



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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

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BY THE GENERAL MEETING
OF 18 JUNE 2025

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BUILDING BRIDGES IN A FRAGMENTED SOCIETY

The troubling political context of 2024, with growing stigmatisation of the most vulnerable, reached its peak when the National Assembly was dissolved and the campaign for the legislative elections began. Buoyed by the strength of the work undertaken at our General Assembly held in Lourdes just after the dissolution, we sent a message to all our volunteers and employees, who were also severely shaken by events, and sometimes divided as to how to respond. We were happy and proud to reaffirm our simple intention, inspired by the Gospel, which has been the foundation of our association since 1946: to provide help and support, *'wherever the need arises, to the exclusion of any national or religious bias'* (article 1 of our statutes). It is this principle that continues to guide us, every day, throughout France and around the world. In our centres, our charity shops, during our shared meals, it is not peoples' status or nationality that we are meeting, but Sonia, Jean-Luc, Latifa and her children... We chat to them over coffee, we support them in their efforts regardless of their life history, the colour of their skin, their religion, and whether or not their papers are in order. The dignity and destiny of every person are important to us. And that makes all the difference.

At Secours Catholique we meet people who we wouldn't otherwise meet, we build bridges in this society which is so fragmented, and these encounters move us, and lead us to overcome our fears or prejudices, to see others differently than before. They enable us to grow, to recognise that we have so much in common with these people who we thought were so different. This very real experience of fraternity also helps us to see at first-hand what people in difficulty experience in our country: the pain of isolation, the fear of tomorrow, the difficulty of accessing essential needs, especially in deprived areas, the courage it takes to withstand the trials of life, the willingness to make sacrifices for loved ones, the injustice of so many situations, the feeling of counting for nothing in the eyes of the powerful, that you are despised and constantly judged.

We know how much the State's political orientations weigh on the daily lives of the people we meet in challenging circumstances, but also on the confidence they have in themselves and in society. To bend them in the direction of respect for the rights and dignity of each person, this is the whole reason for the advocacy that Secours Catholique carries out at the local, national and international levels. If we are committed at Secours Catholique, it is because we're not indifferent to the fate of others. How better to bear witness to this, in this period, than by opening up spaces for exchange? Let us share our convictions and deep aspirations. Let us listen humbly to each other, in mutual respect with all, as our commitment to Secours Catholique prepares us for. The search for a fair and fraternal world is a collective adventure to be lived together! ■

Didier Duriez
President



Adélaïde Bertrand
General Delegate



François Odinet
Chaplain General



THEY ARE SECOURS CATHOLIQUE

“ALEXANDRE, VOLUNTEER

“I KNOW WHAT PEOPLE ON THE STREET ARE GOING THROUGH; I WAS IN THEIR SHOES.”



ÉLEONORE HENRY DE FRAHAN / SCCF

Formerly homeless, Alexandre, 38, is a volunteer in charge of the Secours Catholique street outreach team in Toulouse.

“I found myself homeless for the second time in October 2022. I slept in my car. I used to come to L'Ostalada¹ virtually every morning for breakfast and ended up staying there. It was from there that I started to rebuild my life. I found a place in a hostel, then a place to live. I also found work, I'm a mechanic. Today, I am self-employed. At the same time, I volunteer. I come on almost all the street patrols. The fact that I have lived on the street changes our relationship. I know where they are, I know what they're going through because I was in their shoes a few months ago.” ■

“ANAHITE

“TAKING CARE OF OTHERS LIFTS YOUR SPIRITS.”



ÉLEONORE HENRY DE FRAHAN / SCCF

Anahite, an asylum seeker from Armenia, comes every Wednesday to offer hairdressing for people at La Caséla, a Secours Catholique space reserved for women.

“I came to La Caséla for breakfast for the first time five months ago. I immediately felt good in the midst of these women and wanted to get involved in the volunteer team. I offered to do hair for those who wanted. The director liked my idea, and we set up a small hairdressing salon in the basement. People sign up beforehand, I have between three and five appointments a week. When they feel beautiful, they regain their self-confidence. And, for me, taking care of them lifts my spirits.” ■

“GRÉGORY

“GETTING OUT OF MY MICROCOSM.”



ANTHONY MICALLEF / SCCF

Grégory, 43, is a computer scientist. He takes part in the digital initiation session that takes place every Thursday morning in Aix-en-Provence.

“This is my first volunteer experience. The desire came at a time when I realised that I had everything going for me, that everything was going too well in my life. I felt the need to give back. I participate in the session to help people be more comfortable with the tools and more autonomous in their procedures, and I lend a hand at the cafe. It's an opportunity to get out of my microcosm, to meet people from all walks of life.” ■

¹ L'Ostalada is a day care centre in the heart of Toulouse managed by Secours Catholique.

“ ANNE

“WE OFFER A SPACE TO SPEAK FREELY.”

STEVEN WASSENAAR / SCCF



For the past eight years, Anne, 74, has been welcoming the families of Strasbourg prison detainees.

"I have to feel useful, that's why I wanted to become a volunteer once I retired. I would never have imagined getting involved in a prison environment before Caritas Alsace suggested it to me. Every Wednesday, I go to La Mezzanine, a centre for family members (and in particular children) of detainees.

We have set up this room located just outside the prison with sofas, games, books, things to paint and draw... The children we take in are collateral victims. We give them freedom to be themselves, because children and parents are afraid of the gaze of others." ■

“ EDNA

“WE ALL BELONG TO THE SAME PLANET EARTH.”

CHRISTOPHE HARGOUES / SCCF



Edna, 72, is vice-president of Secours Catholique du Gard. For seventeen years, she has been building bridges between France and the countries of the South.

"I came to international charity a bit by chance, at a time when, upon retiring, I wanted to get involved as a volunteer. Secours Catholique du Gard has long been in contact with Caritas Burkina Faso, in Kaya. I went there once. Today, we work on extractivism and I feel a connection because I am of Guyanese origin. We are seeing the same pollution problems in the French Guyanan Amazon as in the Orbiel valley in the Aude. We all belong to the same planet Earth that we must respect, as human beings." ■

“ SUHEIR FARRAJ

“I DREAM OF A SOCIETY FREE OF VIOLENCE.”

VICTORINE ALISSE / SCCF



Founder of the NGO Tam in Palestine, Suheir Farraj defends the rights of women in a patriarchal society under the yoke of the Israeli occupation.

"Growing up, I was inspired by my mother, grandmother and older sister, all three of whom were strong women. Feminism is in my blood. It's not easy to defend women's voices in our patriarchal society. We raise awareness in schools with the new generations on the issue of gender equality. And we are advocating for a change in the laws. Because in order to change mentalities and raise awareness, we must first change the laws. I dream of a society free of violence, of a free country and a free land. I know that it will be a long journey to assert women's rights in Palestine. Maybe I'll never see that. But maybe my daughters will see it." ■

LOOKING BACK AT 2024



GAEL KERBAOL / SCCF

FEBRUARY

More than a hundred Urgences France volunteers from 21 departments were deployed in the Pas-de-Calais to assist nearly 600 households affected by the floods at the end of 2023.

16 MARCH

In Aubervilliers, Le Cèdre, the Secours Catholique centre, organised an afternoon of discussion on the theme of spirituality in order to bring intercultural dialogue to life.



MATHIEU GENON / SCCF

AND ALSO...

JANUARY 21. Secours Catholique invited its volunteers, employees and partners to respond to the call from 201 well known people, including Véronique Devisé, national president at the time, to march throughout France for freedom, equality, fraternity, and called for the withdrawal of the Asylum and Immigration Act. **23.-25.** The 14th Summit of the Global Forum on Migration and Development was held in Geneva. Secours Catholique defended the analyses and recommendations of its study, 'Free to leave, free to stay: protect human rights in the context of environmental mobility'. **FEBRUARY 21.** Publication of the document 'Olympic and Paralympic Games: not invited to the party'. **MARCH 16.-24.** Farmers and consumers brought together by Secours Catholique and the Civam network (Centres d'Initiatives pour Valorisation l'Agriculture et le Milieu rural) went to the Salon de l'Agriculture to discuss food insecurity with key members of the agri-food industry. **APRIL 24.** Publication of 'Rural areas: lack of mobility', advocacy based on people's testimonies about the difficulties they encounter in getting around their region. **MAY** More than seven months after the start of the war in the Gaza Strip, the situation is catastrophic for civilians. Secours Catholique acts through its Palestinian and Israeli partners in Gaza and the West Bank. **JUNE 24.** In Nancy, the Secours Catholique delegation is participating in the organisation of a 'street parliament for alternative migration policies' aimed at reminding people that a different way of accepting migrants is possible and gives voice to the

CHRISTOPHE HARGOUES / SCCF



12 JUNE

Secours Catholique elected its new national president, Didier Duriez, at the general assembly in Lourdes. He is a former company executive and volunteer. Secours Catholique also has a new general chaplain, François Odinet.

SÉBASTIEN LE CLÉZIO / SCCF



12-15 JUNE

Secours Catholique and its partners in the Amazon basin took part in the 11th Pan-Amazonian Social Forum (Fospa) in Bolivia. The objective: to think about solutions to protect the Amazon and the rights of Amazonian indigenous people with the COP 30 on climate change in Belém, Brazil, in 2025 in mind.

VICTORINE ALISSE / SCCF



14 SEPTEMBER

The Maison d'Abraham, a branch of Secours Catholique located in East Jerusalem, celebrated sixty years of welcoming pilgrims of all faiths, the poorest and the inhabitants of the neighbourhood.

people concerned. **17.** Following the announcement of the dissolution of the National Assembly, Secours Catholique – Caritas France sent a letter to all the volunteers and employees to reaffirm the values on which its action is based. **JULY** The National Family Allowances Fund (CNAF) appoints Secours Catholique et Apprentis d'Auteuil as the head of the Parenting Support Network. This was the starting point for the creation of a federation of family houses. **AUGUST 20.** In a victory for Secours Catholique's advocacy, the Council of State ruled in its favour by annulling part of the ministerial decree aimed at authorising the rental of unfit housing. **SEPTEMBER 17.** Event at the Halle Pajol, in the 18th arrondissement of Paris, to launch the publication of an extensive study to understand and find solutions to food prices together: 'The unfair price of food: what costs for society and the planet?' **OCTOBER 24.-28.** More than 120 volunteers and 30 employees from 55 of the 80 Secours Catholique centres meet in Lourdes to discuss the participation of everyone in the daily running of their centres. **NOVEMBER 4.** Secours Catholique published its annual statistical report on the state of poverty in France. **18.** Publication of the report 'In contempt of rights', the result of a survey that Secours Catholique conducted with the Observatory of Associative Freedoms (OLA) on the barriers experienced by charities offering support to people exiled at the borders. **DECEMBER 14.** Cyclone Chido devastated the island of Mayotte. Secours Catholique set up a crisis unit to support the delegation's teams on the ground.

COMBATTING ISOLATION AND FOSTERING SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

WEAVING SOCIAL AND FRATERNAL CONNECTIONS: Secours Catholique – Caritas France's mission has never seemed more urgent than in 2024 given the worsening of social divisions, the fragmentation of society and mistrust of others. Fraternity beyond differences is possible, however, it makes us grow in humanity. This is confirmed every day in the association's 2,500 or so centres, family houses, creative workshops... oases of fraternity where intercultural and religious encounters are experienced with simplicity. Since 2020 and the Covid crisis, Secours Catholique teams and volunteers have not stopped coming up with new ways to meet those who are isolated by the desertification of public services or discriminatory discourse. Mobile shops, charity vans, bicycle patrols, street cafés... These approaches testify to a generous society, firm in its convictions, which restores to others, wherever they come from, the self-confidence essential to their power to act and make it possible to forge links that create a new society.



CHRISTOPHE HARGOUËS / SCCF

COMBATTING ISOLATION AND REBUILDING SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

REDEFINING THE FRAMEWORK OF 'DAY CARE' FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING SEVERE EXCLUSION

The Secours Catholique – Caritas network has some 80-day care centres where people who are homeless, isolated or excluded are received unconditionally by the volunteer teams. The services offered there (showers, luggage storage, meals, recreational workshops, etc.) vary from one reception to another, often depending on the profile of the people who use them (single women, families, exiles, people experiencing homelessness, etc.), or depending on whether they are located in a rural or urban area. What they all have in common is that they allow a fraternal relationship to be forged between volunteers and individuals, which carries the seeds of the individual and collective transformations at the heart of the Secours Catholique project.

In a social context that is getting tougher, with increasingly difficult access to accommodation, housing, residency, financial aid, etc., these places

of unconditional welcome are more essential than ever. Volunteers face increasingly painful human situations on a daily basis (350,000 homeless people according to the housing foundation, including at least 2,000 children and 3,000 women on the street¹). These realities test and pose questions, to the point that they have expressed the need to redefine, beyond differences, what are the rules, the common basis and the common project of the Secours Catholique centres. In 2022, a working group made up of members of the association's headquarters and 13 volunteer representatives, delegates or facilitators from different day care centres of all sizes, all types and from all over the country met over a period of eight months. The objective was to discuss the major issues that affect the work of day care centres and to establish their place and role in the broader framework of the association and the local

¹ Foundation for Housing, 'State of Poor Housing in France', 2024.

social services system. Presented in October 2024 in Lourdes, the document resulting from this work proposes a definition of Secours Catholique's day care centres, as well as benchmarks concerning the priority areas for volunteers when dealing with people. It also offers support for reflection and consideration of development of new day care projects.

GOING EVER FURTHER IN FRATERNITY



CHRISTOPHE HARGOUËS / SCOF

With more than 2,500 centres, Secours Catholique – Caritas France is particularly well established throughout the country to offer help, support or its fraternal listening service to as many people in very challenging situations as possible. But many of them do not come knocking on the doors of the association, often out of modesty, because they do not know it or are too far from it. At the time of the health crisis, when the need to break the isolation of the most vulnerable was critical, Secours Catholique teams multiplied their actions to reach out. This is how the network of Fraternibus, mobile spaces, came in to being, offering administrative help or simple hospitality.

They now number around forty, of which about ten were put into circulation in 2024.

In addition to this network, there are other strategies: the ideas hub, a bus that is recognised as a space for social life, which travels in the Var; a charity van, the Frat'mobile, inaugurated in 2023 in Haute-Garonne; street cafés started up by the Paris delegation: very small pop up refreshment stands mounted on cargo bikes where people living on the streets can come and have a hot coffee and chat to volunteers; or the bicycle patrols, introduced every Saturday in Bordeaux in 2024, in order to get closer to people experiencing extreme exclusion, not for material help but for fraternal conversation. Often set up in consultation with town halls or social action centres, these schemes make it possible to rebuild links in rural areas and neighbourhoods on the outskirts of cities where opportunities for meeting people have gradually disappeared.

POP UP SHOPS TO GET AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE TO NEEDS

Some delegations of Secours Catholique – Caritas France are innovating by developing mobile shops that allow them to reach out to the most isolated people. These initiatives, such as those set up by the delegations of Berry, Burgundy or, currently being piloted, Gard and Upper Normandy, cover several towns and villages, strengthening access to recycling and charity schemes in areas where this is sometimes non-existent.

These initial pilots are very positive, as one volunteer testifies: *"The people who come to the truck are often surprised by the purpose of the shop and appreciate the welcome and the opportunity to exchange with the volunteers. Working with local partners, in particular the municipalities that host us, allows us to pinpoint the most suitable places for the truck in order to be as close as possible to the inhabitants."* ■

ENABLING THE POOREST TO PARTICIPATE AND BE HEARD

FORMALISE THE STEPS TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO SPEAK OUT

Valuing the knowledge and experience of people living in poverty in order to strengthen their power to act is one of the major axes of Secours Catholique – Caritas France's national project. All kinds of activities and pilots have been carried out on this topic in delegations throughout France for several years, but the approach needed to be formalised. This work began in 2023 with the capitalisation of all these actions, which led to the identification of 14 beacons or touch points to guide the development of an 'all actors' approach. In 2024, these 14 guidelines and the approach were developed in an educational booklet containing work sheets. This four-page document is intended to describe Secours Catholique's approach to its various partners, a poster and an 'Everything you need to know about' module on the association's intranet which explains the importance of building projects and including the people concerned. These different tools were presented in Nouvelle-Aquitaine and Picardy and then integrated into a training for the network members entitled 'Development of people's empowerment'.

L'APOSTROPHE, A CHANCE FOR FREE EXPRESSION



Issue 13 of *L'Apostrophe*, journal, a fortnightly Secours Catholique – Caritas France magazine written by people who have experienced poverty, launched a new way of letting people voices be heard in 2024. 'Culture, what for' is the theme that was proposed to a group of people who gathered around a table

at the P'tit café, an associative establishment in Puy-en-Velay (Haute-Loire). They all had experience of poverty, some of extreme poverty (living on the street). Together, they chose to bear witness to the 'culture of all', distinct from the top-down demand for a 'culture for all', which is seen as more legitimate. All of them have common experiences

that they were keen to share. A collective called Dis-moi, founded by committed citizen activists (notably at the heart of ATD Fourth World, the Red Cross, Secours Catholique, Secours Populaire and the communal centre for social action in Puy-en-Velay) and local artists, offers various artistic workshops supervised by local professional artists. These workshops welcome many people who lack a space to express themselves due to instability, poverty or exclusion. From January to March 2024, all those who were involved in the 13th issue of *L'Apostrophe* were connected in one way or another with the adventure of Dis-moi as an author, actor, actress, storyteller, dancer, singer, spectator or even coordinator. This approach was presented through testimonies to the Ministry of Culture during a morning on access to culture for people in precarious situations. An article was devoted to it in the December 2024 edition of the FAS (Federation of Solidarity Actors) magazine.

THE VOICE OF THE POOREST IN THE STATISTICAL REPORT

The conviction of Secours Catholique – Caritas France that the poorest are the experts on poverty and that their words about what they are experiencing must be heard and even authenticated also applies to the statistical work carried out each year to report on the state of poverty in France (see p. 71). Thus, in its edition published in 2024, the view of people on the theme chosen for the thematic file, the difficulties of access to social benefits, due in particular to the digitalisation of procedures, occupies a central place. It was collected from members of three groups based in Metz, Versailles and Saint-Quentin, who contributed with texts of collective analysis based on their experiences. A diagram of the process of applying for social benefits, based on their experiences, highlights the real obstacle course and the incredible waiting times necessary to access one's rights.

When it was released in November 2024, representatives of the Versailles group came to testify to the violence felt in the face of this faceless

administration when the report was presented during a parliamentary lunch at the headquarters of Secours Catholique.

STORY IN WORDS AND IMAGES OF A SPECTACULAR MOBILISATION SUCCESS

The story begins in 2019, when the inhabitants of two adjoining buildings, at 1bis of a street in Gennevilliers, were threatened with eviction. Supported by the employees and volunteers of the Secours Catholique – Caritas France delegation in the Hauts-de-Seine, they decided to mobilise as a collective to assert their right to housing.

After five years of struggles, hopes, disappointments, but also victories, the collective wanted to tell the story of this beautiful human adventure through a

book entitled *Together or Nothing. Collective account of a mobilisation*. Written by the inhabitants of the collective themselves as part of writing workshops and collections of testimonies, the book recounts all the stages of a mobilisation that brings hope and inspiration to all those who are confronted with similar situations of injustice. It was completed by two podcasts produced in parallel. In September 2024, a crowdfunding campaign raised some €1,500 to illustrate the book with beautiful photos taken by a professional photographer and print 200 copies. Its publication gave rise to a festive event at the end of September. ■

BRINGING CREATIVITY TO LIFE

PREPARATION FOR THE 2025 'SUMMER SEASON'

The practice of creativity as a lever to make a different connection and develop people's power to act is central to Secours Catholique – Caritas France. Across the regions, teams offer cultural and artistic practices (writing workshops, visual arts, singing, dance, theatre, clowning, etc.). To give life and echoes to these dynamics, the association has been organizing national culture-creativity meetings since 2021. The teams can share what they experience through the artistic activities they set up to encourage them to try out their own practices and experiment with others. It is also an opportunity to

see how to use creativity to imagine new ways to present, or how to use it to mobilise support around a project, carry out advocacy...

