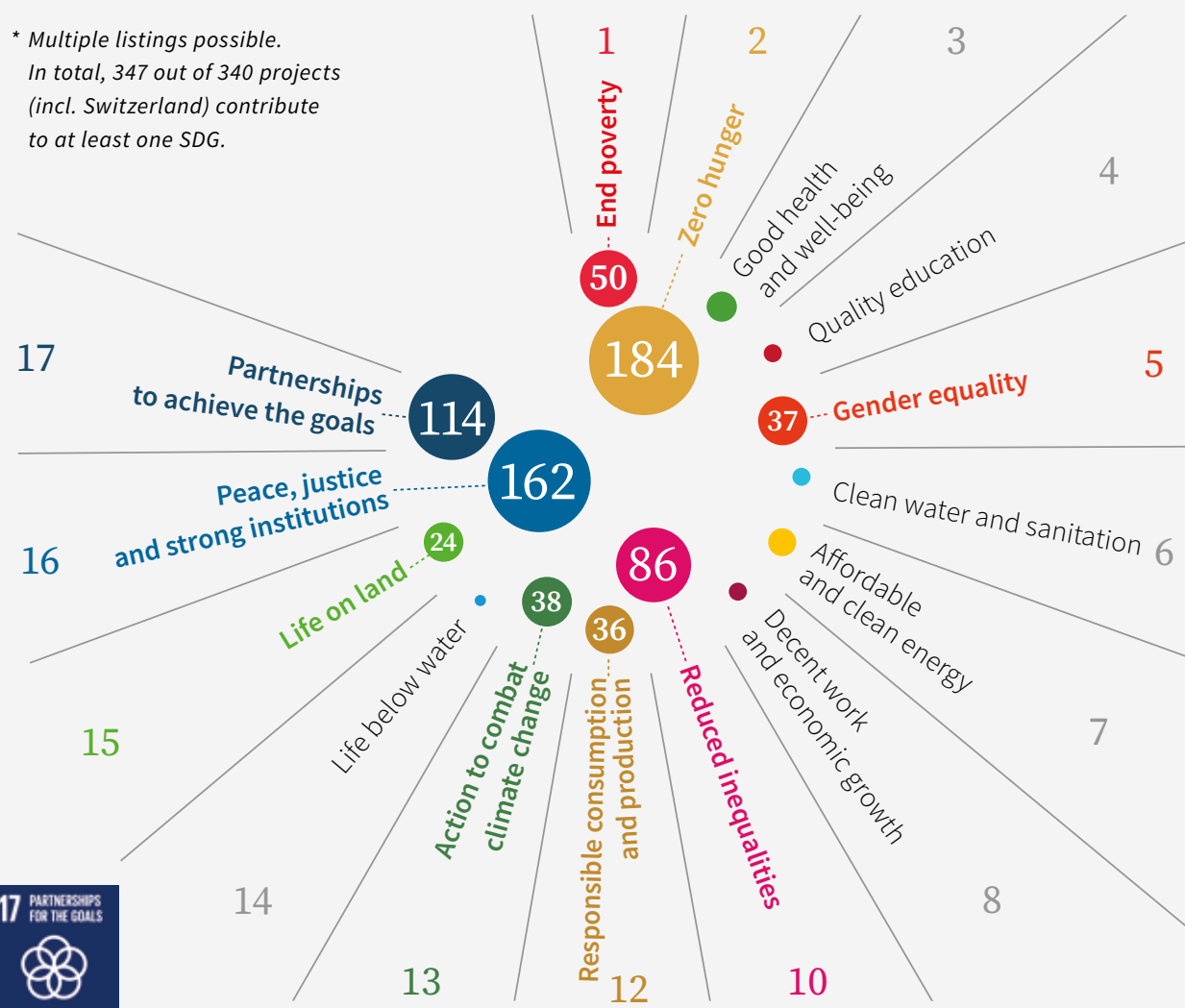
### Lively debates at the first action forum

Around 60 people from the church environment visited the first action forum of Fastenaktion in Solothurn, which was a mixture of further training and motivational sessions. They not only gained many insights into our work but also joined in the discussions in workshops – about strategies against hunger and global warming, but also about the relationship of Fastenaktion to the Catholic Church in crisis. The donations from the church environment have not been enough to fund our project work for quite a long time. However, a majority of the guests thought that the relationship remained important for both sides. The insights and impulses from the day are intended to flow into the new strategy which Fastenaktion is elaborating for the time from 2025. The next action forum will take place on 6 September 2024.



