



# ANNUAL REPORT 2021

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**ENSEMBLE,  
CONSTRUIRE  
UN MONDE JUSTE  
ET FRATERNEL**



# CON- TENTS

ANNUAL REPORT APPROVED  
BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
OF 14 JUNE 2022

A STRATEGY THAT IS EQUAL TO THE CHALLENGES .....	3
THEY ARE SECOURS CATHOLIQUE .....	4
LOOKING BACK AT 2021 .....	6
BRINGING SOCIAL CONNECTIONS, FRATERNITY AND THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION TO LIFE .....	8
Fighting isolation and re-establishing social connections .....	9
A bus to combat isolation .....	11
Enabling the poorest to participate and be heard .....	13
Bringing spirituality to life .....	14
Strengthening spiritual bonds .....	15
An innovative, ecological and supportive hamlet .....	17
FIGHTING POVERTY THROUGH ACCESS TO RIGHTS FOR ALL .....	18
Developing advocacy priorities .....	19
Changing the way people are helped .....	20
Innovating to meet needs .....	22
A year filled with projects and initiatives .....	23
Defending the right to sustainable and quality food .....	24
La Marguerite cooperative grocery store .....	27
Tackling energy poverty .....	28
Promoting access to housing .....	29
Defending access to work and decent incomes .....	31
Developing a sustainable social and solidarity-based economy .....	34
Defending migrants' rights .....	36
Defending the right to holidays for all .....	38
Combating human trafficking .....	39
A holiday for relaxation .....	41
Defending the rights of prisoners .....	42
Dealing with Emergencies .....	43
France and internationally: a community with a shared future .....	44
PURSUING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GLOBALLY .....	46
The aftermath .....	47
Reforestation in the northern Brazilian Amazon .....	49
Defence of rights and freedoms .....	50
Ecological transition and social justice .....	54
Emergence of a strong civil society .....	56
From emergency response to long term support .....	57
426 projects supported worldwide .....	58
Support for partners and ongoing assistance .....	60
France and international convergence .....	61
Female farmers, skills that bear fruit .....	63
AN ORGANISATION FIT TO RESPOND TO NEW CHALLENGES .....	64
Challenges of volunteering and commitment .....	65
Revisiting governance and methods of intervention .....	66
Communication .....	68
Publications .....	69
Donations and finance .....	70
Caritas France network .....	72
GOVERNANCE AND CONTROL AT SECOURS CATHOLIQUE — CARITAS FRANCE .....	75
IDENTITY .....	76

## A STRATEGY THAT IS EQUAL TO THE CHALLENGES

During 2021, following two years of health crisis, poverty has become more acute. Short term measures taken by public authorities have not enabled the most vulnerable to sustainably escape poverty. Unavoidable expenditure, particularly on energy, is an increasing burden on the budgets of the poorest households, especially as a result of rising energy prices. Our advocacy for a fair ecological transition is more relevant than ever. We share our concern with our international partners who are making us increasingly aware of our common future, making us consider this post-crisis period at both local and global levels.

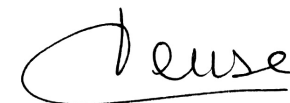
In this context, the constraints linked to the pandemic have to a large extent set the pace for the Secours Catholique teams in 2021, with all that this has meant in terms of their resilience and inventiveness. They have stepped up, adapting their activities to the restrictions, and inventing new ways of doing things in response to the poverty that the crisis engendered: the isolation to which our societies abandon the most vulnerable and food insecurity faced by 10% of the French population, including many young people and children!

As evidence of this creativity, all over France, projects have been set up to reach out to people, re-establish connections, and to bring food aid in line with our national project, which means respecting people's dignity and involvement, while at the same time enlisting local experts to provide quality food. Support in response to the call for *France Relance* projects and the generosity of our donors has made it possible to find the resources to do what was necessary to get them up and running. And the *Belles Retrouvailles* in September bore witness to the beautiful green shoots resulting from these initiatives.

Their faith in life, despite the great difficulties they face, makes the poorest our spiritual guides. Our Christian roots lead us to welcome them fully, and therefore also their spirituality, whatever it may be. This fundamental basis for our activities was defined and reaffirmed in 2021 by the adoption of a reference text, the fruit of communal reflection, but also by the work undertaken with the St. Laurent network, supporting twenty groups of people experiencing poverty at the plenary assembly of the Conference of Bishops in November 2021, with the theme 'Cry of the Earth and Cry of the Poor'. It was a real meeting of minds that took place, and one that was transformational, as testified in the closing speech of the President of the Conference on the place of the poor within the synod. The bishops heard the wisdom of the poor who call upon us to care for the earth and our brothers and sisters.

What we have experienced in 2021 also points us towards the future. We can bear witness to the fact that meeting those who feel rejected by our society transforms the outlook of everyone. It calls us to recognise in each person a brother who must be welcomed and with whom we must travel. It calls us to commit ourselves to building a more just and more fraternal society. ■

Véronique Devise  
Présidente nationale



Vincent Destival  
Délégué général



Hervé Perrot  
Aumônier général





# THEY ARE SECOURS CATHOLIQUE

“NICOLE

“MEETING PEOPLE, GETTING INVOLVED IN PROJECTS. IT HAS HELPED ME A LOT.”



XAVIER SCHWIBEL / SCOF

Nicole has had several lives: first as a model, another as a wife and mother, then a life as a caregiver with a husband weakened by disease. "After he passed away, I needed to break free from loneliness," she says. "In 2015, someone suggested Secours Catholique." Nicole became a volunteer in a charity shop. It was a renaissance. "Meeting people, having projects, participating in training courses, feeling useful... It has helped me a lot," she says. So, when she was offered the role as head of the local Secours Catholique team, she did not hesitate. "My priority was to find a more suitable place for our shop, which was small and poorly located," she says. "But we don't just have a nice shop. We play a real social role."

“ODILE

“THEY SAY, ‘WE WANT TO GO TO THE BLACKBOARD!’ WORKING TOGETHER BECOMES A GAME.”



ELODIE PERRIOT / SCOF

During her professional life, Odile ran her own publishing strategy consulting firm. Now retired, she still attends business leader conferences, contacts that prove useful in her new life as a volunteer at Secours Catholique in the 11th arrondissement of Paris. She provides academic support and support in finding employment. Bamby's teacher has been supporting Bamby for three years and requested that Odile include Kadidia in the tutoring sessions. Kadidia is a very close friend of Bamby who is doing well at school. "Since they have started working together, it's much better. There is competition. They tell me: 'We want to go to the blackboard!' Working together becomes a game."

“AYMAN

“I LEND A HAND IN THE CHARITY SHOP OR HELP WITH SETTING UP THE STAND ON MARKET DAYS.”



XAVIER SCHWIBEL / SCOF

Leaving Sudan in 2014, Ayman followed the path of many migrants: Libya, Lampedusa, Sicily, Rome, Ventimiglia, then France, in 2016. It was in Paris, where he was sleeping in a tent, that he was told that in Calais buses leave for destinations across France twice a week. "I went there. We were shown a map of France, but I didn't know France. I was given a ticket: Ussel." He obtained his papers, trained, took French lessons, found work with an electrician. "I continued the French classes, with volunteers. And I became a volunteer at Secours Catholique. I lend a hand in the charity shop or help with setting up the stand on market days." Eager to learn and move forward, he plans to start a work-study programme in a large company, or to begin training in the electricity industry.

“THUN SARAY

“I SACRIFICED MY PERSONAL LIFE FOR CAMBODIA.”

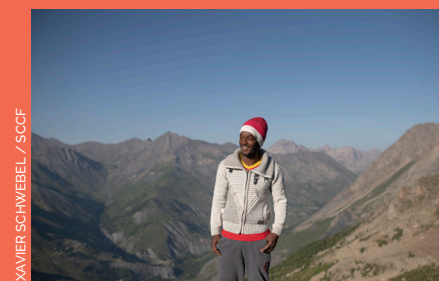


DENIS MARTIN / SCOF

In 1991, following the civil war in Cambodia, Thun Saray founded the NGO Adhoc (Association for Human Rights and Development in Cambodia), Secours Catholique's partner. His commitment goes back to his experience as a prisoner, first in the Khmer Rouge camps where he was imprisoned for studying economics, which made him a 'petty bourgeois', then in the prisons of the new regime, for having become closer to the Liberal Social Democratic Party. "I was thrown into a tiny, dark cell in which I had to eat, sleep and do my business, with a chain on my feet." Now exiled in Canada, Thun Saray continues his commitment, but thinks of handing over to the younger generation. "I sacrificed my personal life for Cambodia, I aspire to more relaxing and calm days."

“SOULEYMANE

“MY PARENTS RAISED US IN A SPIRIT OF SOLIDARITY AND GENEROSITY.”



XAVIER SCHWIBEL / SCOF

Arriving in France at the age of 16, Souleymane passed his baccalaureate, began and then stopped studying business, then was recruited at the age of 22 by a football club, which he ended up leaving, disappointed. It was then that he made a new start by volunteering with Secours Catholique Seine-et-Marne. "My parents raised us in a spirit of solidarity and generosity. This is also what Islam teaches me." Souleymane quickly found his place with the Young Caritas, with whom he performs outreach in a make-shift camp of young migrants waiting for papers. "It's precious for me to have found an environment where I can develop: I discover skills, I am trusted. In the future, in my professional life, I will be able to use the skills I have learnt at Secours."

“IN THE FUTURE IN MY PROFESSIONAL LIFE, I WILL BE ABLE TO USE THE SKILLS I HAVE LEARNT AT SECOURS.”

“SANTIAGO

“I REALISED I HAD TO TAKE OVER.”

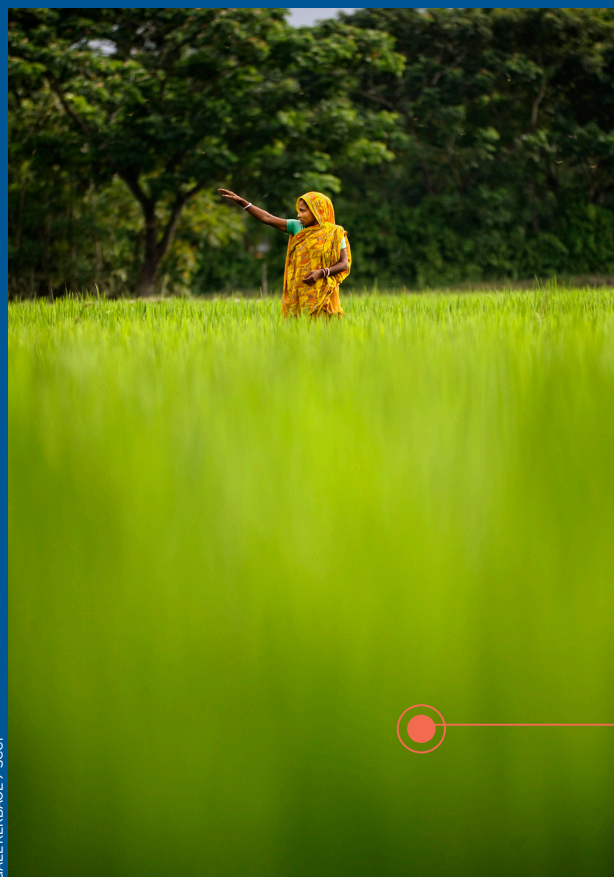


ANAÏS PACHAÉZIAN / SCOF

Born in an Awajun community in the heart of the Amazon rainforest, Santiago Manuin has made his life a fight for the defence of the Amazon and its people. A fight that began in 2009, with the massacre of Bagua, a violently repressed demonstration, where his father was seriously injured. "I realised I had to take over," he explains. At the age of 24, he trained at the School for Indigenous Peoples' Leaders, then trained in human rights with the United Nations, because he is convinced that, to fight better, we must use the path of dialogue and law, which he does within Saipe (Agricultural Service for Research and Economic Promotion), Secours Catholique's partner. "We are now a pebble in the shoe of the Peruvian state," observes Santiago, who at all times wears his crown made of toucan feathers and his earrings received from the great Awajun chiefs, who recognised him as a leader.



# LOOKING BACK AT 2021



GAEL KERBAOL / SCCF



VINCENT BOISOT / SCCF

9 MAY

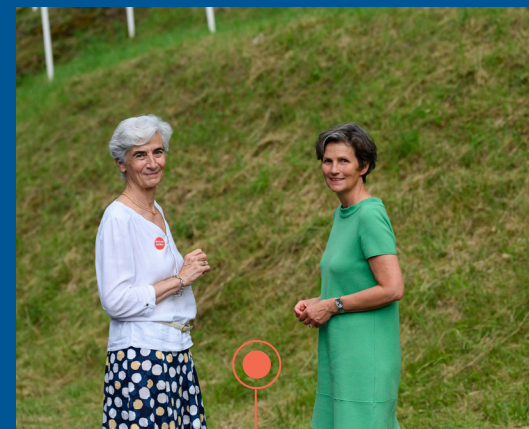
In Paris, Secours Catholique marches amongst the demonstrators as part of the 'after march' to denounce the government's lack of ambition in the face of the ecological and climate emergency, the day after the adoption of the Climate Law by the national assembly.

18 FEBRUARY

Publication of a Secours Catholique-Caritas France study which began in 2019 amongst indigenous people in six countries of Asia and Latin America to report on their lifestyles and the management of their territories through the prism of integral ecology as defined by Pope Francis in the encyclical *Laudato si'*.

## AND ALSO...

**19 JANUARY.** Publication of the second edition of the warning barometer on the human rights situation in Brazil, based on information and data collected by the seventeen international organisations in the Solidarity Brazil coalition, which Secours Catholique co-created following the election of Jair Bolsonaro. **3 FEBRUARY.** Véronique Fayet, Secours Catholique president, and Mgr. Leborgne, bishop of Arras, go to Calais to meet the exiles who survive in extremely difficult conditions. **1 MAY.** In order to maintain the momentum that the *France Relance* call for projects has given to its delegations, Secours Catholique-Caritas France launches a call for internal initiatives with a fund of 6 million euros. **15 JUNE.** The General Assembly of Secours Catholique adopts a landmark text on the spiritual dimension in the footsteps of the poorest. **20 JULY.** The working group in which Secours Catholique participated, on the framework of the pact for children Fighting Against Violence Against Children 2020-2022, presents its recommendations on the prostitution of minors to government. **10 AUGUST.** A group of 350 people in precarious vulnerable situations who came at the request of the Saint-Laurent network and from the delegations of Secours Catholique and several partner associations, lead the celebration of Saint-Laurent at the Lourdes grotto. **14.** An earthquake ravages the island of Haiti. Responding to Caritas Haiti's call, Secours Catholique's International Emergencies and



GAEL KERBAOL / SCCF

15 JUNE

Véronique Fayet steps down as national president of Secours Catholique, a position which she held for seven years. She passes the torch to Véronique Devise, an expert in the social field through her professional and volunteer commitments.



SÉBASTIEN LE GLÉZIO / SCCF

24 TO 29 AUGUST

Young Days, which replace the Young Caritas Summer Schools, bring together 200 young people from all over France and Europe; a great time of intercultural and interreligious sharing.



LOUIS WITTER / LE PICTORIUM

11 OCTOBER

Faced with the repetition of serious violations of the fundamental rights of migrants on the British coastline, Father Philippe Demeestere and two young activists begin a hunger strike.

Latin America-Caribbean divisions release €30,000 in aid for the distribution of food and health kits. **20 TO 23 SEPTEMBER.** Three hundred and fifty Secours Catholique members meet in Lourdes for a national session: *Belle Retrouvailles* after more than a year of pandemic. **3 NOVEMBER.** Twenty groups of people with experience of vulnerability come to meet the bishops gathered in plenary assembly in Lourdes to witness the 'mysterious wisdom of the poor' (Apostolic Exhortation the Joy of the Gospel, 2013) and explore how the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor come together. **FROM 12 TO 28.** The dream of making a trip to the Holy Land becomes a reality once again for two groups of people living in very difficult situations. **18.** Secours Catholique – Caritas France publishes its annual statistical report *State of Poverty* in France: a set of observations and analyses resulting from the observation of more than 38,800 situations, with a particular focus on food insecurity. **1 DECEMBER.** A decree published in the Official Journal of 1 December 2021 increases the amount of the energy voucher by €100 for 2021, thus responding to a request from Secours Catholique. **2.** The Coordination d'Actions Inter-acteurs aux Frontières Intérieures (CAFI), created by Secours Catholique – Caritas France, Médecins sans Frontières, Médecins du Monde, Amnesty France and Cimade, organises a seminar at the National Assembly to discuss the report of the parliamentary commission of the inquiry created at its request. **15.** The Senate adopts an amendment proposed by Secours Catholique concerning unaccompanied minors (UAMs).



# BRINGING SOCIAL CONNECTIONS, FRATERNITY AND THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION TO LIFE

**THE 2020 LOCKDOWNS** made the isolation in which our societies leave the most fragile even harder: people who are alone, elderly or not, those living in poverty, substandard housing, undocumented migrants... Faced with this distress, Secours Catholique – Caritas France changed its practices to perform more outreach to care for those who, out of ignorance or modesty, do not come knocking on the doors of our centres. This is how the Fraternibuses were launched, a model taken up by about twenty delegations in 2021, making it possible to rebuild links in certain rural areas and in certain districts on the outskirts of cities where opportunities for meeting up have gradually disappeared. Fraternity was experienced face-to-face in 2021, in the Maisons des Families that reopened, during creative and cultural activities that emerged in all delegations, or through actions such as the family holiday scheme and homework help, which help to break social barriers to create new possibilities. 2021 also provided answers to the strong need for meaning expressed by the people we support. The 'visitations' resumed in Lourdes, with the members of the Saint-Laurent network, as well as the trips to the Holy Land, the trip of a lifetime for people in very vulnerable situations. Also worth mentioning is the great reunion of the Young Caritas, who gathered for a few days at the city of Saint-Pierre in the summer of 2021, demonstrating generosity to others no matter what origin and religion, that they know so well how to instil in us.



CHRISTOPHE HARGOUES / SCGF

## FIGHTING ISOLATION AND REESTABLISHING SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

### DEVELOPING A FRATERNAL OUTREACH APPROACH

Secours Catholique, which predominantly provides hospitality to those who come to its centres, is leaving its offices to reach out to people by developing the concept of Fraternibus. The relevance of this innovative initiative was confirmed following the lockdowns of 2020, having been already piloted locally.

It was at the Secours Catholique de l'Eure that the idea of the first Fraternibus was born four years ago (see report on p.11). Alain-Benoît Dimier, facilitator at Secours Catholique de l'Eure (2016-2019), then Rhône, says:

*"When I arrived in the southern Eure region in 2016, a Secours Catholique centre had just closed. About fifty municipalities, and no more centres. My mission? To bring the association back to this region. I started by immersing myself in this valley, to get acquainted*

*with the reality of the people who live here. After six months, people had told me about a lot of mobility problems – bus and train lines had closed – and isolation. What sense would it have made to open a static centre and expect people to come who can't move? We have moved towards reverse mobility: going to people, where they are.*

*The first objective was to listen to people. Many do not feel empowered to speak. It is also a question of encouraging groups of people to work together. Let people meet and talk to each other, let them become actors in their lives and their region. Let them feel empowered to challenge their town hall.*

*Our challenge? Not to become a place where you do things for people. You have to know how to engage those who come. They are the ones who shape the meetings."*

In 2021, the model was taken up by some twenty delegations, thanks to the financing from the France Relance plan (see p.22).