In 2024, the steering committee met to prepare for the 'Summer Season' 2025, a particularly important edition since it will also be a question of developing ideas to make the 80th anniversary of Secours Catholique, in 2026, a real celebration in the delegations.

ADVOCACY FOR CULTURE AS A LEVER IN THE FIGHT AGAINST VULNERABILITY

Secours Catholique – Caritas France is part of the FAS's Culture Mission, whose challenge is to better integrate cultural rights into overall social assistance, to better support the initiatives of member associations and to promote the cultures of the people it supports.

In 2024, the group launched an appeal aimed at public authorities, elected officials, social action actors, to make access to cultural practices and cultural rights an integral part of training in social support and the support itself. In an article published in the November 2024 issue of *Messages* magazine, Secours Catholique reaffirms how access to cultural practice is a fundamental element in the fight against



VINCENT BOISOT / SCCF

poverty, in that it participates in a profound change in one's relationship to oneself, to others and to the future, that it allows the development of fraternity by promoting social connections around a cultural activity that places everyone in front of the same 'blank page', to free speech or anger by putting into words, sound, images, or even to do yourself good by seeing beauty. These real contributions are also evidenced by these words collected following creative workshops or cultural outings organised by Secours Catholique: "We need poetry to feel lighter", "Culture heals the spirit", "It allows us to regain an energy that is a little lost in everyday life", "It repairs, in our troubled lives". As part of its approach to increase the skills of the teams offering cultural activities,

Secours Catholique has applied for and obtained a licence for entertainment entrepreneurs which allows it to pay artists to support creative projects in the area. It is also approved as a 'Culture Pass'. The challenge is to give visibility to the artistic creations of Secours Catholique participants or to share them with school audiences (for example: shows, human rights films, etc.). ■

BRINGING SPIRITUALITY TO LIFE



CHRISTOPHE HARGOUES / SCOF

volunteers are often the smile and the outstretched hand of our French society to those who find themselves in vulnerable situations and to migrants upon their arrival, but also for the long duration of the procedures they have to go through. The collaboration of volunteers and employees allows Secours Catholique to help people in vulnerable situations by responding ever better to the requirements of public services and above all by respecting the dignity and freedom of the people welcomed. This enables them to have a detailed knowledge of the social reality of our country."

RENEWED CONFIDENCE OF THE BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF FRANCE (CEF)

During their plenary assembly in November 2024 in Lourdes, the members of the CEF were invited by Secours Catholique to the city of Saint-Pierre in order to cultivate the link between this place of fraternal welcome and the bishops. A connection claimed by the CEF since it renewed its confidence in Secours Catholique through a mission text published in 2023, it duly thanked the association in its closing speech delivered by its president on Sunday, 10 November 2024: "Our gratitude is great for the volunteers committed at all levels. They are a strong expression of the lived charity of our Church, a persevering charity that translates into much-needed gestures and actions of solidarity for the tired fabric of our society. These

PRESENCE AT THE OPENING MASS OF NOTRE-DAME

After five years of work, Notre-Dame de Paris Cathedral reopened its doors in December 2024. On 12 December, everyone from Secours Catholique – Caritas France's Paris office was invited to a mass dedicated to the charitable movements of the diocese and the people they accompany. In total, 150 people in vulnerable situations participated in this historic mass. To help them prepare to return to the cathedral whose fire had shaken the whole world, everyone was given a document inviting them to remember the event, individually or in groups, and to marvel at the rebirth of Notre-Dame. ■





REGION

A SUPPORTIVE
AND WELCOMING
SHOP

“Initially, it was a storage room that was mainly aimed at supporting people in vulnerable situations, where you could find clothes and furniture, but no friendly space,” says Émilie Bonneau, regional coordinator of activities at Secours Catholique in Nouvelle-Aquitaine. In 2019, the team decided to turn it in to a ‘charity shop’ and set up shop in Surgères, near La Rochelle. “The primary aim was to have a large open space in which visitors and volunteers alike can move around easily,” says Émilie Bonneau. “The space we occupy today looked like a plain cube, in need of decoration. We could do what we wanted. We thought of this new shop as a third place. We don’t exclude anything; we can easily host other activities such as exhibitions. It would be a way of bringing in a different audience.” From 2 p.m., the thirty or so volunteers are busy sorting the donated clothes. The buyers are from all walks of life and social classes. Some arrive, their arms full of donations. While in the shop, people bargain hunt or chat over a coffee. Upstairs, in the office that provides social assistance, a pair of volunteers welcome a single mother. “Entering a charity shop to ask for help with administrative procedures is less stigmatising,” says Marine, the person in charge. “People are not labelled ‘people in vulnerable situations’, they are just ordinary buyers.” ■



SCAN THIS CODE TO READ
THE FULL REPORT ON THE
WEBSITE OF SECOURS
CATHOLIQUE.

STRENGTHENING FRATERNAL AND INTER-RELIGIOUS TIES



MATHIEU GÉNON / SCCF

PARTICIPATION IN THE 'FRATERNITY BAROMETER'

On 4 February 2024, on the International Day of Human Fraternity¹, the Fraternity Laboratory published its 'Barometer', a study that measures the perception that the French have of this value inscribed in the nation's motto. Secours Catholique – Caritas France, as a member of the Lab, participated in the piloting of this survey carried out by Ifop (French Institute of Public Opinion). Like each of the member structures, the association made a contribution to the final report by proposing an interpretation of the survey based on the answers given by the poorest of the respondents. Unsurprisingly, while 85% of all respondents say they are happy, the percentage drops by 17 points when it comes to people below the threshold of poverty (€900 per month). They, on the other hand, are more likely (24% compared to 18%) to consider fraternity as a fundamental

value for the future. It is not surprising that many of them joined the demonstrations led by Secours Catholique on this national day, 4 February. The Isère delegation, for example, organised a major march behind a single banner, Fraternity, with a quote from Pastor Martin Luther King: "Either we will live together as brothers, or we will perish together as fools", while in Orléans, moments of intercultural and inter-religious sharing were enjoyed throughout the day over coffee, a cup of tea, a meal or a friendly match of 'futsal' (indoor football).

#FRATERNITÉ

On 1 October 2024, during his general policy speech, Prime Minister Michel Barnier declared that fraternity was one of the five priorities of his government. The Fraternity Lab, of which Secours Catholique – Caritas France is a member, immediately bounced back by launching #Fraternité, one hundred days before 4 February 2025, the date of the next World Day of Human Fraternity. They set out a call for fraternity in an opinion piece published a few days later (on

¹ The International Day of Human Fraternity was established by the United Nations (UN) at its General Assembly in December 2020 following the document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Common Coexistence, signed on 4 February 2019 by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmad Al-Tayyeb.

26 October) in the Ouest-France newspaper under the title 'From a fragmented France to a fraternal France.' The whole of civil society was invited to get involved to demonstrate fraternity already at work throughout the region, in organisations committed to social connections, through the actors of inter-religious and inter-convictional dialogue, and the initiatives coordinated by the Fraternity Lab. It also reminded us that if France is fragmented, it is largely because there is a lack of places and times to meet to rebuild society together.

PARTICIPATION IN THE BAROMETER OF CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

The Barometer of Cultural and Religious Pluralism is an indicator designed by the Pharos Observatory to measure the level of social cohesion within a society for advocacy purposes. Secours Catholique – Caritas France participated by supporting the initiative from 2022 through one of its partners in Lebanon. In 2024, the Nord-Lille delegation volunteered to have the methodology applied in one of its centres located in Roubaix, one of the most unequal (43% of the inhabitants live below the poverty line) and most multicultural cities in France. The objective was to understand the way in which the great cultural and religious diversity of the people attending this centre is experienced in order to draw lessons and recommendations useful to Secours Catholique and in other spaces. After an initial contextual study, a questionnaire was submitted to a sample of 51 people representative of the different profiles of the regulars. The findings of the investigation were first detailed to all those who had participated and then made public on 25 November. These testify to the success of Secours Catholique's national project in terms of intercultural and religious fraternity. The Roubaix day care centre is indeed experienced by the interviewees as an oasis where everyone feels accepted and respected in their culture and identity. Secours Catholique is working on a tool that considers the results of this survey so that other centres in the region can work on this issue of cultural and religious pluralism. ■

>>> IN BRIEF >>>

WELCOMING PEOPLE AND THEIR PETS

In the city centre of Poitiers, La Coquille, a new Secours Catholique centre, has a rare feature for such a structure: people are accepted with their pets. While they rest in the three kennels, the owners can take a shower, carry out their administrative procedures or simply recharge their batteries. *"By welcoming the dogs, we can be even more inclusive,"* says Philippe, a volunteer.

OPERA FOR ALL

In Orléans, Secours Catholique welcomes between 20 and 30 apprentice singers for a weekly workshop led by mezzo-soprano Malika Bellaribi-Le Moal, the 'diva of the neighbourhoods', who has made it her mission to bring opera singing to where it is not the norm. The group of singers is made up of volunteers, people in vulnerable situations and young people helped by the local mission. The ambition is to stage *Carmen* for a public performance and in a theatre at the end of the year.

LEARNING WHILE HAVING FUN

On Wednesday afternoon, a team from Secours Catholique goes to the Port-Marly hostel, in the Yvelines, to lead the Ronde des mots, a French learning workshop that brings together a dozen children aged 6 to 11 who are staying on site with their families. *"Reading stories, singing, games, musical awakening... We offer fun activities that allow them to enrich their vocabulary,"* explains Christine, a volunteer.

CULTIVATING PLEASURE AND FRATERNITY

In Verdun, Secours Catholique and Amatrani, an association that helps migrants, run a shared garden located in the heart of the working-class district of Les Planchettes. The place welcomes about thirty participants on Wednesday afternoons. *"The goal is to promote exchange and social diversity,"* says Rémy, a volunteer. *"I come here to feel the earth and also to meet people,"* says Rachida, who has been involved in the garden for three years.

COMBATting VULNERABILITY THROUGH ACCESS TO RIGHTS FOR ALL

RARELY HAS THE LANGUAGE USED ABOUT THE MOST VULNERABLE PEOPLE, exiles or recipients of minimum social benefits been as violent as in 2024, and as detrimental to fundamental rights. Because their translation into laws (law for full employment, asylum and immigration law) has very serious consequences for the people affected by this institutional mistreatment. Challenging also for the thousands of Secours Catholique – Caritas France volunteers who witness, often powerlessly, the growing poverty of those they support – and sometimes even face criticism for their acts of solidarity supporting foreign nationals. Secours Catholique remains faithful to its mission of unconditional welcome for the most vulnerable. This loyalty is tinged with hope when its innovative approach to reinventing access to food leads to the mobilisation of thousands of people, when its advocacy for the right to work finds an echo in Europe, or when the campaign carried out ahead of the Olympic Games enables access to accommodation for the most in need.



ANTHONY MICALLEF / HAYTHAM REA

CAMPAIGN TO LIMIT THE HUMAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE PARIS GAMES 2024

DEFENDING THOSE 'NOT INVITED TO THE PARTY'

Under the slogan: 'Games Wide Open', the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games Organising Committee announced great ambitions for the environment, employment, the economy, education and a more inclusive society through sport. As the experience of international sporting events of this scale unfortunately shows that they often have an exorbitant human and environmental cost, Secours Catholique – Caritas France chose, in February 2024, to warn about the risks and make proposals to prevent them in an advocacy document in four points and sheets entitled 'Olympic and Paralympic Games, not invited to the party'.

AVOIDING 'SOCIAL CLEANSING'

Hotels ceasing their social activity and thus accentuating the saturation of the accommodation stock

in Île-de-France, eviction of informal living spaces, moving people in vulnerable situations, in particular by moving food distribution points and sending homeless people to temporary reception centres in the regions... the impact of the Games on the lives of many people in situations of exclusion was felt from the preparation phase. With the collective Le Revers de la médaille, Secours Catholique very early on warned against this 'social cleansing' and pleaded in favour of a general mobilisation to offer these people a sustainable accommodation or housing solutions.

PREVENTING THE HEIGHTENED RISK OF EXPLOITATION AND TRAFFICKING

Major sporting events multiply instances of exploitation, whether sexual or through work, domestic slavery, coercion to commit offences or crimes or forced

begging. Knowing that in France in 2022, associations recorded 4,363 victims of such acts, Secours Catholique has called for increased vigilance before and during the Games, and for effective and sustainable policies to be put in place against exploitation and human trafficking. Six months before the Games, the collective Together against human trafficking, coordinated by Secours Catholique, launched an awareness campaign under the slogan: "We would all like it to be fun". It consisted of a document (also available in English) with life stories illustrating different forms of exploitation and human trafficking and an information booklet to train professionals but also volunteers who may find themselves in contact with victims. An e-learning course presenting the issue in twenty minutes was also made available to associations and had 3,500 views in more than 30 countries on the international humanitarian site Disaster Ready. Beyond information and training, the campaign aimed to make Paris 2024 organisers take responsibility as well as private companies and partners (targeting digital platforms).

RESPECTING THE AMBITION OF A 'SUSTAINABLE HUMAN AND SOCIAL' LEGACY

Nearly 200,000 jobs were created to cover the increased activity at the time of the Games. In view of recruitment difficulties, due to a lack of anticipation of needs, support and training, employers were authorised to deviate from the labour code by introducing a seven-day-a-week rhythm, while the 45,000 Games volunteers could be mobilised for up to 48 hours a week! In response to these practices, Secours Catholique proposed concrete solutions to the public authorities that lived up to the stated ambition of a 'lasting human and social legacy' for the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

REDUCING THE CARBON FOOTPRINT RATHER THAN OFFSETTING IT

To take into account the carbon impact of events such as the Games, which involve massive infrastructure and international travel, carbon offsetting is often proposed, usually in the form of large-scale tree planting. However, not only is the effectiveness of such projects difficult to measure, but the new risks they raise for the people living in the sought after areas are unacceptable. In its campaign, Secours Catholique called for a reduction in emissions at the source.

Released on 21 February 2021, under the title 'Olympic and Paralympic Games: not invited to the party', this positioning and advocacy document was presented ahead of the opening of the Games to the stakeholders concerned: the organising committee, the prefectures of all the cities hosting events, elected officials and politicians, and actors on the ground. It was available on the United Nations website.

PARTICIPATION IN THE MONITORING OF FRANCE BY THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

On 21 October 2024, on the eve of the sixth periodic review of France by the United Nations Human Rights Committee in Geneva, civil society had the opportunity to meet with the members of the Committee to present them with observations and recommendations. Secours Catholique – Caritas France took the opportunity to present its campaign for the Paris Games, which were a catalyst for poverty for people who were homeless or evicted from their accommodation, and a revelation of the evils and injustices that run through the labour market as well as insufficient policies to prevent and fight against trafficking and exploitation. ■

FIGHTING FOR ACCESS TO RIGHTS

POLICY ON ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE

A real gateway to Secours Catholique – Caritas France, the reception services for people in vulnerable situations are run by 17,000 volunteers, i.e. 15% of the association's staff (2022 figures). In order to reflect the plurality of mechanisms and designations already in place in the delegations, the action was renamed 'Welcome - Listening - Support' in 2023,

and in 2024, several framing tools were added to the existing one, starting with a reference guide produced between 2022 and 2023. Its objective: to shed light on the position expected of volunteers in their role as listeners authorised to grant financial aid and accompaniment towards access to rights, and also to support their practice through benchmarks, recommendations, and sharing experiences. The guide is interspersed with links to national documents that



SÉBASTIEN LE CLÉZIO / SCCF

allow you to deepen certain key concepts, as well as to the 11 benchmarks that have guided the Welcome – Listening – Support programmes from volunteers since 2018.

Published in February 2024, this guide was followed up by training, an opportunity to share the realities experienced in the context of this often difficult support, due to the limitations that volunteers face, as well as rewarding because of the richness of the connections created and the possible impact on individuals.

DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF ACCESS TO RIGHTS

Supporting access to rights (right to housing, right to health, right to social benefits, etc.) for people in vulnerable circumstances is one of Secours Catholique – Caritas France's priorities. It is not a question of replacing workers or social organisations, but of identifying people who have been denied their rights and of supporting them in the re-establishment of those rights, thus enabling them to mobilise their power to act, and, finally, to

alert the public authorities when these situations of unclaimed rights are the result of errors, or poorly applied or exclusionary national or local policies. To strengthen this culture of access to rights, Secours Catholique launched a bimonthly newsletter in 2024 for reception centre teams in order to strengthen their support practices and keep them informed of the latest news on national and local schemes. A training kit has also been developed in parallel to enable delegations to develop the way volunteers identify the needs of the people they support and to seek solutions with them in terms of access to rights. The training also aims to strengthen their knowledge of the social rights that exist in France, the different social assistance groups as well as the reference sites on these issues. Developed in March 2024, this training kit has already been tested in Picardy, Allier and Bouches-du-Rhône.

SURVEY ON THE DIGITALISATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

Each year, the Secours Catholique – Caritas France Statistical Report lays out the state of poverty in France based on the household situations of those welcomed by its volunteers. In 2024, the analysis of the living conditions of more than 58,000 households has made it possible to establish a picture of poverty and to shed light on the worsening of poverty in France. In addition to this general profile, a thematic dossier is added to each edition to complete the statistical analysis itself. In 2024, it focused on a topical subject that was popular with delegation members during an internal consultation: the difficulties of access to social benefits, due in particular to the digitalisation of procedures. Several points of view intersect: that of Secours Catholique, which relies on its experience in the field, that of the Defender of Rights, Claire Hédon, invited as a major witness, and of course that of the people concerned, namely the members of three groups based in Metz, Versailles and Saint-Quentin, who contributed to the case through collective analysis texts developed from their experiences. A diagram of the process of applying for social benefits, based on their lived experiences, shows the real obstacle course and the incredible waiting times it takes to access to their rights.

When it was released in November 2024, the report was presented at a parliamentary lunch at the headquarters of Secours Catholique, in the presence of representatives of the Versailles group who >>>

FOCUS

EVERYONE AT THE TABLE CAMPAIGN

CAMPAIGNING TOGETHER FOR THE RIGHT TO FOOD

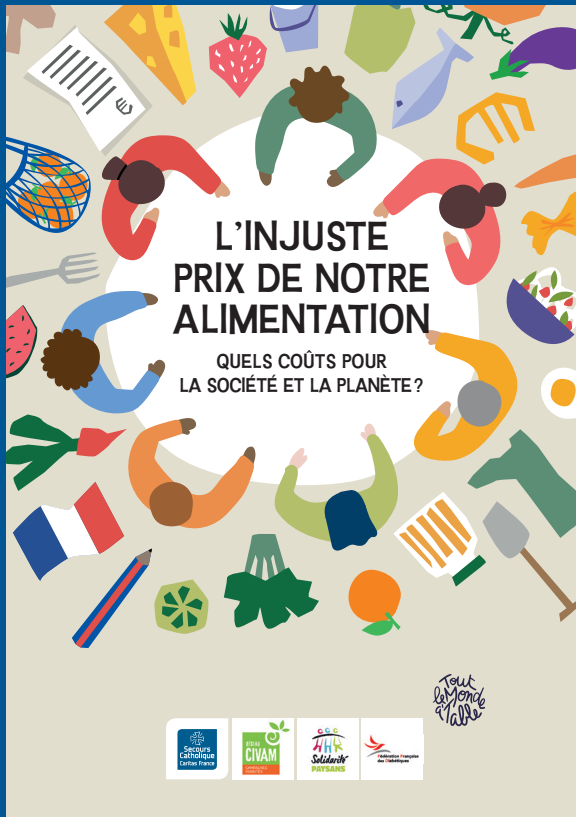
In 2021, faced with the extent of food insecurity highlighted by the health crisis, Secours Catholique – Caritas France launched the Together, Live Well, Eat Well programme. Its objective is to strengthen the impact of the action taken with its partners to provide access to sustainable and quality food for all. In 2024, the programme reached a new dimension of advocacy and mobilisation.

