

Strategy 2020–2024



**SOLIDAR** SUISSE  
FIGHTING FOR GLOBAL FAIRNESS

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**Carlo Sommaruga**  
President of Solidar Suisse

You are holding in your hands the new Solidar Suisse strategy document for the period 2020 – 2024.

The result of a participatory process in which Solidar Suisse’s employees played an essential part, this document outlines the strategic guidelines which govern the work of our teams in Switzerland and in the 16 countries where we have a presence. It is also intended as a source of information for interested stakeholders outside the organisation who wish to know more about the path we have set ourselves.

In many parts of the world where we are involved, civil society organisations are increasingly being put under pressure by authoritarian governments. In Switzerland, development cooperation must defend itself against attempts at instrumentalisation, drastic budgetary cuts and attacks mainly from the political right, which put a question mark over international cooperation as a whole. The challenges facing an organisation such as ours are all too present. Far from concerning us, they strengthen our determination. We are convinced that our new strategy will enable us to meet these challenges and achieve our ‘raison d’être’.

‘Economy and work’, ‘disasters and crises’, ‘democracy and civil society’: by regrouping our work for the coming years around these three themes, we aim to pool our values and expertise to the benefit of international solidarity. As we conduct our awareness-raising work and pursue our humanitarian and development projects, we are determined to continue our fight for the most poor and vulnerable, and towards social justice.

We are proud to enjoy the trust of so many prestigious organisations and partners, not to mention our thousands of supporters and donors. I sincerely hope that our new ‘Strategy 2020 – 2024’ will serve to reinforce your confidence in Solidar Suisse and the work we are engaged in with our partners around the world.

**Carlo Sommaruga**

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DEAR READER,



The following images stand for what we do across the world. Solidar Suisse assists the local population in Mozambique in making their concerns heard. We empower young people in Bolivia and Burkina Faso and enable them to access the labour market. We support the resistance of women against violence and discrimination in Nicaragua. In Pakistan, we ensure that children can go to school instead of working. We support workers in their struggle for decent working conditions in the global supply chains in South East Asia. And we stand by the people in Southern Africa, whose livelihoods were destroyed by Cyclone Idai.

*Pictures: Joachim Merz, Vassil Anastasov, Andreas Schwaiger, Jürg Gasser, Usman Ghani, Pring Samang, Denis Onyodi, Frank Yuwono*







## STRATEGY 2020 – 2024 IN A NUTSHELL

The world of the coming years will continue to be marked by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity ('VUCA'). For this reason, Strategy 2020–2024 was developed with the goal to enhance Solidar Suisse's resilience, understood as our ability to adapt to and thrive in an unpredictable, demanding future. In order to do so, Solidar Suisse chose to adopt the Oxford University's Scenarios Approach, geared to cope with turbulences, uncertainties, novelties and ambiguities, thereby strengthening an organisation's ability to cope with shifts and shocks.

***Our vision is a just and fair world free from discrimination, exploitation and violence where people's basic needs are met, and their human rights are fulfilled. Everyone benefits from decent work, social justice, equal opportunities and democratic participation.*** To achieve this vision, we advocate via campaigns, build partnerships and implement development and humanitarian projects in less well-off regions of the world. All of our actions are based on strong values such as solidarity, human rights, outspokenness, accountability, transparency, inclusiveness and equality, empowerment and professionalism.

Our work is based on various norms, legal frameworks and multilateral agendas such as the UN Agenda 2030, the human rights conventions, International Labour Organisation (ILO) standards and internationally agreed humanitarian standards and codes of conduct.

This strategy includes reshaping our worldwide institutional and programmatic architecture through a concentration on less focus countries.

A range of strategic goals are outlined, all contributing to a thriving organisation with significant and demonstrable contribution to necessary changes in our societies towards a more just world. These goals define our ambition to remain a relevant and outstanding NGO in the development and humanitarian sector as well as in advocacy work. We plan to converge our approaches into more holistic, collaborative and agile ways. We will do so by further shaping our thematic and programmatic work. Our three instruments (development cooperation,

humanitarian action, campaigns and advocacy) will be further strengthened in order to bring about positive changes in the lives of people in the three domains of ***economy and work, disasters and crises*** and ***democracy and civil society***.

The strategy sets the future course for our positioning, marketing, fundraising and communications. We aim to become more impact-oriented, transparent, visible and recognised. Plus, we explore ways to better inspire, engage and mobilise the young generation.

Finally, we have defined ways to maintain and enhance our organizational fitness in key domains such as finance, IT, quality management and human resource management. Being a 'people business', we rely on the best qualified and most motivated staff.

We are grateful to our staff on all levels who contributed to this strategy. The board of trustees endorsed this strategy on the 24<sup>th</sup> of September 2019.

## INTRODUCTION – WHO WE ARE

Solidar Suisse is a Swiss non-profit organization which commits itself worldwide to decent work and democratic participation and implements humanitarian action. The NGO has been involved in international cooperation for more than 80 years and builds on long experience and institutional expertise in both development cooperation and humanitarian action. Solidar Suisse was founded by the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions and the Social Democratic Party as Swiss Labour Assistance in 1936.

Still committed to our historical roots, we are driven by the struggle for a more just world. Solidar Suisse conducts awareness campaigns in Switzerland and in recent years has had an average annual turnover of 18 million Swiss francs. It currently operates more than 60 projects in more than 15 countries and employs 34 staff in Switzerland and 100 abroad. Organised as an association, Solidar Suisse is supported by a broad base of collective members, single members and donors. Private foundations and the public sector, in particular Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Swiss Solidarity and the Liechtenstein Development Service, are important partners for us.

Solidar Suisse is a member of SOLIDAR, a European network of more than 60 Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working to advance social justice in Europe and worldwide. We are a partner of Alliance Sud, the Swiss alliance of some of the largest NGOs active in International Cooperation.