REGION

## A BUS TO COMBAT ISOLATION

In summer and winter, Secours Catholique volunteers go to meet the inhabitants of the southern Eure region with their Fraternibus, a mobile listening space that they park at Damville market on Tuesdays and at Breteuil on Wednesdays. Coffee, hot water, tea bags, chocolate powder, fresh water, grenadine syrup, but also a computer, a table and some chairs... and already the conditions are met so that people can come to confide, to make friendships, to learn about their rights.

"In a fixed space," Olivier explains, "there are only people who knock on the door. Here, we take a few steps towards them." Their presence on market days makes them visible and sets a weekly appointment for the locals. Christophe, another Fraternibus volunteer, receives a disability pension and cannot work. "I feel good here," he says. "We are not judged. It allows me to do something useful. And speaking in front of several people at once helps me overcome my shyness." Denis, who put his passion for mechanics at the service of the project, confirms: "It's surprising, we managed to create stronger bonds than if we just played boules."

A range of social backgrounds come together here. Mohamed, manager of a mini market, offers a basket full of sweets for the daily visitors. "Bring it back when it's empty!" Ms Mutel, a retired general practitioner, enjoys meeting those who used to come to her practice. "These connections give importance to people, and it has a beneficial effect," she observes. For Bernadette, 75, recently widowed, coming to the Fraternibus appointments "saves me from thinking about Covid and seeing it on TV all day". ■





## BUILDING BONDS OF SOLIDARITY BETWEEN FAMILIES

Getting families in vulnerable situations out of their isolation, weaving fraternal bonds between them and around them, this is the raison d'être of a number of Secours Catholique – Caritas France programmes. First, two long running ones: support for schooling and one to one mentoring.

Managed remotely as much as possible during periods of lockdown from 2020, these activities have been able to resume and fully play their dual role in 2021: to awaken the curiosity of children so that they can better invest in learning, gain confidence in themselves, and discover other interests and resources, and to forge bonds of solidarity between families with different social backgrounds.

Created in 2009 with Apprentis d'Auteuil, the Maisons des Familles, based on an unconditional welcome, are also formidable catalysts for mutual aid. At the end of 2021, the network had twenty and three others were about to open in Rennes, Rouen and Villeurbanne.

## THE YOUNG DAYS AT CITÉ SAINT-PIERRE

The Young Caritas Summer Schools, which brought together hundreds of young volunteers involved in Secours Catholique – Caritas France, have made way for the Young Days, which are to be held every two years at the Cité Saint-Pierre in Lourdes.

Cancelled in 2020 due to the pandemic, the first Young Days were held in August 2021. Two hundred Young Caritas members from France and Europe

were at the rendezvous, as well as, remotely, Young Caritas from Haiti and representatives from our partners in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Honduras. Each day was punctuated by entertainment, great interreligious and intercultural moments, as well as excursions, notably to Mount Béout and Lourdes grotto. This large-scale event fulfilled its mission:

to allow Young Caritas to share their experience (successes and difficulties), to explore their commitment to the poorest and to develop their sense of belonging.

It made it possible to go beyond the Summer Schools, in terms of meaning and truth, and to create links that can be maintained until our major gathering in 2023. ■

# ENABLING THE POOREST TO PARTICIPATE AND BE HEARD

## FACILITATION OF LOCAL SOCIAL CHANGE

Through its work, Secours Catholique – Caritas France reaffirms its desire to act to transform society, starting from the poorest, from where they live and from their concerns. For several years, our delegations have been leading regional initiatives with a view to social change.

In 2021, we wanted to look back at these experiences to practically measure how facilitating actors in the field moves the lines of poverty, by giving people the opportunity to be regional actors, to regain self-confidence, to be recognised through their actions. This review was carried out in September and October in Aurillac, Rennes, Versailles and Alès, with about forty members. It will result in a document to be published in 2022, which will include and analyse the expertise gathered from the participants in the four projects visited.

## SHARING ARTISTIC, CREATIVE AND CULTURAL PRACTICES

Writing, theatre, drawing, dance, music, visual arts, photos, storytelling, clowns, sewing, cooking... the many creative, artistic, and cultural possibilities that take place in the different Secours Catholique – Caritas France projects bring breath and bring joy, strengthen people's ability to act and make it possible to create group dynamics.

Following on from the work that led to the publication in 2018 of the *Culture with Everyone* document, the first national 'Sharing to Act' meeting dedicated to artistic, creative and cultural practices was organised in the summer of 2021 in Lourdes. Sixty people



SEBASTIEN LE CLÉZIO / SCCF

from fifteen delegations were present during three days of sharing and experimentation, providing the opportunity for each to introduce others to new creative experiences, but also to express the confidence and pride that these approaches bring to people living in poverty. ■

## >>> IN BRIEF >>>

### CÔTES-D'ARMOR: RESPITE FOR FAMILIES



GAËL KERBAOL / SCCF

Four days a week, L'Escale des Familles, in Saint-Brieuc, offers households in difficulty the opportunity to shower, wash their clothes, eat and rest.

In this large apartment that can accommodate up to fifty people (when health requirements allow), children and parents discover a family atmosphere. Here, they can play, cook, have lunch, and talk to other people in difficulty, who are often migrants, as well as with the volunteers who run the place.

"The children want to come here all the time. They are asking for it. It makes me

happy to see them play. And it feels good to see people," says one father.

### REUNION: 'KOZ KAFÉ', INVITATIONS TO BREAK FREE FROM ISOLATION

On the high plains of the island of La Réunion there live many poor and isolated people who have never dared to ask for help. So, the local Secours Catholique teams have been organising festive 'Koz Kafés' for the past few months where, as their name suggests, they offer a coffee and invite people to chat.

Focusing on the 'highlands' of the island, where help is less accessible than in the seaside towns, these activities attract many people who, for a day, feel less alone. In addition to offering listening and verbal exchange, these events are an opportunity to buy books and second-hand clothes or to participate in workshops on how to transform old fabrics.

The president of Secours Catholique de La Réunion welcomes this

expanding initiative because, she observes, "There is really a loneliness and a need that goes beyond food. People need a fraternal relationship."

### LOT-ET-GARONNE: MOBILE CAFÉ NEAR MARMANDE

The Secours Catholique de Marmande team seeks to support the inhabitants of the surrounding villages, who are isolated, living on little and whose mobility is very limited. Since July 2021, four to five volunteers have been going to meet them.

In close collaboration with the elected representatives of three small municipalities, including that of Cocumont, the team has set up an 'outdoor lounge' two mornings a week near the village hall, which gives village inhabitants the possibility of shelter in the event of bad weather. Around colourful tables and chairs, simply offering coffee and small cookies, the volunteers welcome people who wish to break free from their loneliness to meet and chat.

“CREATIVITY GIVES ME ENERGY AND MAKES ME HAPPY. I EXIST. I EMERGE FROM SADNESS WHEN I'M THERE.”



## &gt;&gt;&gt; IN BRIEF

SEINE-SAINT-DENIS  
DRAWING TO RECHARGE  
YOUR BATTERIES

STEVEN WASSENAAR / SCDF

Every Wednesday, a dozen participants meet to draw and paint at Secours Catholique in Rosny-sous-Bois. This activity is essential for forgetting a daily life which is sometimes hard to bear. *"It's like going to a place where you can relax, concentrate and... recharge your batteries,"* says

Pauline. For Sophie, *"always busy"* with medical appointments following a triple heart bypass, drawing allows her to find calm.

Radha, who has never been to school, is proud to see that her paintings are appreciated. Ghislaine repeats the encouragement of Ginette, who volunteers to lead this workshop: *"You have to dare. You have to dare!"*

BOUCHES-DU-RHÔNE  
DISCOVERING THE BEAUTY  
OF THE WORLD

Mireille and Nasser, volunteers involved in La Ruche, one of Secours Catholique de Marseille's spaces, offer people recreational outings. These cultural outings are organised in consultation and according to events

on offer, perhaps to an exhibition at the Mucem, or a show, a concert, the theatre or a street event, in the summer months.

The regulars, mostly women of all generations, go together by public transport to these places of culture, commenting on their discoveries in these moments of escape and 'awakening' to beauty.

These visits are followed by a sharing of impressions, feelings, and signs that show a growing awareness of artistic expression.

As part of this process of opening up to the world, Mireille and Nasser offer a day of escape one Saturday a month and lead the group to discover the surrounding beauty, on the outskirts of Marseille, which is just a few metro stations away.

## BRINGING SPIRITUALITY TO LIFE

VALIDATION OF A REFERENCE  
TEXT ON THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION  
OF SECOURS CATHOLIQUE

The question of the spiritual dimension of Secours Catholique – Caritas France has evolved in recent years and rose to the fore during the health crisis when the teams expressed the need to have a reference text on the subject. It was important that this be the result of a joint reflection involving all the association's members. This was done in 2021, when about 600 people participated in 17 agoras organised throughout France, with a view to amending and taking ownership of the proposal developed with the delegations. The final text was adopted by our General Assembly in June 2021. This is a short text. It will be distributed as part of an educational booklet incorporating the stories and words of people living in poverty and supplemented by 12 sheets which explain the concepts discussed (the intercultural

dimension, secularism, our link to the Church, the social doctrine of the Church, etc.). The final text and the pedagogical tools will be distributed from 2022, through a steering committee to guarantee internal communication and the study of its impact on the daily life of the association.

THE SAINT-LAURENT NETWORK GROUPS  
IN LOURDES 'VISITATION'

The Saint-Laurent network, coordinated by Secours Catholique – Caritas France which co-founded it, was created on the 50th anniversary of the Cité Saint-Pierre in Lourdes. It was then a question of responding to the will of people in very vulnerable situations to come together to share their faith based on the Gospels and to meet every two years in Lourdes for 'visitations', that is to say opportunities to announce good news.

In 2020, out of 150 groups that make up the network, 350 people were able to meet in Lourdes over two sessions due to the pandemic and social distancing measures, including 60 minors who make up the Joyaume, an organisation made for them! In August 2021, the visitations were able to resume with people who had not been able to attend the previous year. The group had 350 people from our delegations from Hauts-de-Seine, Lyon, Angers, Vannes and Yvelines, or from partner associations such as Aux Captifs la Libération, the Lazare Association, the Pierre d'Angle, the Sappel, the Fraternity of St. Lawrence and others. During this pilgrimage, the groups performed the celebration of St. Lawrence on 10 August at the Lourdes grotto, an event that was broadcast worldwide on the Sanctuary site, a precious moment for single people and families who have lived through particularly trying periods of lockdown. Secours Catholique and the Cité Saint-Pierre are proud to have been able to rise to the challenge of such a meeting, in compliance with health and safety guidelines.

## RESUMPTION OF TRIPS TO THE HOLY LAND

For the poorest Christians, making the trip to the Holy Land seems almost impossible. This dream could not be fulfilled in 2020, due to the pandemic. It resumed in 2021: from 12 to 21 November for a first group of 38 people and from 21 to 28 November for another 36 people, during the short period that Israel had reopened its borders. Housed by Secours Catholique – Caritas France at the House of Abraham, a place of hospitality located in the heart of Jerusalem and intended to welcome the poorest of the world, the pilgrims walked 'in the footsteps of Jesus, who came to announce the Good News to the poor'. Dominican father Guy Tardivy, chaplain of the House of Abraham, served as their guide throughout the stay. Thanks to him, people were able to meet strangers: Bedouins, local Christian communities, associations, and local communities committed to the poorest. They also shared time for reflection, especially on the question of the wall, the one that must be destroyed within us and between us.

These trips to the Holy Land are the culmination of a whole year punctuated by weekend meetings to best prepare for what will be experienced on the spot, and also to finance the project, thanks to the organisation of sales in parishes or online fundraisers. About 10 other groups are ready to leave in 2022 and 2023, if health regulations allow. ■



VINCENT BOISOT / SCDF

## STRENGTHENING SPIRITUAL BONDS

Considering people's spiritual side is at the heart of Secours Catholique's work. Times to meet up, to take a step back, to pray and share are organised regularly, as here in Indre-et-Loire, where about fifty people experienced the joy of reunion during a 'spiritual stop'.

*"With the pandemic, I had the impression that we were building an individualistic world. I'm relieved to see that everyone wants to get back together,"* says Michelle, happily.

*"A day like this allows me to refocus and live times of prayer with others,"* says Maryse. *"We also discuss how we live our faith on a daily basis. It's active sharing!"*

In small groups, around the gospel according to St. Mark which tells of the presentation of children to Jesus, real life experiences are shared. Jacqueline points to Babeth, sitting next to her. *"She has had aphasia for fifteen years. She reached out to me at a time when I needed it. Today, I can give back."*

*"What emotion!"* says Jocelyne, whose life changed when, during a journey of Hope, she was able to put years of abuse into words. *"Now I am going down this great path, of the absolute, of life. Before, I hated myself. Today, without forgetting, I have forgiven, and I can move forward."*

For Justine, an undocumented migrant living in a hostel who arrived from Angola a year ago, this spiritual stop was a first. *"I walk with the Bible every moment, but joining this group gives me more strength."*





## REGION

A SOLIDARITY-BASED,  
INNOVATIVE AND  
ECOLOGICAL HAMLET

**D**raguignan has a new neighbourhood, the Saint-François solidarity eco-hamlet, which came into being thanks to Mireille, a lady with no descendants who donated her property to the diocese to welcome those who had experienced difficulties in life. Entrusted to the Union of Deacons of the Var in association with Secours Catholique, the property has made it possible to create a vibrant space which includes about thirty social housing units, a guest house for passing visitors and a field of olive trees where a team of scouts comes to camp every summer. Residents are involved in the running and life of the hamlet. Carole takes care of the chicken coop, a hundred metres from her apartment. After collecting the eggs, she leads her daughter Perrine, 15, born disabled, to the plot in the centre of the hamlet, where Patricia, the other Carole, Méline, Mélissa, Claudine, Jonathan, David, Lucien and the others meet for breakfast.

For her part, Mireille, the donor who remained on the premises, leads the Marmiton workshop in her large house. Residents and volunteers from the solidarity grocery store run by the diocesan team, located in the city, meet around a long table where products from the garden, the solidarity grocery store, or donated by shopkeepers, have been laid out.

*"When I came to live here, everything changed for me,"* says Carole, who now lives with her children near her former husband with whom she has kept a good relationship. The same goes for Méline, 25, who has obtained a permanent contract as a care worker since she lived in the hamlet. After a difficult start (she was homeless) and early motherhood (her son Timéo is 7 years old), she says she has found her balance. *"We are not treated like social cases here. We are spoken to like adults. We accept ourselves as we are, we all know each other and if one person is not doing well, the others will lift their spirits."* ■



FULL REPORT ON THE  
SECOURS CATHOLIQUE WEBSITE:  
[bit.ly/EcoHameauSC](https://bit.ly/EcoHameauSC)



# FIGHTING POVERTY THROUGH ACCESS TO RIGHTS FOR ALL

**THE HEALTH CRISIS OF 2020** has brutally confronted us with the urgent need to create a more just, fraternal, and sustainable world for all. At the end of the year, Secours Catholique – Caritas France took up this invitation to think about the future, with a view, at the mid-point of its national project, to considering the direction to be given to its advocacy. This work, carried out with the people we support, but also with our international partners and our teams, to share sources and experiences, gave rise to a publication in 2021. The themes that emerge reinforce our commitments: engagement in favour of a right to quality and sustainable food, a model that we have successfully tested at the local level and that we are carrying out at the national level as part of a programme launched in 2021; commitment to access to employment and a fair income for all, which has led us to look closely at the work of the Public Integration Service and to get involved in innovative initiatives such as zero long-term unemployment zones and a range of proven activities; commitment to the renovation of heat sinks and solutions for sustainable mobility, in order to implement the fair ecological transition that we are calling for; and a commitment in 2021, to defend the rights of refugees too often violated at our borders and in our streets.

*France Relance* recovery plan, the call for projects announced at the end of 2020 by the government, and the generosity of our donors has allowed us to boost many of our actions in these different areas, and to put in place all the ideas and energy needed for projects.



VINCENT BOISOT / SCOF

## DEVELOPING ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

### FIVE ADVOCACY PRIORITIES FOR THE AFTERMATH

Since spring 2020, the Covid-19 crisis has brought our societies face to face with their structural dysfunctions and deep inequalities. For Secours Catholique – Caritas France, it was important to seize this unprecedented moment to *think about the world in the aftermath* and define our advocacy priorities for the years to come. This reflection was enriched by the contributions from five sources: people in vulnerable situations who shared their experiences and expectations with us, the Church and its teachings, including the encyclicals *Laudato si'* and *Fratelli tutti*, our delegations, our international partners and our national leadership.

This reflection, which began in 2020, was punctuated by virtual meetings, agoras bringing Secours Catholique teams and people in vulnerable situations together for a day. The final text includes 20 proposals divided into five main themes: access to employment and a guaranteed minimum income,

the right to decent and sustainable food, the challenge of the right to decent housing and insulation of housing, the reception of migrants, the defence of fundamental rights and freedoms undermined by the crisis among our partners in the South, but also in France.

Fine-tuned in the course of the three agoras, these twenty proposals were presented as part of a half-day on advocacy during our *Belles Retrouvailles* in which the delegation offices, executives from the headquarters and people in vulnerable situations participated. Each participant could vote for four of the twenty proposals, a way to become familiar with the text and claim it as their own. Amendments were proposed on this occasion and the final text, presented in December 2021 to our Board of Directors, was approved.

Released at the beginning of 2022, it aims to ensure the coherence of the messages we wish to convey in the context of the presidential and legislative elections, the first opportunity to promote the world in the aftermath according to what we are calling for.



## PUBLICATION ON NON-USE OF RIGHTS AND SERVICES

The statistical report on poverty in France published each year by Secours Catholique – Caritas France highlights the importance of lack of access to rights, including minimum benefits (RSA), since a third of the people seen who could claim it do not receive it. This called for a more detailed study of the reasons and issues at stake for no-recourse. This was carried out in 2021, in partnership with the Observatory of Non-use of Rights and Services (Odenore), a national authority in this field.

A twofold survey was conducted: quantitative first, starting from the information on our database to draw up the profile of people in situations of non-use; then qualitative, through on the one hand questionnaires (125 in total) which were completed by members of six of our delegations, and on the other hand about thirty more in-depth interviews discussing their way of life.

The report from this investigation was published in March 2021. It confirms the substantial nature of non-use and shows that the people most at risk are also the most isolated, especially men, with breaks in their careers, and in vulnerable housing situations. Several factors come into play: the complexity and digitisation of procedures, as well as the discontinuity of rights, often following a confrontational experience with the authorities.

Proposals have been drawn from this survey, intended primarily for our teams, so that they can better identify the people to be supported in accessing their rights, but also for the public authorities from whom we ask for a simplification of the procedures and the establishment of zero non-use of social benefits zones. This last proposal, which involves engaging all the stakeholders concerned at a regional level: town hall, Community Centres for Social Action (CCAS), associative actors, departmental council, and Family Allowance Fund (CAF), have been included in the strategy to combat poverty. ■



### ADVOCACY SUCCESS STORIES

#### • A BILL INSPIRED BY OUR 'WITHOUT COMPENSATION' REPORT

Published in October 2020, our Without Compensation report largely inspired a bill defended in the Senate in June 2021 and relating to the establishment of a guaranteed minimum income.

#### • ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT ON NON-USE

After denouncing an amendment aimed at tightening the control of RSA recipients, Secours Catholique – Caritas France obtained the adoption of its proposal for Zero Non-Use Zones.