In three years, the Together, Live Well, Eat Well programme has made it possible to support projects in the Secours Catholique – Caritas France network for shared gardens, solidarity food baskets, social and solidarity grocery stores to allow the most vulnerable people non-stigmatising access to quality products... On a larger scale, as part of a partnership with the Vrac, Ugess, Civam and Cocagne networks, the programme has brought out innovative achievements such as the Montpellier Food Bank, inaugurated in 2023, and the one being set up in Lyon. These are great initiatives, but they remain a drop in the ocean of inequalities to which a system designed to provide food in abundance leads, but without keeping its promises of accessibility for all, or proper remuneration for those who produce it, and at a high price for health, water, climate and biodiversity. Convinced that these inequalities can only be solved

by addressing their structural causes, Secours Catholique launched an in-depth study in 2023 on the current pricing system that does not take into account the 'real costs' for society: health problems, negative impacts on the environment, exclusion of part of the population, etc. Conducted with the economic analysis laboratory Le Basic and in partnership with the Civam network, the Solidarité paysans movement and the French Federation of Diabetics, this report entitled 'The unfair price of food: what costs for society and the planet?' provides an unprecedented financial figure for all public spending that supports our food system and that which compensates for or repairs its negative impacts, particularly on health and the environment. Above all, it demonstrates that there is no inevitability in the face of this, but political choices which, if they were once relevant, must now radically change.

EVERYONE TO THE TABLE TO TRANSFORM THE SYSTEM

The report 'The unfair price of food' was made public on 17 September 2024 at an event at the Halle Pajol, in the 18th arrondissement of Paris, in the presence of all the study partners, representatives from the groups concerned, specifically farmers and people in vulnerable situations, but also elected officials, representatives of the associative world and the Secours Catholique network. The objective was indeed to bring together (instead of opposing as is too often the case) as many actors as possible to initiate together the transformation of a system that creates injustice and irreparable damage.



The publication of the report was also intended to kick off a major campaign, 'Everyone at the table', which will continue until the 2027 elections. The launch exceeded all expectations. Secours Catholique had designed a communication and animation kit that the network's delegations made extensive use of to organise all kinds of local events: debates and press conferences, awareness-raising workshops, convivial moments, and even the participation of Italian, Spanish, German and Colombian partners! In total, in September 2024, 22 delegations organised 43 events across 11 regions and with the participation of more than 1,900 people in person. The press, both national and regional, widely shared this Secours Catholique mobilisation, unprecedented both in terms of its scale and the openness it has given to associative actors from the farming community, and the fields of ecology and health.

The political fallout from this vast advocacy operation was not far behind. Starting in September, Secours Catholique was received by the General Secretariat for Ecological Planning as well as the Interministerial Delegation for the Fight against Poverty. The organisation participated in an event

“ 22 DELEGATIONS
ORGANISED 43 EVENTS
ACROSS 11 REGIONS BRINGING
TOGETHER NEARLY
2,000 PEOPLE. ”

at the National Assembly in preparation for a draft framework law on the right to food, to which several deputies have already committed.

THE NEXT STEPS OF THE CAMPAIGN:

- ▶ The launch of a popular education movement on the right to food called Carav'alim. Launched in December 2024, the movement's website sets out all its ambitions: to welcome, co-ordinate and support projects, initiatives and collectives that work for access to dignified and sustainable food for all and act with people affected by the injustices of the food system.
- ▶ A large four-day meeting in Lyon, in April.
- ▶ In 2025, alongside all the partners of the study, to take stock and maintain momentum.



SCAN THIS CODE TO SEE THE
CAMPAIGN PAGE ON THE
WEBSITE OF SECOURS CATHOLIQUE.

Tout
le Monde
à Table

**“WE WOULD LIKE TO
FIND A PUBLIC SERVICE THAT
RECEIVES US, LISTENS TO US
AND HEARS US.”**

>>> came to testify to the violence felt in the face of this uncompromising administration. It was also presented to members of successive governments, the Minister of Solidarity and representatives of social protection administrations, in particular the CNAF, with which Secours Catholique conducts regular exchanges in order to remedy these difficulties in accessing rights. Researchers have also taken up

the issue, as well as many national and regional media. The delegations of Secours Catholique played an important role in the successful reception of the report, by organising press conferences and meetings with partners, members of the communal social action centres (CCAS), representatives of the Defender of Rights in the Regions or the commissioners for the fight against poverty. ■

FIGHTING AGAINST FINANCIAL INSECURITY AND FOR ACCESS TO A DECENT INCOME

CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE FIRST PILOTS OF THE CONDITIONAL RSA ROLL OUT

The so-called law for full employment passed in 2023 provides for “renewed support” for RSA recipients, which consists of making the payment of their allowance conditional on a minimum of fifteen hours of activity per week. Secours Catholique – Caritas France, alongside its partners ATD Quart-Monde and AequitaZ, has long been committed to the right to an adequate means of subsistence for all and opposed to any conditionality being placed on this right, took a stand in 2023 in the debates on the reform, expressing strong criticism of the spirit and consequences of this law for the most disadvantaged people. In line with this advocacy, a survey was conducted on the conditional RSA pilots with a view to a critical assessment published on 14 October 2024. Based on the cross-referencing of the first feedback from the people concerned and integration professionals, as well as on quantitative data collected by France Travail and journalistic investigations, this study made it possible to formulate four key risks:

1. The risk of slipping from the compulsory fifteen hours of work to unpaid work being carried out by RSA recipients.
2. A decrease in beneficiaries' autonomy and power to act due in particular to the use of algorithms.

3. The possible increase in disqualifications due to an increase of obligations.
4. The contrasting realities of the opportunities to return to work in a context where our economy does not produce enough stable and decent work for everyone.

Faced with the risk that the reform will push even more people to give up this basic minimum benefit – in 2024, the rate of non-take up of the RSA increased by 10.8 points in the departments that are piloting the reform, while it remained stable in the others – Secours Catholique and its partners have called for the suspension of the roll out planned for 1 January 2025, without convincing the government so far, but gaining support of several consultation bodies such as the National Consultative Commission on Human Rights (CNCDH) and the National Council for Policies to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion (CNLE).

CONDEMNATION OF ‘COMPULSORY WORK HOURS’ BY THE CNCDH

Secours Catholique – Caritas France study ‘First assessment of the RSA pilots’ was taken by Denis Vienot, its former director general, to the heart of CNCDH which has taken it up. At its plenary assembly on 19 December 2024, the committee issued a statement that the compulsory work hours in return for RSA violates human rights. Secours Catholique



CHRISTOPHE HARGOUES / SCOF

welcomed this opinion, which reinforces its analyses and positions and is based on an article of the 1946 Constitution, to which the preamble to the Constitution of the Fifth Republic also refers: 'Any human being who, by reason of his age, his physical or mental state, his economic situation, is unable to work has the right to obtain from the community adequate means of subsistence.'

ADVOCACY SUCCESS WITHIN THE CNLE

Secours Catholique – Caritas France sits on the CNLE's network of associations where it can report on observations from the field and make proposals. In 2024, it contributed to the opinion on social and undue benefits published on 7 March by the CNLE. Entitled 'Sanctions: the point of view of experience', this opinion is in line with a long-standing advocacy on these subjects. On the eve of implementation of the new system of sanctions provided for by the full-employment law, the CNLE warns against the 'institutional mistreatment' represented by the reclaiming of undue payments, which is experienced as a sanction by the persons concerned. He argues

for the definition of an 'unseizable minimum' guaranteed and a cancellation of 'fungibility', a practice that allows the recovery of benefit overpayments. In its response, the CNAF indicated that the system of solidarity at source (also a long-standing Secours Catholique proposal), generalised in France since 1 March 2025, should lead to a very significant decrease in the number of errors and therefore in overpayments and controls. A step forward that Secours Catholique welcomes.

CONTINUATION OF THE 'CRAZY JOB' CAMPAIGN

In the report 'A crazy job' published in 2023, Secours Catholique – Caritas France and AequitaZ quantify the countless hours that the so-called 'inactive' work for the benefit of society as family carers or committed volunteers and propose ways to ensure that these contributions are valued. Widely commented on in the media when it was released, the report continued to fuel the debate in 2024. It was presented at the plenary meeting of the CNLE on 7 March, at a public conference organised on 22 March in Chambéry, at the 98th meeting of the Social Weeks of France in November, and finally on 3 December, in Lyon, as part of a public event organised by the Pact of the Power to Live.

FOR A RIGHT TO EMPLOYMENT IN FRANCE AND EUROPE

For several years, Secours Catholique – Caritas France has been committed to supporting people who are the most excluded from working on their journey towards employment. Throughout France, about fifty teams of employment volunteers support people in their job search. More and more often, this support is done in the context of collective workshops to promote mutual support and enable people to share their experiences.

From the outset, Secours Catholique contributed to the pilots of the association 'Territoires zéro chômeurs de longue durée' (TZCLD), as a founding member and financial supporter, but also through the involvement of some fifteen of its delegations in several of the 58 TZCLD projects that have emerged to date.

That same year, Secours Catholique participated, alongside 16 other groups working for employment and solidarity, to a national consultation in favour of a law on the right to employment for all. The association also carried out lobbying with Caritas Europa during the European elections, specifically through an open letter to MPs, but also through networking

with other key actors, participation in webinars, and a two-day visit to the TZCLD projects in Burgundy, with representatives of Caritas Europa, Caritas Germany and the Czech Republic.

PRESENTATION OF THE OBSERVATORY OF BANKING INCLUSION (OIB) REPORT

Secours Catholique – Caritas France is a member of the OIB, whose mission is to ensure that every citizen has access to essential banking services and that financially vulnerable people are protected, supported and informed about the measures to which they are entitled. Each year, the OIB publishes a report on the situation and evolution of household difficulties in order to prevent the risk of over-indebtedness as much as possible. On 15 October 2024, at the publication of the 2023 report, Secours Catholique organised a webinar during which the actors in the field were able to share with Banque de France representatives and the authors of the report about what was actually happening in the community. While the 2023 report highlights several advances, much remains to be done in a context of over-indebtedness of families. On 19 November 2024, as part of the National Day of Budget support for the Restos du Coeur, Secours Catholique – Caritas France presented the OIB's report on the 'Manifesto for Universal Financial Inclusion' written in 2022 with many associative partners. It was an opportunity to note that the objective of universal access to bank accounts and credit, even for people with a good history of microcredit, is far from being achieved.

HELPING PEOPLE WITHOUT RESOURCES

For several years, the Welcome – Listening – Support teams and the Secours Catholique – Caritas France migrant teams have been expressing their unease and their feeling of powerlessness in the face of people without financial resources or access to social rights, for the most part due to a precarious administrative situation. In the absence of prospects of regularisation that would allow access to the right to work, volunteers question their ability to support and are looking for alternatives to offer.

Secours Catholique has therefore decided to take charge of this subject through a survey aimed at those in need, in order to better understand what they are experiencing and what they expect, but also to capture the experience of volunteers who

accompany them in order to identify the actions already implemented in the network and to imagine avenues for the future.

Led by an in-house person and by two students made available by the Law Clinic of Sciences Po Paris, the project collecting testimonies and capitalisation was released in 2024. It was very well received by the teams.

CONTINUATION OF THE WORK CARRIED OUT WITH THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STATISTICS AND ECONOMIC STUDIES (INSEE) TO IMPROVE THE MEASUREMENT OF POVERTY IN OFFICIAL STATISTICS

For several years now, Secours Catholique – Caritas France has been engaged in research aimed at studying poverty in all its dimensions, as experienced by the people themselves, and not only in terms of monetary resources. In 2022, Secours Catholique, ATD Fourth World and INSEE began a process based on the cross-referencing of knowledge between researchers, associations and people concerned to enrich the measurement of poverty in France based on the eight dimensions defined by the work done by the University of Oxford and the two associations. Two dimensions were dealt with in this first part. In 2024, the other six were discussed. The steering committee has been expanded by two researchers from the University of Paris School of Economics who specialise in issues of well-being and the measurement of poverty. New groups of people living in poverty have contributed to the process, such as the facilitator and two people from the Auxerre team who have been able to participate in the entire process since 2022. Two reports have been published. The objective of this work is to enrich various INSEE surveys relating to the resources and living conditions of French households and thus to allow a more accurate analysis of poverty in all its dimensions. ■

COMMITTING TO A FAIR ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION

PARTICIPATION IN LAUDATO SI' WEEK

In 2023, Secours Catholique – Caritas France took up a theme already integral to many of the delegations' projects and the Core (Resilient Communities) programme led by its international directorate: climate change and its price for the poorest, yet the least polluting. One of the challenges of this approach entitled Dream for Ecological Revolution is to mobilise individuals around the issue of just ecological transition. This is why, in 2024, the association has decided to be part of a broader mobilisation: the World *Laudato Si'* Week which takes place in May around the anniversary of the encyclical. The success of this mobilisation exceeded expectations since 24 delegations joined in, competing with each other with ideas for events and meetings: climate fresco, festive gatherings such as the Fraternibus sessions at the Port-Breton park in Dinard, nature walks such as the one organised around the abbey of Beaufort in Brittany.

At the headquarters of Secours Catholique in Paris, a banquet brought together all the associative partners as well as some international partners, such as TAM from Palestine, Caritas Colombia and the Amazonian Centre of Anthropology (CAAAP) from Peru, who were in Paris for the Core project (see p. 44-45). All kinds of activities spiced up the banquet menu: musical siestas, do-it-yourself workshops to learn how to make your own hygiene products...

REFLECTIONS FROM THE NATIONAL ANIMATION COUNCIL (CAN) ON ECOLOGY AND POVERTY ISSUES

The mandate of CAN, the Secours Catholique – Caritas France consultative body composed in equal parts of people with experience of vulnerability, office staff and the leadership team, was renewed in 2023 for two years with a new theme for reflection for its 63 members: to define and draft a reference text on what would be an ecology in the service of justice and fraternity.

Two rallies took place in 2024. The first, in an eco-place in Lyon that is very invested in healthy food, was an opportunity for participants to taste products and, for people from CAN who have experience



of vulnerability, to lead workshops and share their own eco-friendly practices. Secondly, in Lourdes in November, it was a question of defining the extent to which the advocacy of Secours Catholique should make the biggest polluters face up to their responsibilities. According to the definition of a 'fair' ecology which is beginning to gain consensus within the CAN, everyone should indeed act to the best of their capacities and their own impact. This is a way of repairing inequalities in the face of ecology, as the least polluting solutions are inaccessible to the poorest (and less polluting), or non-existent where they live.

RENEWED COMMITMENT TO CHARITABLE TEXTILE RECYCLING

With 715 charity shops run by 7,000 volunteers and visited by 500,000 people each year, Secours Catholique – Caritas France is a committed player in reuse as part of its fair and fraternal approach to ecological transition. In addition to helping to limit textile waste and enable everyone to afford quality clothing, these shops offer a space for meetings and conviviality. As part of an agreement with the eco-organisation Refashion, Secours Catholique

“24 DELEGATIONS
COMPETED WITH EACH OTHER
WITH IDEAS, EVENTS AND
MEETINGS.”

benefits from funds to set up calls for expressions of interest (CEIs) in order to finance the delegations' projects in four areas: educational training, sewing or upcycling workshops, improvement of sales and reception areas, and even creation of new structures. In 2024, 31 delegations received funding to carry out this type of activity, and 27 committed to a traceability process that makes it possible to estimate incoming volumes and their recovery more accurately. Secours Catholique estimates that 50% of the 3.5 million items of clothing donated to its branches are resold at charitable prices because of the quality of the donations.

2024 was marked by a worsening of the textile crisis with increasing difficulties in selling clothes not sold in stores. As the sorting and recycling sector for used textiles is struggling to find outlets, this has jeopardised a regional network that is essential for a united and local management of used textiles. Faced with this situation, Secours Catholique is working with its partners (Emmaüs, ESS France, Tissons la solidarité, Réseau national des recycleries et ressourceries, French Red Cross) to find new responsible solutions to compensate for the lack of buyers in certain areas and maintain the activity of charity shops in order to continue to promote an ecological transition that leaves no one by the wayside.

PARTICIPATION IN THE CNLE REPORT ON ECOLOGY AS A LEVER FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

In 2024, Secours Catholique – Caritas France participated in the steering committee of the report entitled 'Making the ecological transition a lever for social inclusion: the social impact of ecology' produced by the CNLE in partnership with the French Environment and Energy Management Agency (ADEME) and with the support of the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS). Produced in a participatory approach, this report reconciles scientific, associative and institutional knowledge and the experience of people in vulnerable situations who make up the fifth college of the CNLE. It is in line with Secours Catholique's observations and recommendations since it notes socio-environmental inequalities and questions the ability of the most modest populations to adapt before formulating recommendations to align the ecological transition with the fight against poverty and social inequalities. The association's participation in the development of this report shows that its voice now counts on climate and poverty issues. ■

PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE MOBILITY

STUDY AND PROPOSALS TO WORK ON REGIONS WHERE THERE IS A LACK OF MOBILITY

Further exacerbated by the rise in fuel prices, mobility problems in rural and hyper-rural areas lead to isolation and great inequalities in access to rights and employment. Secours Catholique – Caritas France's local teams are competing with each other with ideas to change this: microcredits, financial aid for the purchase of a vehicle, charitable transport... Whilst useful, these initiatives are simply sticking

plasters on a failing transport system. The time had come to launch a national campaign for a public policy to be undertaken in favour of inclusive and sustainable mobility in rural areas.

In 2023, a precise diagnosis of the needs and existing means of transport was carried out in several departments (Aveyron, Pyrénées-Gascogne, Allier, Tarn, Saône-et-Loire, Côte Roannaise), while, at the national level, a seminar was held at the end of the year with about fifty representatives of associations



SEBASTIEN LE CLEZIO / SCCF

in the field of solidarity and ecology. Based on the elements and analyses collected, Secours Catholique drew up a report presenting courses of action to combine access to mobility in rural areas with respect for the limits of the planet. Published in April 2024 under the title 'Rural areas: lack of mobility', this report starts with the words of people on the difficulties they encounter, reviews the political and economic decisions that have led to these situations and makes recommendations based on four major levers: a real planning of resources in the areas, the development of infrastructure, support for modes of transport other than a private car and the financing of mobility in these areas.

Although the report could not be presented to parliamentarians in June 2024 due to the dissolution, it was the subject of several events organised by Secours Catholique delegations throughout France, and also at the request of stakeholders such as the DREAL (Regional Directorate for the Environment, Planning and Housing) in Caen, as part of the Congress of the Regions of France in

>>> IN BRIEF

OPERATION 'EVERYONE BY BIKE'

In two years, the 'Tous à vélo' campaign carried out by the Secours Catholique in Évreux in partnership with the Cicérone integration project has enabled 100 adults to do cycling training and to acquire a bike. *"We ran a campaign for free public transport for people in vulnerable situations, but in vain,"* explains Sarah Guinoubi, facilitator. *"We then thought about an alternative."* The programme included five two-hour bike school sessions, a maintenance and repair workshop and a traffic awareness session. The participants were able to buy a bike reconditioned by Cicérone and financed by Secours Catholique for €10. *"I'd already got on a bike,"* says Ben, 36, *"but I'd never ridden one. After three sessions, I knew how to ride!"*

LEARNING DIFFERENTLY

In Saint-Sulpice-la-Pointe, every Monday and Thursday afternoon, when the bell rings to signal the end of class, a dozen children aged 7 to 10 meet the Secours Catholique volunteers who support them during the school year. Between the child in difficulty and the adult, the relationship that is formed goes beyond homework help. *"They confide in us, they express their feelings,"* says Chantal, a volunteer. In the association's premises, after a time of reading and revision, the pairs meet around fun activities. That afternoon, the children helped plant olive trees in the premises shared garden. The objective: to teach them the rules of community life, to make them aware of eco-gestures and citizenship.

MOBILE DIGITAL WORKSHOPS

A team from Secours Catholique runs digital workshops in isolated municipalities in Isère. These sessions take place over several weeks and bring together a dozen people who want to familiarise themselves with the use of the computer or smartphone. *"Software, Internet browsing, emails... we explain to them how everything works,"* says Laurence, a volunteer. *"The goal is for people to be more independent and to feel proud."* Since their creation in 2022, these mobile workshops have served six municipalities. Chantal, 70, followed one of them.