## REVIEW OF STRATEGY 2015 – 2019

Our strategic orientation, combined with our traditional values, has shaped and continues to shape the global work of Solidar Suisse, not only in our focus countries but also in Switzerland. Our three strategic pillars (1. decent work 2. democracy and participation 3. humanitarian action) are still undisputed and created the desired impact.

### Review on programme level

**Field of action ‘Decent Work and Democracy and Participation’:** As our annual programme reporting shows, significant impact was created across all projects. In the past strategy period, we developed a collective reporting based on a set of predefined common objectives including indicators. A next necessary step is to set baselines and report annual target levels against these baselines.

**Field of action ‘Humanitarian Action’:** We successfully terminated (Sri Lanka, Philippines, Lebanon) and started (Indonesia, Nepal, Mozambique) humanitarian programmes during this strategy period. Very high impact was achieved. On the project level, our reporting is of excellent quality, while the collective reporting is more challenging due to the nature of much less synchronised programmatic phases as compared to development cooperation.

**Field of action ‘Campaigns and Advocacy’:** Solidar Suisse accomplished to focus its communications on decent work issues and to conduct at least one campaign each year to this end. With our communication efforts we reached companies in production, retail and trade, well over a million of people both in Switzerland and abroad and have initiated improved processes on sites. In addition, Solidar Suisse sharpened its profile as a decent work expert organization by repositioning and focusing its communication in Switzerland.

By reviewing our context analysis made in our previous strategy paper, we concluded that the focus of our activities proved relevant and justified. However, two main improvements are planned for the next strategy period:

1. It became obvious that the operation of the development and humanitarian programmes is too disintegrated. Considering the limited size of Solidar Suisse, there is significant potential of increasing effectiveness by bringing these two pillars closer together by implementing a nexus approach in its focus countries.
2. A full integration of our campaign work into these strategic domains is deemed necessary. Further interweaving of programmes and campaigns is planned.

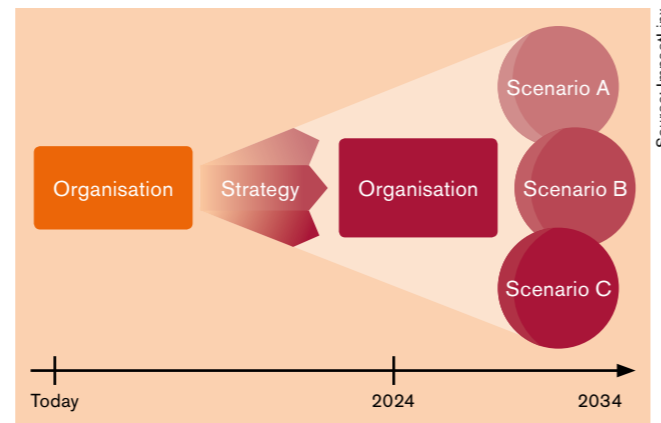
## STRATEGY 2020 – 2024: DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Solidar Suisse senior management conceived of the strategy development process as an opportunity to enhance the organisation's resilience, understood as our ability to adapt to and thrive in an unpredictable, demanding future. In order to do so, Solidar Suisse chose to adopt the Oxford University's Scenarios Approach facilitated by an expert from the consultancy firm ImpactLinX. The first phase included analysis and building the scenarios, before the second phase was dedicated to the strategy development itself.

The Scenarios Approach is geared to cope with turbulences, uncertainties, novelties and ambiguities, thereby strengthening an organisation's ability to cope with shifts and shocks. Its starting point is a critical review of traditional methods of strategy development which often start by predicting how an organisation should look like in the future before embarking on an exercise of planning the steps necessary to achieve that future state (cf. graph below).

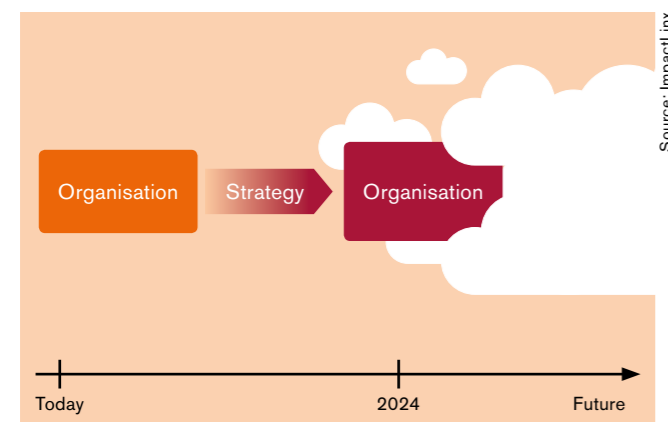
Arguably the weak spot of this process is the fact that it is often underpinned by a fuzzy, implicit and therefore unvalidated vision of the future. Even though most strategy processes involve some sort of trend analysis or forecast element, the underlying assumptions are hardly ever clearly defined.

The Scenarios Approach on the other hand begins with the realisation that while we cannot predict the future, we are able to come up with multiple scenarios, i. e. different, yet equally plausible versions of the organisation's future context.



Graph: Scenarios Approach

In multiple workshops, the Solidar Suisse team created a set of three well-founded scenarios based on various analyses, i. e. different variants of the context Solidar Suisse will plausibly be confronted with in 10–15 years. Taking these scenarios as their starting point, the strategy team then addressed the strategic questions arising: What are the opportunities and challenges Solidar Suisse, its partners and the people it works for will be confronted with? How can the organisation seize the emerging opportunities and mitigate the arising risks? Which organisational qualities are needed for Solidar Suisse to thrive in the different futures?