## CHANGING THE WAY PEOPLE ARE HELPED

### FROM FINANCIAL AID TO REAL 'HELPING HANDS'

Fraternal encounters and social transformation are the fundamentals of Secours Catholique – Caritas France's work. But this support often begins with financial or material assistance. Our decision, in the spring of 2020, to hand over vouchers to households most severely affected by the lockdowns led us to reaffirm that this type of aid is fully part of our method of supporting people. In 2021, a discussion was held with the delegations on the place of aid and its way of working. It confirms that financial aid must be granted with discernment and collectively,

and that it is inseparable from fraternal support, that is to say, listening, but also support leading to access to rights and encouragement of collective action. A benchmarking note on our aid policy has been co-constructed and will be disseminated. The share of significant aid (between €500 and €4,000), which still represents only 2% of the total financial aid provided by Secours Catholique, will be increased. These are real helping hands to finance projects through which people can look ahead to the future.

### CALLS FOR A HELPING HAND

Messages, the quarterly magazine of Secours Catholique – Caritas France, allows delegations to publish calls for donations to finance promising projects. A small selection:

**A HELPING HAND OF €2,900** for Fabienne, 45 years old, who needs a vehicle to do her internships in the last year of nursing training, a childhood dream.

**A HELPING HAND OF €4,000** for Thibault, to finance the rest of the cost of insulating his home.

**A HELPING HAND OF €2,500** to Michèle, home helper, to replace her vehicle without which she could not keep her job.

**A HELPING HAND OF €1,500** for Adeline, mother of four children, to buy a used vehicle that would allow her to obtain a permanent contract in a geriatric centre.

**A HELPING HAND OF €1,912** for Mariette, to pay for the replacement of her boiler and avoid her falling into debt.

### DIGITAL PLAN FOR ALL

In view of the magnitude of the digital divide and illiteracy revealed by the health crisis in early 2020, several Secours Catholique – Caritas France delegations responded to the call for projects concerning digital technology as part of the *France Relance* plan. As Axel Haentjens from Secours Catholique in Île-de-France explains:

*"As soon as the €100,000 grant was obtained, the project team identified the need for computer equipment at our 377 hubs, for beneficiaries to use. At the end of 2021, 87 refurbished PCs, 181 laptops and 84 smartphones were purchased from the Bocage workshops, a cooperative society of experts in the sorting and reuse of computer equipment. This programme has revealed disparities between delegations and major training needs for people in vulnerable situations and volunteers. To remedy this, we entered into a partnership with Emmaus Connect, which began with training courses in June and July in the cybercafé created in Puteaux. Another initiative was launched in Chanteloup-les-Vignes with an external service provider. Two skilled mentors arrived in the autumn*

*to coordinate the deployment of the plan in the 78 and 92 areas.*

*"The Digital Plan for All in France is intended to be replicated in other regions. Exchanges of good practice have already taken place with the delegations from Franche-Comté, Haute-Loire and the Lyon region.*

*"The digital divide is a real issue, a political issue, especially in the context of going paperless for 100% of administrative procedures by 2022."*

### SUPPORT AND TRAINING FOR THE 1,500 VOLUNTEERS ON CCAS BOARDS

Secours Catholique – Caritas France wanted to strengthen its representation on the boards of directors of Communal and Intercommunal Centres for Social Action (CCAS and CIAS). This has been done since 2020, when 1,500 of the volunteers proposed for this mission were retained by the mayors. Sitting on these bodies in charge of social action allows us to have a tangible influence, both on the social policies of the municipalities and on their implementation. Those on the boards can share our position on the fight against poverty, report back on observations from the field, and bring elected officials to meet the most disadvantaged citizens, so that they can better assess the difficulties encountered and adjust policies accordingly.

The delegates, facilitators, and volunteers responsible for training this network in their delegations are trained and exchange ideas regularly. In 2021, we offered the board members themselves video-conferencing training to enlighten them on the decisions to be made, keep them up to date on the association's work and increase their skills, for example on reading and understanding a CCAS budget. In January 2021, the board members from major cities also participated in a one-day training carried out in partnership with a trainer from the National Union of CCAS and CIAS (Unccas). ■

**“THE DIGITAL DIVIDE IS A REAL ISSUE, A POLITICAL ISSUE, ESPECIALLY IN THE CONTEXT OF GOING PAPERLESS FOR 100% OF ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES BY 2022.”**



## FOCUS

## INNOVATING TO MEET NEEDS

After a year in which the country remained almost at a standstill, the French government decided on a two-year recovery plan entitled France Relance. For Secours Catholique – Caritas France and its delegations, this call for projects has been the accelerator of a new way of thinking about action in terms of projects and initiatives.



XAVIER SCHWIEBEL / SCOF

A boost given by the call for *France Relance* projects. In November 2020, after a year of health crisis, the French government announced the economic recovery plan *France Relance 2020-2022*. Secours Catholique – Caritas France responded to the fight against poverty component and obtained funding for forty projects to restructure day care, healthy and sustainable food, access to digital technology and the development of *Fraternibus*. At the regional level, most of our delegations also invested in the approach, new for some, of applying for grants via calls for projects. To maintain this momentum, in May 2021 we announced a call for internal initiatives with a fund of 6 million euros. It has achieved its goal: to release energy, as thirty-three projects have been financed within this framework. In total, the cost of these various projects amounts to more than 11 million euros, including 5.8 million euros provided by funders other than Secours Catholique. To respond to our call for internal initiatives, the delegations were able to rely on a new Secours Catholique body, the *Accompagnement des Projets (CAP)* commission, created in early 2020, which facilitates skills sharing and the validation procedures needed for local projects funded by our headquarters. In 2021 this new way of working allowed us to move from a project approach to a programme model, forming a network of delegations carrying out the same type of initiatives. We can thus have a global vision of the projects under consideration, develop strategic positioning on the proposed themes, and adapt the levels of funding and support resources to be deployed.

## A YEAR FILLED WITH PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES



CHRISTOPHE HARGOUES / SCOF

Rebuilding ties in certain rural areas combining poverty, an ageing population, lack of services: it is with this objective in mind that the Marne-Ardenne delegation took up the call for *France Relance* projects to finance a **mobile solidarity grocery store**. A place of exchange, sharing and social diversity, this grocery store was created in 2021.

The concept of **Fraternibus** was conceived in 2020, on the basis of existing pilots, when it came to maintaining the social and fraternal bond that periods of confinement were undermining, especially in rural areas and in poor neighbourhoods on the outskirts of cities. This new model for Secours Catholique, consisting of reaching out to people in difficulty, quickly won over the delegations. Twenty-four projects have been proposed and financed in 2021 as part of *France Relance* (see report p.11).

The **digital divide and illiteracy** are among the major societal issues that the 2020 lockdowns highlighted. Faced with this challenge, a regional group from Île-de-France worked on courses of action and advocacy in conjunction with the national headquarters and the teams already engaged in the fight against the digital divide. Its objective: to support project dynamics and allow teams to network to share needs. In 2021, eight projects emerged in this area (see testimonial p.21).

The purchase of school supplies weighs heavily on the budgets of the poorest households. The Seine-Saint-Denis delegation knows this well and has renewed a project launched in 2020: **pop-up shops dedicated to the start of the school year**, where families can buy new, quality supplies at a very low price. In 2021, the cost of the project was revised upwards to include payment of a sports licence to a club.

*"My daughters are in CE2 and fifth grade and they were looking forward to having everything that is asked for on the list, to be like the other students."* Naboundou

The health crisis has hurt the poorest students the most, some of whom have accumulated unpaid rent and risk not having their lease renewed. The Villeneuve-d'Ascq team has opened a **permanent office near the campuses**, to provide financial and moral support. The project was funded through a call for donations in the local press and the parish network and support under the call for internal initiatives.

Born in the south of the Jura in 2020, the concept of **solidarity baskets**, composed of fresh products from organic farming, is an alternative to the classic distributive model. It also supports local farmers, maintains social ties, and encourages the sharing of knowledge around food. In 2021, forty-nine solidarity basket projects were proposed and financed under the call for internal initiatives (see also p.25).



VINCENT BOISOT / SCOF



## DEFENDING THE RIGHT TO SUSTAINABLE AND QUALITY FOOD



XAVIER SCHWIBEL / SCCF

### AN AMBITIOUS AGENDA FOR THE RIGHT TO SUSTAINABLE AND QUALITY FOOD

The commitment of Secours Catholique – Caritas France regarding dignified access to sustainable and quality food – the opportunity for people to choose their food and to have access to fresh quality, local and/or organic products – has shown its relevance with the health crisis, when the fragility of traditional models of food aid and the problem of regional resilience were highlighted. Faced with these challenges, at the beginning of 2021, we launched an important national programme entitled Together, Living Well, Eating Well, with the ambition to contribute to significant structural changes by 2025.

The programme has four themes: adapting our practices and developing projects for dignified access to sustainable and quality food; supporting campaigns for resilient food systems; raising public awareness of the concept of the universal right to food; lobbying

the public authorities for a shift in their response to the problems of food insecurity.

Several of these themes were worked on in 2021. We have stepped up our support for tangible solutions



### ADVOCACY SUCCESS STORIES

#### CLIMATE LAW, PROGRESS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS

Whilst it still has a long way to go, the law adopted in September 2021 based on the work of the Citizens' Convention for the Climate includes some progress, particularly on the zero-interest mobility loan, a proposal that we advocate for with the Climate Action network.

#### UN RECOGNISES RIGHT TO A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

After more than ten years of advocacy to which Secours Catholique contributed, the Human Rights Council adopted a historic resolution recognising the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

such as the forty-nine fresh solidarity basket projects developed in twenty-four delegations. Thanks to funding from *France Relance*, we have started changing our 139 solidarity grocery stores by favouring the model of grocery stores open to all, and not only to people in vulnerable situations, to combat stigma. To change food practices and policies at the regional level, we have launched, with a consortium of partners (the Cocagne network, the Civam network<sup>1</sup>, the Vrac network and Ugecs<sup>2</sup>) a project entitled Territories to Live in Lyon, Toulon, Montpellier and Aix-Marseille.

Hunger for Dignity, our 2021 statistical report on poverty in France, published in November 2021, includes a study of people who received food aid during the pandemic. It presents our analysis of policies to combat food insecurity and our national advocacy for the 2022 elections.

Secours Catholique has also been a member of the National Coordinating Committee for the Fight against Food Insecurity (Cocolupa) since its creation in September 2020. We are leading a working group on the participation and inclusion of people in vulnerable situations. ■

- 1 Centres of initiative to promote agriculture and the rural environment.
- 2 Union of social and solidarity grocery store groups.

### >>> IN BRIEF

#### GARD

#### FRESH BASKETS AND BREAD OVEN FEDERATION

In Vauvert, Secours Catholique uses a range of activities related to food as part of the fight against the isolation of people in financial difficulty. The team began distributing baskets of fresh fruits and vegetables. It has also just acquired a mobile bread oven to offer residents of working-class neighbourhoods the chance to leave their buildings to bake their bread, pizza, pita or pretzel together. Financed by a subsidy from local authorities and designed by a local engineer, the furnace was built with the help of four young people from an association to get people into employment.

#### CHER ET INDRE

#### BASKETS THAT CREATE NEW RELATIONSHIPS

In Berry, twenty households supported by Secours Catholique benefit

from fresh local products, in the form of solidarity baskets. Several families wanted to meet the market gardener partner behind the initiative. Adults and children learnt about working on the land and participated in picking and making up the baskets. The group also spent a morning with the farmer who supplies the meat. The youngest learnt how to feed the animals and a rich exchange took place around a homemade terrine. "Families are proud because their baskets help support these farmers," says Brigitte, a volunteer. Friendly relationships were also born from this day.

#### HAUTE-SAÔNE

#### GRAY'S GARDENS CULTIVATE CONVIVIALITY

The town of Gray, in Haute-Saône, is home to Secours Catholique's oldest shared gardens. Since 2007, fifteen households have been working the land there, growing fruits, vegetables and flowers organically, a way to eat



XAVIER SCHWIBEL / SCCF

well while saving money when looking for work or as young retirees. But as the gardeners meet every week, it is also to break from isolation. Every Friday, we exchange gardening tips, we meet around a good coffee and lunch. In Gray's Gardens, we cultivate everything, even conviviality.





## REGION

LA MARGUERITE  
COOPERATIVE  
GROCERY STORE

Located in one of the narrow medieval streets that make up the heart of Riom, 15km from Clermont-Ferrand, the shopfront of La Marguerite attracts the eye and the shoppers. The grocery store, opened by Secours Catholique in January 2021, already has more than 350 members, a third of whom, due to financial difficulties, benefit from preferential rates calculated according to their resources, while 'solidarity' members pay 100% of the price of the products.

Annabelle, a mother who takes care of her five children alone, is a regular at the shop. "Until now, I hadn't needed any help," she says. "But here, I pay substantial rent in the private sector. It is difficult." Annabelle therefore benefits from preferential rates, which does not prevent her from having access, like any other member of the grocery store, to varied and quality products: fresh fruits and vegetables, meats and cheeses from local producers. "I do all my shopping here. I find everything," she explains. "And then it's cheerful, we don't feel awkward, we come with pleasure."

"Here I can choose what I buy. And then we go to the checkout! Symbolically, it's important!" says another regular, Patricia, a mother of seven children, three of whom are still dependent. Beya, a cashier, like Annabelle and Patricia, benefits from a preferential rate. With her husband, she participated in the development of the premises, and ensures the operation of the grocery store alongside the thirty volunteers, both experiencing poverty and not, who want to get involved in the project. ■





## TACKLING FUEL POVERTY

### THE ONPE BLOWS OUT TEN CANDLES AND FUEL POVERTY TAKES ROOT IN THE COUNTRY

The National Observatory of Fuel Poverty (ONPE) celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2021. Ten years of monitoring the quantitative and qualitative evolution of the situation for people experiencing fuel poverty. This body, of which Secours Catholique – Caritas France is a member, took advantage of this anniversary, celebrated as part of the first edition of the National Day against Fuel Poverty, to publish a report on a decade of public action against this social, health and environmental scourge. The results show that the objectives set by the State are far from being achieved. Indeed, the number of households in fuel poverty has not decreased despite the renovation efforts made and the rise of policies to support housing energy renovation: 12 million people, or one in five of the population, are affected.

ALAIN, LIVING WITH FUEL POVERTY AND SUPPORTED BY SECOURS CATHOLIQUE

“I NEED TO HAVE A DRINK IN THE NIGHT...1. ON WINTER MORNINGS, MY WATER BOTTLE, ON THE FLOOR NEXT TO THE BED, WAS FROZEN.”

households in fuel poverty has not decreased despite the renovation efforts made and the rise of policies to support housing energy renovation: 12 million people, or one in five of the population, are affected.

### A SECOND ENERGY VOUCHER: THE FIRST RESPONSE FOR HOUSEHOLDS TO THE SOARING PRICES

In its report, the ONPE noted that the health and social crisis, combined with unprecedented fuel price inflation, had further exacerbated fuel poverty. Secours Catholique therefore appealed in May for the granting of a second energy voucher to the people affected, a plea which was partly granted, since a cheque was paid in December to the 5.8 million eligible households, but for only €100, while the actual household bills range from €1,400 to €2,100 per year. Another cause for satisfaction: Secours Catholique

has long been calling for protection against having your fuel cut off via the energy voucher, a proposal that is now in the process of being adopted.

### ADVOCACY FOR THE RENOVATION OF THERMAL SIEVES IN THE CLIMATE AND RESILIENCE ACT

Alongside social and environmental NGO partners, Secours Catholique – Caritas France joined the parliamentary debate drafting of the Climate and Resilience Act adopted on 22 August 2021. This advocacy has made it possible to obtain some progress, such as the adoption of a new energy performance diagnosis, which is now enforceable; the implementation of the new 'Mon Accompagnateur Renov' system, whose social component is strongly inspired by the '1DigneToit' home renovation pilot carried out by Secours Catholique and the Réseau Éco-Habitat (REH) in Hauts-de-France; and finally, the progressive ban on thermal sieve installation. From 2023, housing that is deemed too energy-intensive will be considered non-habitable and therefore unrentable. On the other hand, lobbying continues to obtain the introduction of an obligation to renovate for all owners, whether they are landlords or occupants, provided that a financial, technical and social support system is offered to them, with zero charge for the least well off.

### THREE WINNING DELEGATIONS OF THE 'CHAUFFETOI' CALL FOR PROJECTS

Started in the Oise at the initiative of Secours Catholique – Caritas France of Picardy delegation and REH, the '1DigneToit' programme quickly proved its usefulness in supporting the poorest homeowners to renovate their homes. Today, the programme is spreading as part of a partnership between REH and AG2R La Mondiale. The launch of the 'Chauffetoi' call for projects rewarded the initiatives of ten winners, the first three of whom are Secours Catholique de Bourgogne, Maine-et-Loire and Poitou delegations. All have demonstrated their willingness and ability to commit



CHRISTOPHE HARGOUËS / SCOF

to a healthy and sustainable habitat alongside the households concerned and in connection with local builders. They now receive financial

support and training on renovation support schemes. ■

## PROMOTING ACCESS TO HOUSING

### PUBLICATION OF THE PRACTICAL GUIDE TO ACCOMMODATION

At the national level, on average one in two requests for accommodation from the emergency 115 number is not granted, to the point that more than three-quarters of people on the street do not even call anymore. This is the reality faced by at least 300,000 homeless people in France and the Secours Catholique – Caritas France teams who support them. Because our volunteers often feel helpless in the face of the great distress of people and the oversubscribed accommodation, the various stakeholders of Secours Catholique – Caritas France

have co-produced a practical guide on access to and retention of accommodation. Tested and improved in 2021, it will be used in delegations from 2022 as part of exchange and training sessions. The accompanying procedures, the rights, and the mechanisms to be activated differ according to the needs of the people and the audience (single people, families with children under three years of age, asylum seekers, people without a residence permit, etc.). The guide reviews all these various cases to ensure that the teams take the necessary steps when talking to the relevant social services. It also includes recommendations on possible remedies if no solution





VINCENT BOISOT / SCOF

is found, and illustrations of the range of options and appeals that can be carried out to remind prefects and local elected officials of their responsibility concerning the right to access and retain accommodation.

### ASSOCIATIONS CAMPAIGN TO AVOID HOMELESSNESS

Weakened by the health and social crisis, people threatened by rental evictions or abrupt breaks in accommodation obtained a reprieve in 2020, the winter truce having been extended until the summer thanks to the campaign carried out by CAU of which Secours Catholique – Caritas France is a part. Faced with the wave of homelessness that was to be feared at the end of winter 2021, the collective has set up a monitoring hub, co-led by Secours Catholique – Caritas France, to which to report the risks of closure of shelters, evacuations of squats or slums and threats of expulsion. The alerts collected as part of this system led to regular calls to the Minister in charge of housing so that the instruction to prevent rental evictions and not to put people out on the street be passed on to the prefects and respected in all territories. On 6 September 2021, the results of this work were

presented at a joint press conference. The collective remains vigilant to ensure unconditionality and continuity is respected when it comes to accommodation, as well as the fundamental right to have decent housing.