"I had never learned how to go online," she says. *"Now I'm less afraid of making mistakes and I'll continue to practice: with willpower, you can do it!"*





AIX-EN-PROVENCE

REGION

DIGITAL
ASSISTANCE IN
AIX-EN-PROVENCE:
“I PANIC EASILY.”

Every Thursday morning at Secours Catholique d'Aix-en-Provence, in the working-class district of Encagnane, a team of six to eight volunteers helps people who have difficulty with digital technology to solve a technical problem, to complete an online procedure or to master a digital tool or skill. The objective: to demystify the use of computers, smartphones and the Internet, which have become essential in daily life.

“You’re telling me, ‘Close the window!’” repeats Halima, mischievously, while pretending to actually close a window. At her side, Sonia and Jean-Paul, volunteers, laugh at the joke while helping her print medical documents herself. With her laptop under her arm, Nathalie comes *“just for troubleshooting”*. This retiree wants to refresh her memory on how to copy and paste text from the Internet into a Word document. While some people take hold of the mouse, many others don’t dare or can’t. This is the case of Rabha, 57, who came with her grandson in a stroller and her crumpled payslips. *“Without them, I won’t get anywhere!”* she exclaims, pointing to Catherine, Brigitte and Hosea who are working for her on the portal of the Family Allowances Fund (CAF).

Appointments can go on, and not only for technical reasons. *“We share a bond, we chat,”* says Jean-Paul. *“Often, people entrust us with their whole lives.”* The session takes place at the same time as the reception-café, open to people who are isolated or on the street. It is in full swing in the large adjacent room. A way to build bridges between the different needs of people, and to remove fears. ■



SCAN THIS CODE TO READ
THE FULL REPORT ON THE
WEBSITE OF SECOURS
CATHOLIQUE.

Strasbourg. Training for elected officials was also carried out by a dedicated organisation.

MOBILITY CHALLENGE IN THE HAUTES-PYRÉNÉES

As part of a day of discovery and exchanges on mobility in the Hautes-Pyrénées, the delegation of Secours Catholique – Caritas France proposed to all the participants, including members of partner associations and local elected officials, to go to Bagnères-de-Bigorre (centre of the department) by any means of transport as long as they were not alone in their petrol powered car. A challenge (met!) and a very good introduction to the exchanges with the various mobility stakeholders and the deputy of the Hautes-Pyrénées who came to debate the analyses and proposals set out in the 'Rural areas: lack of mobility' report.

THE HOUSE OF SOLIDARITY MOBILITY 43

In 2024, Secours Catholique – Caritas France participated, through the Solidarauto 43 garage, in the creation of the Maison de la mobilité solidaire 43 financed by the Tims¹ programme, for which it is acclaimed. This project, which was developed by a group of associations, is primarily aimed at people in vulnerable situations throughout the Haute-Loire region. Its mission is to support alternative solidarity mobility solutions to the car, to develop shared and active mobility solutions in several areas of the department, to advocate for solidarity and inclusive eco-mobility with public, economic and associative actors, etc. in a shared governance system involving public partners, local authorities, economic actors and associations. ■

¹ Programme which aims to develop sustainable and inclusive mobility in France.

TACKLING HOMELESSNESS AND POOR HOUSING

NATIONAL DAYS OF DAY CARE CENTRES TO BUILD NETWORKS

The first seminar was held in Paris in 2022 with 70 people, volunteers and employees from the day care centres of Secours Catholique – Caritas France. It was on this occasion that the need for a reference document redefining the framework and the common points of the day care centres beyond their differences was agreed, and that the decision was taken to organise a large gathering in Lourdes. It was held from 24 to 28 October 2024, in the presence of 120 volunteers and 30 employees from 55 of the 80-day care centres throughout the country. On the programme: the presentation of the reference framework, with different sheets exhibited, a debate on a theme chosen by responses to a survey; the participation of all in the life of the centres and an opportunity to share in fraternity, during open forums or activities outside Saint-Pierre. Many of the volunteers in the day care centres are in a vulnerable situation, so it was a question of seeing how to organise the most inclusive governance possible.

But for volunteers who face the greatest exclusion on a daily basis, these days were an opportunity to network in joy, to emerge from isolation and to take time to relax.

The national team for day care centres was created at the end of these days of reflection; it will make it possible to maintain the links forged in Lourdes and to promote exchanges, not to homogenise practices but to always better respond to the challenges.

TOOLS TO UNDERSTAND AND SUPPORT

Faced with the deterioration of the emergency accommodation situation, Secours Catholique strengthened its educational tools in 2024 to support its volunteer teams in supporting homeless people. As a follow-up to the Practical guide on accessing and remaining in emergency accommodation published in 2021, it has developed a new training kit, trialled in the Loiret and Vaucluse. This module gives information to help with understanding the situation of the people met by Secours Catholique, how the



VINCENT BOISOT / SCCF

accommodation and housing ecosystem works, and the role that Secours Catholique can play in it through support and advocacy. It will be rolled out in 2025 to new delegations strongly committed to the fight against homelessness.

NATIONAL ADVOCACY SUCCESSES

ACCESS TO NEW ACCOMMODATION PLACES THANKS TO OLYMPIC ADVOCACY

In its campaign 'Olympic and Paralympic Games: not invited to the party' (see p. 19-20), from the start of 2024 Secours Catholique – Caritas France had denounced the risks of evictions from slums and forced displacement of people on the street who were close to the Games. This advocacy continued within the framework of the collective *Le Revers de la médaille* and the meetings that took place at city level, with the Paris 2024 organising committee, as well as the prefectures, ministries and regional and departmental councils concerned. While many consequences of the denounced 'social cleansing' could not be avoided, Secours Catholique was pleased that the mobilisation had made it possible to open nearly 200 permanent places for the most

marginalised people in Paris: single men, sometimes accompanied by pets, who are the forgotten ones in terms of access to accommodation.

AN ADDITIONAL €250M FOR EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION

While the Solidarity Pact launched in September 2023 provided for the maintenance of the general accommodation stock at 203,000 places, three successive ministers had committed to creating 10,000 additional places in view of the growing number of vulnerable people on the street (women, families with very young children, people with medical conditions or disabilities, etc.), the budget cuts announced at the end of 2024 raised fears of further closures. The repeated calls from Secours Catholique and the Collective of Associations for Housing, of which it is a member, have made it possible to adopt resolutions in the National Assembly and the Senate to put an end to child homelessness and obtain the release of an additional €250M to end the year. However, this effort will have to be continued and expanded in 2025 in order to meet all needs.



ELODIE PERRIOT / SCCF

PUBLICATION OF A REPORT ON HOUSING BASED ON SECOURS CATHOLIQUE'S CAMPAIGN

As a member of the CNCDH, Secours Catholique was heavily involved in the development of the opinion 'Making the right to housing effective for all' published in March 2024. It takes up several key points, in particular on the systemic discrimination suffered by the poorest households in the race for social housing in most major French cities.

SUCCESSFUL APPEAL AGAINST THE DECREE SETTING HEALTH STANDARDS FOR RESIDENTIAL PREMISES

Secours Catholique and its partners had filed an appeal against the ministerial decree of 29 July 2023 to authorise the rental of unfit housing (basements without side openings, apartments with a ceiling height of 1.80 metres or a width of only 2 metres...). On 20 August 2024, the Council of State ruled in favour of the collective and cancelled the critical part of the decree.

WINNING LOCAL ADVOCACY

POITIERS: STRATEGY FOR THE CREATION OF A DAY CARE CENTRE COORDINATOR

Secours Catholique – Caritas France, which has been running a day care centre in Poitiers for a long time, deplored the lack of coordination and structures in the area to meet all the needs of people on the street. The organisation encouraged the city and the State to create a coordination position for social actors, and to open a new day care centre in addition to its own, managed by social workers, which should be opened in 2025.

AIX-EN-PROVENCE: SUSPENSION OF THE EVACUATION OF A SLUM

In October 2024, faced with the imminent eviction of 183 people, including 74 children, living in the slum of L'Arbois in Aix-en-Provence, the delegation of Secours Catholique and its partners called on the prefecture of Bouches-du-Rhône and obtained that the State suspend the use of law enforcement. A brief respite for families while waiting for the resumption of local consultation on the strategy for the elimination of the slum.

TOULOUSE AND AVIGNON: CASE LAW IN FAVOUR OF STAYING IN ACCOMMODATION

In 2023, the Toulouse delegation of Secours Catholique responded following the return to the street of families taken care of in emergency accommodation. In 2024, the judge ruled in the organisations' favour by condemning the prefecture on the grounds that these practices are contrary to law. This case law has supported other appeals throughout France, particularly in Avignon where the victory was widely reported in the local press.

PROGRESS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST ENERGY POVERTY

In collaboration with the Eco Habitat network and the National Housing Agency (ANAH), Secours Catholique – Caritas France had signed a contract in 2020 that provided for the energy renovation of 200 households in vulnerable situations by the end

of 2024. While the number of alterations supported did not quite meet the ambitions (120 in total), this contract demonstrated that such support made sense. It has indeed enabled the evolution of the ANAH regulations, the increase in aid for very modest homeowners and the implementation of support throughout the work financed by the agency. In addition to having changed national schemes, this pilot has led to the emergence of other similar projects: the Chauffe-toit programme in Burgundy and Maine-et-Loire, which already has a portfolio to its credit in 2024, and another, Solidar'toit, in Poitou. Secours Catholique's involvement is twofold: it supports the creation of these associations in charge of socio-financial support (setting up of the project for ANAH) and technical follow-up with craftsmen, while its volunteers provide fraternal support to households throughout the work. ■

SUPPORTING FAMILIES

A NEW ROADMAP FOR SCHOOLING SUPPORT

At Secours Catholique – Caritas France, school support now counts nearly 3,500 volunteers and several thousand children across 63 delegations. This work is all the more fundamental as it allows children not only to improve their academic results, but in general to regain self-confidence and to open up to other worlds through outings. The need was beginning to be felt, and to be expressed by the people concerned, to redo the inventory of needs in terms of materials, animation tools and the chance to meet to discuss improvements to support for the children. In 2024, a roadmap was drawn up to reframe the activity and equip volunteers to deal with changing situations. Today, most of the children supported in their schooling have 'dys' disorders (specific language or learning disorders) or have experienced migration journeys. It was therefore important to give volunteers the keys to fully understand these experiences and disorders and to give them access to available resources in terms of associations, adapted educational tools and also knowledge of the law. This roadmap was presented



MATHIEU GÉNON / SCOF

during the year to the delegations concerned and will continue to be presented in 2025.

LOCAL SPONSORSHIP, RECOGNISED SUPPORT FOR PARENTHOOD

Parents are not the only educators of their children, this is the whole idea behind the 'Local mentoring', an activity that has been carried out by Secours Catholique – Caritas France for many years. For parents in vulnerable situations, who struggle on a daily basis to make ends meet, sometimes in equally



VINCENT BOISOT / SCCF

precarious housing conditions, being able to create a long-term bond with a trusted adult is particularly valuable. Precious also for the children to whom this 'local mentor' will offer activities and outings that will help them discover other worlds and types of relationships with adults.

In February 2024, as part of the decree of the Taquet law on child protection, local mentorship was recognised as one of the resources that families can claim with the Child Welfare Service (ASE). This decree concerns children entrusted to the ASE, which is more rarely the case for children benefiting from local mentorship by Secours Catholique. The association is not in favour of it being restricted to children from families in vulnerable situations, preferring that local mentorship remain a personal and absolutely free choice for parents, made in the sole interest of their children.

PARTICIPATION IN THE HIGH COUNCIL FOR CHILDREN, THE FAMILY AND AGE (HCFEA)

Secours Catholique – Caritas France participates in two of the three HCFEA colleges, the one for children and adolescents, and the one for the family. During the bimonthly meetings that bring together some forty representatives of associations, institutions such as the CNAF, the General Directorate for Social Cohesion (DGCS) and regional and municipal elected officials, Secours Catholique can report findings and issue opinions, both on referrals from the government and on subjects proposed by the participants. It is in this context that in 2024, they intervened on the subject of children living on the streets, defended the right to stays and holidays for all, from the perspective of raising awareness of the environment and the protection of biodiversity, and took a position on the subject of the mental health of children and adolescents and their care.

OPENING OF A NEW FAMILY CENTRE IN ORLÉANS

In May 2024, Secours Catholique – Caritas France inaugurated a new family centre in Orléans. The network now has 23 houses open from Monday to Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., 15 of which were created

by Secours Catholique. The reception of parents in vulnerable or isolated situations is unconditional. They can go there with or without their children, the primary objective being that they can have time and space to settle down, share their difficulties and happiness with other parents, and regain confidence in their role, which is often undermined by the conditions in which it is exercised, in hostels for many, squats, and even on the street.

In 2024, when the project to create a federation of family houses was born, five national meetings of the network took place. These each brought together about fifty people: office staff, senior management and partners from the houses, but also parents, volunteers and employees, in order to exchange their experiences and practices. The last of these meetings took place in October 2024 on the theme of similarities and differences between the different houses.

TOWARDS A FEDERATION OF THE NETWORK OF FAMILY HOUSES

Created in 2009 jointly by Secours Catholique and Apprentis d'Auteuil, the family houses have since demonstrated their relevance and necessity. When the network reached the critical threshold of more than 20 houses, the time had come to structure it in the form of a federation. The study carried out in 2023 to identify the needs, both of the houses themselves and of the partners, made it possible to define the desired form of governance – a shared governance involving the parents themselves to a very large extent – and the missions of this federation. In July 2024, the CNAF appointed Secours Catholique et Apprentis d'Auteuil as the head of the Parenting Support Network. In September, a team was set up, with volunteer or salaried members of the two associations, to take up the challenge and work on drafting the statutes that will be filed with the prefecture in 2025.

The federation will be responsible for securing the economic model of the family houses and guaranteeing the implementation of the already existing reference framework. It will promote the pooling of resources and practices, support the offices of each house on administrative and financial levels, and lead a common advocacy on public practices vis-à-vis parents in vulnerable situations and the unbearable cases of entire families on the street.

RESPONDING TO THE RIGHT TO HOLIDAYS FOR EVERYONE

Neither an addition nor superfluous, holidays help to strengthen family ties and strengthen the capacity of individuals and parents to act. This is a right of which Secours Catholique – Caritas France is an ardent defender.

In 2024, the National Agency for Holiday Vouchers (ANCV) allocated an endowment of €470,000 which enabled the organisation of 470 holiday projects and the departure of 960 people on group stays and 2,020 on individual stays.

In addition, thanks to Secours Catholique's partnership with the National Union of Outdoor Sports Centres (UCPA), the Berry Tudy and Maison de Courcelles associations, and with the financial support (€20,000) from the Department of Youth, Popular Education and Associative Life of the Ministry of Sports, Youth and Associative Life, 300 young people went to summer camp. In addition, more than 500 children and teenagers have gone on holiday as part of the family holiday scheme.

In 2024, Secours Catholique – Caritas France continued to multiply initiatives to facilitate the departure of families, children and young people, isolated people, and seniors. Thus, two new partnerships have been set up. The first with the association Parents Vacances founded in 2019 on an original idea of making houses available between individuals and families accompanied by a trusted partner such as Secours Catholique which makes the link. This formula has benefited more than fifteen families (71 people) in five different delegations and will benefit others, as the national development of this partnership progresses.

The second with the foundation 'Je pars, tu pars, il part', which collects holiday stays from accommodation providers, tour operators and major players in tourism in order to make them available to organisations that support people who are unable to go on holidays. Twenty-five families, or 100 people, were able to go on holiday in this way in 2024.



PARTNERSHIP WITH THE OCEANOGRAPHIC MUSEUM OF MONACO

The Oceanographic Museum of Monaco has developed educational tools for schools focused on the protection of biodiversity. As part of a partnership signed in 2024, 20 people (parents and children) from the Eure delegation were invited in July to stay for three nights, including a hotel stay, a visit to the museum, a boat tour, and even an introduction to scuba diving.

The success of this first experience prompted the museum to extend the partnership for three years, allowing other children and their parents to benefit from it and to gain a concrete understanding of environmental issues. Whilst this trip was the highlight of a broader awareness campaign on biodiversity conducted as part of the Reve project by Secours Catholique, it was through discovering the diversity (and fragility) of marine flora and fauna that a real spark of awareness could occur. ■

DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF FOREIGN NATIONALS

MOBILISATION AGAINST THE ASYLUM-IMMIGRATION LAW

Throughout 2023, during debates on the asylum-immigration law, Secours Catholique – Caritas France, alongside other organisations, mobilised to denounce a bill that undermines a number of fundamental rights of the people affected. However, this mobilisation did not succeed in changing the minds of the senators and then the deputies who voted for the law at the end of the year. Staying true to its mission of solidarity with the most vulnerable, Secours Catholique decided to invite its volunteers, employees, and partners to respond to the call of 201 public figures, including Véronique Devise, then national president, to march throughout France on Sunday 21 January 2024, for freedom, equality, fraternity, and to call for the abandonment of the law. The active involvement of the network in the march on 21 January, an unusual course of action for the organisation, revealed the ability of Secours Catholique to voice political opinions and to be in solidarity with other associations and unions.

REGIONAL MOBILISATION

Local stakeholders in Secours Catholique continued to mobilise throughout the year, with some key moments.

- ▶ **In Nancy**, on 24 June, the delegation participated in organising a "street parliament for other migration policies", with a dual objective: to remind that a different reception of migrants is possible and to give voice to the views, experience, and demands of those affected.

- ▶ **In Savoie**, the team at the Chignin day reception centre produced a video to remind, through a poignant testimony, that "when you provide a warm welcome, things go well".
- ▶ **In Île-de-France**: on 9 December 2024, the teams of Secours Catholique launched a series of webinars entitled "1 hour 30 minutes to better understand". During the first session, 150 participants were able to talk to Ekrame Boubtane, an international migration specialist, on the theme: "What is the real economic cost of immigration?"

THE NEW CHALLENGES OF LEARNING FRENCH

Nearly half of the people welcomed by Secours Catholique – Caritas France are foreign nationals. Among the volunteer teams that assist them, over 300 teams are engaged in French language learning activities to support their integration into society. Two new challenges have emerged.

THE CHALLENGE OF CERTIFICATION

Since January 2024, following the enactment of the law to control immigration and improve integration, measures concerning French language proficiency have made it even more difficult to obtain a long-term residence permit without certified French language skills, exacerbating vulnerability and discrimination. A group of about fifteen individuals (those involved in French language learning, employees, volunteers, etc.) formed to assess the practices and concerns of local teams and determine actions that can be implemented within the framework of Secours



ÉLODIE PERROT / SCOF

Catholique's national project. These actions aim to promote French language learning, favouring a holistic approach that allows individuals to learn at their own pace, without the pressure of results, and respecting the fundamental principle of unconditional welcome for the most vulnerable: asylum seekers and undocumented individuals who cannot access state or local government-funded language training programs. This reflection contributes to advocacy efforts aimed at denouncing the state's withdrawal from offering training and support for people wishing to learn French and its impact on the voluntary sector.

THE CHALLENGE OF ACCESS TO LEARNING FRENCH

As part of the "French for All" collective, Secours Catholique – Caritas France participated in an experimental study conducted between 2020 and 2024 with learners and facilitators (volunteer and professional trainers, educational coordinators, association directors, etc.). Through interviews conducted in seven towns across France with volunteer learners, the participants in the research were invited to think of solutions to the most frequently raised access issues to French learning, both locally and nationally. Some of the recommended solutions have resulted in the creation of new workshops, support systems,

community-based actions, and advocacy towards local and national policymakers. In total, over 140 learners participated in this action-research, published in 2024, as well as in the grass-roots efforts that led to on-the-ground transformations.

LEARNERS' DEMANDS

As part of the action-research took place during the debates on the asylum and immigration law, the participating learners wanted to challenge elected officials through an online opinion piece that demands access to professional French language training across all regions of France, a diverse training offer that meets their various needs, priority access to daycare centres for learners, and recognition and value of their diplomas.