Graph: Traditional strategy development process

## ANALYTICAL FOUNDATION OF OUR ENGAGEMENT

The strategic scenarios identified five possible, sometimes contradictory, main developments:

- Possibly multilateralism and global solutions for global problems are strengthened and the Agenda 2030 is accepted as programmatic framework. At the same time, we face a risk of increasing nationalism, loss of power of supra-national institutions and increasing influence of big corporations.
- The need for international cooperation remains high or even increases in some countries (least developed countries, Sub-Saharan Africa, and climate change frontier states). The gap between poor and rich within countries is widening. A further shrinking space for civil society and social tensions is expected, leading to a more repressive attitude of many states towards NGOs.
- Technological innovation leads to a loss of jobs, precarious work situations and informalisation of jobs. On the other hand, it provides new jobs and opportunities in communication and networking (e. g. direct communication with beneficiaries, supporters and donors, crowd action, short term mobilization, public initiatives).
- Thematic emphasis in international cooperation will be on increased humanitarian action, a renewed focus on reducing domestic poverty, climate change and migration. However, an increase of actors, channels, approaches and opportunities will at the same time lead to dispersal and 'de-professionalisation' of international cooperation.
- Philanthropy of rich individuals and corporate social responsibility will gain in importance; strong NGOs in the global South will be able to absorb more means, while public funding in the global North declines and the fierce competition in the Swiss donor market increases even more.

Our programmatic work is thus strongly influenced and shaped by the following developments:

### Social inequality

In recent decades, the unequal distribution of wealth and income around the world, but also within individual countries, has increased markedly, as has unequally distributed access to productive resources, basic social services, opportunities, markets and information. Social inequality affects not only countries with low per capita incomes, but almost more countries with medium incomes, i. e. the majority of Solidar Suisse focus countries, especially in Latin America. Social inequality also includes drastic discrimination against women in the world of work. In none of our focus countries can the goal of sustainable poverty reduction be achieved without equal opportunities and access to basic services.

### Climate change

The poor regions of the world are the hardest hit by climate change, although they have contributed least to it. It is necessary for Switzerland to be involved both nationally and internationally in tackling the causes and coping with the consequences of climate change. Climate justice means Switzerland needs to reduce its own climate-damaging activities while helping poor countries cope better with the consequences of global warming and develop in a climate-friendly manner. In all its projects, Solidar Suisse is committed to an ecologically sustainable world in which all economic activity contributes to social justice, does no ecologic harm and contributes to people's access to water, food and natural resources.

### Humanitarian crises

The **impact of natural disasters** keeps increasing. While geologic-induced disasters remain constant, climate-related disasters such as hurricanes or floods are on the rise. In all cases people's vulnerability keeps significantly increasing due to inadequate spatial planning, uncontrolled urbanisation and generally unsafe habitats. Furthermore war, violence and persecution drove worldwide forced displacement to the record high of 70.8 Million people in 2018. Overwhelmingly, developing countries are most affected.

### Forced migration, displacement and labour migration

Capital and goods enjoy extensive global freedom of movement. But people from the world's poorest countries often face severe restriction of their freedom of movement, a clear breach of their human rights. For a just globalisation and to uphold our own democratic principles, we need to stand for the rights of migrants. In many ways, migrants are the link between rich and poor countries, providing cultural exchange and economic balance through trade and financial remittances to their countries of origin. People seeking a new home in another country are often fleeing war and economic hardship, but often also from their own corrupt and violent regimes.

### Precarious forms of work

Dynamic liberalization and deregulation, including the internationalization of economic relations, continue to dominate economic policy worldwide. Adding to this is the inadequate, often completely missing international regulation of transnational companies. International cooperation continues to be called upon to cushion the precarious consequences of global deregulation. Marginalisation, exclusion and poverty of people who are not integrated into the economic cycle have intensified in poor countries as well as in metropolitan areas and structurally weak regions of the industrialised world. High unemployment and a lack of prospects among young people, a huge gender gap, the increasing informalisation and precarisation of work and the reduction of purchasing power through real wage losses can also be observed in so-called emerging economies.

### Digital transformation and 'Uberisation' of the economy

Industrialisation, mechanisation and digitisation create new jobs, but they are often precarious. In addition, this rapid transformation triggers migration patterns that often exacerbate pressure on local labour markets. The mechanization of agriculture, for example, increases pressure on cities where

too few jobs can be created. Digitalisation has led to greater networking among actors and to more direct communication, but not to economic convergence: digitisation and the development of the platform business model (Uberisation) have enabled employers around the world to bypass the payment of minimum social security claims and exclude employees from the scope of labour laws.

### Danger of populism and shrinking space for civil society

The absence of the rule of law and the associated democratic and participation deficits are generally recognized as the cause of misguided development and persistent poverty. The international community has recognised these shortcomings and is supporting capacity building to implement democratic principles and procedures in many countries. All too often, however, it focuses on governments, while citizens and local civil society structures are neglected. To make matters worse, civil society organisations and NGOs around the world are currently struggling with growing problems. Governments use force and repressive means to suppress any civil society commitment to human rights, justice, democracy, or to protect the environment. Organisations are banned, assemblies are not approved or smashed, human rights lawyers and NGO staff are imprisoned, visas and travel permits are not issued, or activities are prohibited. The systematic erosion of the foundations of democracy in the workplace and the violent repression of strikes and protests threaten peace and stability. This makes it increasingly difficult to promote an independent and critical civil society.

### Demographic change and youth unemployment

While societies in industrialised countries must cope with an ageing population, the opposite is the case in the global south. The majority of young people worldwide (almost 85 %) live in developing countries. More than 64 million young people worldwide are unemployed and 145 million young workers live in severe poverty. Youth employment remains a global challenge and an important political concern. More than every fifth young person is neither in the labour market nor in education, 3 out of 4 of them women. In poor countries, millions of young people are about to enter the labour market. However, this 'demographic dividend' can only be used if decent jobs and fair framework conditions are in place. That is not the case today.