### Number of projects in line with SDGs\*

\* Multiple listings possible. In total, 347 out of 340 projects (incl. Switzerland) contribute to at least one SDG.



### Many thanks for your help and support

Fastenaktion thanks all donors, foundations, cantons, municipalities, church communities, parishes, regional churches and companies for their support and cooperation. We also thank the SDC for the programme contribution received in the context of the Sufosec Alliance\*

\*The Sufosec Alliance is a partnership of six Swiss NGOs active in promoting sustainable food worldwide.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The 2030 Agenda with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals applies worldwide to all countries.



# Profit and Loss Statement as of 31 December 2023

The detailed figures and the full annual report can be found at [www.fastenaktion.ch/Jahresbericht](http://www.fastenaktion.ch/Jahresbericht)

Revenue	2023 (CHF)	%	2022 (CHF)	%
General donations	8 096 674	36.4	9 514 844	39.7
Contribution from public funds	100 653	0.5	125 466	0.5
Legacies	349 998	1.6	1 223 141	5.1
<b>Total free donations and contributions</b>	<b>8 547 325</b>	<b>38.4</b>	<b>10 863 452</b>	<b>45.3</b>
Earmarked donations	3 624 525	16.3	4 641 447	19.4
Earmarked legacies	1 000 000	4.5	0	0.0
Earmarked contributions from public funds	1 165 074	5.2	1 317 167	5.5
SDC programme contribution	6 590 000	29.6	6 590 000	27.5
Forwarding of programme contribution to Aqua Alimenta	- 440 000	- 2.0	- 440 000	- 1.8
SDC contributions others	595 525	2.7	606 040	2.5
Additional third-party contributions for projects	962 460	4.3	265 000	1.1
<b>Total earmarked donations and contributions</b>	<b>13 497 584</b>	<b>60.7</b>	<b>12 979 654</b>	<b>54.2</b>
<b>Total donations and contributions</b>	<b>22 044 909</b>	<b>99.2</b>	<b>23 843 106</b>	<b>99.5</b>
Trading profit	129 599	0.6	64 624	0.3
Income from services	56 394	0.3	61 217	0.3
<b>Other income</b>	<b>185 993</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>125 841</b>	<b>0.5</b>
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>22 230 902</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>23 968 947</b>	<b>100.0</b>

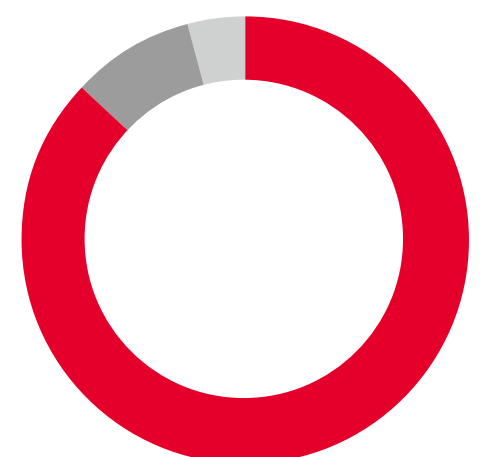
Expenditure	2023 (CHF)	%	2022 (CHF)	%
Country programmes	- 11 167 951	47.0	- 10 081 414	43.9
International programmes	- 2 532 937	10.7	- 2 054 347	9.0
Programme development	- 733 372	3.1	- 872 500	3.8
Projects in Switzerland (IMF FO-RKZ) Pastoral contribution Switzerland	- 703 645	3.0	- 774 175	3.4
Directorate projects	- 197 525	0.8	- 157 840	0.7
Awareness-raising	- 3 011 707	12.7	- 3 348 626	14.6
<b>Interim total</b>	<b>- 18 347 136</b>	<b>77.2</b>	<b>- 17 288 902</b>	<b>75.3</b>
Project processing costs (esp. project planning, coordination and control)	- 2 358 189	9.9	- 2 349 131	10.2
<b>Direct project expenditure</b>	<b>- 20 705 325</b>	<b>87.1</b>	<b>- 19 638 033</b>	<b>85.6</b>
Administration	- 896 822	3.8	- 941 590	4.1
Fundraising	- 2 167 938	9.1	- 2 372 091	10.3
<b>Administrative expenditure</b>	<b>- 3 064 760</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>- 3 313 681</b>	<b>14.4</b>
<b>Total operating expenses</b>	<b>- 23 770 085</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>- 22 951 714</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<b>Operating result</b>	<b>- 1 539 183</b>		<b>1 017 233</b>
Return on real estate investment	479 989		471 733
Real estate expenditure	- 201 131		- 175 801
<b>Real estate result</b>	<b>278 858</b>		<b>295 931</b>
<b>Ordinary result</b>	<b>- 1 260 325</b>		<b>1 313 164</b>
Financial income	619 042		107 017
Financial expenses	- 70 063		- 1 530 953
<b>Financial result before change in exchange rate fluctuation reserve</b>	<b>548 979</b>		<b>- 1 423 935</b>
<b>Tax payment</b>	<b>- 17 015</b>		<b>- 28 741</b>
<b>Interim result before change in fund capital</b>	<b>- 728 361</b>		<b>- 139 513</b>
Change in fund capital	- 346 963		366 000
<b>Interim result before change in organisation capital</b>	<b>- 1 075 324</b>		<b>226 487</b>
Change in exchange rate fluctuation reserve	- 83 529		176 429
Change in approved project funds	2 796 000		0
Change in free resources	- 1 637 147		- 402 916
<b>Surplus/shortfall after allocations</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>