THE FRANCO-BRITISH COASTLINE: A ZONE OF HUMANITY TO BE DEFENDED

Secours Catholique – Caritas France has been supporting exiled people on the Franco-British coastline in Calais for over twenty-five years. The denial of dignity and fundamental rights that they face at the Franco-British border and the extreme precariousness that follows have made this area a “zone of humanity” to defend. In this humanitarian crisis on French territory, the actions of Secours Catholique are inevitably evolving. An internal seminar, gathering 80 national and local stakeholders, took place in Calais over two sessions, in March and July 2024, to rethink this presence.

A DEADLY YEAR

For the sixty volunteers from Secours Catholique welcoming asylum seekers, the year 2024 has been tragically marked by over 75 asylum seeker deaths. With each new tragedy, the team, along with other local associations, does its best to support the families, including during the identifying of bodies, tracing relatives in their home countries, and managing the logistics of burials on-site. The significant increase in the number of deaths along the coastline is certainly not inevitable. This is the message conveyed by two articles co-signed by Secours Catholique in *Libération* (May 2024) and *Le Monde* (September). They argue that the inhumane living conditions in camps, combined with ever more aggressive repression that forces individuals to take increasing risks, are what lead to these deaths by the dozens.

ADVOCACY SUCCESS

A small victory in advocacy should also be noted in 2024. Secours Catholique's teams successfully achieved the removal of one step in the difficult asylum process since the closure of the Calais counter in 2016. People wishing to apply for asylum have since had to travel to the Lille reception centre (Spada). In 2021, a mandatory appointment by phone was added as a prerequisite for their first visit. Following letters sent to the Ministry of the Interior and the French Office for Immigration and Integration (Ofii), this obligation has been removed. This is a first step, with hopes of reopening a counter in Calais.

MORE AND MORE OBSTACLES TO SOLIDARITY

Secours Catholique participated in the OLA survey on the repression of solidarity with exiled individuals at borders. The report, entitled “*In Disregard of Rights*”, was published on 18 November 2024. The repression suffered by organizations and volunteers assisting exiled people, is increasingly being denounced publicly, as evidenced by the public debates surrounding the “crime of solidarity” in recent years. Drawn from around twenty semi-structured interviews and association archives, the report outlines the various types of obstruction to solidarity at borders, beyond mere criminalisation: verbal attacks and assaults on the legitimacy of solidarity supporters, police harassment and violence, material and financial damage, and finally, attempts to ostracise and undermine collective action. ■



DEFENDING RIGHTS AND EMPOWERING PRISONERS

SUPPORTING PEOPLE IN CUSTODY

To combat the isolation and social exclusion often caused by detention, Secours Catholique is able to rely on a network of nearly 2,000 volunteers who meet with prisoners to build a fraternal connection, offer material assistance when needed, and help restore self-confidence and autonomy. To support their work, in collaboration with Catholic prison chaplaincies, Secours Catholique has also updated its "yellow binder" a physical tool that was no longer meeting the needs. It has been completely overhauled to take account of changes in the prison environment and the dynamics specific to each of the two partner organisations. The new joint and entirely digital guide, entitled *"Supporting People in Custody"*, was published in 2024. It is a practical manual with sections on the regulatory framework for prison visits, a collaborative approach to supporting people, a focus on their material and spiritual needs and links to online resources for further assistance. Questions such as the volunteers view of the detainee or the purpose of the sentence are also addressed in order to broaden the discussion. The files will be updated on-line and can be used to direct and guide the life of prison teams according to the characteristics of the local context of the delegations.

PROMOTING COMMUNITY SERVICE

Since 2017, Secours Catholique has been authorised to take in individuals sentenced to community service (CSI) to fulfil all or part of their sentence (up to 240 hours over a 24-month period). In 2024, the assessment of the 180 CSI individuals hosted over the past five years was completed, in preparation for renewing the authorisation granted by the prison administration and the Ministry of Justice in 2025. The results were positive, with many delegations able to integrate one or more people into their reception activities (drop in centres, solidarity shops etc) street patrols, as well as actions linked to the end of year collections: presence in public spaces, markets and other festive and solidarity events around Christmas, or even administrative projects or a few hours to

join volunteers who spruce up a room or cultivate a shared garden with assisted people. Thanks to national authorisation the delegations are exempt from the initial administrative formality and can therefore very easily submit job descriptions. Secours Catholique will continue to promote access to this service within its network as it is fully in line with its mission to awaken solidarity. Through the activities offered to them, people sentenced to community service (CSI) discover a network of fraternal solidarity, where many choose to continue as volunteers beyond their mandated hours.

“ALMOST 2,000 VOLUNTEERS GO OUT TO MEET PRISONERS TO FORGE FRATERNAL LINKS WITH THEM.”

A RECEPTION PROJECT FOR INMATES NEARING RELEASE

The fulfilment of prison sentences provides that at the end of their sentence prisoners can sometimes serve their detention in an open environment in order to better prepare for their release. In 2021, an Épinal-based farmer, inspired by the Moyembrie farm model, approached Secours Catholique – Caritas France to offer a welcome of this type on his farm. The delegation took up the idea and after a period of consideration, approached a local accommodation and reintegration centre (CHRS), Le Renouveau in Épinal, to set up a joint project for 2024. The aim is to initially reserve five places for the reception, accommodation and support of people under sentence, four of whom are serving a sentence known as 'an out of prison placement', and one who has been released but has no place to stay or a roof over their head.

Under this scheme, which is due to come into effect in 2025, the CHRS Le Renouveau will make its staff available for supervision, security and social work, while Secours Catholique volunteers will provide fraternal contact with people, welcoming them,

listening to them and helping them to become financially independent at the end of their external placement and to find accommodation, in conjunction with other organisations and partners. The project also provides for people in care to benefit

from the possibility of employment on a fixed-term integration contract in a company or on a social integration site in the region, and for them to discover voluntary work, whether with Secours Catholique or other associations. ■

FACING EMERGENCIES

DEVASTATING FLOODS IN PAS-DE-CALAIS

After the exceptional flooding in November 2023, a new episode of heavy rains on New Year's Eve caused several rivers to overflow in Pas-de-Calais. A total of 348 municipalities or hamlets in the department were declared natural disaster zones. In early January, in the light of the scale of the disaster, Secours Catholique's France Emergency Department set up a special unit to contact the affected municipalities by telephone to carry out an initial assessment. Then, from 15 to 26 January, an initial assessment was carried out on site by eight supervisors from the National Emergency Team France (Enuf). This made it possible to visit 140 municipalities across the entire department and to categorise them based on the number of affected households—approximately 11,500 residents in the three areas where Secours Catholique chose to intervene: Montreuillois, Audomarois, and Pays d'Opal.

The aim of the initial assessment is to define a system that is viable with the number of volunteers available to go door-to-door in pairs to all the households in the municipalities in the selected sectors, plus occasional visits to people in difficulty referred by the town halls and other institutional players in the other municipalities. At the end of the initial assessment, recommendations were made to the delegation, which is responsible for taking the final decision, depending in particular on its ability to continue to monitor people after they have left the scheme. In total, the operation in Pas-de-Calais lasted more than three months, from 1 February to the end of April 2024. It involved 123 volunteers from 21 départements, who were deployed in 82 towns to 594 households. The role of the volunteers is to offer a time of listening and comfort and, depending on the

difficulties and needs expressed by the people concerned, to put together applications which are then presented to the aid committee for material support. In the Pas-de-Calais region, 40 applications were submitted to the aid committee, with an average of €400 granted per household.

EXCEPTIONAL MEASURES FOR DEVASTATED MAYOTTE

It is impossible to talk about 2024 without immediately thinking about Cyclone Chido which completely devastated the island of Mayotte on 14 December. As soon as the disaster was announced, a crisis unit was activated at the Secours Catholique – Caritas France head office, with members of the board, several departments and the emergencies department, to show strong support for the delegation on site, who were directly affected like all the island's inhabitants. Faced with damage on such a scale, we had to think about the type of action to be taken and with which partners, as the situation did not allow us to put in place the usual system of going to every home affected by the disaster, as all homes were affected, but rather required intervention as part of a long-term project and actions co-financed with other partners and charities. From the outset, Secours Catholique has been very careful not to polarise the population, paying as much attention to the Mahorais as to the highly vulnerable exiles who make up some of our volunteer teams.

From the outset, the Mayotte delegation benefited from the support of the teams from La Réunion, who were more numerous and whose knowledge of the area was invaluable to the crisis unit. Thanks to its links with local players, parcels for the delegation's volunteers and their families were air-dropped whilst waiting for a system to be put in place in 2025.



Gaël Kerbaol / SCCF

TIME TO REVIEW THE SYSTEMS

Following the conclusion of emergency operations, Secours Catholique traditionally organises a review session to reflect on the intervention, to report back to volunteers who took part and to the members of the delegation. Reviews were held in June 2024 for the intervention following the Charente-Maritime earthquake and in late September for the Pas-de-Calais floods. The aim is both to take stock of the difficulties encountered and what has worked well. For the volunteers, particularly those called upon by Secours Catholique at regional and national level, these review sessions are also an opportunity to hear news of the families in great difficulty that they have left behind at the end of the intervention.

PREPARING FOR MULTIPLE INTENSE SHORT-TERM EVENTS

It is now clear that climate change is a reality. In France no region can consider itself safe from extreme weather events (such as hailstorms, floods, and mini tornadoes) which contribute to new vulnerabilities among people who are already in difficulty. Thus, Secours Catholique's France Emergency Dept was called out following the floods in Seine et Marne, Ardèche and Var. Whilst no action proved necessary

in Seine et Marne, a week-long operation was set up in the commune of Limony, in the northern Ardèche, with three pairs of volunteers supervised by Enuf staff, and another in the Var, entirely managed by an Enuf member of the local delegation, who was able to recruit volunteer teams directly on the spot. Emergencies will increasingly be part of the delegation's activities. Fifteen or so of them have contacted the France Emergency department, in particular to train new volunteers to be on standby in their area and to be able to rapidly take charge of organising a post-emergency response. So, six new advisers were trained in 2024, and two meetings were organised in the two delegations affected by the disasters in Ardèche and Pas-de-Calais, during the review sessions. A mini-training course for delegation offices was set up that same year, the idea being to invest time now to avoid losing it when the time comes. ■

PURSUING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WORLDWIDE

INCREASED STRIKES by the Israelis on Gaza and Lebanon, the advancing Russian army in Ukraine, rising extremism in many countries... the geopolitical and humanitarian toll in 2024 is alarming. Secours Catholique – Caritas France witnessed these events through its partners, which it supports in times of ordeal and emergency, without losing sight of the objectives of long-term development, social cohesion and preservation of the environment. For climate change is having the greatest impact on the most vulnerable populations. This was shown by the cyclone that devastated Myanmar and the droughts that are jeopardising food security in Africa. The Core programme, which Secours Catholique has been running since 2022 in 18 countries, creates and implements a fair ecological transition for the poorest, for those most affected by the crisis. To do this, it relies on the knowledge of the communities themselves, who already have some of the answers, and on the commitment of a civil society that it brings together and strengthens in its power to act against the disorders of the world.



ACTING FOR A FAIR ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION

INITIAL REVIEW OF THE CORE PROGRAMME

In 2021, as part of a multi-annual partnership agreement with the French Development Agency (AFD) and the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE), Secours Catholique – Caritas France launched an ambitious programme to promote a fair ecological transition in fifteen countries. This programme now has a name, 'Resilient Communities' (Core), which was chosen in 2024 by all the stakeholders and which confirms the belief that the scale of the community is key to the desired transformations. Not only because communities, especially the most vulnerable, highlight the injustice of dominant models that degrade the environment and deplete resources, but above all because they offer avenues for change and know-how that are only too willing to be mobilised if their 'power to act' is strengthened.

A review of the first two-year phase of the programme was conducted in 2024. It highlighted the

urgency of the changes to make in an increasingly pressing context, given the climatic, security and political crises. It also highlighted the strength of the collective that has been created and is now capable of thinking together to identify ethical practices and build a common vision.

Phase one of the programme was also a springboard for setting up the programme's four management bodies: the Strategic Committee, which includes a number of international partners, members of Secours Catholique's management and international advocacy team and research partners (Centre international d'études pour le développement local - Ciedel - and Groupement d'intérêt scientifique pour l'étude de la mondialisation et du développement – Gemdev), the Stakeholders' Assembly (APP) which brings together all the partners, the Scientific Committee and the Coordination Unit at Secours Catholique.



VINCENT BOISSOT / SCCF

SECOND APP OF THE CORE PROGRAMME

The Core programme provides for all stakeholders to meet every two years with the aim of building a shared vision of the fair ecological transition supported by the collective and of nurturing the practices of the partners. The work conducted at these meetings provides input for the strategic committee responsible for drafting the summary documents. The first APP in 2022 was devoted to partners getting to know each other, the projects they were involved in and the regional dynamics underway.

The second APP, which took place from 27 to 31 May 2024 at the Cité Saint-Pierre in Lourdes, aimed to examine in greater depth the themes that make up the fair ecological transition, to pool the work of the partners on these themes and to identify synergies, avenues of work and elements of a shared vision. There is now a consensus that a just ecological transition could be achieved through simultaneous and inseparable access to three bodies of rights: the right to a decent standard of living from one's work and from the land, the right to live in harmony within one's own territory, the right to be part of a community.

PUBLICATION OF A FIRST BULLETIN OF 'CONTROVERSIES AND DEBATES'

Research, one of the major thrusts of the Core programme, enables empirical knowledge to be combined with more theoretical knowledge. The participative and comparative research work carried out by Gemdev, Secours Catholique's partner, during the first phase of the programme focused on agro-ecology. It was divided into three stages:

a field study on the working methods of Secours Catholique's partners in the Sahel, Brazil and Bolivia, a series of participatory webinars which have helped to identify common issues with Bangladesh, Bolivia and Senegal, and finally a meeting between these same partners and leading figures from the academic world working on agro-ecology. Published in 2024, the 'Controversies & debates' bulletin summarises all these elements. It is the first in a series of forthcoming contributions on fair ecological transition, the ambition of which is to move without bureaucracy from the controversy that characterises the scientific method to the debates that are currently unsettling society, by bringing together the knowledge of stakeholders and researchers.

REGIONAL MOMENTUM FOR FAIR ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION

A few years ago, a regional initiative was launched by partners in Bangladesh, Vietnam, India and Burma in conjunction with the Secours Catholique – Caritas France study on Indigenous peoples. The links and exchanges have continued and, thanks to the Core programme, this initiative was given a new impetus in 2022. In 2024, the partners were able to meet in France for a week-long workshop before the meeting of the programme's stakeholders in order to move forward with the implementation of the action plan developed at the previous workshop in 2022 and, in advance, to take advantage of the opportunity to engage in exchanges in order to consolidate their links, to forge links with new members of the team on all sides and to get to know a second Burmese partner, to review the joint action plan and pursue the networking policy. It was also an opportunity to find out about the work being carried out by the Secours Catholique Hauts de France delegation with the most vulnerable people.

These few days were very beneficial. A number of learning visits between regional partners were agreed upon then and implemented during the year. Thus, the Burmese partner travelled to Vietnam to gain a better understanding of the local approach to questions of territorial governance, in terms of natural resource management and land rights. The Indian partner received tailor-made training on the use of a monitoring tool that enables indigenous communities to collect their own information on harvests, natural resources, etc. and thus manage their own development. These South-South initiatives

and exchanges of best practice are fine examples of the momentum generated by the Core programme.

THE REGIONAL DYNAMICS OF THE AGRO-ECOLOGY IN THE SAHEL PROGRAMME (PAES)

In Africa, the Paes programme, which Secours Catholique – Caritas France has been running for several years with nine partners in Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Benin and Togo, was incorporated into the Core programme in 2021. One of the aims of the Paes is to set up regional networks of players from these countries with a view to sharing practices and knowledge, capitalising on them and promoting them on a sub-regional scale. In May 2024, a third regional meeting of the Paes initiative was held in Paris with all the partners, most of them in person. The meeting provided an

opportunity to take stock of the programme, reflect on collective commitments and reconsider its governance. A shared vision has been defined for the programme: to become, within five years, a strong, effective learning community, committed to a just ecological transition, through a dynamic that is inclusive, transformative and empowering. An elected and dynamic steering committee has been set up, with fortnightly meetings for strategic monitoring. The meeting concluded with a visit to the Ferme de Paris, whose facilities are made available to Champs des Possibles, an organic market-gardening cooperative in the Bois de Vincennes. ■

STRENGTHENING THE RESILIENCE OF THE HARDEST HIT AREAS

ADVOCACY AT COP 29 TO FINANCE TERRITORIAL RESILIENCE

In 2024, Secours Catholique – Caritas France's years of lobbying shifted from denouncing false solutions to climate change, such as carbon offsetting, to working on the impact of climate imbalance on the most vulnerable. Regional reorganisation, crop diversification, early warning systems, dykes, cyclone-proofing homes... solutions exist to strengthen the resilience of the hardest hit communities. What remains is for the governments to put on the table the means to finance measures to adapt to climate change, as well as policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The outcome of this advocacy through Climate Action at COP 29 in November 2024 in Baku, Azerbaijan, was disappointing. The final agreement envisages a contribution of 300 billion dollars per year by 2030. Whilst this may seem like an impressive sum, it is actually disappointing when you consider inflation and financing requirements. According to the UN report on the financing of sustainable development, the countries of the South would need 2,400

billion dollars a year to cope with the effects of climate change.

AMBITIONS AND THEMES FOR COP 30

COP 30, which will be held in Brazil in November 2025, will coincide with the tenth anniversary of the Paris Agreement. This summit will be a key moment in international climate diplomacy and should enable international civil society to come together and make its voice heard, particularly at the People's Summit organised on the margins of the conference.

Secours Catholique – Caritas France will be taking part in the COP alongside its partners, particularly the Brazilians, to monitor and influence progress on adaptation policies. In fact, states will have to define indicators to measure the efforts made to achieve the global adaptation objective in several key areas: food security, health, infrastructure, water supply and social systems. Finally, the issue of technical and financial support for developing countries will be at the heart of our advocacy.

This is a vital issue, particularly for the poorest

(and least polluting!) countries and communities around the world, which are the first to suffer from droughts, floods, salinisation of the land and heat-waves. To back up its case against this injustice, since the end of 2024 Secours Catholique has been carrying out a major project to gather the views of the people most affected by these disruptions, both in mainland France and in overseas countries such as Brazil, Tunisia and Madagascar. The analysis of these reports and the resulting recommendations

will be presented at COP 30. Limiting the impact of climate change means proposing measures that increase the resilience of territories while integrating the fight against poverty.

The challenge at COP 30 will be to convince the Member States of this. While the political context is no doubt unfavourable, the climatic and social reality is as pressing as it is undeniable, as the accounts gathered by Secours Catholique and its partners testify. ■

DEFENDING RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISTS IN HONDURAS

According to the NGO Global Witness, which publishes its annual report on threats to defenders of land and environmental rights, 18 environmental rights activists were killed in Honduras in 2023, one of the highest murders rates in the world. These community leaders, who often come from indigenous peoples who have a sacred relationship with their ancestral territories, are paying a very high price for their opposition to the plans of companies that are taking over their land for mining or hydroelectric projects. Although the vast majority of Latin

American countries have ratified international agreements such as Convention 169 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which requires consultation with indigenous communities and obtaining their free, prior and informed consent to any project on their territory, they have failed to

protect them from the threats and crimes of armed groups in the pay of big business. The protection measures put in place (bullet-proof vests, escorts, etc.) are more often than not ineffective. This was the case for Juan Lopez, a community leader and

partner of Secours Catholique – Caritas France in Honduras, who was shot dead on 14 September 2024. Very shaken by this crime and concerned for its other partners, the association, through its national president Didier Duriez, has joined the hundred or so civil society players from all over the world who, in an open letter, have asked the President of Honduras to make the protection of the defenders of the land, the environment and water a priority during her term of office.

DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS IN PALESTINE

Since the end of October 2023, Secours Catholique-Caritas France has been supporting a new partner in Palestine, the NGO Al-Haq ('Right' in Arabic), which since its creation in 1979 has been documenting violations of the individual and collective rights of Palestinians in the occupied territory, regardless of who is responsible for them. The NGO conducts field investigations into crimes as defined by international law and international humanitarian law and supports cases before the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the International Criminal Tribunal (ICT). The documents produced are also used to conduct advocacy and raise awareness among stakeholders and international officials. This work was awarded the French Republic Human Rights Prize in 2018, jointly with the Israeli NGO B'Tselem. In 2024, Secours Catholique organised for Al-Haq's head of advocacy to come to France so that she could be received not only by the French Federation

“COMMUNITY LEADERS
PAY DEARLY FOR THEIR
OPPOSITION TO BUSINESS
PROJECTS”

for Human Rights, but also by members of parliament and government representatives, particularly at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

AN INFORMATION EXCHANGE NETWORK FOR A SHARED VIEW OF MIGRATION

The Africa Europe Network for Human Mobility (Raemh) is made up of 11 member organisations based in North Africa, West Africa and Southern Europe, which work with people on the move at different stages of their migratory journey. Its aim is to build the capacity of its members to respond effectively to the needs of the people they support. Secours Catholique – Caritas France has been responsible for the administrative and financial management of the network since 2021 and until 2024, when it was transferred to Caritas Guinea. In June 2024, the association took part in the steering committee workshop held in Abidjan to discuss key issues relating to strategy, governance and the ever-increasing challenges on migration routes. Its investment in the network is primarily focused on developing a local-global synergy between the grassroots activities of the network's member organisations and the support work for migrants carried out by the France network's project managers and volunteers. In 2024, this dynamic has opened up a dialogue between members on cross-cutting issues such as civil status, return to countries of origin and bereavement, all crucial issues in migratory journeys.

MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT, MAJOR EVENTS

In 2024, Secours Catholique – Caritas France had several opportunities to make its case for the protection of migrants.

In January 2024, at the 14th Summit of the Global Forum on Migration and Development held in Geneva under the presidency of France, it participated as co-chair of the civil society delegation. This was an opportunity to present the analyses and recommendations from its study 'Free to leave, free to stay: protecting human rights in the context of environmental mobility', published in 2023.

In September 2024, it took part in a global meeting in Bogotá (Colombia) organised by the Red Clamor Latin American ecclesiastical network, alongside Caritas Internationalis, which brought together representatives of various Catholic organisations working with people in situations of mobility. It was also in 2024 that the European regional review of

the follow-up to the Global Pact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, signed in Marrakesh in 2018, took place. In its contribution to the review, Secours Catholique drew attention to the obstacles encountered by migrants in accessing basic services and called on governments to honour the protection to which they have committed themselves.

COLLECTIVE ACTION AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION

Since 2022, Secours Catholique – Caritas France has been funding a programme to combat domestic and workplace violence against women in the Great Lakes region (Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rwanda). Led by eight partners, the programme aims to change mentalities and adapt social norms that promote respect for women's rights.

In September 2024, the programme's partners were invited to take part in a participative advocacy training course, during which they were able to develop their skills and understanding of the legal and political frameworks in force, as well as working >>>



ÉLODIE PERRIOT / SCDF

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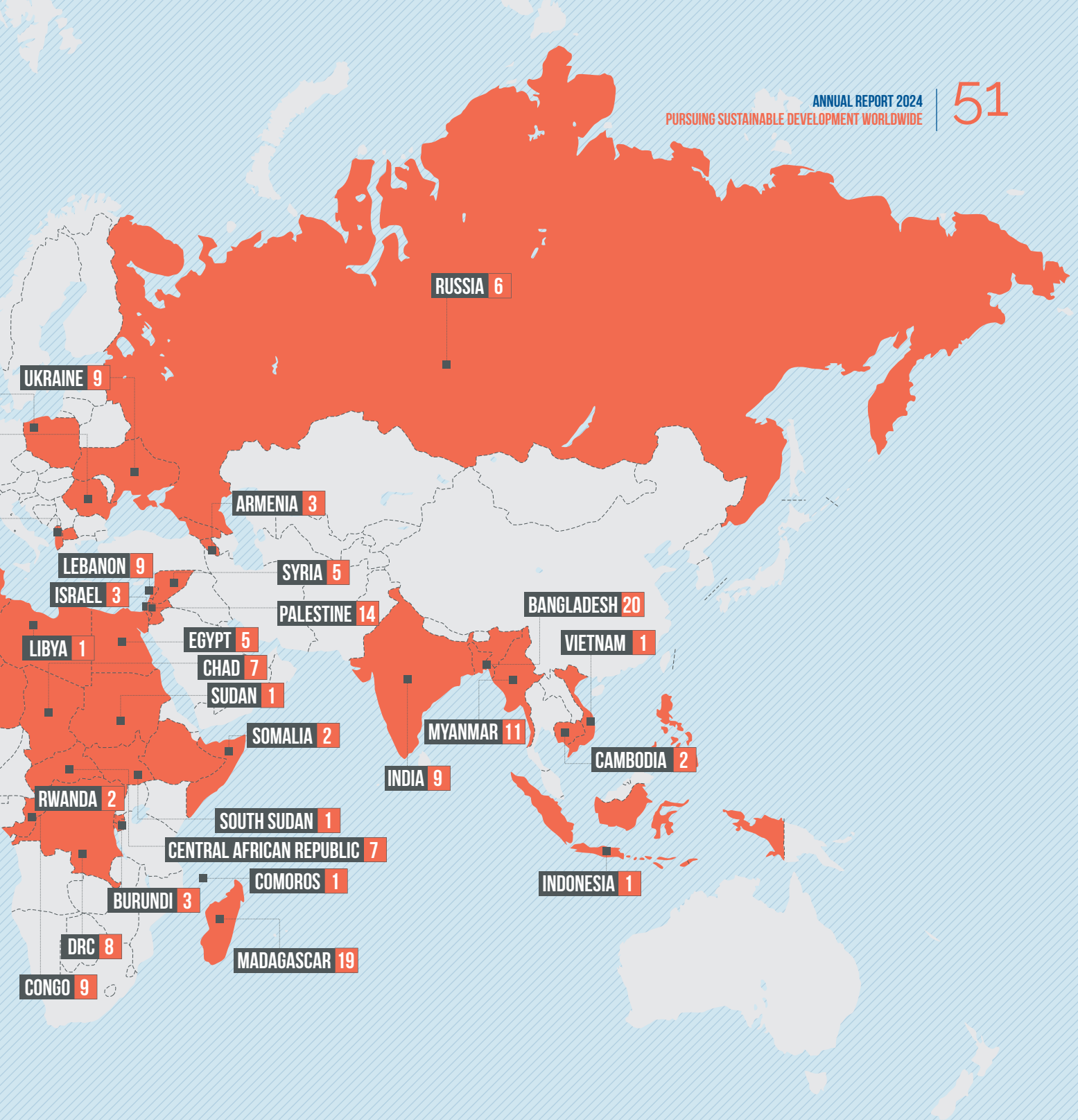
335 PROJECTS SUPPORTED WORLDWIDE



PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY REGION/INTERNATIONALLY

AFRICA REGION	11
LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN REGION	8
ASIA REGION	4
EUROPE REGION	5
MIDDLE EAST, NORTH AFRICA REGION	4
INTERNATIONAL	17

COUNTRY NUMBER OF PROJECTS



>>> on the development of national strategies. Their aim is to mobilise decision-makers to carry out the structural reforms needed to improve the application of the law and care for victims.

In November 2024, halfway through the programme, a workshop was held in Bujumbura, Burundi, to share the results of the self-assessments carried out at diocesan and national level in the programme's three partner countries.

Following the departure of the international volunteer in charge of regional coordination, a new coordinator was recruited locally and assigned to Caritas Goma in the DRC. This choice of local recruitment aims to strengthen the power of action of the partners and the ownership of the programme by partners and local communities.

CONTINUATION OF PRIVATELY FUNDED PROJECTS IN MALI, BURKINA FASO AND NIGER

As a result of the ban on NGOs in Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali receiving French public funds, the agro-ecology projects supported by Secours Catholique – Caritas France are now financed entirely from the association's own funds. Their continuation is crucial in regions where food security is threatened by climate change and where the population is heavily dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. In Burkina Faso, the project aims to develop agro-ecology education in conjunction with primary schools and farmers, in order to combat farmers' heavy dependence on chemical inputs and raise awareness of the impact of these substances on human, animal and environmental health. In Niger, producers of improved seeds for millet, sorghum and black-eyed pea are given support to adapt production to the shorter rainy seasons. A network of seed shops has been set up to ensure that seeds are available throughout the region, and three farmers' field schools have been created for 75 farmers, including 31 women. In Mali, in the northern region of the diocese of Bamako, Secours Catholique is supporting a transition to agro-ecology by raising awareness among producers of sustainable practices and setting up processing units for market garden produce to diversify local outlets.

THE EXPERIENCE OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN IN DEFENDING THEIR TERRITORIES

The International Management of Secours Catholique – Caritas France is continuing to make progress on the gender approach it initiated in 2023. The regional initiative adopted by eight Latin American partners as part of the Core programme has made it possible to tackle the issue of gender from an intercultural perspective. In April 2024, partners from Bolivia and Brazil attended the pre-Fospa (Foro Social Panamazónico) Peru held in Tarapoto and took the opportunity to visit the Kichwa communities supported by Caaap, Secours Catholique's local partner. They discussed the question of protecting indigenous territories, particularly from the point of view of the role played by women. The exchange enabled the material and spiritual impacts of mining on the indigenous territories of the three countries to be identified, and the strategies that indigenous organisations, including those led by women, have implemented to defend their territories to be discussed collectively. These exchanges culminated in July 2024 in a webinar entitled 'The leadership of indigenous women in the management and defence of territories', co-organised by the same Bolivian, Brazilian and Peruvian partners and by the indigenous women we met in Peru. They spoke about the issues facing their communities and described the collective action they are taking as leaders to tackle them. ■

DEVELOPING A STRONG CIVIL SOCIETY



ÉLODIE PÉRIOT / SCF

DEVELOPING EMPOWERMENT THROUGH SPORT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

In 2024, Secours Catholique – Caritas France took over the management of a consortium created the previous year with a French partner, the 'Fédération sportive et gymnique du travail' (FSGT) and five partners in Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon and Jordan. Entitled 'Sport for all', the project is based on the original approach to sport that the FSGT has been using for forty years and on Secours Catholique's desire to promote social change in the Middle East by developing the emancipation of the most vulnerable people and community mobilisation. The aim of the project is to train activity leaders who will then be responsible for setting up various activities. This educational element is provided by the FSGT, which ran two training courses in 2024, one in Jordan and the other in Egypt. As for Palestine, support adapted to the situation in Gaza was offered to the team of 20 activity leaders from Secours Catholique's local partner.

In Gaza, the project was so successful in 2024 that six events were organised each week in different

locations, with around a hundred children attending each event, to the extent that a pool of travelling activity leaders had to be created to go from one location to another.

In November 2024, all the project partners met in France for an initial training course.

END OF TRIALS OR FIRST STAGE OF CHANGE-ORIENTED APPROACHES (AOC) COMPLETED

Over the last three years, Secours Catholique – Caritas France has carried out five AOC trials in Palestine, Togo, Colombia, India and Madagascar (see p. 50-51). Launched in the wake of the Covid crisis, these experiments have increased the skills of all Secours Catholique partners and teams. They are now being finalised and developed, with the aim of producing a Massive Open Online Course (Moc) in 2025 so that eventually all the association's partnership coordinators will be trained and able to implement the approach in the communities supported by their partners.



ÉLODIE PÉRIOT / SCCF

END OF THE AOC EXPERIMENT IN INDIA

India is one of the five countries in which Secours Catholique – Caritas France has carried out an AOC experiment which is due to be finalised in 2025. It began in 2023 in the village of Hatibari, where one of the projects supported by its partner Balasore Social Society Service (BSSS) is taking place. After an initial training session on the method, the local partner worked with the village community to define a vision for the community, and then on the changes it wanted to see. This phase led to the creation of a theme: 'The difficulties encountered by young people in building their future'. Several online follow-up meetings took place in 2024 with the Secours Catholique teams and an AOC consultant, culminating in a second on-site mission in October 2024, the aim of which was both to refine the partner's support approach and to help the partner organise a 'change monitoring' workshop, the aim of which was to listen to the communities' feedback on the changes that had taken place since the first BSSS workshop in

2023. During the year that elapsed between the two missions, the partner worked with various groups of stakeholders to encourage them to make changes: mothers, fathers, dignitaries and young people. The approach has already started to bear fruit in terms of change for the various stakeholder groups, especially mothers and young people, but also within the partner's own team, with the facilitators noticing that they were spending more time in the communities, that they were listening more, and that this was also happening between them in-house.

THE SUCCESS OF AOCs IN MADAGASCAR

For a number of years, Secours Catholique – Caritas France has been experimenting with AOCs, leadership tools that enable all the members of a community in a given area to work together towards a shared vision of the desired changes. Partnership coordinators trained in this method in turn support the partners.

Thus, at the end of 2024, a remote training cycle on AOCs began with Caritas Antsirabe, followed by a face-to-face meeting in 2025. In the specific case of the diocese of Antsirabe, the second most food-insecure region in Madagascar, the AOCs will help to mobilise communities around the issue of access to healthy and sufficient food. Tried and tested with other partners and in other countries, the AOC method is proving its worth in promoting social cohesion, improving living conditions for communities and boosting local capabilities. Thanks to this collaboration, Caritas Antsirabe is consolidating its role as a driving force for sustainable development in Madagascar. ■

MAINTAINING A FRATERNAL BOND



VICTORINE ALISSE / HORS FORMAT / SCCF

SIXTY YEARS OF HOSPITALITY FOR THE POOREST AT THE HEART OF JERUSALEM

La Maison d'Abraham celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2024. For sixty years, it has endeavoured to fulfil the mission entrusted to Secours Catholique – Caritas France by Pope Paul VI in 1964: to make this house a place of welcome, particularly for the poorest people, pilgrims who cannot afford accommodation in Jerusalem, as well as a meeting place for local residents and visitors of all faiths and beliefs. Despite the very serious crises that are once again casting a shadow over the region, La Maison d'Abraham was keen to mark this anniversary as a tribute to the bonds of friendship and solidarity it has forged with everyone over the years.

On 14 September, the team at La Maison d'Abraham was delighted to welcome a delegation from the French Catholic Church (CEF), led by Bishop Éric de Moulins-Beaufort, and several representatives from the national Secours Catholique directorate, who met in fraternity with pilgrims from the Saint-Laurent network, a small group who came as ambassadors for the 450 people in insecure situations in the network who have undertaken a pilgrimage to the Holy Land since 2021.

In his letter to Secours Catholique, Cardinal Paroline, Secretary of State of the Holy See, renewed, on behalf of Pope Francis, his encouragement and thanks for their commitment to the mission entrusted to them. La Maison d'Abraham has further extended this mission by supporting a local development project for some 400 women and girls in the neighbourhood, in partnership with the Althoury Women's Centre, which offers well-being and economic empowerment activities within the house itself. The project was initiated by Bernard Thibaud, whose term of office as Director of La Maison d'Abraham ended that same year, in 2024.

'We pray that justice and peace may inhabit the hearts of men and inspire the conduct of states. Here, in this house, pilgrims and travellers of all kinds are welcomed. They share a moment in the life of a community, not only the community that runs the house, but also the community that has forged links with this part of Jerusalem, which is riven by the tensions and hopes of the city.'

Extract from the letter sent by Cardinal Parolin to La Maison d'Abraham in 2024. ■

RESPONDING TO EMERGENCIES



MAJID JILDAH

HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT IN PALESTINE

After a year of intensified Israeli strikes on the Gaza Strip, the humanitarian situation is of an unprecedented severity. According to the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees (Unrwa), 1.7 million Palestinians (75% of the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip) have been displaced and on several occasions. In autumn 2024, the Food Security Phase Classification (FSPC) initiative estimated that almost the entire population of Gaza (around 96% of the 2.3 million inhabitants) was critically in need of food. In 2024, Secours Catholique – Caritas France renewed its support for Caritas Jerusalem's emergency action, which aims to improve access to healthcare for Gazans as power cuts, drug shortages and bombardments hamper the health system. The NGO offers primary, maternal, child and mental health services to civilians, while providing them with financial assistance to meet their basic needs in the face of prices that have doubled.

The humanitarian situation has also worsened in the West Bank. As a result of restrictions on movement

within the Palestinian territories and the suspension of work permits, poverty has increased, many children have dropped out of school and the health situation has worsened. Secours Catholique has supported the Israeli NGO Physicians for Human Rights Israel (Phri), which delivers supplies and medicines to health centres in the West Bank and sends two weekly mobile clinics to the Palestinian territories, particularly to communities affected by violence from the army and settlers.

EMERGENCY AID FOR DISPLACED PERSONS IN LEBANON

At the end of 2024, Israeli strikes on Lebanon and the ground invasion that followed threw around 1 million people - almost 20% of the total population - onto the roads, forcing them to flee eastern and southern Lebanon as well as from the southern suburbs of the capital. Faced with these massive movements of civilians, Secours Catholique has mobilised to provide emergency aid through its Lebanese partners who are working in shelters throughout the >>>



D.R.

INTERVIEW

KARAM ABI YAZBECK, REGIONAL COORDINATOR OF
CARITAS MIDDLE EAST NORTH AFRICA (MONA)

“WE MUST NEVER
LOSE HOPE, ABOVE
ALL IN PEACE
AND JUSTICE”

Caritas Mona, in Beirut, is supported by Secours Catholique – Caritas France in its missions, including emergency aid and peacebuilding. Karam Abi Yazbeck, its regional coordinator, recalls a particularly deadly year in the region in 2024.

What is your impression of 2024 at the heart of the conflict?

Karam Abi Yazbeck: Since the start of the Israeli response to the Hamas attacks, the situation has worsened in Gaza and the West Bank and has rapidly deteriorated throughout the Middle East. From September 2024 onwards, the massive bombing raids on southern Lebanon, but also on Beirut and the Bekka plain... and the ground offensive that followed, marked the start of a much wider conflict. The indirect involvement of Yemen, Iraq and Iran led us to fear that the whole region would be set ablaze.

What role can you play in these circumstances?

Karam Abi Yazbeck: As Caritas Mona, our role is to coordinate the work of our partners in the region and to advocate. Right from the start of the war, we supported the emergency response of Caritas Jerusalem in Palestine, the West Bank and Lebanon, with the challenge, particularly in Gaza, of the restrictions

on access to humanitarian aid imposed by Israel. We also worked through Catholic Relief Services (CRS), a member of Caritas Internationalis in the USA, and Caritas Jordan. Thanks to a partnership with the Hashemite Jordan Association, aid was transported from Amman to Gaza via the West Bank, which is the most efficient channel.

In addition to direct emergency aid, we are constantly lobbying for a ceasefire, particularly among Caritas worldwide, to make them aware of the importance of ensuring respect for international humanitarian law. We have organised two meetings, one in January 2024 in Amman, to discuss the emergency situation and actions to be taken with our partners and Caritas members in the Middle East, and a second in March 2024 in Rome, where we invited all our partners, including Secours Catholique. At the same time, we worked on drafting three documents that we update regularly: a detailed report on the situation, an emergency plan with several scenarios depending on how the situation deteriorates, and a joint advocacy text calling for a ceasefire.





What feedback do you get from the teams on the ground?

Karam Abi Yazbeck: Caritas Jerusalem has offices in Gaza and the West Bank. Like all Gazans, the members of the Gaza office team have been displaced, and we have lost two of our colleagues and their families in this conflict. I can testify to the resilience of our teams there, which are made up not only of Christians but also of people of all religions, as well as the predominantly Muslim populations they help. The people of Gaza are, I believe, the most resilient in the world. They are confined to this great prison

that is the Gaza Strip, they have adapted to an extremely difficult life and then, with the war – not the first, as everyone knows – they have been constantly moved southwards, then northwards, then southwards again, all under constant

bombardment, while there are no hospitals, no water, no food, no basic services. Especially in the north, people have suffered from hunger. Despite this, despite the destruction, despite the loss of loved ones, people are holding firm. They prefer to stay, to hold on to their territory, and refuse any idea of taking refuge in Egypt or Jordan.