### Urbanisation and modern-day slavery

Since agriculture can employ fewer and fewer people, migration from the countryside to the cities is on the rise, including a particularly large number of young people. The world is therefore experiencing an unprecedented wave of urbanisation. At the same time, poverty and social inequality are growing faster in urban regions than in rural ones. With increasing internal and cross-border migration, working conditions are also becoming increasingly precarious. Women are very often exposed to major risks such as violence, exploitation, forced labour or trafficking. Due to these trends, it is necessary to include youth and gender issues in the considerations of each country's development agenda and policy.



# VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

## Our Vision

Our vision is a just and fair world free from discrimination, exploitation and violence where people's basic needs are met, their human rights are fulfilled, and everyone benefits from decent work, social justice, equal opportunities and democratic participation.

## Our Mission

We put solidarity into action in global and local campaign, development and humanitarian projects in less well-off regions of Africa, Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe. We fight for decent work, democratic participation, social justice worldwide and we act in humanitarian crises after natural and man-made disasters. With foresight and ambition, we eliminate social wrongs, and create possibilities and prospects for disadvantaged people.

## Our Values

We push and translate the following values in and across all our actions.

**Solidarity and human rights:** We stand in solidarity by the side of poor people and vulnerable groups. Human rights are our guiding principle: they are non-negotiable and universal. In addition, we believe resources, goods, services and economic opportunities must be distributed fairly.

**Outspokenness:** We take clear positions in important political and social debates.

All **humanitarian interventions** are provided in an **impartial and independent** manner, based on rights and need alone.

**Accountability:** We strive to be accountable for our actions and are committed to transparency.

**Inclusiveness and equality:** We respect all persons regardless of their sex, origin, religion, social position, physical abilities or sexual orientation. For Solidar Suisse, gender equality means **all human beings have the same rights, opportunities and entitlements** in all spheres of life. We believe in the right of every person to shape all policies and decisions that affect their lives and society.

**Empowerment:** As an organization we support people in precarious conditions and vulnerable groups – they are entitled to their rights and need to be able to exercise them. Therefore, we do not present beneficiaries as recipients of charity or as victims but as acting and self-responsible persons fighting for their rights.

**Professionalism:** Solidar Suisse commits to be a fair employer. As an employer we promote a culture of personal responsibility, flexibility, networking and development. We are professionally competent, innovative, reliable and ensure this through capable and motivated employees.

## Our Approach – How We Translate Our Values into Practice

**Partnerships:** We build long-lasting and genuine quality partnerships to enable citizens and their collective organisations to strive for a democratic society and rule of law. We work with civil society organisations, NGOs, grassroots organisations, social movements, labour action groups and trade unions. We actively shape partnerships with our donors, on whose behalf we implement projects.

**Cooperation on eye level:** Our work is based on cooperation between equal partners. Other than charity with unequal relations between giver and recipient, we believe our understanding of solidarity allows us to respect our partner's integrity and their right to set their own terms and conditions. In return, we expect our partners to respect our interests and values.

**Alliances, networks and collective platforms:** We engage in national and international movements, platforms and networks to further common goals and respond to global challenges collectively. We will actively seek collaborations and form appropriate alliances in order to increase outreach and impact of our work.

**Labour rights and human rights:** We are fighting against precarious labour conditions and exploitation (modern-day slavery such as child labour or forced labour), but also are tackling the legal, social and labour protection that is not afforded where it should be. Social human rights protection chiefly consists of the right to work, to fair and dignified working conditions, living wages, social security and health as well as the right of assembly and the right to unionise.

**Rule of law, democratic rights and civic participation:** Popular participation and organisation are important measures in securing human rights and giving people greater influence over their own lives and social development. We strive for universal access to democratic participation and we are committed to ensuring all people we work for and with are able to shape the political decisions determining their lives.

**Responsibility towards sustainable development:** We bear social, economic, ecological and international responsibility and are committed to the diligent and economical use of resources.

**Global solidarity:** Humankind faces challenges yet unseen in the 21<sup>st</sup> century such as climate change, urbanisation and migration, inequality, water and food crises, digital transformation, access to renewable energy, fragile states and armed conflicts. Solidar Suisse believes that we need to cooperate across boundaries and cultures in order to meet these challenges. As a Swiss organisation, we need to stand in solidarity with those that do not enjoy the wealth, prosperity and security like we do. We stand in solidarity with our partner organisations, the workers, women, youth and other people of concern in our focus countries. Finally, solidarity with and responsibility towards future generations requires us to act swiftly and responsibly.

**Focus on outcomes and impact:** All of our work must lead to positive changes for people and communities we work with, and to meaningful contributions to development processes. Thus, we focus on maximizing impact by continuously increasing our target and results orientation. We do so by giving just as much importance to using synergies and collective learning as to promoting results, accountability and proof of impact. Solidar will further raise its impact profile and qualitatively assess positive changes among partners, communities, households and individuals.

## Global and National Reference

Our work is based on various norms, legal frameworks and multilateral agendas, the most important being:

- UN Agenda 2030 with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)
- Human rights conventions: Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Norms and standards as developed by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and agreed in ILO's International Labour Conferences (ILC)
- Legal frameworks: National labour laws
- The Swiss government's Dispatch in International Cooperation (2017–2020/2021–2024)
- Business and Human Rights: UN guiding principles on business and human rights; OECD guidelines; ILO core conventions
- Humanitarian standards: Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) Alliance, SPHERE standards and the Code of Conduct for International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief



Graph: UN Agenda 2030 with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

# STRATEGIC GOALS 2020 – 2024

## Thematic and geographic orientation

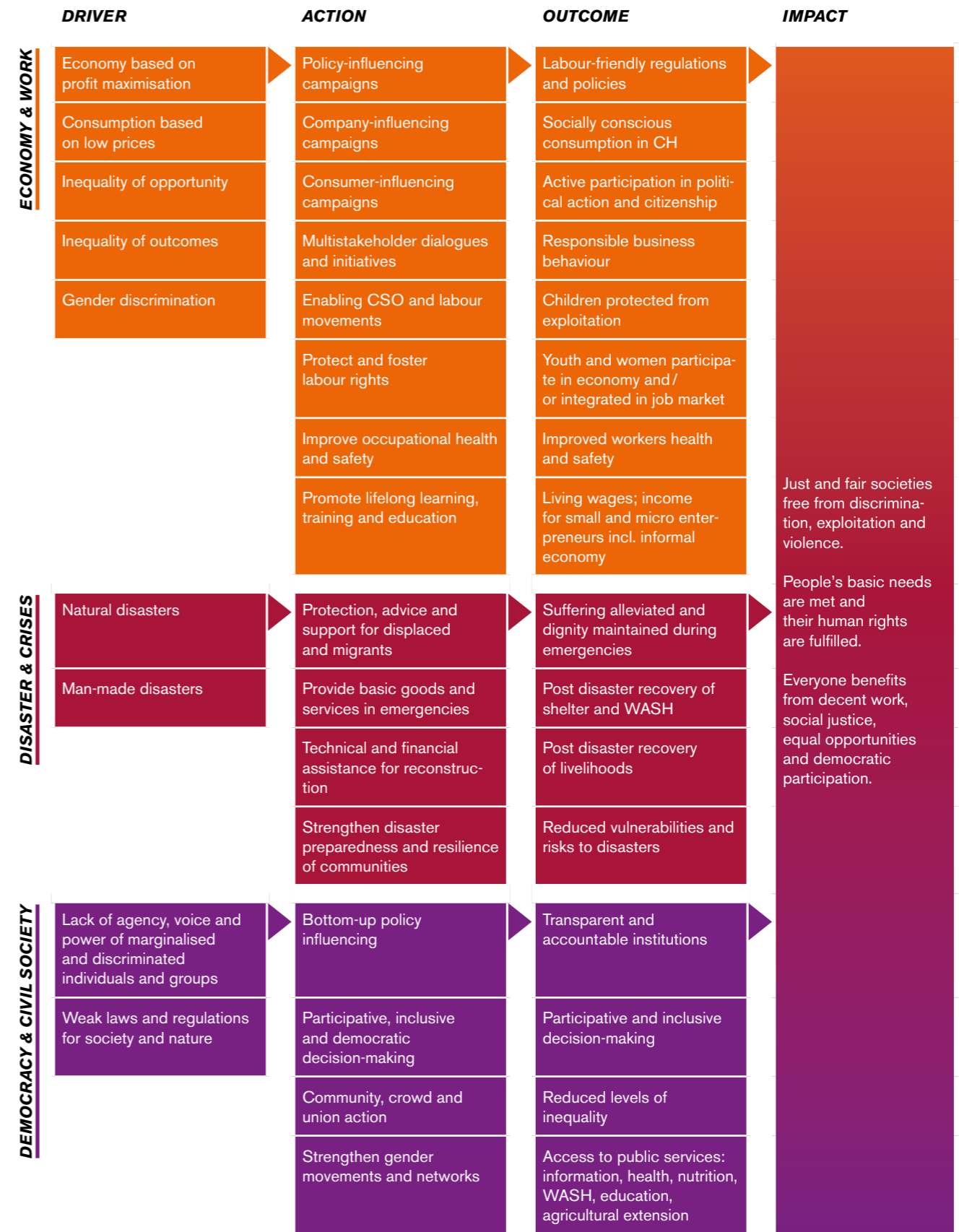
Solidar Suisse aims at through its projects and programmes.

### Focus on Global Impact

Solidar Suisse works in three operational pillars: development cooperation, humanitarian action and campaigns and advocacy. However, there are considerable overlaps and the past years have seen a continuous trend to work across these pillars, connect them and build project teams consisting of staff from different departments. The complex nature of international cooperation, specifically the fields of social development we work in, implies holistic, dynamic, adaptive and agile approaches. While the graph below does not reflect this interconnectedness and complexity, it maps the domains, impact goals and positive change

Solidar's programmes are designed in order to connect these domains into a simplified global theory of change (cf. graph on the right side).

## SOLIDAR SUISSE'S GLOBAL THEORY OF CHANGE



### GLOBAL IMPACT MODEL

DOMAINS	Economy & work	Disaster & crises	Democracy & civil society
IMPACT GOAL	Fair economy and decent work	Sustainable livelihoods and resilient communities	Equal, just and inclusive society
OUTCOMES	Sustainable production and consumption	Meet emergency needs	Just access to public services and resources
	Labour rights and social protection	Recovery and reconstruction: WASH, shelter	Inclusive and participatory decision-making
	Improved access to job market	–	Transparent and accountable institutions
	Reduced extreme labour exploitation	Community-based disaster risk reduction, including climate resilience	
	Small enterprises, income generating schemes, sustainable livelihoods		
<b>APPROACHES / INSTRUMENTS</b>			
	Campaigns and advocacy	Development cooperation	Humanitarian action

Our action responds to various negative global drivers which hinder the fulfilment of our vision. Our action leads to positive outcomes and impact in our focus regions. In order to unfold our full potential across the organisation, a more coherent approach needs to be adopted. More collaborative initiatives are needed. Structures and planning must be adapted to enable joint working – within teams and between teams, departments and programmes.

**Agile Thematic Adaptation and Innovation**

Trends and topics that move and shape our society constantly adapt and change. These features of a ‘VUCA world’ (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity) imply rapid, constant and flexible adaptation. New, emerging and trending issues must be taken up while guarding our organisation’s core themes. This shift implies flexible programmes of a certain size which can adapt and become more innovative. In order to make financial resources available to meet these requirements, areas of investment

and disinvestment (thematic or geographic) are to be identified.