### ACCESS TO SOCIAL HOUSING: THE OBSTACLE COURSE FOR THE POOREST IN FRANCE AND IN TWELVE CITIES

The poorest have more difficulty accessing social housing than others, as Secours Catholique – Caritas France and five other associations demonstrated in a study published in 2020. In order to ensure that the right to housing for households with very low incomes is respected, in 2021 the collective shared the summary of its findings and proposals with parliamentarians as part of the drafting of the 3DS law promulgated on 21 February. To better understand the contrasting realities of housing according to the regions, the collective continued its research with a comparative analysis of the conditions of access to social housing in the twelve main French cities outside Paris.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR HOUSING, BUT IT IS A RIGHT THAT IS STILL NOT HONOURED

The right to housing with the CCAS or CIAS is guaranteed to any person with a link to the municipality and who does not have a stable address. In fact, some CCAS do not fulfil their obligation to house due to a lack of means. So, Secours Catholique – Caritas France is forced to compensate for the shortcomings by sheltering thousands of people itself in several of its day care centres.

In 2021, Secours Catholique's positioning document and practical tools were made available to volunteers involved in this service.

With this experience and in conjunction with the Federation of Solidarity Actors (FAS), Secours Catholique is asking for better funding for this essential public service to access its procedures and rights. In 2021 this advocacy made it possible to obtain €15 million to finance the service for two years. However, this is a partial success, because this funding is intended only for associations approved to provide housing in addition to the CCAS, without settling the question of the resources of the latter. In addition, the granting of funds is conditional on



### ADVOCACY SUCCESS STORIES

#### • ACCESS TO WATER IN A SLUM IN ROSNY-SOUS-BOIS

In 2021, the Secours Catholique de Seine-Saint-Denis and its partners filed a petition for protection of fundamental rights concerning access to water in a slum in Rosny-sous-Bois: a success, since in March, the court ordered the installation of a water point, toilets, and showers.

#### • END OF THE MANAGEMENT OF ACCOMMODATION ACCORDING TO THE TEMPERATURE

In September 2021, Secours Catholique and its partners obtained the implementation of a multi-year programme from the Minister of Housing to avoid the closure of emergency accommodation places open only in winter.

providing greater numbers and faster housing, which is incompatible with the improvement of the quality of support for homeless people.

While continuing its action in this field, Secours Catholique did not wish to respond to the call for projects. On the other hand, it participated in the working group of the Directorate-General for Social Cohesion (DGCS) to define the criteria for allocating these credits in line with needs. ■

## DEFENDING ACCESS TO WORK AND DECENT INCOMES

### MONITORING THE PUBLIC SERVICE FOR INTEGRATION AND EMPLOYMENT

The Public Service for Integration and Employment (SPIE) is one of the tools chosen by government to strengthen support towards employment for people who are furthest from it. In 2021, Secours Catholique – Caritas France, as a representative of the Alerte collective, participated in the first National Monitoring Council for the implementation of the SPIE, which is rolled out in the regions that volunteer. This was an opportunity for us to express key areas of concern: the decrease in funds allocated to integration

in the departments (-12% between 2013 and 2018 according to our *Integrate Solidarity* report), the difficulties related to procedures going paperless and our desire to set up departmental integration assemblies with the participation of people facing poverty to gather their needs and their proposals for improving socio-professional support.

Another cause for satisfaction: thanks to its fraternal support, Secours Catholique is clearly identified as an actor contributing to professional integration. This asset will allow us to cooperate with regional actors to promote the return to employment for the people we support.



## &gt;&gt;&gt; IN BRIEF

## RHÔNE

## FRATERNAL COACHING TO SUPPORT A RETURN TO WORK IN THE RHÔNE

"There are many barriers to finding a job," observes Vincent, aged 31, a volunteer at Secours Catholique de Lyon. "When you have a job, you have overcome these obstacles. Sharing our experience can be a boost for other people." Passerelles, which works by pairing up those seeking employment with a coach, was born from this observation. "The support is flexible," Vincent explains. "We meet to get to know each other, then the follow-up can be done by phone or email. The coach motivates and helps overcome difficulties throughout the job search or training." Vincent supported Michael. "Every time I had a contact person from the job centre on the phone, I called Vincent to help me understand," says Michael. "I made him reread my draft letters; he helped me create my LinkedIn profile. As soon as I'm stuck, I call him." The first pairs are on their way, others should follow.



CHRISTOPHE HARGOUËS / SCOF

## CAMPAIGN AGAINST CHANGES IN UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

The reform of unemployment insurance was announced in 2019 as part of the Professional Future Act, then shelved during the health crisis. At the beginning of 2021, the government announced its implementation as soon as September starts. With a collective of associations and unions, Secours Catholique – Caritas France campaigned against this reform described as "absurd, unfair and indecent" in a joint article published in *Le Monde* in May. Two of the measures implemented penalise the most vulnerable: the new method of calculating the amount of the allowance, which is very unfavourable to people alternating periods of unemployment and employment, and the tightening of the conditions of access to unemployment which require the person to have worked six months instead of four. Unfortunately, our substantial campaign did not prevent the reform from being adopted in the autumn. We will now conduct a survey to measure the impact in terms of income, but also in terms of people's frustration.

## NEW PILOTS FOR ZERO LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT REGIONS

Since 2016, Secours Catholique – Caritas France has been a founding member of the Territoires Zéro Chômeurs de Longue Durée<sup>2</sup> (TZCLD) initiative, an initiative that remains relevant year after year. This voluntary system allows supported people to be employed on permanent contracts by social and solidarity economy enterprises known as Employment Enterprises (EBE), for activities and services not covered by the companies in the employment areas concerned. It has largely proven its worth, in terms of the number of job creations for people who were very far from employment (1,240 jobs since the beginning of the pilot, including 913 in 2021), but also in terms of revitalising the regions. Signed in 2021, a decree implementing Law No. 2020-1577 of 14 December 2020 on strengthening inclusion in employment through economic activity and the TZCLD pilot has made it possible to implement a new stage of pilots that incorporate some of the adjustments proposed by Secours Catholique. Two new regions were authorised at the end of 2021, the first of the more than fifty that are expected in the



CHRISTOPHE HARGOUËS / SCOF

next three years. Our delegations in Morbihan and Cantal-Puy-de-Dôme, in particular, are very involved in the development of these pilots, and many others are interested in them.

These are indeed very practical projects to give people back the power to act in accordance with the ambitions of our national project.

## THE ACCORDERIES CELEBRATE THEIR TENTH ANNIVERSARY

The *Accorderies* operate according to a principle of exchange of services measured in units of time. They developed in France thanks to the Macif Foundation, Secours Catholique – Caritas France and the Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations. In 2021, the network of

forty-one approved *Accorderies* celebrated its tenth anniversary. As a co-founder, Secours Catholique supports it very actively and encourages its delegations to develop them. The *Accorderies* make it possible to fight against poverty by giving the poorest the opportunity to access services and to have the value of their knowledge and talents recognised within a collective.

## PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION THROUGH SALARIED ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The activity and employment cooperative Cités Coop was co-founded at the end of 2020 by Secours Catholique – Caritas France and Cités Caritas but began its activity in 2021. Such structures exist in France following the law of 31 July 2014 on the social and solidarity economy. Their principle: to house the activity and ensure the administrative management of entrepreneurs who receive a salary. This gives them the freedom to undertake projects without the financial risks.

The unique feature of Cités Coop is to give access to this employment solution to people experiencing poverty who have an entrepreneurial project, but who need to be supported in its implementation. The stated objective is that at least 70% of the entrepreneurs



## ADVOCACY SUCCESS STORIES

## • A GOVERNMENT GESTURE IN FAVOUR OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Taking up a very small part of Secours Catholique's suggested actions, in October 2021 the Prime Minister announced the creation of a youth engagement contract. Our participation in the implementation meetings for a scheme for the most vulnerable young people gives us hope for progress to come.





CHRISTOPHE HARGOUES / SCCF

hosted at Cités Coop are people who are very far from employment. The system allows them to achieve their dreams, to meet and share with other entrepreneurs

and to benefit from socio-professional support. Cités Coop is located in Paris, with a branch in Gironde. Several of our delegations are interested in this with a view to opening up new opportunities for people who are far from employment.

Cités Coop can also host temporary cooperatives, a tool for professional integration that is based on a time bound collective entrepreneurial project. It is a tool for relaunching a career, acquisition of know-how and interpersonal skills, and also reassurance that makes it possible to test an economic activity in a collective framework before embarking on an individual project. It is also a tool available to delegations. Charentes developed such a cooperative in 2021.

### LAUNCH OF NEW PROJECTS

The Oacas (Community Centre Organisations and Charitable Activities) are, like the temporary cooperatives, part of the approved activities that Secours Catholique – Caritas France wishes to pilot in order to offer a solution of income and integration to people far from employment or for whom it is forbidden to work because of their status. In 2021, our Nord-Lille delegation, with the Abej Solidarity association, was the first to launch an Oacas project, due to be rolled out in 2022. ■

## DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY-BASED ECONOMY

### FROM CLOTHING EXCHANGES TO ECO SOLIDARITY SHOPS

The many Secours Catholique – Caritas France's clothing exchanges and shops are expected to continue their evolution towards eco solidarity in the years to come, as a place of welcome and conviviality open to all and as a space for reuse, focusing on ecological issues.

In 2021, several tools and webinars were offered to delegations to support them in this transformation step by step, taking into account needs at the local level. To ensure an eco-responsible management flow, our delegations are invited to communicate more with donors about our charitable recycling

mission, to get closer to local recycling plants, to develop innovative solutions to reuse damaged clothes, via sewing workshops or in partnership with employment structures (integration projects, EBE, temporary cooperative...), and finally to identify responsible brands whose unsold new items could be sold.

New models to enable a regional approach are being sought: mobile shops to go to people in vulnerable or isolated situations, pop up shops to target specific needs, internet shops to activate click and collect in the event of a health crisis, or third-party shops offering workshops or other services with partners.

### ACCESS TO SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY FOR ALL

As low-emission zones are rightly developing to curb air and lung pollution, it is becoming urgent to give people living in poverty the means to buy clean vehicles and to have alternatives to the car when possible. This is at the heart of Secours Catholique – Caritas France's plea for a transition that does not come at the expense of the poorest.

The Solidarauto federation, created and chaired by Secours Catholique, with which we signed a new three-year partnership agreement in 2021, supports garages in their transition towards this goal of access to sustainable mobility for all. Garages, based on a model where vehicles are donated, also offer new services such as the development of long-term rental, support towards existing financial aid and the creation of funds for people who are not entitled to existing aid.

Secours Catholique is also advocating for a solution combining microcredit and the valuation of conversion premiums, in order to promote access to vehicles classified Crit'Air 1. This advocacy paid off in 2021. The government has indeed proposed such

a device, which has however come up against the reluctance of the banks.

As part of the debates around the Climate and Resilience Act, we also launched the idea of a zero-interest loan for the purchase of a clean vehicle. Again, we have been heard, but the pilot is announced for 2023. ■



XAVIER SCHWELB / SCCF

### >>> IN BRIEF

#### ILLE-ET-VILAINE SHARED TRANSPORT

Redon does not have public transport serving the surrounding rural communes. "We are approached by people who cannot afford to have a car. This is a problem, for example, when looking for a job or going to the doctor," explains Mireille Naudin, head of the local Secours Catholique team. "Isolated people also contact us because they can no longer visit their children." To solve these difficulties, the team is launching, in partnership with the Red Cross and with the support of the departmental council, a shared mobility initiative. About twenty volunteer drivers and three coordinators provide a rotating loan service for two vehicles, one hybrid that can be

driven by a volunteer, the other electric, without a licence. The vehicle is loaned for a maximum of forty-eight hours and within a radius of 100 km. "This is a project for a very collaborative future," says Mireille Naudin.

#### CÔTES-D'ARMOR LES PIGNONS DÉJANTÉS AT THE SERVICE OF MOBILITY

The Secours Catholique de Lamballe (13,000 inhabitants), having noted the lack of means of transport for some people, especially migrants, created, in partnership with two other local associations, a bicycle repair workshop, called Les Pignons Déjantés (Crazy Sprockets) by enthusiastic volunteers. Opened in 2020, the

workshop repairs bikes donated by people from the town. Restored to working order, these are offered or loaned to people whose lack of mobility has been noted. When the number of bicycles repaired is greater than that of the beneficiaries, the two-wheelers are entrusted to a receiver who is responsible for selling them. The sum obtained allows the workshop to partially cover the costs of the premises, the cost of tools and supplies. Any cyclist, whether they are experiencing poverty or not, can come and repair their bike themselves at the workshop: they will find tools and advice from volunteers at their disposal.



## DEFENDING MIGRANTS' RIGHTS

### CAFI'S SUCCESSFUL ADVOCACY

In 2017, Secours Catholique – Caritas France, together with Médecins sans Frontières, Médecins du Monde, Amnesty France and Cimade, created the Coordination d'Actions Interacteurs aux Frontières Intérieures (CAFI), with a view to better organising assistance and defending the rights of migrants in border areas with Italy, the United Kingdom and Spain. Rejected in 2020, our request to create a parliamentary commission of inquiry to review the many rights violations was finally agreed to in May 2021. This is an important advocacy success that has allowed us to advance others on the subject. Throughout the year, we contributed to the work of the committee, providing thematic notes, participating in the various hearings, and encouraging its members to travel so that they could talk to the people concerned where they were surviving. Released

in mid-November, the committee's report takes up some of our findings and requests, particularly concerning the practices observed on the Calais coast and on the French-Italian border but differs on other subjects such as that of unaccompanied minors or learning French.

Keen to debate their proposals and ours, on 2 December CAFI organised a seminar at the National Assembly bringing together the main parliamentarians involved, from different political families, and representatives of our associations. Given the electoral context, the commission's recommendations are unlikely to be followed up in the immediate future. However, they provide an interesting basis for the advocacy we will have to make before the Assembly following the 2022 parliamentary elections. The experience itself represents a step forward. It has enabled us to show that it is possible to address these issues and to provide concrete solutions through open discussion between associations and parliamentarians.

### TENSIONS ON THE BRITISH COASTLINE

Faced with the repetition of serious violations of the fundamental rights of migrants on the British coast, and despite the denunciations of the Defence of Rights, the CNCDH and Human Rights Watch, Father Philippe Demeestere and two young activists took the decision, on 11 October 2021, to lead a hunger strike. Highly publicised, this action mobilised associative networks through support actions, inquiries, tribunes and widely signed petitions, and thus put the issue of the fundamental rights of exiled people back in the spotlight.

Following this campaign and a question from Emmanuel Macron during a visit to Montbrison, Didier Leschi, director of the French Office for the Integration of Immigrants (OFII), was appointed as mediator. With a very narrow margin of manoeuvre, the latter made minimal proposals (opening of a night shelter), which were abandoned as soon as the hunger strikers ended. Daily evacuations and brutal practices quickly resumed. An important momentum as a result of the hunger strike, however, opened up some new perspectives. The migrant services platform, which brings together associations present on



XAVIER SCHWIBEL / SCOF



XAVIER SCHWIBEL / SCOF

the coast, is carrying out in-depth work with a view to a 'citizens' convention' approach. Internally, a group of representatives from headquarters and delegations, from Dunkirk to Normandy, met to define a common strategy for field and advocacy actions to be carried out

### PROBLEMS FOR THE SOLIDARITY REFUGE IN BRIANÇON

For several years, exiled people who cross the Alps and arrive in France in a state of exhaustion and extreme frailty have been welcomed for a few days at the Refuge Solidaire, an associative offering of which Secours Catholique – Caritas France is a part. In October 2021, the number of people present having far exceeded the eighty-maximum quota beyond which the security conditions are no longer met, the shelter had to close.

Requests to the prefecture for the public authorities to open up additional space were rejected without any discussion being possible.

In December, following a drop in arrivals, the shelter was able to reopen. Considerable support from associations, including a significant contribution from our Alpine delegation and the Emergencies France team, ensures its sustainability, at least for some time to come.



### ADVOCACY SUCCESS STORIES

#### • SUCCESS OF THE 'MOVE YOUR PREFECTURE' CAMPAIGN

In the Hauts-de-Seine, faced with the impossibility of obtaining an appointment in the prefecture for residence permits, the delegation of Secours Catholique and its partners filed eighteen referrals, seventeen of which led to an appointment for people and compensation for their legal costs.

#### • GOING PAPERLESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES DEEMED "ILLEGAL"

In November 2021, the inter-associative collective in which Secours Catholique is engaged obtained that imposing a paperless approach without offering alternative ways of making appointments at the prefecture be deemed "illegal" by the administrative court of Guyana.

#### • SENATE AMENDMENT TO THE CHILD PROTECTION BILL

In December, after hearing from Secours Catholique and its partners, an environmental group in the Senate tabled forty-four amendments from our proposals. One of them, concerning Unaccompanied Minors (UAMs), was adopted.



## DECLARING A POSITION ON UAMS

Faced with the increasingly worrying situation of UAMs, in 2019 Secours Catholique – Caritas France created a national working group bringing together actors from delegations and headquarters. Its objective: to define our position on the issue of these young migrants and provide the teams with tools to support them as well as possible. Slowed down in 2020 due to the health crisis, the group's work, enriched by meetings with the young people concerned in the field, resumed in 2021 and led to the publication of a document recalling the principles we defend: border protection, appointment of a guardian to accompany the young person as soon as they arrive, presumption of minority, banning record keeping, confinement or expulsion from accommodation when young person reaches 18 years of age. This document will allow the delegations to bring our advocacy to the departments in charge of social assistance for children and therefore the reception of UAMs. At the national level, we defend the principle that the care of these children and young people is the responsibility of child protection and does not switch to the migration policy led by the State, by reaffirming, via press releases,



XAVIER SCHWEBEL / SCCF

debates, work around various bills... that UAMs are children to be protected before they are migrants to be controlled. ■

# DEFENDING THE RIGHT TO HOLIDAYS FOR ALL

## HOLIDAYS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Significantly slowed down in 2020, due to fears of Covid transmission, family holiday care almost got back to normal in 2021. More than 1,000 children have benefited from



VICTORINE ALISE / SCCF

the time for renewal and reciprocal enrichment offered by family stays, one of Secours Catholique – Caritas France's longest running programmes.

In 2021, we also continued the partnership forged with the National Union of Outdoor Sports Centres (UCPA), Courcelles House and the Berry-Tudy Association, allowing 194 children and teenagers to go to camp, with a new element: offering young adults the opportunity to go to the UCPA as well and pass a certificate of aptitude to become an activity leader (BAFA).

For these young people who have particularly suffered from the lockdowns of 2020, this is a great opportunity to change horizons, to make themselves useful to the youngest, and to acquire a door opener for future summer jobs.

## ADVOCACY FOR ACCESS TO HOLIDAYS FOR ALL



The health crisis has highlighted that going on holiday is not a luxury but a real necessity in terms of psychological and physical balance, especially for people in vulnerable situations, most of whom have lived through periods of lockdown in housing conditions that are particularly ill suited. The advocacy that Secours Catholique

– Caritas France leads with other organisations in favour of equal access to holidays for all has been strengthened in 2021. We brought it to the level of the State, the regions, the departmental councils and the municipalities as well as CAF so that they can allocate the necessary means to carry out this right effectively.

Thanks to the €412,000 donated by the National Agency for Holiday Vouchers (ANCV) in 2021, we were able to send 2,700 people on holiday, both families and single people. ■

# COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

## AN IMPORTANT STEP FORWARD IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TRAFFICKING, SLAVERY AND FORCED LABOUR

As coordinator of the collective Together Against Trafficking in Human Beings, which brings together twenty-eight associations, Secours Catholique – Caritas France has established itself as a major player in the fight against child labour, forced labour, human trafficking and modern slavery. Throughout 2021, we contributed to the development of a national strategy to accelerate the fight against these scourges, a strategy that enabled France to become a pioneering country in this field in November 2021. France thus joins Alliance 8.7, a global partnership that aims to implement point 8.7 of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

Now an official partner of Alliance 8.7, we have the strength to advance the causes we defend in this field by jointly mobilising the various actors concerned.