Does this resilience allow us to retain hope?

Karam Abi Yazbeck: We must never lose hope, especially in peace and justice. Because peace alone is not enough, you need justice. But unfortunately, none of this is on the cards, not even in the distant future. Israel, with its own military forces and the support of the Americans, has no hesitation, as in Syria and Lebanon, in occupying territories (not to mention what is happening in Gaza and the West Bank), and nobody says a word. Despite its violations of international law and humanitarian law, the Israeli government continues to enjoy the unconditional support of the United States and other countries. This dashes any hope of peace and justice. But we keep going, we have to keep going.

What would be the route to a possible peace?

Karam Abi Yazbeck: As you know, the war started seventy-seven years ago. That's already several generations. The hatred is growing and so are the atrocities. The road to peace is a long one, and we're not even on it yet. Everyone is talking about a two-state solution. Instead, we are witnessing the expansion of a single state. Even if agreement were reached on a two-state solution, I don't see how it could be implemented. The West Bank is divided into three overlapping areas, with the army present everywhere. From the point of view of geography and demography, the place that a Palestinian state would have is not viable. And as long as there is no country for the Palestinians, there can be no peace or justice.

Do aid and advocacy actions still have an impact?

Karam Abi Yazbeck: Everything that we, Caritas Mona and our sister Caritas organisations, with the support of Secours Catholique, can do, of course, cannot solve the problems. But it's essential because it's a sign of hope that even small changes are possible. The resources mobilised for war and armaments continue to increase, while those allocated to humanitarian aid continue to decrease. Failure to maintain this aid is to act against humanity. ■

“ DESPITE THE DESTRUCTION,
DESPITE THE LOSS OF LOVED
ONES, PEOPLE ARE HOLDING
FIRM. ”

>>> country, particularly in Beirut, the Bekaa plain, Tripoli and Saida. They distribute basic necessities such as mattresses, blankets, hygiene kits and hot meals.

SUPPORTING UKRAINE'S MOST VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

In 2024, Ukraine is now in its third year under fire from the Russian army, whose attacks have intensified even further, putting 40% of the population, i.e. 15 million people, in a humanitarian emergency. Added to this is a catastrophic economic situation and massive job losses that have pushed 9 million people into poverty, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (Ocha). Others continue to flee the country, so that by the end of 2024, there were 3.6 million internally displaced people and 6.3 million refugees abroad. Since the start of the war in 2022, Secours Catholique – Caritas France has been working to help civilians through its partners on the ground, in particular its two sister organisations (Caritas Ukraine and Caritas Spes Ukraine), throughout the country, both in the areas close to the front line and in the areas to the west, and in particular with the most vulnerable people such as single mothers, children, the disabled and the elderly... Support for Ukrainian Caritas was provided through the Caritas Internationalis network and bilateral emergency aid projects: distribution of food, money, blankets, hygiene kits, etc. In addition to providing material aid, Secours Catholique has also been working to heal war trauma, which affects 10 million people according to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), including 1.5 million children. Caritas Ukraine has been able to set up art therapy programmes for children and their parents, and Caritas Spes Ukraine has been able to offer summer holidays in Croatia to families so that they can re-establish links and develop support networks. Secours Catholique also supports Voices of Children, a local NGO which has helped teachers and schoolchildren in a region close to Russia, and TLU (Turbota pro Litnih v Ukraini), another local NGO which helps frail elderly people to avoid isolation and a sense of demoralisation.

A total of €4.5 million in aid has been paid out by Secours Catholique to its partners in Ukraine and Poland since the start of the war, benefiting 180,000 people and 15,000 children for educational and psychosocial support projects.

RECONCILING EMERGENCIES AND DEVELOPMENT IN MYANMAR

In September 2024, Cyclone Yagi came to an end in Burma, killing hundreds of people and causing floods and landslides that destroyed crops. This latest disaster, which comes on top of the interminable conflict triggered by the coup d'état in 2021, means that the number of displaced people has now reached 3.5 million, a tragedy from which, unfortunately, international media attention has been completely diverted. Secours Catholique – Caritas France has maintained and even increased its support for local partners who are on the front line in responding to the crisis. One of them, whose teams are themselves displaced, and which has been forced to move its offices since the junta in power and the armed groups fought for the conquest of the towns, nevertheless remains active among the most vulnerable populations. In addition to funding emergency humanitarian aid (distribution of food, temporary shelter and psychosocial support), Secours Catholique is continuing to support projects to promote agro-ecology, to defend land rights and to promote social cohesion so that people are better prepared to be self-sufficient when the fighting ends and the displaced return to their land. In these regions that have been hard hit by climate change, the management of natural resources and the development of agro-ecology – in other words, sustainable means of production that do not require inputs, fertilisers and chemicals from outside – have inestimable added value for the resilience of these regions and the livelihoods of their people.

“THE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRO-ECOLOGY HAVE INESTIMABLE ADDED VALUE.”

RETHINKING DEVELOPMENT IN A WORLD BESET BY EMERGENCIES

In a world where crises are multiplying and lasting longer, whether linked to war, climate change or political conflict, it's difficult to respond to emergencies without thinking about long-term solutions or thinking in terms of development without anticipating possible future crises. Secours Catholique – Caritas France is seeing this more and more in the

field, where many of the development projects run by its partners are frequently affected by emergencies requiring the intervention of different partners. In 2024, the association has decided to work in a different way to address three themes simultaneously: emergencies, development and the search for peace.

Capitalising on the organisation already put in place using this model between the International Emergencies Unit and the Middle East Unit is a

starting point for this review. The idea of an internal reorganisation has already been agreed. The next step will be to define which partners to work with under this new organisation and in which areas. Internal seminars at Secours Catholique's International Action and Advocacy department were held in June and November 2024 with the help of Caritas Spain, which has already successfully carried out its own reorganisation. ■

AGREEMENT IN FRANCE AND INTERNATIONALLY

ACTIVITIES IN SCHOOLS ORGANISED BY THE 'INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY' MUTUAL ASSISTANCE GROUP

As part of its mission to promote international solidarity, Secours Catholique – Caritas France has set up a dedicated mutual assistance group. The group met several times in 2024 to consider new ways of promoting the theme in the light of the association's local-global ambitions, namely: to understand the causes of poverty and exclusion, the links between these causes, the responses that civil society organisations can provide, the means to take action, and finally linking local initiatives in France and around the world. Activities in schools are among the projects selected, based on four themes: migration, food, fair ecological change and intercultural and inter-religious issues. In order to tackle these issues from a local-global perspective, the group leaders begin by explaining how their delegation is trying to respond to these problems at a local level, before tackling the issues at a global level using games developed by Secours Catholique and adapted to the age of the pupils.

LOCAL-GLOBAL MEETINGS DURING LAUDATO SI' WEEK

In 2024, *Laudato si'*¹ week was celebrated in a large number of Secours Catholique – Caritas France delegations (see p. 27). It was an opportunity to highlight the association's commitment to a fair ecological revolution, with testimonials, events, experiments

and initiatives. Several international partners from Palestine, Colombia and Peru who came for the APP of the Core project, took advantage of their visit to Paris to take part in the *Laudato si'* event organised at the Secours Catholique headquarters in Paris. After this moment of sharing and entertainment, they visited the café Le Fraternel before continuing with other visits: Le Cèdre for partners working on the Sustainable Cities project; La Rampe day centre in Hauts-de-Seine for partners working on Fair Ecological Transition in rural areas; Loiret for the Executive Secretary of the Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network (Repam), who was able to learn about the work being done by local teams and present Repam's work to promote the autonomy and sustainable development of people living in the Amazon rainforest; and finally Brittany, where Caritas Kaolack (Senegal) renewed its partnership agreement on ecological transition.

LEARNING VISIT BY CARITAS SPAIN AND CARITAS ITALY

Caritas Spain and Caritas Italy were in the process of considering how to develop their solidarity grocery models and travelled to France for a week to find out more about the food access schemes developed by Secours Catholique – Caritas. Initial discussions had taken place with Caritas Spain on this issue at the time of the Covid crisis. They were continued and extended to Caritas Italy for this visit to the Gard, Hérault, Aix-en-Provence and Occitanie delegations. The study carried out on the various Secours Catholique solidarity grocery models were

1. A movement set up in 2015 to carry the Pope's message developed in his encyclical on safeguarding 'our common home'.

compared with what is done in the Caritas Spain and Italy networks. It was an opportunity to open up avenues of reflection to develop and question practices on both sides, and to strengthen collaboration for European advocacy on the right to food.

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE STAKES INVOLVED IN FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS

The idea behind the tool entitled 'A better understanding of free trade agreements so that we can take action on the food we eat' was born in February 2024, during demonstrations by French farmers against the so-called Mercosur agreements between the European Union and Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay. Made in collaboration with two Brazilian partners of Secours Catholique – Caritas France, this promotional tool uses three illustrations to help people understand the impact of these trade agreements on our food and on those who produce it. It complements the other resources used in the study 'The unfair price of our food', published in 2024, and has aroused great interest within the Secours Catholique network, as well as among partners in France (Alimenterre, Graine Occitanie, Festisol, Coalition Brazil) and in Brazil.

RAISING AWARENESS OF THE CHALLENGES FACING THE AMAZON AND THE STRUGGLES OF ITS PEOPLES

As part of Secours Catholique – Caritas France's participation in the next Fospa, an activity tool has been produced and offered to delegations to raise awareness of the challenges facing the Amazon and the struggles of its peoples. This set of twelve question cards allows delegates to reflect collectively on these issues with the help of the facilitator, and to create a map of Amazonia as they find the answers.

CAPE VERDEAN ATMOSPHERE AT LE FRATERNEL COMMUNITY CAFÉ IN TROYES

On 14 and 15 December 2024, the Secours Catholique Champagne Sud delegation team took over Le Fraternel to promote international solidarity through its partnership with Cape Verde.

An exhibition of photos from the various missions in Cape Verde, music, an exhibition, sales of items created in collaboration with local and Cape Verdean teams, tasting of hot spiced apple juice... a convivial way of starting a conversation and showing the public how everything is linked,

between here and there, in terms of poverty, climate change and food.

PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY 'THE UNFAIR PRICE OF FOOD'

As part of its many years of advocacy on food issues, in 2024, Secours Catholique – Caritas France completed and published a major study, 'The unfair price of our food', which puts a figure on the real cost, i.e. in terms of damage to health, the environment and social justice, of our food consumption patterns (see p. 22-23). This work, carried out mainly in France, is far from ignoring the consequences of the relocation of certain environmental and social costs for people around the world. The cultivation of soya, for example, is paid for by the massive uprooting of ancestral forests, the sacred property of indigenous communities in Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay. At the end of 2023, two Brazilian partners of Secours Catholique came to France to talk about these issues and contribute to the study. Their stories were also used to create a tool to raise awareness of the impact of the draft agreement between the European Union and Mercosur, which was under discussion at the time: an agricultural frontier that is constantly being pushed back, causing serious problems with drought, rainfall patterns and black smoke that spreads far from the Amazon.

Some of the recommendations made in 'The unfair price of our food' concern the international aspects of free trade agreements. They include measures to promote the development of agro-ecology and a demand that the European Union stop exporting pesticides that are banned in Europe to Brazil, which affect local health and the environment, and which European consumers find on their plates in imported meat and soya. The publication of the study coincided with the farmers' demonstrations in France, which led to a local-global discussion on these issues in several Secours Catholique delegations. This dialogue was intended to continue in 2025 with a learning visit by six members of Secours Catholique France to Brazil to feed into the 2026 municipal election campaign and the dialogue on food between the delegations and partners. ■





SEBASTIEN LE CLEZIO / SCCF



REGION

THE AMAZON: DEFENDING THE GUARDIANS OF THE FOREST

In the heart of the Amazon rainforest, the Amazon Anthropology Centre (Caaap), a partner of Secours Catholique, is supporting the demands of indigenous communities to recover parts of their territories located in the Pacaya Samiria national reserve. This protected area in northern Peru was created in the 1970s with the aim of conserving the Amazon rainforest, but without consulting its original inhabitants. Since then, indigenous communities have struggled to gain access to this area to gather fruit or medicinal plants, or to carry out traditional hunting activities. Grouped together within the Acodecospat federation, dozens of these communities have embarked on this legal battle to have their territory recognised or extended.

"The administrative procedures for obtaining a joint deed of ownership take a minimum of two years," explains Veronica Shibuya de Mestanza, a former lawyer and project manager at Caaap. *"We need to demarcate the boundaries and carry out a soil classification study. All this takes time,"* complains the project manager, who is calling on the public authorities to simplify the process.

Communities face yet another challenge: securing recognised territories that are also sought after by drug traffickers, fishermen and loggers. To repel the invaders, Caaap is helping to set up patrols to monitor the territory and is advocating non-violent methods of resistance. So, when fishermen using dynamite approached their shore, the inhabitants of the community of Libertad dislodged them from their boats using plants that cause hives. ■



SCAN THIS CODE TO READ
THE FULL REPORT ON THE
WEBSITE OF SECOURS
CATHOLIQUE.

AN ORGANISATION THAT ADAPTS TO MEET NEW CHALLENGES

2024 MARKED A MAJOR TURNING POINT in June, when the National Assembly was dissolved. This unprecedented political crisis has enabled Secours Catholique – Caritas France to reassert its DNA: welcoming people unconditionally. This is the mind-set expressed in the letter that the association's general meeting sent to its employees and volunteers the day after it was dissolved. This was also the case for the Assembly held in September, a day of video-conferencing with a hundred or so network players, which revealed a great deal of convergence in the aspirations expressed: be a part of the association's mission of raising awareness of solidarity, encouraging dialogue and debate internally and externally, and developing the practice of advocacy. However distressing they may be, these events are an opportunity to reinforce Secours Catholique's confidence in the strength of individual and collective commitment. This confidence is reflected in the Group's policy: the desire to develop volunteering to enable all those who wish to do so to have an impact on the spiritual, social and ecological transformation of the world they live in. Opening membership of the association to people who are committed to it. Moving towards a form of governance that involves people who, better than anyone else, have experience of poverty and exclusion. Secours Catholique is more than ever committed to its mission of fraternity.



VINCENT BOISOT / SGGF

STANCE ON NATIONAL POLITICAL ISSUES

REAFFIRMING AN UNCONDITIONAL WELCOME

In June 2024, in the week following the announcement of the dissolution of the National Assembly, Secours Catholique – Caritas France, which was meeting for its general assembly in Lourdes, wondered what role the association should play in this context. The decision was taken to send a letter to all the association's volunteers and employees to reaffirm the values on which its work is based, to express the concerns raised by certain political options, and to call on everyone to go to the polls, but without giving any voting instructions. In the run-up to the second round, it was also decided to state loud and clear, and visibly, regardless of which political force won the elections, Secours Catholique's commitment to unconditional welcome (enshrined in article 1 of its statutes).

AN ASSEMBLY TO CONTINUE FURTHER REFLECTION IN THE LONG TERM

Secours Catholique is well aware that the political crisis of June 2024 was not just an epiphenomenon. On 27 September 2024, it organised an Assembly Day open to delegation staff, members of the Board of Directors and staff at head office to discuss the social and political context in which Secours Catholique finds itself.

In the run-up to the event, around thirty Secours Catholique members met to provide some initial answers to the following questions: What does the rise of the far right indicate? To what extent is this an issue for Secours Catholique? The documents resulting from these exchanges were submitted to the Assembly for review and development. On the day, more than a hundred people, representing over half of the 72 delegations, took part in a full day of discussions via video-conferencing, in a fine dynamic of agreement in the aspirations expressed: to fulfil

the association's mission of raising awareness of solidarity, encouraging dialogue and debate internally and externally, and developing the practice of advocacy. During the day, participants were invited to a time of reflection led by H  l  ne Noiset  te, a religious auxiliary, teacher at Loyola faculties and volunteer with Secours Catholique. The session focussed on the invitation to discussion found in the Gospels as well as in *Fratelli Tutti*. They were also able to

benefit from the experience of four leaders from the F  d  ration des centres sociaux, the Aequtaz association, Caritas Italy and the Mouvement associatif on ways of encouraging and organising dialogue on social issues.

The challenge now is to turn these aspirations into a national action plan, taking a long-term view and building on the highlights already identified in the delegations' agendas. ■

THE CHALLENGES OF VOLUNTEERING AND ENGAGEMENT



CHRISTOPHE HARGOUES / SCCF

FINAL STAGE OF THE NATIONAL "VOLUNTEERING" STRATEGY

At the beginning of 2023, the Board of Directors of Secours Catholique – Caritas France set itself a single priority over a two-year period: the development of volunteering. The first step in this process was to define a vision: 'To enable all those who aspire to do so to have an impact on the spiritual, social and ecological transformations of the world they inhabit'. The

second was to take stock of what already exists by identifying all the practices developed by the delegations to recruit, motivate and retain their volunteers. To achieve this, a GPS was designed in 2023, an online tool in which delegations were invited to indicate their strengths and weaknesses on a list of topics relating to volunteering. At the end of 2023, an analysis of the GPS identified a number of areas

to be tackled in 2024: the question of responsible volunteers, that of occasional volunteering and, finally, that of volunteer recognition. These workshops were carried out in parallel with others that already existed and continued in 2024: the production of a communication kit for delegations to promote volunteering; the complete overhaul of a document dating from 2013 on the quality of team life; a reflection on the need to take care of volunteers by working on the management of risks, particularly emotional risks, to which they may be exposed; training for volunteers in charge of local teams.

A wide-ranging capitalisation process, involving ten or so delegations, has been launched around the regional management teams. Its aim is to look at how activity teams made up of paid staff and volunteers work, the path that led to their creation and what they make possible. An analysis of what has already been done in this area in certain delegations will enable us to identify the paths to success and the causes of failure.

Another necessary but sensitive area is the procedures to be followed in the event of misconduct or inappropriate behaviour by a volunteer. In order to strengthen the legal framework for dealing with these situations, Secours Catholique is planning to

have a letter of reception signed, reminding people of the rights and duties to be respected in order to guarantee the safety of the teams as well as that of the people being cared for.

The question of occasional voluntary work, which is not very well developed at Secours Catholique although it is in line with its vision of enabling everyone to have an impact on society to the extent of their possibilities, is also being studied. A training project for delegations is currently being developed. All these projects are intended to be completed by the 2025 AGM. To carry them out, Secours Catholique has set up a small national team, representatives in each region and correspondents in each delegation. This organisation enables us to better communicate what is being undertaken in the network and completes the mapping carried out thanks to the GPS. The association has set itself indicators of results in terms of revitalising the network: number of volunteers in absolute terms, changes in their diversity in terms of age, background and place of residence, rejuvenation of the network, number of volunteers with responsibilities and number of training sessions carried out. These indicators will be assessed over a five-year period and compared with trends in volunteering in other associations. ■

A NEW APPROACH TO GOVERNANCE AND ACTION

OPENING MEMBERSHIP OF THE ASSOCIATION

In 2024, the subject of opening up membership of Secours Catholique – Caritas France was the subject of two consultations: the first, in winter, dealt with specific questions about the project and its consequences. The delegations were invited to organise open meetings based on a defined framework. The aim was to define the most appropriate level of membership. A consultation targeting the offices of the delegations made it possible to draw up a policy: to join Secours Catholique, you must have been involved for at least three months, have followed a training course and apply for membership in a letter, approved by the office of your delegation or by the national office.

FURTHER REFORM OF ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION

The question of membership is part of the major reform of the method of governance initiated by Secours Catholique – Caritas France in 2022 in order to be more consistent with its project of participation for all and development of people's power to act. This reform requires a change in the articles of association. In 2024, a draft of these new Articles of Association was submitted to the various network stakeholders for their consideration, with the aim of finalising a text to be presented at the General Meeting in June 2025. The text adopted by the General Meeting will then have to be validated by the Council of State and the Ministry of the Interior, a normal process for public interest associations.

The standard statutes for this type of association provide that members may be present at the general assembly. However, if the 60,000 volunteers of Secours Catholique take the opportunity they will be given to become members of the association, provisions will need to be made to allow them to elect representatives – and obtain an exemption to that effect.