In this strategy period, we will reflect on our approach to innovation. Our innovations must build on locally developed solutions and provide development solutions for remote areas. We will increase the share of projects which stand up to innovation criteria such as new approaches, new stakeholders, new technologies used (hard- or software), or new partnerships. However, all innovations must lead to meaningful, lasting and sustainable impact in society.



Graph: Operational presence

**Strategic goal 1.1**

By 2024, a comprehensive programming approach, cross-boundary and cross-team, is in place. To the maximum extent possible, a ‘nexus approach’ is applied, designing both humanitarian aid and development cooperation jointly. Furthermore, each programme plans and budgets campaigning and advocacy approaches from the onset.

**Strategic goal 1.2**

By 2024, at least two more regional programmes spanning across more than one country are established.

**Strategic goal 2**

By 2024, Solidar Suisse has proven its capability and capacity to rapidly and constantly adapt its programmes to shifting realities and expectations. In order to do so, Solidar Suisse invests in new projects. These projects fulfil at least one of three criteria:

1. projects that meet new or future societal challenges such as rapid economic or digital transformation or the digital divide leaving workers behind
2. projects in Sub-Sahara Africa and Asia which fit in the ‘nexus’ space between disaster management and long-term development
3. innovative projects

**Geographic Focus**

Solidar Suisse operates on four continents. Currently we are established with our own office and staff in 10 focus countries, while our project activities take place in more countries through local partners. The strategy review revealed that we operate too many offices with limited capacities to cope with increasing quality, compliance and donor requirements. Thus, there is a clear need to re-shape our worldwide institutional and programmatic architecture. In line with strategic goal 2, this strategy will see a concentration on less focus countries. In the remaining countries we will strengthen local partnerships. The aim is to allocate larger financial volumes to fewer programmes. We will assess whether our successful regional and cross-boundary work in areas such as labour rights and labour activism in Asia, or elements thereof, may be expanded to other world regions.

Solidar Suisse operates in Latin America, West Africa, Southern Africa, South Eastern Europe and Asia. Focus countries with own offices are Bolivia, El Salvador, Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Kosovo, Hong Kong (for Asia regional) and Bangladesh. In other countries, we fund projects via partner organizations: Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia, Pakistan, China, Nicaragua, Benin, South Africa, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## International Programmes

### Humanitarian Action

Solidar Suisse supports individuals and communities in acute distress with humanitarian assistance which is provided in a timely manner and responds to their priority needs. Emergency assistance is provided with a view to longer term recovery efforts, and by supporting self-reliance capacities of our target groups. We work in a coordinated and accountable manner, supporting local response capacities, and adhering to humanitarian principles and recognized standards. Basically, three broad phases can be distinguished:

**Emergency Phase:** Solidar Suisse intervenes in order to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity during and in the immediate aftermath of man-made and natural disasters.

**Rehabilitation/Reconstruction Phase:** Solidar Suisse aims at restoring and improving living conditions of the affected population in the aftermath of man-made and natural disasters.

**Preparedness & Prevention:** Solidar Suisse supports vulnerable groups and communities to better prepare for and mitigate the effects of future disasters.

A stronger focus will be put on integrating humanitarian response and preparedness in existing country programmes in regions affected by regular seasonal crises or a significant protracted crisis. Interventions may respond to acute humanitarian needs, strengthen resilience or reduce the risk of future disasters.

### Development Cooperation

Solidar Suisse remains committed to its claim ‘Fighting for Global Fairness’ by focussing on the following three domains, each containing distinguishable but interlocking impact goals.

The domain **Economy and Work** contains the areas of sustainable production and consumption; labour rights and social protection; improved access to the job markets and reduced extreme labour exploitation (UN Agenda 2030, Sustainable Development Goals Nr. 1, 4, 5, 8, 10, 12, 17).

The domain **Democracy and Civil Society** includes just access to public services and resources; inclusive and participatory decision-making and transparent and accountable institutions (UN Agenda 2030, Sustainable Development Goals Nr. 1, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 16, 17).

The domain **Disaster and Crisis** encompasses community-based disaster risk reduction, including



Graph: The domain Economy and Work



Graph: The domain Democracy and Civil Society



Graph: The domain Disaster and Crisis

climate resilience and inclusive economic development enabling vibrant small enterprises, income generation and sustainable livelihoods (UN Agenda 2030, Sustainable Development Goals Nr. 1, 2, 6, 8, 11, 13, 17).

Though the last strategic phase showed success in consolidating and even sharpening Solidar's programmatic scope, the internal linkages between programmes and projects remained weak. Only a few programmes offered genuine integral approaches. The gap between our respective teams at the various levels, as well as between our approaches, remained too wide. Innovative and cross-team initiatives interfacing development work, disaster preparedness and campaigning were tested and piloted, and now need to be up-scaled in the upcoming strategic phase. Additionally, as the world of work will drastically change further (globalization, ICT, automation etc.), our programmes need to come up with innovative approaches.

### Nexus: Bridging Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Action

Since its foundation, Solidar Suisse has been a dual-mandate organization, working both on long term development issues and providing emergency relief and recovery assistance in times of crisis. Our crisis interventions have always been characterized by an emphasis on linking measures of relief, recovery and development, ensuring each phase contributes to the success of the subsequent one. Solidar's **emergency assistance** adheres wherever possible to the principles laid out in the Early-Recovery approach. Our **recovery approach** aims at 'building back better/safer' and building local capacities. Lastly, we design **long-term development** interventions which support people and institutions to become more resilient in times of crisis. In addition, for Solidar Suisse the nexus approach also implies the belief that in certain crisis contexts a specific focus on traditional long-term development topics, such as participation and democracy and access to decent livelihood opportunities, is the best recipe to resilient societies and preventing crisis.