## NATIONAL CONTRIBUTION TO ACTION AGAINST CHILD PROSTITUTION

In France, 7,000 to 10,000 minors are involved in prostitution each year, a number that is on the increase. In 2021, Secours Catholique – Caritas

France participated in a working group on this serious subject as part of the pact for children, 'Fighting Against Violence Against Children 2020-2022', promoted by Adrien Taquet, Secretary of State for the Protection of Children and Families.

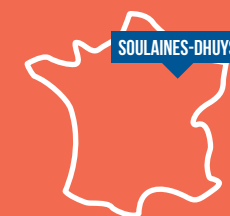
On May 20, 2021, the working group, led by the Paris General Prosecutor, presented its recommendations to the government on the prostitution of minors. The report on the resumption of our work, in which we set out our findings, the good practices we identified and our recommendations, was submitted at the end of June to Adrien Taquet and presented to the media

**66 IN FRANCE, 7,000 TO 10,000 MINORS ARE INVOLVED IN PROSTITUTION EACH YEAR, A NUMBER THAT IS ON THE INCREASE. 99**

on 13 July 2021 during a meeting with the Secretary of State for Children and Families and Minister of Solidarity and Health.

On the basis of the evidence produced, the Government drew up a working plan against the prostitution of minors, which was presented on Monday, 15 November. ■





## REGION

A HOLIDAY  
FOR RELAXATION

Secours Catholique volunteers organise holiday stays for supported families throughout the year. In May, several of them spent a few days in the village of Soulaïnes-Dhuys, at the initiative of the Aube delegation. Without the need to travel miles, they took advantage of this long-awaited getaway to breathe and break the routine.

*"We've been looking forward to this stay for months and, when you see all these smiles, you say to yourself it's worth it."* Facilitator of the Secours Catholique de l'Aube, Perrine does not hide her enthusiasm when she arrives near Lake Der, where young and old are preparing to picnic. In total, twenty-four people who were present for this weekend in the open air come from France, Kosovo, Albania, Cameroon or Ivory Coast. Some of them are regularly involved in the activities of the association and lend a hand when possible.

After sharing the snack with the swans, the group heads to the bird observatory. Bessim, his wife Fahrije, and their two sons, left Kosovo for France eight years ago. After years of proceedings, they were refused asylum. *"We live with my parents, we are not allowed to work and we risk deportation if we move,"* says Bessim. *"It's simple, we have not left the city of Troyes since we arrived here."*

*"Our mother was seriously ill, hospitalised for several months in 2020,"* say Lola and Melissa, whose mum Sandra has been going to the Secours Catholique cooperative grocery store for a few weeks. *"With the health situation on top of all that, the opportunities to be together were really rare... This stay allows us to make up for lost time!"*



FULL REPORT ON THE  
SECOURS CATHOLIQUE WEBSITE:  
[bit.ly/VacancesAubeSC](https://bit.ly/VacancesAubeSC)



## DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF PRISONERS

### AN UNPRECEDENTED STUDY ON POVERTY IN PRISON

Secours Catholique – Caritas France and Emmaus France have a long history of supporting people in prisons. Seeing the way in which the links between prison and poverty are built and sustained, the two associations wished to objectify and document this reality. From March to October 2020, they conducted a qualitative and quantitative survey, based on the voices of more than 1,000 detainees and their families. Published in September 2021 and presented on 21 October to the parliamentary committee of inquiry on prison policy, this study, the first in twenty years, highlights the poverty of prisoners in its economic but also social, professional, cultural, and spiritual dimensions. It takes a broader perspective than the time of incarceration by also focusing on the living conditions of people before and after prison. The findings are not surprising. The poor are massively over-represented in detention, raising

questions about the role of criminal justice in a process that could be described as the criminalisation of poverty. Currently, prison deepens destitution, causing people to lose the power to act in their own lives. Release, without planning and follow through, expose the most vulnerable to increased vulnerability. Current criminal policies do not help to stop this spiral. This is one of the findings of this study, which leads to a series of twenty-five concrete recommendations, inspired by proposals from the detainees themselves, which aim to make the fight against poverty, which has become systemic in prison, a major focus of penal and prison policies.

### ADVOCACY AGAINST THE CRIMINALISATION OF POVERTY

Secours Catholique – Caritas France and Emmaus-France were heard in 2021 by Jean-Marc Sauvé, president of the Committee of the General States of Justice commissioned by Emmanuel Macron, Dominique Simonnot, General Inspector of Prisons, the CNCDH, Marine Jeantet, delegate for the prevention and fight against poverty and Claire Hédon, Defender of Rights. This was an opportunity for us to present our study on poverty in prison and to express our concerns about the current function of criminal justice as a real tool for poverty management. ■



WORDS FROM A DETAINEE

“REAL PRISON STARTED WHEN I CAME OUT.”

Gael Kerbaol / SCCF

## DEALING WITH EMERGENCIES



CHRISTOPHE HARGOUES / SCCF

### CONTINUITY OF CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS

Since the beginning of the pandemic Secours Catholique – Caritas France emergency team integrated the Covid Group, created at the national level with members of the human resources, legal and advocacy departments. Its mission was to translate government decrees into protocols applicable to the various activities to ensure that they could continue in compliance with health rules.

Since the end of 2020 and throughout 2021, two emergency department staff members have continued to adjust the protocols for the safety of the teams and people welcomed, in accordance with the health rules dictated by the government as the pandemic evolves.

At the beginning of 2021, the emergency team was also able to resume and continue, in support of the Alpes-Maritimes delegation, the disaster assistance system set up after the passage of storm Alex in the valleys of La Roya and Vésubie, a project that had to be interrupted during the second lockdown.

### STRENGTHENING THE SUPERVISION OF EMERGENCY TEAMS

In 2018, Secours Catholique – Caritas France noted that its emergencies department in France lacked people trained to supervise volunteers when setting up intervention systems. A four-year training plan was then put in place. Despite the pandemic, it was able to be completed – and in October 2021, all the people trained to supervise the teams found themselves at the Saint-Pierre summit. The team of post-emergency professionals now includes thirty new people capable of overseeing teams of forty or fifty volunteers in the field. This brings to forty-two the number of people in supervisory capacity and to four the number of activities that we are now able to carry out simultaneously. ■



## FOCUS



**BENOÎT-XAVIER LORIDON**  
INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY AND  
ACTION DIRECTOR



**JEAN MERCKAERT**  
FRANCE AND EUROPE ADVOCACY AND  
ACTION DIRECTOR

## FRANCE AND INTERNATIONALLY: A COMMUNITY WITH A SHARED FUTURE

*A Community with a Shared Future* it is under this title that the study conducted with our international partners at the end of 2020 was published. It reflects on the reason why Secours Catholique – Caritas France is increasingly called upon to think about its fight against poverty at the global and local level. Discussion with Benoît-Xavier Loridon, Director of International Action and Advocacy and Jean Merckaert, Director of Advocacy France Europe.

### Why is the global-local stake so strong for Secours Catholique?

**Benoît-Xavier Loridon:** The awareness that we share a future with the rest of the world has been in the genes of Secours Catholique since the 1960s when Jean Rodhain, opened the association up to international projects. The work done over the years and, recently, the health crisis shows us how global the stakes have become. The encyclicals *Laudato si'* and *Fratelli tutti* also invite us to take up the ecological and social subject as a global one.

**Jean Merckaert:** Our international partners alert us to the problems of deforestation, loss of food sovereignty and soil depletion that originate in our patterns of consumption. I am thinking of the massive imports of soya beans that feed our livestock and endanger the lands of the indigenous peoples of Latin America with whom we work, or our dependence on gas and oil, energies that are harmful to the climate and maintain forms of power that our partners come up against. Social and environmental issues are linked. This is why we have chosen, since 2015, to engage in COP 21, with our international partners and Caritas around the world.

### How is this concept implemented in practice?

**J. M.:** Our common vision of the issues has very practical outcomes. Secours Catholique is a member of the Climate Action Network, a federation of associations that fights against the causes of climate change both internationally and locally. Our two directorates defend common positions and objectives, in particular to ensure that climate policies are both ambitious and equitable, for example with regard to mobility, which must be accessible to all, but less energy intensive. Another example, our international partners are strongly committed to agroecology, which is echoed here, in our advocacy for a universal right to quality and sustainable food.

**B.-X. L.:** We bring together and exchange opinions with members from the delegations and our international partners, for example during the Summer Schools, where we involved Caritas Europa in our community of action. Also, during the information exchange meetings, which were able to resume in 2021, where the delegation of Hauts-de-France



received an Israeli partner and another from Mexico on the theme of migration. They are spaces for sharing experiences that allow us to understand the realities experienced on both sides.

### What changes can it bring to Secours Catholique?

**J. M.:** Our call for a social safety net and an ecological ceiling is a translation of the Sustainable Development Objectives (SDGs) that aim to eradicate extreme poverty and preserve the planet. With SDG 1, the goal of eradicating extreme poverty, set for 2030, is no longer reserved for poor countries, because our rich countries have no lessons to give in this area! In France, we are building on this international commitment to call for a guaranteed minimum income so that no one has to choose between proper food and heating.

**B.-X. L.:** We agree on a common advocacy with five themes which have been defined thanks to a great deal of work collecting the voices of people in vulnerable situations in France and our international partners, but also of analysing the thought of the Church and the capitalisation of our actions. Today, we all find ourselves with a notion of a common future, and a pressing need to open up to others.

**J. M.:** Secours Catholique looks to the future with hope, but a concrete hope, not devoid of awareness of the colossal challenges facing humanity. It is by practising fraternity on a daily basis that we find the strength to face these challenges together.

“TODAY, WE ALL FIND OURSELVES  
WITH A NOTION OF A COMMON FUTURE,  
AND A PRESSING NEED TO OPEN UP  
TO OTHERS.”



# PURSUING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GLOBALLY

**WHAT LESSONS CAN BE DRAWN FROM THE IMPACT** of the health crisis in France and the rest of the world? Secours Catholique – Caritas was keen to answer this question, in particular through a survey of its international partners. Their analyses, which are similar to those made in France, highlight the 'common future' that binds us. It invites us to rethink our development models by linking environmental and social issues.

The multi-year partnership agreement signed in 2021 with the French Development Agency (AFD) will enable us to implement our vision of a just ecological transition as a response to these challenges in eighteen countries, including France. The programme gives priority to our main themes of action: agroecology, a resilient model that has demonstrated its relevance in the face of food insecurity caused by the pandemic; environmental migration for which we call for safe and legal pathways as part of the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration; the defence of indigenous land rights in the face of a dominant predatory system, a subject to which we have devoted a study in Latin America and Asia.

Eager to support a strong civil society fit to make the changes to which it aspires, we tend to support our international partners towards empowerment, as is the case today in Africa. It also means that we support them in the face of the increased pressure that many states are exerting on civil liberties and on those who defend them.



## THE AFTERMATH

### WORKING WITH OUR PARTNERS TO FACE OUR COMMON FUTURE

A few months after the beginning of the global pandemic, Secours Catholique – Caritas France sought to better understand its impact in France and abroad, and to inform its thinking on its advocacy priorities for the years to come.

As part of the consultation, a questionnaire was sent to international partners, members of the Caritas network, church organisations and civil society actors. Forty-nine of them, from four continents and thirty-two countries, responded.

We asked for their analysis on three main themes: their vision of the crisis in their country but also on the crisis in Europe, their view on key issues (migration, social and environmental issues, rights, and freedoms), and the impact on the activities carried out on the ground.

The answers of our partners shared strong ideas but also nuances of opinion. A very detailed summary of the study was published in June 2021 for advocacy and internal training purposes.

Although representing the vision of our partners at the time, between August and September 2020, the study highlights long-term findings and issues. Aggravating pre-existing inequalities and injustices, the crisis has highlighted the common vulnerability of our societies and the limits of dominant economic

GAATW, INDIA

**“WILL WE HAVE THE DETERMINATION,  
AND WILL WE APPRECIATE THE  
URGENT NEED FOR A PARADIGM SHIFT?”**

and agri-food models. It calls on us to urgently rethink our societies and our development models by linking environmental and social issues, and also to strengthen international solidarity, because of the 'common future' that binds us. ■





## REGION

## REFORESTATION IN THE NORTH OF THE BRAZILIAN AMAZON

In the forest that Sergi Roberto Lopes planted himself some thirty years ago, the trees sometimes reach 20 metres in height. "When I arrived here in 1985, there was a native tropical rainforest," explains the sixty-year-old. "Like many other small farmers, first of all, I cleared land to grow 'cash crops' such as rice, beans and maize." The government of the day encouraged peasants from southern Brazil to migrate and settle in this region that was rich in natural resources (minerals, oil etc.) and sought after by the great powers. "The faster we cut down the forest, the faster we were given ownership of the land," recalls Sergi Lopez. "But yields were poor and more and more forest had to be destroyed to guarantee sufficient production." This should have been a wake-up call. "After three years we realised that we needed to rethink our relationship with the forest. Through the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT), we contacted local people, including dozens of former 'seringueiros' [rubber tappers] who knew about 'agriculture in the shade' and how to exploit the forest." Together, in 1989, they created the Alliance for Dense Economic Reforestation (RECA), a cooperative intended to organise the production and marketing of the fruits of the forest. To enable the economic viability of the project, farmers apply agro-forestry systems, a type of culture that combines complimentary species so that they protect each other against parasites and promote their mutual development. The stakes are high because deforestation continues to break records in Brazil. To meet this challenge, the RECA members also depend on education and have created the Family Agricultural School. ■





## DEFENDING RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS



ÉLODIE PERRIOT / SCCF

### INCREASING PRESSURE ON FREEDOMS AND THOSE WHO DEFEND THEM

Government pressure on defenders of human rights and public freedom of speech is by no means new in many countries of Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe and the Middle East. However, this has significantly increased since March 2020, on the pretext of the declaration of a virtually worldwide health emergency, which has enabled the authorities to exercise greater control over public space, to restrict freedom of expression, the right to assemble, the use of social networks, freedom of the press and sometimes even to postpone elections.

In 2021, the work of Secours Catholique – Caritas France's partners was severely impacted by measures to control their activity or to block funding from abroad. Some of them, in Russia and in Burma following the coup d'état in February 2021, had to close. Others, in Asia, are unable to carry out advocacy work, and many have been imprisoned or killed, especially in Latin America.

As a result of these threats, our support for our partners now includes a provision for their protection. Where possible and depending on the severity of the situation, we provide support, ranging from help with obtaining Schengen visas to increased IT security, funding for legal aid, relocation or a 'psychological retreat'. We are also very flexible in adapting projects to emergency situations as they arise (access to basic essentials) and transferring funds.

### A YEAR OF CONSOLIDATION OF THE 'VAMOS POR LA PAZ' PROGRAMME IN COLOMBIA

Secours Catholique – Caritas France was very involved in the implementation of the peace agreements signed in 2016 between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and helped to develop the 'Together for Peace' programme which is supported by the AFD and led by a consortium of 23 Franco-Colombian organisations of which we have been the

leader since the end of 2020. In this first year of the programme, we have mapped out the risks and the actors involved in the three project areas: the rural areas of the departments of Cauca and Chocó that were most affected by the armed conflict. An emergency fund has been set up to provide legal and psychological support to human rights activists in danger and to enable their temporary relocation.

We also organised a face-to-face General Assembly of the consortium in Bogotá and key meetings with the French ambassador to Colombia and representatives of the three transitional justice agencies that were established as part of the peace agreement. The year 2021 was deeply affected by the national strike that swept the country from April to June and was triggered by a protest against a draft tax law, but also because of the slow progress of peace agreements and the resurgence of violence. We were committed to informing, in particular the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, about the demands of the demonstrators as well as the violence with which the strike was repressed. Caritas Colombia lobbied the local authorities on this.

### SUPPORTING THE RESISTANCE OF BRAZILIAN CIVIL SOCIETY

In December 2018, Secours Catholique – Caritas France and 17 other international solidarity organisations created the Solidarity Brazil coalition to echo the concerns of social organisations and movements in the run up to Jair Bolsonaro's accession to power. In January 2019, the coalition launched the 'Brazil Resists. Activism is not a Crime' campaign with the publication of the first edition of its barometer on the status of human rights in the country. Two years later, on 19 January 2021, the second edition (2020) appeared.

Based on information and data collected by our partners in the field, this barometer reveals the resilience of those actors who, on a daily basis mobilise to defend justice, human rights and the environment. As part of this awareness raising and advocacy campaign, we posted video testimonies on social media from 50 field workers involved with

'brésistance'. A performance was organised in front of the Brazilian Embassy, with the help of Greenpeace, on the day of the publication of the second edition. Throughout the year, we requested meetings with the mayors to ask them not to sign trade agreements between the European Union and Mercosud, at least as long as these would not include any guar-

**“AS A RESULT OF THESE THREATS, OUR SUPPORT FOR OUR PARTNERS NOW INCLUDES A PROVISION FOR THEIR PROTECTION.”**

antees with regard to protecting human rights and the environment. Finally on 28 August, we hosted an awareness-raising day during the CRID civil society summer school in Nantes.





GAËL KERBAOL / SCCF

### OPENING UP SAFE MIGRATION ROUTES FOR CLIMATE MIGRANTS

The first worldwide Review of the implementation of the Global Agreement on Safe Migration takes place in May 2022. In anticipation of this deadline, in 2021, Secours Catholique – Caritas France initiated an analysis in collaboration with international networks, to support its advocacy in favour of protecting environmental migrants. One of the highlights of this preparatory work was the launch of a multi-stakeholder field study conducted on three continents, Latin America, Africa and Asia, to analyse the facts around environmental migration, its multi-faceted nature and the needs of the people it concerns.

“ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS WAS THE LAUNCH OF A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER FIELD STUDY CONDUCTED ON THREE CONTINENTS, LATIN AMERICA, AFRICA AND ASIA, TO ANALYSE THE FACTS AROUND ENVIRONMENTAL MIGRATION.”

One of our major demands in the implementation of the Agreement is the need to establish safe and legal routes for these people, as no legal protection is currently envisaged within the existing legal framework. The Global Agreement on Migration opens up the possibility of such developments, that we hope to embrace. Environmental changes (drought, salinisation of land, water pollution...) linked to climate change are a legitimate reason for migration that must be recognised. The study launched in 2021 will run for two years, led by Secours Catholique.

### SUPPORT FOR A MIGRANTS' ORGANISATION FOR THE BENEFIT OF MIGRANTS

Established in Cairo in 1979 to provide Arabic and English lessons to refugees, the StARS organisation (Saint Andrew's Refugee Services), a partner of Secours Catholique – Caritas France in Cairo, has moved towards a more collaborative management style since the departure of its director in July 2021. A refugee charity for refugees, 80% of its members are former beneficiaries and volunteers divided into several committees, all involved in the management of the activity. In 2021, we decided to provide financial support to

the new team and to strengthen it through training, so that they, in turn, can train community organisations they work with in Cairo and its suburbs. Owing to the continued growth in the vulnerability of migrants since the beginning of the pandemic and the reduction in humanitarian aid provided by the World Food Programme and the High-Commissioner for Refugees, we have funded a new Nexus project with the aim of improving the living conditions of migrant people over time. This comprises a humanitarian element (distribution of food parcels, hygiene kits and cash assistance) as well as a development element consisting of psychosocial and mental health care.