## Fastenaktion in numbers

**23 770 085**

Expenditure in 2023 in CHF





The support of the family is crucial for successful agriculture, says young farmer Jean Pierre Ospina Ante (second from left).

# Agroecological farming reduces rural exodus



Jean Pierre at work in his sugar cane field.



**In Colombia, many young people move from the rural areas to the cities, due to a lack of prospects. A project implemented by our partner organisation Atucsara is counteracting this trend. Thanks to it, Jean Pierre Ospina Ante trained in agroecology after finishing school and is today successfully planting vegetables, spices and sugar cane.**

‘I came across Atucsara five years ago, because at that time my mother participated in its training sessions’, says Jean Pierre. In 2021, the partner organisation of Fastenaktion invited the now 20-year-old to join the local youth group. Its aim was to offer the young people in the region of El Tambo Cauca in south-western Colombia prospects for the future so they would not migrate to the city – and to show them how they can have a good future by working in agriculture. For Jean Pierre, this was successful. ‘I was rather shy and introverted at that time, the group gave me the chance to open up, to express my ideas and overcome my insecurities. ‘He also found that sharing experiences with others of the same age from different villages was very valuable. ‘The group showed us possibilities of changing our region positively.’

### Healthier food, more money

The young people also looked after two community gardens in their villages in which they applied agroecological practices in cultivating beans, potatoes and spice plants. ‘That’s where we learned to produce food with organic fertilisers and natural pesticides, without harming the soil and its living creatures. And we realised that it is possible to live from what grows in the field if one plans properly.’ After finishing school, Jean Pierre decided to enrol in a diploma course in agroecology organised by Atucsara at the University of Popayan. There, he learned everything about native species, micro-organisms and organic agriculture.

‘Today, I am part of a regional network of seed guardians. We try to protect our own seeds, including at the political level’, says Jean Pierre. ‘It contributes to food sovereignty, because without our seeds we don’t have any food’. Alongside this, he also successfully operates an ecological sugar cane production with his cousin and other family members. This has not only improved the family’s diet, but also their economic situation.

### Motivating other young people

‘Some young people find agricultural work too hard’, says Jean Pierre. He, on the other hand, is proud to be a farmer. ‘It is a luxury to be able to grow one’s own food and to know what one eats. Without us, there is nothing to eat in the towns. And with agroecological agriculture, I have found a lifetime project that enables me to put down roots in the region.’ Key factors for this are the support in the family and from Atucsara.


‘I now want to motivate other young people in the region to give life here on the land a chance’, says the committed young farmer. ‘All the more so as those who go to the city with great dreams often end up being disappointed.’




For more information about Colombia go to [www.fastenaktion.ch/kolumbien](http://www.fastenaktion.ch/kolumbien)



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# Food justice – now!

The Fastenaktion Foundation has the following purposes:

- Support of the work and the projects of development organisations and churches in favour of economically and socially disadvantaged people worldwide, with emphasis on Africa, Asia and Latin America
- Involvement in shaping opinions and decisions on development policy
- Promotion of the global solidarity of the population and church in Switzerland through information and awareness-raising in ecumenical cooperation, especially during the time of Lent

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