### Strategic goal 3

Solidar Suisse supports vulnerable people and communities during and after humanitarian crises in focus countries and their adjacent countries. After large scale disasters Solidar Suisse intervenes also in non-programme countries. Professional and high-quality humanitarian action is provided under the condition that Solidar Suisse can respond to critical needs, offer an added value, and acquire the financial means to respond on a meaningful scale.

### Strategic goal 4

Solidar Suisse operates development cooperation programmes of highest quality in the domains of decent work and democracy and civil society. These programmes contribute to combating social inequality and poverty.

Solidar Suisse also acknowledges that it can and must further improve operationalization of a nexus approach on institutional level. Given the size of the organization, there is scope to improve integrated programming and break down the silos between long term development cooperation and humanitarian aid interventions.

## Campaigns and Advocacy

The impact of local projects alone will not lead to the fulfilment of our vision, which is a just world free from exploitation of people and nature. Real change is needed in how and what the economy produces, in our consumption patterns, and in how our governments and the international community regulates economy and society. Thus, raising awareness and campaigning for this change remains a crucial work stream for Solidar Suisse. All campaigns feed on our experience in our focus or project countries, often being left out of the benefits of globalization, or even facing severe social, economic or environmental damages.

### Campaigns in Switzerland and Abroad

In recent years, Solidar Suisse has increased its campaigns for fair working conditions worldwide. These campaigns serve to promote the Decent Work Agenda in our countries, and to sensitize

Swiss politics, companies and population on the connection between sustainable consumption, trade and retail and better working conditions in producing countries. The campaigns aim at building awareness in Swiss society, improving conditions on the ground and pushing for the enforcement of international and national labor rights.

Though the last strategic period showed success in reaching the Swiss public and initiated changes abroad, the link between campaigns in Switzerland and the situation of vulnerable groups in our focus countries often remained too weak. In addition, NGOs in the global South are increasingly building expertise, conducting campaigns and networking internationally. New channels facilitate communication over long distances and enable direct communication with recipients. In order to increase the impact of our campaign work, to better meet the needs of the people in the priority countries and to meet the partner organizations at eye level, Solidar Suisse aims to plan and implement campaigns in even stronger cooperation with our regional offices and/or support campaigns of our partner organizations.

## Marketing and Communications

### Positioning

With clear and stringent positioning, institutional and private donors, media and supporters recognize what Solidar Suisse stands for, what our goals are and what the impact of our global work is. Solidar Suisse decided on a new positioning as of 2017, the implementation of which has been successfully underway ever since. However, in order to respond adequately to growing competition, further measures are needed to ensure that the entire organization is delivering according to its brand promise.

### Fundraising

According to the 'Swissfundraising donation barometer', four fifths of Swiss households donated in 2018. The local fundraising market is undoubtedly attractive, and the competition has further intensified: a considerable number of new and international organisations have entered the market in the last years and set in motion classic cut-throat competition. In addition, the public sector is increasingly withdrawing from financing cultural, social or educational institutions. As a result, museums, theatres, homes, universities and schools are also trying to keep their businesses running with fundraising activities.

The competition among NGOs for financial support and agenda setting will intensify further, while the perception of NGOs is shifting, as their role and impact is reflected upon more critically. New roles and approaches are expected, especially by the younger generations. The way they communicate, get information, donate, shop or pay has revolutionized radically.

Donors expect to know what their money is used for and what impact the donation made. This creates trust and helps to show that even small donations can make a difference.

All the above-mentioned developments point out the clear need to increase our efforts in order to obtain funding from private and institutional donors, e. g. strengthening our reporting on achieved outcomes and impact.



### Strategic goal 5

Through its advocacy work, Solidar Suisse raises public awareness in Switzerland and sensitizes the realm of politics and business in favour of a fair economy which includes decent working conditions and the respect for human rights worldwide.



### Strategic goal 6

By 2024, Solidar has successfully embraced its brand promise for all departments of the organisation. This strongly influences and guides all external relations, be it via campaign, project portfolio, fundraising or organisational communication.



### Strategic goal 7

By 2024, Solidar manages to pick, highlight and integrate currently relevant topics into its work (framing) in order to mobilize the young generation, to engage our community, and to keep existing donor groups as well as institutional partners. Solidar takes thematic leadership and develops products that match our donors' expectations.

## Media and Communication

Digitalization is progressing at a rapid pace. Communication in Switzerland and in many of our focus countries is becoming more fragmented and individualized, and the number of channels is increasing. At the same time, the commercialisation of certain channels is progressing.

While our communication already points to grievances in countries, reports on our projects and points out possible solutions, it only fulfils the requirements of the future, rapidly changing world of communication to a limited extent. In order to better report on the organization's outputs, outcomes and impact in a transparent, up-to-date and targeted manner, Solidar Suisse must expand know-how, networking and information flow within the organization. The involvement of our supporters in Switzerland and possibly focus countries is to be checked; suitable methods for communication based on our positioning are to be strengthened and further developed.



### Strategic goal 8

By 2024, the orientation and reporting on outcomes and impact is strengthened and communicated in a way that is understandable and enhances commitment.



### Strategic goal 9

By 2024, Solidar Suisse is an accessible and transparent NGO.

## Organisational Management

The strategic period ahead will be strongly marked by increasingly difficult frameworks and market conditions as well as the advancing digital transformation of the world of work.

Market conditions and requirements in the non-profit sector become more demanding and less stable at an increasing pace. In a competitive environment cost-effectiveness, accountability and the ability to adapt and keep up with the external world become significant success factors. Solidar's organisational structures, processes and competencies must therefore undergo constant adaptation and improvement in order to keep up with the requirements and expectations of our clients and donors.

In addition, our lives and our work become more digital by the day. Financial transactions (donations, fund transfers etc.), communication and project management move from offline to online. Technological innovations lead to upheavals in the world of work. For Solidar Suisse to thrive in this digital future, more investments are needed, both in the operating countries as well as in the Swiss offices. Sustainable use of all resources becomes more important; thus, we will aim to check our environmental footprint regularly and keep it low.