### A NETWORK OF NGOS HELPING MIGRANTS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE HEALTH CRISIS

Russia has always been a destination for migration for people coming from neighbouring countries such as Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. In 2017, Secours Catholique – Caritas France had launched a coalition of NGOs working in the migrants' countries of departure and an NGO based in Russia, which is very active in supporting people particularly in the legal field.

The aim was to disseminate information on developments in Russian legislation to NGOs in the coalition and to provide migrants arriving in Russia with the number of a 24hr legal helpline, as well as a mobile app in Uzbek and Kyrgyz languages, with a wealth of practical and legal information. In the context of the global health crisis of 2020 and 2021, this coalition has been particularly effective for sharing information and resources on the health measures put in place by the Russian government.

### IMPROVING THE EMPLOYABILITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND WOMEN IN THE BALKANS

Access to employment for young people and women is the main focus of Secours Catholique – Caritas France in the Balkans, a region where almost one third of the under 25s are unemployed. In 2021, we supported several projects aimed at boosting the economy by improving the employability of young people through work placements, careers guidance sessions and entrepreneurship training, but also for women through developing entrepreneurship, especially in the ecological transition sector. The added



ÉLODIE PERRIOT / SCCF

value of these projects is that they involve all stakeholders, companies as well as jobseekers, in order to remove the prejudices that they may have about each other and which are one of the obstacles to employment.

Another obstacle is the lack of support for people by the national employment agencies and the mismatch between school and university courses followed by young people and the needs of the market, due to a lack of careers advisors in schools and universities. Our partners work on raising awareness within the governments of the countries involved to make them understand these shortcomings, with the ultimate aim of getting the states themselves to provide this support towards obtaining employment.

### DISCUSSION AND ADVOCACY ON FRANCE'S POLICY IN THE SAHEL

As French forces prepared to leave Mali after nine years of involvement, voices were raised, pointing out that the predominantly security strategies employed by France in the region were unsuitable. In April 2021, Secours Catholique – Caritas France, in partnership with TLP, Care France, CCFD-Terre Solidaire and Oxfam France, launched an appeal for an overhaul of France's Sahel policy. From October 2021, to fuel the debate, in partnership with Iris (The Institute for International and Strategic Relations), the collective organised a series of debates, bringing together academics, civil society stakeholders from Sahel and France, members of the Sahelian diaspora in France, political leaders and journalists. During this cycle of four conference-debates and two workshops, complementary themes were addressed, such as the coordination of France's



approaches in Sahel, development issues, crisis management, human rights, governance and military operations in the region. The main findings and recommendations from these debates were used as the basis for a joint manifesto published in 2022 that was intended to support advocacy in the presidential campaign.

### ADVOCACY FOR UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO VACCINES AND HEALTHCARE

Ever since the first vaccines against Covid-19, the Pope has repeatedly made calls to remedy the North-South health divide by providing universal access to vaccines and healthcare. In 2021, Secours

Catholique – Caritas France, and its international partners, lobbied the World Trade Organisation (WTO) for a temporary waiver of patents on vaccines. By the end of 2021 this request had not been fulfilled owing to a lack of agreement by the European Union. We are part of the working group formed to support this advocacy and which includes members of Caritas Internationalis and Caritas Europa. We have joined other health and solidarity organisations in France to reiterate that this inequality in terms of vaccination is unacceptable not only because it is unfair but because it prevents a lasting solution to the health crisis. ■

## ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

### DEVELOPING AND PROMOTING A FAIR ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION

In 2021, Secours Catholique – Caritas France signed a long-term partnership agreement with the AFD for the next four years, the eighth of its kind to be signed by the agency with a French civil society organisation. It will enable us to reinforce our strategic dialogue with the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the AFD on a topic of common interest: fair ecological transition.

**“THE DIRECT BENEFICIARIES ARE TWENTY-FIVE CIVIL SOCIETY AND RESEARCH PARTNER ORGANISATIONS, AROUND 2,000 LOCAL ORGANISATIONS AND AROUND 200,000 CITIZENS OF THE COUNTRIES WHERE WE WORK.”**

The aim of this programme, which will be carried out in 18 countries including France with the support of 25 partners across four continents, is to develop and collectively promote a common vision of fair

ecological transition, around two objectives. Firstly, capacity building of vulnerable communities and partners and therefore their ability to take action to implement a systematic vision of ecological transition through 25 field experiments. And secondly, the promotion of this vision.

The programme addresses fair ecological transition in all its social, environmental, economic, political, cultural and spiritual dimensions, with priority given to the following themes: agroecology, environmental migration, sustainable towns, defence of indigenous land rights and the environment.

In addition to field experiments which are essentially local responses to a global problem, the programme aims to move from a local scale to systemic and structural changes both nationally, regionally and internationally. It includes capacity building activities, knowledge generation and dissemination, with an extensive research capitalisation element. The direct beneficiaries are twenty-five civil society and research partner organisations, around 2,000 local organisations (associative, farmers, community, governmental), 500 people in our network in France and around 200,000 citizens of the countries where we work.



### UNDERSTANDING AND DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN ASIA AND LATIN AMERICA

Presented for the first time at the 9th Fospa (Pan-Amazonian Social Forum) the study that Secours Catholique – Caritas France had been working on since 2019 with the indigenous peoples from six countries in Asia and Latin America, was published in February 2021. Entitled *You Would Not Let Your Land Die*, it reports on an analysis of the way of life of indigenous peoples and the management of their lands from the perspective of holistic ecology as defined by Pope Francis in the encyclical *Laudato si'*, as well as on the support for these communities by our local partners.

The study is in three parts. The first, on the ways of life of indigenous peoples and the management of their lands in the face of a prevailing predatory system. The second on how best to support these communities, which entails first carrying out a holistic assessment, adopting a participatory approach and

a supportive stance. Finally, a third, on our recommendations and advocacy towards the governments involved and the international community. While the national and local circumstances of the villages we visited may be very different, the political obstacles encountered by partners and communities are largely similar. It is essential that the governments respect the rights of indigenous people, while at the same time protecting the climate and biodiversity, and that they involve the peoples in all decisions that affect them.

### ADVOCACY ON PROTECTING THE LAND SECTOR AT COP 26

COP 26, which was postponed in 2020, was able to be held in Glasgow, in November 2021. Secours Catholique – Caritas France was present as a member of Caritas Internationalis and the Climate Action network. Our work specifically focussed on the implementation of the Paris Accord and on



mechanisms for reducing CO2 emissions, with a particular emphasis on carbon markets, which we urge should not include the land sector. Indeed, if there is to be a robust climate ambition, it must focus on reducing greenhouse gases rather than carbon offset and storage policies which can put pressure on the land sector. We have made some progress in this area, including the introduction of a complaints mechanism that indigenous peoples and local communities will be able to access if planned carbon market activities impact their land rights or

food sovereignty. As we highlighted in our study, the indigenous peoples of Latin America and Asia, play a major role in reducing CO2 emissions and protecting carbon sinks. The protection of their rights is therefore doubly important. ■

## THE EMERGENCE OF A STRONG CIVIL SOCIETY

### FIRST TRIAL OF A CHANGE ORIENTED APPROACH IN TOGO

Secours Catholique – Caritas France wishes to acquire expertise in a 'Change Oriented Approach' (AOC) for its international partners, comprising a set of tools and methods to facilitate planning, monitoring and evaluating activities to set in motion the process of social change, by inviting local actors who are involved to reflect upon their vision of an ideal common future and the changes that each of them can make in order to achieve this vision. In 2021, this method was trialled by Secours Catholique in Togo, with the support of an external consultant. Initially we worked with our partner to determine the theme of the project: a regional and environmental problem of desertification in the north of the country. On the basis of this work, as part of a field

mission in April 2021, we jointly created a workshop and a presentation method with our partners, who then presented a vision of change workshop for a village community. The aim was to get them to express their perception of the effects of climate change on their environment, to consider their role, what they could do to encourage improvements at their level, and their vision of the changes to be made in the country as a whole. Secours Catholique provides long term support for this process during 'follow-up and encouragement' projects, the first of which took place in September 2021. The aim is to test the impact of AOCs in empowering people through the development of collective action and shared governance, but also to acquire the necessary expertise to apply this tool in other contexts and geographical regions.

### MOBILISING YOUNG PEOPLE IN MADAGASCAR

Launched in 2017 by a consortium of three Malagasy organisations and supported by Secours Catholique – Caritas France and the CCFD-Terre Solidaire, the 'Youth and Citizenship' project entered its second phase during 2020. Its objective is to empower Malagasy youth and encourage them to participate in society so that they can become a real force for social change, by seeking to address the structural causes of the problems faced by young people, which the young people themselves identified during the previous phase.



ELODIE PÉRIOT / SCCF

In 2021, the project reached an important milestone with the launch of the Youth and Citizenship Movement which aims to become autonomous and to expand to include other youth organisations. This has already had the opportunity to carry out several operations. For example, a school of ecology whose work led to the call for 'ecology and human rights' projects, in which around 10 youth organisations took part. The call for projects empowers young people in terms of developing and formulating

projects and in public speaking in order to become stakeholders in the civil society of tomorrow. In addition, they receive specific training according to their areas of concern: health, human rights, the fight against corruption. ■

## FROM EMERGENCY SUPPORT TO LONG TERM ASSISTANCE

### AN EMERGENCY AND DEVELOPMENT RESPONSE TO THE LEBANESE CRISIS

The severe political and economic crisis that had paralysed Lebanon since 2019, was further exacerbated following the explosion in the port of Beirut, right in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2021, hardly anyone was spared from poverty, with around 78% of the population living below the poverty line (according to a UN survey). The most badly affected are Syrian refugees of whom 90% live below the extreme poverty line, and in particularly difficult conditions in winter, especially in the camps near River Litani, where frequent floods force the families to evacuate their shelters. Given the increase in inter-community tensions fuelled by this triple crisis, Secours Catholique –

(of eight months to a year) that aims to provide a rapid response to the humanitarian emergency but including development and peace-building proposals. The emergency component of the project was to provide shelters suitable for winter conditions for Syrian refugees in camps in the Bekka valley and to distribute food vouchers in the city of Tripoli where a centre offering professional training has opened.

### NUGGETS TO SUPPORT AND LINK TO THE NETWORK

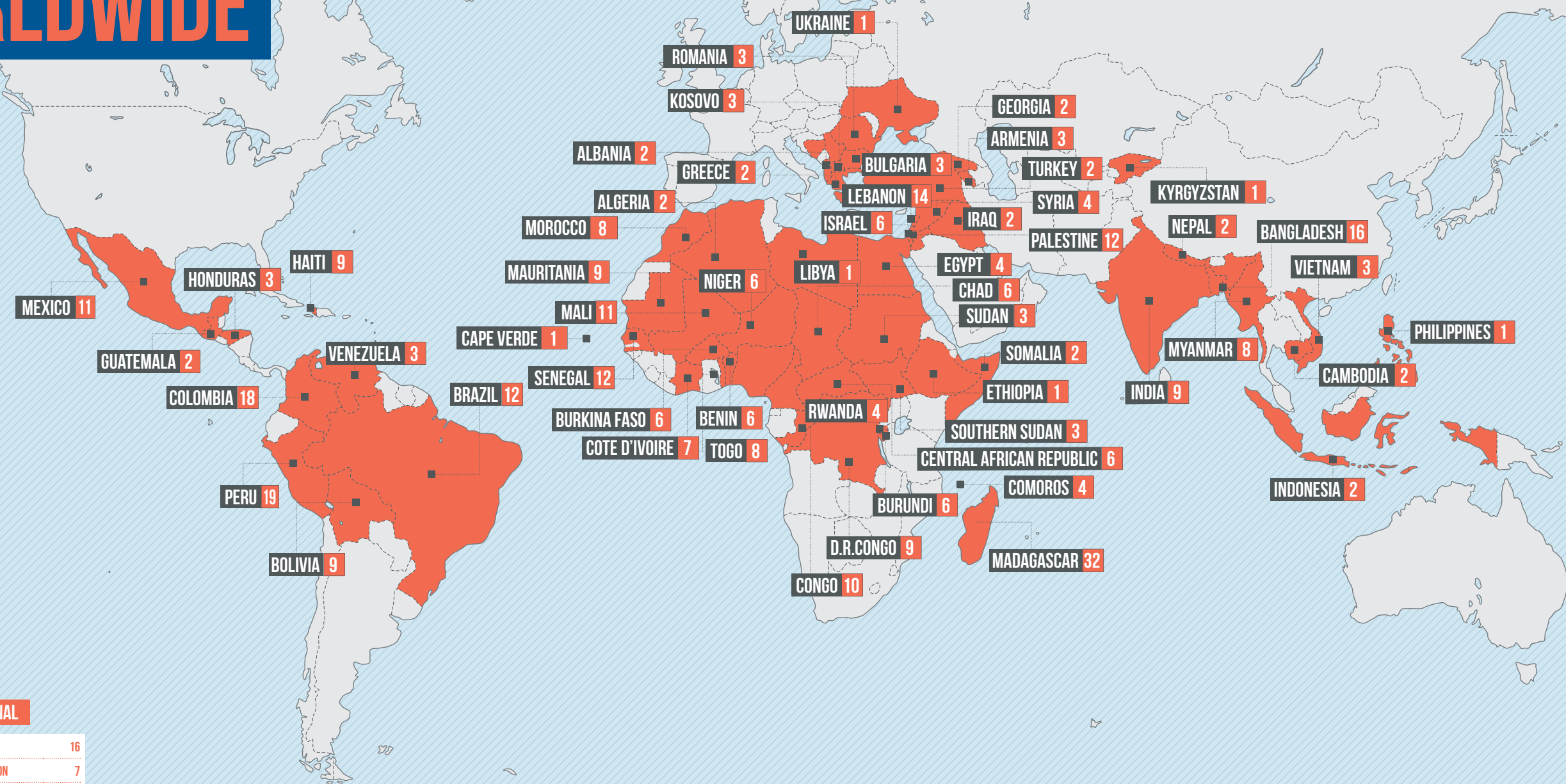
In the face of the dreadful Lebanese crisis, in 2021, Secours Catholique – Caritas France decided to give direct support to community initiatives, known as 'nuggets' that were sometimes created by just a handful of people who, worn down by the inadequacy of the Lebanese government's response and the protracted NGO procedures, decided to take matters into their own hands. This innovative attitude on the part of Lebanese society prompted an entirely new stance from our Directorate for International Action and Advocacy, which is consistent with our desire for the Emergency department and the regional departments to work on more long-term development projects. An international management team visited for the first time in November to identify a number of 'nuggets' with the aim of strengthening them and putting them in touch with volunteers from all over the country to enable them to discuss and share their problems as well as sharing successful

“IN THE FACE OF THE DREADFUL LEBANESE CRISIS, IN 2021, SECOURS CATHOLIQUE – CARITAS FRANCE DECIDED TO GIVE DIRECT SUPPORT TO COMMUNITY INITIATIVES, KNOWN AS 'NUGGETS', THAT WERE SOMETIMES CREATED BY JUST A HANDFUL OF PEOPLE.”

Caritas France supported the response suggested by its partner House of Peace (HOPE): a Nexus project



# 426 PROJECTS SUPPORTED WORLDWIDE



PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY REGION / INTERNATIONAL	
AFRICA REGION	16
LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN REGION	7
ASIA REGION	5
EUROPE REGION	6
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA REGION	4
INTERNATIONAL	32



practices. An exploratory mission by our International Emergency and Middle East divisions is planned for 2022 to determine other interesting initiatives.

### MANAGING THE EMERGENCY IN HAITI IN BOTH THE SHORT AND LONG TERM

For a long time, Secours Catholique – Caritas France has supported agroecology projects in Haiti led by Caritas Haiti and the dioceses. They face an enormous challenge given the country's susceptibility to climactic events: hurricanes, floods, soil erosion, deforestation and frequent earthquakes. On 14 August 2021, when the latest earthquake devastated the island, Caritas Haiti launched an appeal to all of Caritas and its partners. Our International Emergency and Latin America-Caribbean divisions immediately released €30,000 in aid for the distribution of food and health kits.

But in this country that has been particularly hard hit by environmental and health crises coupled with political instability that has literally split the country in two since the assassination of President Jovenel



CHRISTOPHE HARGOUËS / SCOF

Moïse on 7 July 2021, our main concern has been to provide a medium and long-term response. Alongside architects from the International Centre for Earthen Construction, who were there on site, we embarked on the reconstruction of houses, incorporating an agroforestry component, which would eventually provide local timber for construction. To fund these environmental projects, a check-out cash campaign began in November 2021, with a fundraising target of €120,000. ■

## SUPPORTING PARTNERS AND THE ROLE OF SUPPORT

### EMPOWERING PARTNERS IN AFRICA

After helping to establish and strengthen networks of international partners and ensuring that they were effectively organised, Secours Catholique – Caritas France has changed its stance in favour of guiding them towards autonomy, while continuing to support them technically and financially as well as in their advocacy and networking activities.

In 2021, two major initiatives, that had been supported and directly coordinated by Secours Catholique – Caritas France for a number of years, have taken off and are now autonomous: the 'Approach Programme' (DIRO), whose objective is to empower 17 of the 46 national Caritas groups in Africa to become recognised stakeholders, capable of taking action against poverty and the international TLP campaign. The

formation of an 'Approach Programme' team within Caritas Africa began in 2019, allowing for an effective transfer of management from 2020. Although there were delays in getting started, largely due to the health crisis, in 2021, the team was able to take control of the digital tool to organise meetings and webinars with all Caritas members. The mid-term evaluation conducted that very year showed that Caritas groups were implementing the programme, based on the lessons learned in previous phases. A review of the process of capacity building and empowerment carried out since 2005 as part of the various phases of the DIRO programme, then 'Approach', is planned in 2022.

Co-created by Secours Catholique following an advocacy campaign for democratic change launched in 2014, the TLP citizens' movement, which has been an association since 2020, has set up its team and acts

as the network head of a continent-wide movement made up of 10 TLP coalitions in 10 French-speaking African countries. In a year marked by coups d'état in Chad, Mali and Guinea, TLP has demonstrated its ability to mobilise its network and its members

to carry out advocacy actions both in France and abroad, to denounce these attacks on democracy, but also the lack of accountability by the states and lack of social justice, despite pressure being exerted and the arbitrary arrests of its activists. ■

## FRENCH AND INTERNATIONAL CONVERGENCE

### SHARING ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT METHODS TO PROMOTE SOCIAL CHANGE LOCALLY

'Activities to Promote Social Change Locally' (ACSL) is an approach close to that of the AOC (see p.56) that has been led for a number of years by Secours Catholique – Caritas France in order to have an impact on the living conditions of the people that we support, through the empowerment of the people themselves. Regional and national networks have emerged to develop this approach.

As part of the development of the ambitious programme on fair ecological transition, in respect of which the international management of Secours Catholique signed a three-year agreement with the AFD in 2021, we sought to compare the ACSL-type approaches adopted by our international partners on the subject of fair ecological transition and those being implemented in France.



ELODIE PÉRIOT / SCOF

In 2021, we pinpointed about a dozen partners who are setting up this type of project from which our teams in France could draw inspiration. The aim is not to duplicate projects that vary according to the local situation, but to understand the methodology to build a shared vision. From now on, the conditions for exchanges are in place. The first meetings will be held in 2022, notably with the arrival of partners from Togo, Bangladesh and Brazil. At the same time, the national ACSL network is producing podcasts to share experiences in France and elsewhere, to rally the citizens in the same region to organise themselves, discuss and undertake advocacy in their area.

### THE RESUMPTION OF LEARNING MEETINGS

Learning meetings were launched by Secours Catholique – Caritas France as part of their global Migration campaign, to enable their field workers and international partners to share their methods and experiences in the reception of migrants. These meetings were suspended in 2020, then resumed in 2021, when three representatives from our partners in Mexico and Israel were hosted in the Hauts-de-France in mid-October, by people they had met during the World Social Forum on Migration in Mexico in 2018 and in Israel in 2019.

The meeting took the form of a caravan that went out to find teams involved in activities with migrant people in the region, and participation in the forum, held in Lille, on the topic of hospitality. The cycle of meetings ended in March 2022 with the reception of members of Caritas Senegal in Brittany and Caritas Brazil in the Loire. ■





## COUNTRY

FEMALE FARMERS,  
SKILLS THAT  
BEAR FRUIT

To supplement their meagre household income, women from Ngoye, a rural community in Senegal, move to Dakar after the harvest. Some sell their family's stock of groundnuts or millet. Others do household chores for families who are better off than their own. They save for those who remain in the village (children, husband, in-laws) and live in very poor conditions. Now, thanks to income from market gardening activities developed with Caritas Thiès<sup>3</sup> as part of self-help groups, there are fewer women willing to migrate. A more fulfilling life is possible in Ngoye. The painstaking work of Caritas in Senegal, the Sempreviva Organização Feminista (SOF) in Brazil or the Balasore Social Service Society<sup>3</sup> (BSSS) in India testify to this: when women develop a degree of economic independence, their families benefit in terms of food security, health and education. In Senegal, before starting to cultivate, you have to "secure the land", explains Odile Rose Sarr, a sociologist and facilitator at Caritas Kaolack. The group applies to the village chief to obtain the right to use the land. Around 40 women share one hectare. They decide together what to plant: aubergines, lettuce, pumpkins, turnips, carrots, mint... Then they sell these products at local markets in Dakar. The money earned belongs to them. Quite a victory when women's work is often not valued either socially or economically. In fact, during the rainy season, as well as domestic chores and maintaining their vegetable garden to feed the family, the women of Ngoye work alongside their husband in the fields of groundnuts, maize or millet. But at the end of the harvest, he alone decides what to do with every cent earned from this shared labour. ■

3 Secours Catholique partner



FULL REPORT ON THE  
SECOURS CATHOLIQUE WEBSITE:  
[bit.ly/InnoverSenegalSC](https://bit.ly/InnoverSenegalSC)



# AN ORGANISATION FIT TO RESPOND TO NEW CHALLENGES

**EXCEPTIONAL IN EVERY WAY**, the year 2020 forced Secours Catholique – Caritas France to change its ways of working and its internal operations. The assessment of what happened locally, regionally and nationally was very rewarding. In 2021, it prompted us to clarify our shared governance processes and to initiate closer dialogue between the delegations and head office, to better align ambitions with actions and resources with needs. The intense demand for meaning that was expressed at the time of lockdowns required us to take greater consideration of the spiritual side of Secours Catholique. A reference document on this core issue was published in 2021 (see p.14).

In view of the emergencies arising from the crisis, we have been prompted to become more involved in the CCAS in order to have a real impact on social policies and their implementation. In order to support the 1,500 Secours Catholique volunteers who now sit on these committees, we have developed training courses to help them improve their skills.

Many young volunteers have joined us in recent years and we have made greater use of civic reserves and the sponsorship of skills. A national policy on the commitment to social solidarity was needed. A reference document was published in 2021 on how to make the best use of this new energy and to enable people who have experienced poverty to become more empowered through commitment.



ÉLODIE PÉRIOT / SCOF

## THE CHALLENGES OF VOLUNTEERING AND COMMITMENT

### DEVELOPING A NATIONAL POLICY ON THE COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL SOLIDARITY

The lockdowns of 2020 had a significant impact on commitment to social solidarity at Secours Catholique – Caritas France. Forced to stay at home, some of our older volunteers have not resumed their commitment, whereas at the same time, many young and active people joined us, sometimes on an ad hoc basis and with different expectations and desires. For Secours Catholique – Caritas France it was the opportunity to develop a national policy on 'Commitment to Social Solidarity'.

A national review was carried out by representatives from headquarters and the delegations, including both employees and volunteers, with the aim of drafting a roadmap on the issue.

It was delivered in June 2021 and contains three main strands. The first is about the volunteer's journey: calling, welcome, training, handover; the second, the new profiles of actors and the third, the key issues of

commitment open to the widest possible audience. This roadmap was signed by our Board of Directors in July 2021 and serves as the basis for the development of an action plan which is in the process of being approved.

### SECOND INITIATIVE IN INTERNATIONAL CIVIC SERVICE

Secours Catholique – Caritas France has the necessary authorisation to offer young people under the age of 25, whatever their background and qualifications, the opportunity to carry out a civic service assignment in its various branches.

Since 2019, through a partnership with the Catholic Delegation for Cooperation (DCC) which is accredited for international civic services, we have welcomed young people from the four corners of the world, who have studied, are already involved in their countries and have a good grounding in French. In September



2021, five young people from Ecuador and Lebanon completed their civic service mission in the Pas-de-Calais, Ille-et-Vilaine, Haute-Garonne, Essonne and Var delegations, each one on very different topics.

These intercultural experiences are truly enriching both for the young people on civic service missions and for the teams who work with them. They will be repeated in the coming years. ■

## GOVERNANCE AND INTERVENTION MODEL REVISITED

### PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF THE FIRST YEARS OF THE NATIONAL ACTION COUNCIL

The National Action Council (CAN) is a consultative body of Secours Catholique – Caritas France, created in 2018 and made up of a balanced mix of people with different types of experience: experience of poverty, network leadership or delegation management. In 2021, the CAN met several times by video conference to share what was happening in the regions. It took part in our board meeting in June and also at *Belles Retrouvailles*, which brought together people in charge of Secours Catholique and people in vulnerable situations, and where its recommendations on political commitment were presented in the form of short sketches.

As two thirds of the 60 members of the CAN are due to be replaced in 2022, the year 2021 was also an opportunity to carry out an initial assessment with a view, on the one hand, to validating the desirability of increasing the proportion of people in vulnerable situations, as we wish, and on the other hand, to establish support for outgoing members. It will also involve clarifying the mandate given to the CAN for the coming years.

The CAN has demonstrated that such a wide range of actors is perfectly capable of coming up with ideas and proposals, such as during the 'Thoughts on the Aftermath' discussion that was intended to define Secours Catholique's five lines of advocacy, as well as the style of advocacy preferred by Secours Catholique. The CAN is also a formative space where everyone can develop through meeting those who are different.

### SHARED GOVERNANCE IN THE DELEGATIONS

Sharing responsibilities with all, particularly with people who have experienced poverty is a major priority at Secours Catholique – Caritas France. In 2021, as part of a consultation with our 72 delegations, we aimed to find out how they understood the concept of shared governance and how they had embraced it since the call for pilots that was issued in spring 2019. This consultation came to an end in 2021 and enabled us to learn from the experiences of our delegations. This type of governance requires the creation of spaces for learning to participate, places where people in vulnerable situations can gain sufficient self-confidence to get involved. There is no participation without subsidiarity. It also requires that the delegation bureaux clearly define the responsibilities to be handed to the teams, and the teams, the ones that they can assign to individuals. A policy direction has now been established. This process continued in the first half of 2022 with a dialogue in the delegation offices and nationally in an effort to revitalise our associative life.

### ADAPTING AMBITIONS TO THE REAL SITUATION ON THE GROUND

To better communicate the reality of what is happening in the Secours Catholique – Caritas France delegations and in head office management, to decide together what must be done jointly, this is the true ambition of the 'Activity Management Framework' project as part of the 'Heart' project that was launched in 2021. This was confirmed by the findings of two approaches carried out in 2020. Firstly the 'Shared Situational Analysis' in which some 50 delegations took part at the end of 2020 after coming



ANTHONY MICALLEF / SCCF

out of lockdown, and which revealed the situation in the delegations in a number of areas: the state of poverty, leadership of the network and volunteers, development of activities and partnership relations. And secondly, the analysis of our internal operations by a consultancy firm in the teams in two regions. With a view to continuing this head office/delegation dialogue in a constructive way, we have launched a working process called 'Review and Outlook': an annual meeting to review our actions with regard to our associative project which enables the delegations and head office management to stake stock of their actions, their needs and their ambitions. Piloted in 10 delegations in 2021, this process will be extended in 2022. The national coordination plan will be modified each year according to information provided.

**“WE HAVE LAUNCHED A WORKING PROCESS CALLED ‘REVIEW AND OUTLOOK’: AN ANNUAL MEETING TO REVIEW OUR ACTIONS WITH REGARD TO OUR ASSOCIATIVE PROJECT.”**

### SETTING UP AN ADVISORY BOARD AT CITÉ SAINT-PIERRE

The Cité Saint-Pierre has changed over time, from a place dedicated to accommodating pilgrims to a more open space, offering activities intended to encourage each person to speak out, to reveal their talents, to encourage everyone to discover the message of Lourdes and the message of hope from the Gospel and finally to promote the 'impact of meeting' between pilgrims, visitors and volunteers of all backgrounds. There is also a strong expectation that it will become a place for charity workers to recharge their batteries.

In 2021, the review of the proposed plan coming to an end, highlighted the need to improve the pastoral aspect of the project so that the Cité Saint-Pierre continues to be the place of inspiration sought by Mgr Rodhain, and so that its religious communities can position themselves more decisively in the spiritual context they desire.

A council, the actual policy arm of the Cité Saint-Pierre body, has been set up for this purpose. The management committee will remain in charge of policy directions and will report to the council on its work. ■



## COMMUNICATION

In 2020, Secours Catholique – Caritas France launched a brand-new communication campaign appearing on TV, billboards and radio, to promote its association project that encourages encounters and calls for the creation of a more fair and fraternal society. This campaign scored very highly on our image survey and was repeated in 2021. Two makeovers were completed during the year: the delegation websites and our online shop, now known as 'Bonjour!'. The objective: to be more attractive to a young audience who are likely to donate or get involved.

### THE NEW DELEGATION WEBSITES

The redesign of the Secours Catholique – Caritas France delegation websites was completed in 2021. Available on-line on 9 November, just before the launch of the year-end campaign, these new websites enabled the people who were receptive to our messages to find out about actions and projects closest to their homes and maybe to get involved. The aim of this redesign was twofold: to facilitate access to information for internet users and to simplify the administration of the website and the publication of content for the teams. Throughout the year each delegation was supported with the process of putting its new website on-line: reception of the 'empty shell' of the website, taking over or reworking of old content and writing new content, getting to grips with the administration and finally going on-line.

These new websites encourage more commitment through volunteering or donations, by using the 'I donate' and 'I pledge' buttons on all pages. They emphasise the substance of Secours Catholique and its mission through articles on the actions of the delegation, but also on its mission and specific characteristics. They are also intended for people in vulnerable situations by introducing the offer of services at regional level.

### BONJOUR!, THE NEW ON-LINE SHOP

The Secours Catholique – Caritas France on-line shop was revamped in 2021. It is now known as 'Bonjour!', because fraternity begins with this simple word and because it is a 'good day' to do something by supporting our action with a purchase. Its design is more modern, with a deliberately positive tone and a logo inspired by the Secours Catholique cross, embellished with four hearts as a sign of generosity and fraternity. With 'Bonjour!' we enable consumers in

search of meaning to get involved through useful and socially responsible purchases. The shop is aimed at younger people – a major issue for our association – single people or parents, between 30 and 50 years old, who are currently distanced from the association that either they do not know or of which they have an unfavourable view. It offers products from the Catholic culture, but also socially responsible and eco-friendly products.

### SECOND WAVE OF THE IMAGE SURVEY

The national project 2016-2025 aims to transform society starting with the most vulnerable. This ambitious, innovative project did not match the general public's perception of the association. We have therefore undertaken to renew our image and, to measure the impact, we have entrusted an external partner to conduct an annual image survey.

The second wave of the survey was conducted at the beginning January 2021 with a core sample of 1,010 people over 18 years of age and representative of the French population and an additional sample of 150 donors.

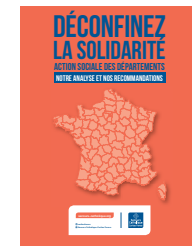
It shows that Secours Catholique is primarily seen as an association that helps people to take control of their lives (79% of respondents), that advocates a more fraternal society (84%) and a little less as a campaigning association (73%) or one that challenges government authorities (69%).

Our communication campaign is popular as our advert has 84% of the general public and 96% of our donors giving positive ratings. It clearly conveys our vision of a fraternal revolution for 89% of respondents and makes 64% of them want to donate, i.e. respectively 10 and 4 points more than in 2020.

Even more than in 2020, the association is considered useful (92%), positive (87%) and effective (80%). However, only 48% of respondents consider it to be modern. ■

## PUBLICATIONS

### 'UNLOCK SOLIDARITY'



at departmental level.

Published immediately after the departmental elections, this Secours Catholique – Caritas France study analyses and compares the social policies implemented by the departments and makes recommendations on how to better fight against poverty

### STATISTICS ON FOOD POVERTY



The defining image of 2020, in a country known throughout the world for its agricultural production and gastronomy, will always be the queues outside the food distribution centres, with a significant number of people there for the first time. In the 2021 edition of its statistical report on poverty in France, Secours Catholique wanted to shed new light on this food poverty. This is based on data from our annual statistical survey, which outlines the profile of the people we meet (770,000 in 2020), but also on a complimentary survey of 1,088 households including those to whom our teams have given service vouchers, which enabled them to deal with the food crisis right from the start of the first lockdown. Up to 7 million people would have needed food aid in 2020, i.e. nearly 10% of the population of France. This is unheard of in peace time.

### A GROUNDBREAKING STUDY ON POVERTY IN PRISON



France, collected the opinions of people detained by the courts. Published in 2021, this study underpins our joint advocacy for poverty in prison to be seen

as a systemic problem. Based on the proposals made by the detainees themselves, twenty-five recommendations provide concrete avenues for improvement throughout the report.

### ADVOCACY AGAINST NON-USE



Since the early 2000s, the annual report of Secours Catholique *The State of Poverty in France* refers to the non-take up of services and estimates its extent: approximately a third of the people supported and eligible for RSA do not receive it. Over a quarter of people who are eligible for family allowances do not collect them. These worrying statistics tend to get worse over the years. This observation, which is widely corroborated by academic and institutional studies on the subject, particularly those of l'Odenore, a partner in this new report which looks in depth at the reality of this phenomenon, poses a real challenge for society.

### 'YOU WILL NOT LET YOUR LAND DIE'



Secours Catholique – Caritas France has carried out a study of the way of life of indigenous populations and the management of their lands from the perspective of integrated ecology as defined by Pope Francis in the *Laudato si'* encyclical. At the same time, it focussed on supporting its partners working in the field in Asia and Latin America.

The study presented here was carried out collaboratively, in eight villages, by three teams from our International Action and Advocacy Directorate and six of our partners in the field.



**'L'APOSTROPHE', N°10**

For its tenth issue, the authors of *L'Apostrophe* – our bi-annual magazine written by people who, owing to their personal experience of insecurity, have gained expertise on poverty – examine the nature and reality of citizenship among those who, on a daily basis, struggle to live better. They experience feelings of mistrust and abandonment, yet also a strong desire for citizenship that values and breathes life into fraternity.

**A COMMON DESTINY**

A few months after the start of the global pandemic, Secours Catholique – Caritas France launched consultations within its network, to gain a better understanding of the impact of this crisis on the actors who make up the network and to inform its thinking on its working priorities. As part of these consultations, five different sources were identified: the opinions of people in vulnerable situations, the network, the Church's social doctrine, external fundraisers or donors and international partners. The analysis is based on feedback from our international partners. ■

## DONATIONS AND FINANCE

**Despite the decline in 2021, the generosity that was clearly evident in 2020, has remained at a remarkably high level. At the end of 2021, Secours Catholique – Caritas France had collected €68.8 million, an amount that confirms the extent to which, by virtue of our being close to the people who are most vulnerable and of the relevance of our action, we have been able to win the trust of new donors, a trust that has also been confirmed by government authorities who have financed our national and regional projects to the tune of €4 million.**

**DEEP SEATED GENEROSITY IS CONFIRMED**

The outpouring of generosity that occurred in 2020 in response to the social consequences of the health crisis continued in 2021. For the second year in a row, Secours Catholique – Caritas France saw an influx of donations throughout the year, totalling €68.8 million by 31 December. This was slightly less than in 2020 but 13.7% more than in 2019. This overwhelming generosity is explained by what can be described as a disaster effect as much as by a genuine commitment to our values, our responsiveness, our proximity to the most vulnerable people throughout the country or our expertise that has enjoyed greater media exposure. Whilst recruiting new donors is a challenge for charities, we can be proud of the fact that we have managed to retain ours, especially those who are usually more erratic, who give as an emotional response to disasters.

**FULFILMENT OF EXTREMELY GENEROUS BEQUESTS**

In 2021, bequests to Secours Catholique – Caritas France were unusually high: up 6.8%, or €2.9 million more than in 2020. There are several explanations for this result. Firstly, the completion of dossiers that were delayed with the lawyers, to which were added a number of major new bequests, and also the fact that many bequests involved properties, a sector where prices have risen, especially in the regions.

**PROJECTS FUNDED BY FRANCE RELANCE**

Right at the beginning of 2021, the government launched an appeal for projects under the *France Relance* recovery plan, in response to which Secours Catholique – Caritas France submitted nationwide projects budgeted at €3 million, and received funding of €2 million. At regional level, 27 of the



GAEL KERBAOL / SCCF

39 applications submitted by the delegations were funded to the tune of €2 million, bringing to €4 million the total value of grants obtained by Secours Catholique as part of the *France Relance* plan. Given that *France Relance* only provides 80% of funds for approved projects, the delegations have made efforts to secure other sources of funding in the regions and the municipalities. In total, almost €9.5 million in grants were obtained compared with €6 – 7 million in previous years.

**A GREAT EVENING OF FRATERNITY**

In March 2021, Secours Catholique organised an extraordinary evening to showcase to its donors, projects that address the social needs that have been identified by its 72 delegations: support for families, fighting loneliness, access to adequate food, support for homeless people... An opportunity for our donors to discover the diversity of the actions we carry out in response to the various aspects of poverty, whilst always remaining faithful to our core philosophy: ensuring that the person in difficulty is at the very heart of the project. Owing to health restrictions, the evening was conducted by videoconference, in the presence of Véronique Fayet, our National President, and raised €300,000.

**MY DONATION HAS MEANING**

Secours Catholique – Caritas France has an in-house fundraising platform named *Mon Don a du Sens*. The Saint-Laurent network used it to fund journeys to the Holy Land which were able to resume in 2021. The total amount of €11,340 was raised in this way in our team networks and those close to groups in the Saint-Laurent network. ■



## THE CARITAS FRANCE NETWORK

The Caritas France Network was created by Secours Catholique – Caritas France to unite the organisations it has helped to create, or which share its values, aims and principles for action. Its goal is to encourage innovation and cooperation at regional level by combining the skills and resources of its members to facilitate the provision of overall support for all those vulnerable people experiencing poverty and exclusion and help them take action themselves. It is also committed to encouraging solidarity and fraternity in others and acting on the causes of poverty.