## Human Resource Management

Solidar Suisse human resource strategy is to ensure that competent and well-managed staff are supported and enabled to deliver our mission. The quality criterion to ensure this is that staff are supported to do their job effectively and are treated fairly and equitably. Solidar Suisse's effectiveness and ability to successfully deliver on our mission is closely linked to our ability to attract, develop and engage competent and committed employees.

We attach great importance to an equal representation of women and men at all levels of the organisation.

Training and staff development are an important part of ensuring Solidar Suisse's ability to successfully

achieve the organisation's mission. Solidar Suisse aims to ensure that all staff have adequate opportunities to:

- Understand and be committed to what the organisation is trying to achieve.
- Take ownership of their own learning and continuous professional development.
- Work with staff, partners and beneficiaries in ways which promote learning and participation.
- Assess, plan and review work to increase effectiveness and achieve high standards.
- Learn from experience and share the lessons inside and outside the organisation.
- Improve their performance and that of others.

Safety, security and wellbeing is everybody's responsibility and concern. Solidar Suisse recognizes its legal and moral duty of care to provide a healthy workplace, promote healthy work practice and mitigate security risk.



### Strategic goal 10

Solidar Suisse will increase its ability to attract and keep motivated staff. At the same time, keeping all collaborators endowed with the right competencies to run the organization remains a high priority.



### Strategic goal 11.1

Solidar's long-term entrepreneurial capacity to act is safeguarded.



### Strategic goal 11.2

We strive for balanced growth and the accumulation of sufficient capital surpluses as reserves.



### Strategic goal 11.3

We will ensure a balanced cost ratio between Programme Volume and Non-Programme costs.

## Financial Management

Solidar Suisse continues to manage its finances in a professional, responsible and sustainable manner. The core financial management functions include ensuring balanced accounts, high-quality budgeting, bookkeeping and reporting standards and providing adequate liquidity in all programmes. Compliance, auditing processes, controlling and harmonising financial processes in general will be further advanced in this strategy period. Solidar Suisse set up its financial management system according to Swiss GAAP FER 21 and bears the NPO label ZEWO. We are monitored against NPO standards covering ethics and integrity, corporate governance, efficient use of funds, results, true and fair accounting, transparency and accountability.

### Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

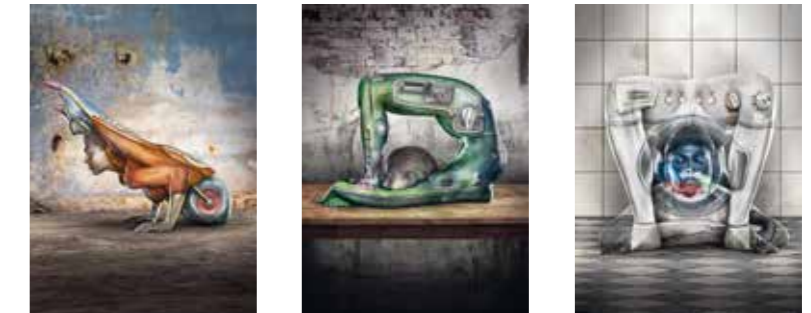
Solidar Suisse operates various offices to ensure long-term quality campaigns and development and humanitarian programmes. Headquarters are in Zurich, while our second office is in Lausanne. Solidar Suisse coordination offices are established in most countries we operate in. We strive to manage these offices in a lean and efficient manner, using adequate infrastructure and equipment.

### Quality and Knowledge Management

The demands placed on development cooperation NGOs continue to increase. Continuous improvements and further developments will be the norm in this fast-changing environment. The

quality requirements not only regarding result-oriented programme and project management but also for efficient process management demand a high level of professionalism. Solidar Suisse will therefore continue to further strengthen its efforts to produce relevant qualitative and quantitative impact statements. We will also invest in designing lean but rapidly responsive processes.

The capitalisation of experience and the exchange of knowledge enrich the conceptual and programmatic work in the country and regional programmes and increase their effectiveness. Solidar will thus continue to pursue the fulfillment of the last period's strategic objective to work on a comprehensive and structured knowledge management system where internal and external knowledge and skills are networked, anchored and further developed and contribute to institutional strengthening.



**Cover** For the campaign «Men and women are not machines», the well-known Swiss contortionist Nina Burri has transformed herself into machines. Hereby we are drawing attention to the horrific labour conditions in factories, on construction sites and in millions of households. Only when people know their rights can they fight for them. Through projects and campaigns, Solidar Suisse promotes decent work, democratic participation and social justice worldwide.

#### Strategic goal 12.1

By 2024, Solidar Suisse has adapted to the requirements in a digital world.

#### Strategic goal 12.2

Globally, Solidar Suisse staff is trained and has the necessary skills in ICT.

#### Strategic goal 12.3

By 2024, Solidar Suisse has an appropriate IT infrastructure (hard- and software), suitable data-management and storage solutions as well as efficient processes.

#### Strategic goal 12.4

By 2024, Solidar Suisse establishes a cross-cutting digital transformation team that guarantees that the organisation is fit on institutional and programmatic level.

#### Strategic goal 13.1

By 2024, Solidar Suisse is a strong learning organisation which manages its knowledge and adapts to evolving changes with ease. In order to do so, Solidar Suisse makes use of adaptive management tools and relies on lean but rapidly responsive processes.

#### Strategic goal 13.2

By 2024, Solidar has anchored a culture that permits mistakes and promotes learning from them.

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## ***FIGHTING FOR GLOBAL FAIRNESS***

We fight for decent work, democratic participation, and social justice worldwide. On behalf of our donors, we put solidarity into action in over 60 projects in four continents. With foresight and ambition we eliminate social wrongs, and create possibilities and prospects for disadvantaged people. **Fight with us!**