[reseaucaritasfrance.org](http://reseaucaritasfrance.org)

### ACCOMMODATION AND HOUSING SUPPORT

Faced with a shortage of housing and the ongoing problem of substandard housing, Secours Catholique has created new solutions within the Caritas France network: construction of new homes funded by solidarity-based savings, supporting Cités Caritas which manages more than 10,000 emergency accommodation units, housing and integration schemes, and finally supporting home insulation upgrades. These projects complement the range of accommodation options and overall housing support provided by Secours Catholique – Caritas France.

#### CITÉS CARITAS



Formed in 1989 by Secours Catholique – Caritas France to give autonomy to the residential areas known as 'cités' under its management, the mission of Cités Caritas is to welcome, house and support people in a vulnerable situation, those excluded from society or the disabled and to steer them towards autonomy and socio-professional integration. It comprises 21 'cités', 14 in the housing sector, three to promote integration through economic activity and four in the disabled sector, in the three French regions of: Centre-Ouest, Île-de-France and Sud.

In 2021, around 1,100 employees – the majority of them social workers – and around 300 volunteers helped more than 13,000 people, including 350 with disabilities (those with psychiatric issues, learning difficulties or autism), through 140 social support services managed by the association (emergency accommodation, social reintegration centres, CHRS<sup>1</sup>, drop-in centres, boarding houses for families and

childcare nurseries etc.). The support provided by Cités Caritas teams promotes and encourages the active involvement of those receiving their help and values their participation as a rich resource. The education initiatives implemented by these cité communities working with disabled people focus on help through work. Its network of 'Grandir en Crèche' childcare nurseries now offers around a hundred places.

As a member of the Caritas France network, Cités Caritas makes a proactive contribution to social change and the way society cares for its most vulnerable members. Its ongoing work is based on the principle of involving professionals and volunteers, as well as the active involvement of those it supports. In 2021, Cités Caritas created a Solidarity Economy and Employment unit and notably incorporated the Bis boutique social inclusion company that was set up by Secours Catholique. Furthermore, Cités Caritas signed a new three-year partnership agreement with Secours Catholique.

[acsc.asso.fr](http://acsc.asso.fr)

#### FONCIÈRE CARITAS HABITAT



Established in 2015, Caritas Habitat is a property company which aims to develop social housing that can then be used by non-profit organisations to fulfil their mission of supporting the most vulnerable with housing. As part of the social and solidarity economy, from the outset, it draws on personal and institutional solidarity-based savings to invest in property purchases: the construction of new social housing, renovation or redevelopment of housing stock.

These assets enable organisations that specialise in supporting poorly housed individuals to continue their projects; these organisations can be

members of the Caritas France network (including Cités Caritas), or close associates.

[caritashabitat.org](http://caritashabitat.org)

#### FONCIÈRE CHÊNELET



Foncière Chênelet was set up in 2009 to respond to the major social housing issues faced by people on the lowest incomes in rural or suburban communities by offering them high-quality eco-friendly housing. As certified social housing contractors, Foncière Chênelet builds high-quality, low-rent social housing, the majority of which is in rural communities.

[fonciere-chenelet.org](http://fonciere-chenelet.org)

#### THE ÉCO HABITAT NETWORK



The Éco Habitat Network was set up as an experimental initiative in 2014 by the delegations of Secours Catholique in Picardy, on the basis of their awareness that many home-owning families in particularly vulnerable situations do not use the public sector schemes available to improve the energy performance of their homes, thereby reducing their energy consumption. The mission of the Éco Habitat Network is to network local stakeholders in home energy improvement (local authorities, businesses and volunteers) to help households on very low incomes carry out major upgrades that are 90% funded by the association.

[reseau-ecohabitat.fr](http://reseau-ecohabitat.fr)

### EMPLOYMENT AND INTEGRATION

In addition to the general level of support towards employment provided by the teams of Secours Catholique – Caritas France, some members of the Caritas France Network also develop employment integration projects, support social innovation and experimentation, and implement advocacy initiatives to facilitate the employment and workplace integration of those most excluded from society.

#### COMITÉ CHRÉTIEN DE SOLIDARITÉ AVEC LES CHÔMEURS



Established over 30 years ago, the Comité Chrétien de Solidarité avec les Chômeurs (CCSC) aims to maintain focus on the consequences of unemployment. By raising awareness in Christian communities as well as society as a whole and by fighting indifference through the words of people experiencing unemployment, the CCSC encourages everyone to take action so that these people can regain a place in society. With the help of Secours Catholique – Caritas France, the CCSC has launched a new version of its newsletter *Vaincre le Chômage*.

[ccscfrance.com](http://ccscfrance.com)

#### FÉDÉRATION SOLIDARAUTO



Solidarauto is the name of the network of community garages set up by Secours Catholique – Caritas France delegations in a number of French regions. These Solidarauto garages work to provide people with the personal mobility they need to facilitate integration into the world of work and society through second-hand vehicle sales, maintenance, repair and rental. At the end of 2021 a strategic plan was devised and a three-year partnership agreement was signed with Secours Catholique.

[solidarauto.org](http://solidarauto.org)

<sup>1</sup> Accommodation and social integration centres



## DEVELOPMENTS IN PHILANTHROPY, INNOVATION AND RESEARCH

The Caritas France Network also has a cross-functional mission to develop, promote and fund research and consultation around the theology of charity and social innovation.

### THE CARITAS FRANCE FOUNDATION



Founded by Secours Catholique – Caritas France in 2009, the Caritas France Foundation is France's first and only umbrella foundation focused on combating poverty. Its core mission is to encourage the development of philanthropy and combat social exclusion via its member foundations, which currently total more than 100. It gives individuals, families and groups of friends the opportunity to set up their own foundations and ensures their smooth running by supporting the founders (choice of projects, the involvement of friends and family, etc.). Its second mission is to raise funds in support of projects run by Secours Catholique – Caritas France, by the Caritas Network in France and internationally, or by other partners. In 2021, two-thirds of the funds raised were redistributed to the Caritas France network and projects elsewhere in the world. The Caritas France Foundation has supported around 1,000 projects in this way since its creation. Lastly, the foundation also supports research and experimentation. It presents an annual award to a young social sciences researcher at the Institut de France symposium.

[fondationcaritasfrance.org](http://fondationcaritasfrance.org)

### LA FONDATION JEAN-RODHAIN



The Jean-Rodhain Foundation was established in 1981 to contribute to Christian reflection on charity in its broadest sense (in terms of justice, solidarity and social doctrine), to promote the study of the theology of charity through academic research and develop a dialogue with field workers based on the experiences and personal accounts of the poor. Every two years, it hosts a symposium attended by around 50 academics and professionals. It has instituted and funds academic chairs in a number of university theological faculties and continues to support the 'Servons la Fraternité' (Let's Facilitate Fraternity) website that developed out of 'Diaconia 2013' with the

aim of sharing good practices that make fraternity a reality for all. At the end of 2021, the foundation celebrated its 40th anniversary with a symposium.

[fondationjeanrodhain.org](http://fondationjeanrodhain.org)  
[servonslafraternite.net](http://servonslafraternite.net)

### CARITAS IN ALSACE

More precisely, it was the history of the Catholic Church in Alsace that led to the creation of Caritas, which preceded Secours Catholique in France, and covered all the topics referred to above.

### THE CARITAS ALSACE CHARITY FEDERATION



Founded in 1903 by Msgr Paul Müller-Simonis to "improve the organisation of Catholic charity work in Alsace", the Strasbourg-based Caritas Alsace Charity Federation has been working for over 100 years. A service of the Alsace diocese of the Catholic Church and an association under local law, it addresses the physical, moral and spiritual hardships of our time. It has three core missions: to act as a central unifying point for charitable activities, to promote charitable initiatives, and to call for more effective social justice by bringing forward proposals to do so. The federation also carries out the work of Secours Catholique – Caritas France in Alsace, working under the name of Caritas Alsace, Secours Catholique network.

[federation-de-charite.org](http://federation-de-charite.org)

# GOVERNANCE AND CONTROL AT SECOURS CATHOLIQUE – CARITAS FRANCE

## AT 31 DECEMBER 2021

**THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY** of Secours Catholique – Caritas France has 151 members, including 118 active members – qualified administrators, presidents and vice-presidents from delegations, and one treasurer per region – and 33 honorary members. The age limit is 75 years old. 56% of the active members are men, 44% are women.

**THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS** comprises 21 members, all voluntary; 12 are presidents or vice-presidents from delegations, nine are qualified individuals. They each have a three-year term of office, renewable twice. The board meets 11 times a year. The committee is made up of a president, two vice-presidents, a treasurer and a secretary. The general chaplain and the secretary general attend committee and board meetings, without voting rights.

### BUREAU

#### President:

Véronique Devise

#### Vice-Presidents:

Alain de Brugière, Anne Duthilleul

#### Treasurer:

Bernard Alet

#### Secretary:

Hélène Mayer

### OTHER MEMBERS

Hervé Bonamy – Pascal Bourgue – Gilles Cagnard – Denise Chalaye – Laurent Courcol – Marie-Laure Denès – Jean-François Desclaux – Philippe de Finance – Vincent Léonard – Chantal Nicol – Patrick O'Quinn – Hervé Masurel – Hélène Mayer – Bertrand Parmentier – Daniel Paul

#### Secretary General:

Vincent Destival

#### Chaplain General:

Père Hervé Perrot

#### Honorary Presidents:

François Soulage, Joël Thoraval, Véronique Fayet

### LINKS WITH THE FRENCH CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS

- ▶ Delegation Presidents and Vice-Presidents are approved by the Board of Directors, subject to the agreement of the diocesan bishop concerned. Administrators, as qualified individual members are co-opted by the Board of Directors, subject to the agreement of the Permanent Council of the French Conference of Bishops and elected by the General Assembly.
- ▶ The National President is elected by the Board of Directors from among those candidates previously approved by the Permanent Council of the French Conference of Bishops.

- ▶ The Chaplain General is appointed by the Permanent Council of the French Conference of Bishops.
- ▶ The Executive Officer is elected by the Board of Directors from among a list of candidates approved by the Permanent Council of the French Conference of Bishops.
- ▶ The General Secretariat of the French Conference of Bishops and the National President, Executive Officer and Chaplain General of Secours Catholique – Caritas France meet regularly.

### ADVISORY COMMITTEES

These committees offer advice and recommendations on the day-to-day running and plans of the association.

- ▶ Strategy Committee
- ▶ France pre- Board of Directors Committee
- ▶ International pre- Board of Directors Committee
- ▶ Resources Committee
- ▶ Audit Committee
- ▶ Appointments Committee
- ▶ Advocacy Committee
- ▶ National Coordination Committee
- ▶ Treasury Committee
- ▶ Shared Governance Supervisory Committee



# IDENTITY

## SECOURS CATHOLIQUE – CARITAS FRANCE

Secours Catholique – Caritas France is a branch of the Catholic Church in France, a member of the Caritas Internationalis confederation and an officially recognised non-profit organisation.

## THE MISSION OF SECOURS CATHOLIQUE – CARITAS FRANCE

Founded on the Gospel, the mission of Secours Catholique – Caritas France is to offer love and awareness of solidarity in France and around the world. Secours Catholique invites everyone to engage with and support others and experience the joy of fraternity. Its members work to increase everyone's ability to act so that people can live in dignity. The association fights the causes of poverty, inequality and exclusion and proposes alternatives that serve the common good.

## ACTIONS

In France, 938,600 people were supported in 2,400 centres. Internationally, 426 operations were carried out in 2021, in 52 countries or regions, in association with the Caritas Internationalis network (162 Caritas groups in 200 countries). Within one year, 2.4 million people benefited from international aid from Secours Catholique – Caritas France.

## ORGANISATION

- ▶ On 31 December 2021 there were 72 delegations, divided into 3,500 local teams in mainland France and French overseas territories.
- ▶ The network numbers 58,900 volunteers and 897 employees across the territory.
- ▶ Three central facilities: La Cité Saint-Pierre in Lourdes, la Maison d'Abraham in Jerusalem and the CEDRE Asylum Seeker and Refugee reception centre in Paris.

## TRANSPARENCY AND CONTROL

The 2021 annual financial statement, including the accounts on the allocation of funds, were certified by our auditors, Ernst & Young, and submitted for approval by the General Assembly on 14 June 2022. They can be viewed on the website: [sejours-catholique.org](https://sejours-catholique.org) or a copy can be obtained by writing to: Secours Catholique – Caritas France, 106 rue du Bac, 75341 Paris Cedex 07.

The Auditor, in addition to certifying the accounts, carries out checks on 10 delegations every year. Along with the internal audit department, a total of one third of delegations are checked every year. International projects are also subject to regular audits either by partners or by Secours Catholique – Caritas France.



The Give with Confidence (Charter Committee) is a

non-profit organisation that carries out checks on fund-raising activity which targets public generosity. It draws up ethical rules, issues the 'Give with Confidence' label to non-profit organisations and carries out continuous and independent checks on their commitments. These are based on the principles of respect for donors, transparency, and the quest for efficiency, integrity and impartiality in three areas: governance, management and communication. On 23 April 2021, Secours Catholique saw its 'Give with Confidence' label renewed for a further three years.

## WE THANK OUR PARTNERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT

- Agence du don en nature
- Agence Française de Développement
- Agence de l'Eau Artois-Picardie
- Agence de l'Eau Loire-Bretagne
- Agence de l'Eau Rhône Méditerranée Corse
- Agence de l'Eau Seine-Normandie

- Caisse d'épargne Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur (CEPAC)
- CGR Cinémas
- COFAQmc
- European Commission (Directorate General for Cooperation & Development)
- Communauté Urbaine Le Havre Seine Métropole
- Ile de France regional council
- Région des Pays de la Loire
- Direction régionale des affaires culturelles IDF
- Charitable donations

- EDF

- European Climate Foundation

- Ferrigno SA
- Fondation Bettencourt-Schueller
- Fondation d'Entreprise du Crédit Agricole Alpes Provence
- Fondation Crédit Agricole du Finistère
- Fondation d'Entreprise du Crédit Agricole Nord et Est
- Fondation d'Entreprise du crédit Mutuel Nord Europe
- Fondation EDF
- Caritas France Foundation
- Member foundations of the Caritas France Foundation umbrella:
  - Fondation Avenir Solidaire
  - Fondation Caholoma Solidarité
  - Fondation Ensemble Emera
  - Fondation Franck Giroud
  - Fondation Graines de Futurs
  - Fondation François, Monique et Pascal Bilger

- Fondation Le Manteau de Saint Martin
- Fondation Ponts Neufs
- Fondation Rivetti
- Fondation Tolot
- Fondation Xamafra

- Fondation Eiffage
- Fondation de France
- Member Foundations of the Fondation de France umbrella organisation:
  - Fondation AFNIC
  - Fondation Carasso
  - Fondation Guy Nicolas
  - Fondation Hardy
  - Fonds Meryem
  - Fondation General Mills
  - Member Foundations of the King Baudouin Foundation umbrella organisation
  - McMillan Stewart Foundation

- Fondation Notre-Dame
- Member Foundations of the Fondation Notre-Dame umbrella organisation:
  - Fondation Isabelle et Hubert d'Ornano
  - Fondation H.
  - Fondation Cesarini

- Fondation Monoprix
- Fondation Norauto
- Fondation Orange
- Fondation régionale du bénévolat en Pays de la Loire
- Fondation Sainte-Geneviève
- Fondation Saint-Gobain
- Fondation Saint-Irénée
- Fondation Sancta Devota
- Fondation Somfy – Les petites pierres
- Fondation SUEZ
- Fondation Vinci pour les cités

- Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial (FFEM)

- L'Agence nationale pour les Chèques-Vacances

- Fonds de dotation Antigone
- Fonds de dotation Jeune et Innovant
- Fonds Saint Christophe

- FujiFilm France
- Grand Lyon
- Jean Lutz SA
- La Poste
- Le Petit Futé
- Les Centres E.Leclerc

- Maisons du Monde Foundation
- Metz Mécènes Solidaires
- Ministère de la Culture
- Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères

- Moneta
- Nestlé France
- United Pharmaceuticals (Novalac)
- Veuve Clicquot

- As part of the Recovery Plan (*France Relance*)



- Direction Générale de la Cohésion Sociale
- Direction Régionale de l'Economie, de l'Emploi, du Travail et des Solidarités d'Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes
- Direction Régionale de l'Economie, de l'Emploi, du Travail et des Solidarités de Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur
- Direction Départementale des Territoires et de la Mer des Bouches-du-Rhône
- Direction Régionale de l'Economie, de l'Emploi, du Travail et des Solidarités de Corse
- Direction Départementale des Territoires et de la Mer de Corse du Sud
- Direction Départementale des Territoires et de la Mer d'Ille-et-Vilaine
- Direction Départementale de l'Emploi, du Travail et des Solidarités d'Indre-et-Loire
- Direction Départementale de l'Emploi, du Travail et des Solidarités de Loire-Atlantique
- Direction Départementale des Territoires des Ardennes

- Direction Régionale de l'Emploi, du Travail et des Solidarités Grand Est
- Direction Régionale de l'alimentation, de l'agriculture et de la forêt d'Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes
- Direction Départementale de l'Emploi, du Travail et des Solidarités et de la Protection des Populations de Savoie
- Direction Départementale de la Protection des Populations du Var
- Direction Départementale de l'Emploi, du Travail et des Solidarités du Vaucluse
- Direction Générale de la Cohésion et des Populations de Guyane
- Direction de l'Environnement, de l'Aménagement et du Logement de la Réunion
- Direction Régionale et Interdépartementale de l'Hébergement et du Logement Ile-de-France
- Direction Régionale de l'Economie, de l'Emploi, du Travail et des Solidarités de Bretagne
- Direction Régionale de l'Economie, de l'Emploi, du Travail et des Solidarités du Centre-Val de Loire
- Direction Régionale de l'Economie, de l'Emploi, du Travail et des Solidarités des Hauts de France
- Direction Régionale Interdépartementale de l'Economie, de l'Emploi, du Travail et des Solidarités d'Ile-de-France
- As well as all the authorities (municipalities, joint community authorities and departmental councils and regional councils) that support us.
- And the companies that support us through skills patronage: Atos, Astek, BNP-Paribas, EDF, La Poste, Michelin, Orange, Société Générale.





**ENSEMBLE,  
CONSTRUIRE  
UN MONDE JUSTE  
ET FRATERNEL**

**This report was designed and produced  
by the Communications Department**

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Christophe Hargoues / SCCF

**Layout:** Publications Department

July 2022



# SECOURS CATHOLIQUE — CARITAS FRANCE IN FIGURES



**€320M**

IN FUNDS OF WHICH 83% DEDICATED  
TO SOCIAL PROJECTS

## 2021 IN FRANCE



**938,600**

PEOPLE SUPPORTED IN FRANCE



**58,900**

VOLUNTEERS



**5,000**

CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS  
SUPPORTED WITH SCHOOLING



**2,400**

RECEPTION CENTRES



**201,200**

FAMILIES SUPPORTED



**3,000**

PEOPLE HELPED GETTING  
INTO WORK



**2,700**

PEOPLE HELPED WITH  
HOLIDAY PLANS



**1,300**

CHILDREN WENT ON HOLIDAY  
IN A FAMILY HOME



**977**

CURRENT MICRO-LOANS  
INCLUDING 364 NEW LOANS

## 2021 WORLDWIDE



**2.4 MILLION**

PEOPLE SUPPORTED INTERNATIONALLY



**426**

PROJECTS IN 52  
COUNTRIES OR REGIONS



**40**

EMERGENCY PROGRAMMES