CAN'S REFLECTION ON ECOLOGY AND POVERTY ISSUES

The mandate of the CAN (National Advisory Council), a consultative body of Secours Catholique – Caritas France composed equally of people with experience of poverty, facilitators/administrators, and leaders, was renewed in 2023 for two years with a new theme of reflection for its 63 members: to define and draft a reference text on what ecology in the service of justice and fraternity would look like.

Two meetings took place in 2024. The first, held at an eco-site in Lyon that is deeply engaged in food-related issues, gave participants the opportunity to test products, and allowed CAN members with experience of poverty to lead workshops and share their own environmentally friendly practices. The second gathering, held in Lourdes in November, focused in part on determining to what extent Secours Catholique's advocacy efforts should hold the biggest polluters accountable. According to a definition of fair ecology that is beginning to reach consensus within the CAN, everyone should act according to

their capacity and their own environmental impact. This approach aims to address inequalities in access to ecological solutions – since the least polluting options are often inaccessible to the poorest (and least polluting people), or simply non-existent in the areas where they live.

A WEEK TO ENERGISE STATISTICAL DATA COLLECTION

From 29 January to 2 February 2024, the first Statistics Week was held, organised by the Poverty and Territories Analysis Department of Secours Catholique – Caritas France for its network. The event featured webinars, short videos, and key statistics. The goal was primarily to remind local reception teams of the importance of collecting data on the situations of the people they assist – for both local and national advocacy purposes – and to present them with a methodology for assessing local demographics, mobility, housing, etc., in order to evaluate the needs of people in situations of insecurity and adjust the volunteer teams' activities accordingly. Secours Catholique is also exploring ways to collect data on people who frequent its day centres, French language learning courses, solidarity shops, community groups etc. – a segment of the population that is currently under-represented or not represented at all in the statistical report on poverty in France. ■

COMMUNICATION FOCUSED ON THE NATIONAL PRIORITY

A CALL TO GIVE YOUR TIME

Inspiring engagement so that everyone who wishes can have an impact on the society they live in – this is the national priority of Secours Catholique – Caritas France for 2023-2025. Launched in April 2024, the campaign supporting this ambition aimed to restore meaning, enjoyment, and concrete usefulness to volunteer work by addressing one of the main barriers to volunteering: the time commitment. People were invited to make a "tailor-made" donation of time: two hours to lend a hand, a late afternoon to assist with

administrative tasks, an evening for outreach to people living on the streets, a morning for a coffee welcome... once a week, once a month, or whenever they felt like it. Today, young people and working adults – the primary target of the campaign – engage in support of a cause rather than an institution. That's why the campaign featured very practical visuals and a catchy concept that could be adapted to highlight a variety of opportunities for action. The national campaign aimed to support recruitment efforts across local branches, which were provided with a toolkit:



four poster designs to choose from and customisable flyer templates were made available, allowing edits to the title (e.g. Give a Sunday Morning, Give a Christmas Night, etc.) and visuals; templates were also provided for animated videos for social media, as well as banners for websites; a revised Charter of Engagement (posters and postcards) was also created in line with the new visual identity guidelines.

Practical rallying guides were made available to the network starting in April 2024 and throughout the year, covering various topics: volunteer recruitment and appreciation; outreach to Catholics; roles that support local delegation life; outreach to young people (ages 16–25) and professionals in the workplace.

VOLUNTEERS SHARE THEIR STORIES

The 60,000 volunteers of Secours Catholique are at the heart of the association's mission. They are a powerful force for action, but also for personal and collective transformation, in the shared effort to build a fairer and more fraternal society. As part of its 2024 volunteer campaign, Secours Catholique – Caritas France gave its volunteers the opportunity to share

their experiences and the means that support their commitment with other volunteers, employees and of course the people who are supported day by day who form the cornerstone of their commitment. Several media outlets helped give them a voice:

- ▶ RCF (Radio Catholique de France): as part of its summer radio segments, from 13 July to 1 September, broadcasts aired every Saturday and Sunday morning. A medium aimed at reaching retired listeners who share the values of Secours Catholique.
- ▶ "Le Média Positif": An online media outlet launched in 2021 to highlight citizens, associations, and companies committed to building a better world. A video report on Secours Catholique was shared on its social media platforms in September 2024 to reach the 18–34 age group.
- ▶ A partnership with influencer Yannis Chaumard-Seavan, also known as "L'Écureuil Curieux" [The Curious Squirrel], who filmed creative and social workshops in Moissy-Cramayel (Seine-et-Marne delegation). This first collaboration with an influencer helped modernise Secours Catholique's image for a younger audience, on Instagram and TikTok. The video was published in September 2024.

These volunteer profiles in the media and on social networks, energised the campaign throughout the year. The campaign was also punctuated by three major media moments: Neighbour's Day (31 May), the September back-to-school season, and International Volunteer Day (5 December), each marked by a combined national and local outreach strategy.

A NEW INTRANET BETTER SUITED TO USER NEEDS

"Isidor", the intranet of Secours Catholique – Caritas France, is open to all members of the association – volunteers and staff alike – to stay informed about organisational news, create working groups, or send newsletters. It is accessible to over 30,000 users and hosts nearly 15,000 pieces of content created by all types of contributors, both nationally and within local teams. Developed about ten years ago, the platform's software needed to be upgraded to ensure sustainability and to support more ergonomic, innovative features that better meet user needs and expectations. The software upgrade took place over several months in 2024, with the transition from the old version to the new one occurring in March 2025. ■

FUNDRAISING

DONORS RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

In this year of 2024, marked by political, geopolitical, and economic uncertainties, the generosity of Secours Catholique – Caritas France's donors exceeded expectations. The organisation closed the year with over €68 million in donations – slightly more than in 2023. Secours Catholique appears to be viewed as a reassuring institution due to its reliability and its close connection to the growing number of people affected by the current situation, inflation, and climate change. The organisation's clearly stated values, the educational approach it uses to carry out its mission, and its strong presence on the ground – whether in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, remote rural areas, or overseas territories – are widely recognised. When a cyclone devastated the island of Mayotte, Secours Catholique's long-standing presence and the active role of its local delegation – known for its unconditional welcome and spirit of solidarity – led many donors to support both emergency relief and rebuilding efforts. The Mayotte fundraising campaign, which launched very strongly at the end of 2024, may well reach €1 million.

A RECORD YEAR FOR BEQUESTS

In 2024, Secours Catholique received a very large number of bequests and life insurance donations, totalling over €44 million. This record is largely due to the continued growth in life insurance gifts to the organisation in recent years, combined with an exceptional number of large cases that came through this year.

STABLE LEVELS OF PUBLIC SUBSIDIES

The overall decline in public funding for nonprofit organisations has continued in 2024. However, Secours Catholique maintained its regional staffing – specifically recruited to help local delegations identify funding opportunities – which allowed the organisation to offset the decrease through a higher number of successful applications.

STRONG DONOR LOYALTY

Now more than ever, associations will have to rely on private generosity. Secours Catholique already enjoys strong donor loyalty, as shown by its exceptional 2024 performance in bequests and fundraising, despite a challenging context. Relationships with donors are kept strong throughout the year through a strategy focused on: keeping them informed about actions and advocacy efforts, deepening their understanding of the causes the organisation defends through high-quality publications like the *Messages* magazine, offering conferences and inviting them to local events (such as project site inaugurations, meetings with field teams, and concerts or performances). Yet the outlook remains bleak in light of shifting public opinion and political developments that are increasingly – and sometimes aggressively – hostile to mutual aid and international solidarity. ■

PUBLICATIONS

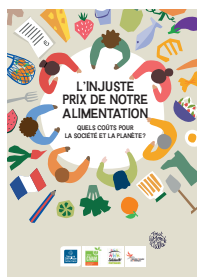
STATISTICAL REPORT 2024



In November 2024, Secours Catholique published its statistical report on the state of poverty in France. The organisation raises concerns about the declining standard of living among the poorest and, in a special report, highlights the difficulties in accessing social protection due

to the digitalisation of administrative procedures. The perspectives of Secours Catholique and the Defender of Rights, Claire Hédon, are joined by those of the people directly affected, who contributed texts based on their personal experiences.

THE UNFAIR PRICE OF OUR FOOD



Starting from the price of our food and its health, social, and environmental costs, this report provides an unprecedented estimate of the public spending that supports our food system, as well as the spending that compensates for its negative impacts. It offers concrete answers and solu-

tions to ensure that everyone has dignified access to quality food – good for both health and the environment – while also guaranteeing fair compensation for those who produce it.

FIXING MOBILITY IN UNDERSERVED AREAS



Mobility issues in rural areas lead to major inequalities in access to rights and employment, in particular. Published in 2024, the report "Territories with Broken Mobility" is the result of an assessment of needs and existing transportation options carried out in several departments, as well as a national

seminar bringing together around fifty partners from the fields of social solidarity and ecology. The report offers possible courses of action to combine access to mobility with respect for the planet's limits.

CONDITIONAL RSA: THE RESULT OF TRIALS



In 2023, Secours Catholique took a stand in the debates on the full employment reform, one of whose measures involves making the payment of the RSA (Revenu de Solidarité Active) conditional on fifteen hours of weekly activity. As a continuation of this advocacy, a study was conducted in

2024 on the initial trials of the conditional RSA. Combined with quantitative data collected by France Travail and journalistic investigations, this study led to the formulation of four warnings.

DEFENDING THOSE LEFT OUT OF THE CELEBRATION



The organising committee of the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games had announced major ambitions for the environment, employment, the economy, education, and a more inclusive society through sport. Unfortunately, experience shows that such international sporting events often

come with an exorbitant human and environmental cost. As a result, Secours Catholique chose, as early as February 2024, to raise awareness about the risks and to put forward proposals to help prevent them.

APOSTROPHE N° 13



"What is the purpose of culture?" – this is the question explored by a group of individuals gathered for a writing workshop in Haute-Loire, led by writer Ismaël Jude. Each person, drawing from their own experience, reflected on and wrote – in various forms – about their unique relationship with culture. Together, they concluded with a powerful

"advocacy for culture for all". An interview conducted by members of the editorial committee with Vanessa Mestre, director of the Choisy-le-Roi theatre, completes the main feature of this 13th issue.

THE CARITAS FRANCE NETWORK



The Caritas France Network was created by Secours Catholique – Caritas France to unite the vastly diverse organisations it has helped to create, or which share its values, aims and principles for action that are all committed to fighting poverty for and with the most vulnerable in France and throughout the world, driven by a shared Christian belief and the determination to organise their in-house solidarity to support the spirit of innovation that is characteristic of them. By co-operating and combining the resources and skills of its members in the regions, it aims to promote all-round support and empowerment for people living in insecurity or exclusion. In the spirit of “promoting Christian charity” it is also committed to encouraging solidarity and fraternity with the aim of having an in-depth impact on the causes of poverty. www.reseaucaritasfrance.org

CITÉS CARITAS



Formed on 10 May 1989 by Secours Catholique – Caritas France, Cités Caritas is a not-for-profit association under the law of 1901 which has been working for over 30 years promote the inclusion of people in a vulnerable situation, those excluded from society or the disabled.

Through its activities (medico-social support, social housing, housing for asylum seekers, refugees and disabled people, housing support, adapted housing, adapted working, obtaining employment and integration through work, childcare, vocational training) Cités Caritas is helping to build an inclusive society that welcomes vulnerable people and sees their capacity for action and their participation as a source of wealth and life. Cités Caritas is active throughout France, developing its activities in a spirit of innovation and seeking to respond to new social needs. www.cites-caritas.fr

individuals, the excluded or disabled, to continue their projects. These organisations can be members of the Caritas France network (including Cités Caritas), or not.

www.caritashabitat.org

FONCIÈRE CHÊNELET



Foncière Chênelet was set up in 2009 to respond to the major social housing issues faced by people on low 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.

www.fonciere-chenelet.org

FONCIÈRE CARITAS HABITAT



Established in 2015, Caritas Habitat is a social housing property company which aims to develop low-cost housing that can then be used by non-profit organisations to fulfil their mission of supporting the most vulnerable with housing, accommodation and reception. 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 or homeless

RÉSEAU ÉCO-HABITAT



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.

www.reseau-ecohabitat.fr

COMITÉ CHRÉTIEN DE SOLIDARITÉ AVEC LES CHÔMEURS (CCSC)



Established over thirty years ago, the CCSC aims to maintain focus on the consequences of unemployment. By raising awareness in Christian communities and in society as a whole and by combating indifference through the voice of people living with unemployment, the CCSC invites everyone to act so that these people can regain full citizenship. With the support of Secours Catholique – Caritas France, the CCSC has launched a new version of its newsletter, 'Vaincre le Chômage'.

www.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 in order to provide people on the lowest incomes with the personal mobility and to facilitate their integration into the world of work and society through second-hand vehicle sales, maintenance, repair and rental. Since 2017, the Solidarauto federation – a network of community garages, an association under the law of 1901, has brought together garages licensed under the Solidarauto brand and supports people with plans for a community garage who wish to open a garage under a Solidarauto licence, in particular thanks to the sponsorship of the project by one of its members and the partnership of a local Secours Catholique – Caritas France group.

www.solidarauto.org

THE CARITAS FRANCE FOUNDATION



Founded by Secours Catholique – Caritas France in 2009, the Caritas France Foundation is France's first charitable 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. The Caritas France Foundation has supported over 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. In 2024 the Caritas France Foundation celebrated its 15th anniversary.

www.fondationcaritasfrance.org

THE JEAN-RODHAIN FOUNDATION



The Jean-Rodhain Foundation is named after the founder of Secours Catholique – Caritas France. Recognised as a non-profit organisation on 1 July 1981, it honours Jean Rodhain's concern for theological and spiritual reflection on charity, by endeavouring to promote fundamental research to underpin and support the Church's charitable work. By exploring the new faces of charity to demonstrate its social and spiritual benefits, the foundation encourages the cross-fertilisation of experience and knowledge. With a special focus on the voice of the most impoverished and that of people involved with the diaconia, it establishes partnerships and encourages dialogue between theologians, solidarity activists and vulnerable people.

To fulfil its mission, it sponsors teaching and research on charity in seven French theology faculties (Jean-Rodhain chairs in Angers, Lille, Lyon, Paris Institut catholique, Paris Centre Sèvres, Strasbourg and Toulouse). It organises interdisciplinary symposia on themes linked to contemporary expressions

of charity and/or challenging charity's capacity to respond and innovate. It provides financial support for academic work (theses, research seminars, etc.) on charity related themes, with particular emphasis on work rooted in the voice of the people involved. It funds the publication of research work on charity related themes to promote its distribution amongst other researchers and those involved with solidarity and the diaconia. Finally, it supports initiatives aiming to develop a theology based on the voice of the poor, and those aimed at developing a theology based on the word of people involved in the diaconia.

www.fondationjeanrodhain.org

THE CARITAS ALSACE CHARITY FEDERATION



Founded in 1903 by Msgr Paul Müller-Simonis to "improve the organisation of Catholic charity work in Alsace", the Caritas Alsace Charity Federation currently comprises 2,000 volunteers and 800 employees and is structured round two main areas of activity: its charitable work carried out by Caritas Alsace, and its facilities and services working in the fields of child protection, disability, the elderly and integration in the broadest sense. On the eve of its one hundred and twentieth anniversary, its new roadmap reflects a desire to open up to civil society, to modernise its operations, to make sustainable development an integral factor in its choices and to develop a new communications strategy. The federation also carries out the work of Secours Catholique – Caritas France in Alsace, working under the name of Caritas Alsace, Secours Catholique network.

www.federation-de-charite.org

UNION DIACONALE DU VAR



Created in 1983, the Union Diaconale du Var is a social and solidarity based economic union made up of 18 associations with a variety of aims (integration, family, accommodation, health, street emergencies) that fight against social exclusion, work together to promote human development and respect for all and take part in the Church's diaconal work in the Var by pooling their skills and know-how thanks to a general secretariat that supports its activities.

www.udv-asso.fr

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT AT SECOURS CATHOLIQUE — CARITAS FRANCE

ON 31 DECEMBER 2024

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY of Secours Catholique – Caritas France brings together 141 members of the association, including 138 active members (members who have paid their membership fee) – qualified administrators, presidents and vice-presidents from delegations, and one treasurer per region – and 11 honorary members. The age limit is 75 years old. 51.5% of the active members are men, 48.5% are women.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS comprises 21 members, all voluntary; 13 are presidents or vice-presidents from delegations, eight are qualified individuals. They each have a three-year term of office, renewable twice. The board meets six 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.

OFFICE

M. Didier DURIEZ

National President, qualified individual

Mme Emmanuelle d'ACHON

Vice-president, qualified individual

M. Hervé BERNOUD

National Treasurer, qualified individual

M. Marc BONNET

National Secretary, President of Mayenne

Mme Dominique NOWINSKI

Vice-president and Vice-president of Nord Cambrai

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Mme Brigitte Audo

Mme Laurence Augere-

Rossignol – M. Laurent Courcol

Mme Frédérique Bolle-Reddat

M. Éric Delzant – Sr Marie-Laure

Denes – Mme Marilynne Durand

M. Bruno de Feraudy

Mme Catherine Gaudry –

Mme Marie-Annick Joly

M. Jean-Pierre Lagasse –

M. Vincent Leonard –

M. Jean-Louis Milhau –

Mme Chantal Nicol M. Bertrand
Parmentier

Secretary General

Mme Adélaïde BERTRAND

Chaplain General

Père François ODINET

Honorary Presidents

Mme Véronique DEVISE,

Mme Véronique FAYET

and M. François SOULAGE

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.

Property Committee

International Committee

Resources Committee

Audit & Risks Committee

Appointments Committee

Advocacy Committee

Treasury Committee

Caritas France Network

Committee

National Activity Committee

IDENTITY

LE SECOURS CATHOLIQUE – CARITAS FRANCE

Le Secours Catholique – Caritas France is a branch of the Catholic Church in France, a member of the Caritas Internationalis confederation and a 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 all people can live in dignity. The association fights against the causes of poverty, inequality and exclusion and proposes alternatives that serve the common good.

ACTIONS

In France, 1,120,000 people were supported in 2,500 centres. Internationally, 335 operations were carried out in 2024, in 48 countries or regions, in association with the Caritas Internationalis network (160 Caritas groups in 200 countries). Within one year, 3.4 million people benefitted from international aid from Secours Catholique – Caritas France.

ORGANISATION

- ▶ On 31 December 2024 there were 72 delegations, divided into 3,500 local teams in mainland France and French overseas territories, covering the entire country.
- ▶ Network of 58,000 volunteers and 910 employees across the country.
- ▶ Three central facilities: La Cité Saint-Pierre in Lourdes, La Maison d'Abraham in Jerusalem, Le Cedre in Paris.

TRANSPARENCY AND CONTROL

The 2024 annual accounts, including the accounts on allocation of funds, were certified by our auditors, Ernst and Young, then submitted for approval at the AGM on 18 June 2025. They are available on the website: www.secours-catholique.org or 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.



Give with Confidence is a non-profit organisation that carries out checks on fundraising activity that targets public generosity. It devises ethical rules, issues the Don en Confiance label to non-profit organisations that apply, and carries out on-going and independent checks on their commitments. They 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. In March 2024, Secours Catholique – Caritas France saw its Give with Confidence label renewed for a further three years.

WE THANK OUR PARTNERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT IN 2024

PRIVATE PARTNERS

Businesses

- 2C Bricolage SAS
- AG2R Agirc-Arrco
- Astris Finance
- Boiche Entreprises
- CGR Cinémas
- Comat Alco
- Comat Centre
- Comat Nord
- Crédit Mutuel
- DC Agency
- Droit de Regard
- Eco TLC - Refashion
- E. Leclerc
- Essaimons - Plaxtil
- Groupe Atlantic
- Jean Lutz SA
- La Poste
- Le Petit Futé
- Maisons du Monde
- Moneta Asset Management
- Socultur
- Symta Pièces
- Veuve-Clicquot

Associations

- Agence du Don en Nature
- Association pour la Réfection et l'Amélioration du Logement (ARAL)
- AXA Atout Coeur
- Dons Solidaires
- Femmes Forum
- Journée mondiale de prière des femmes
- Institut océanographique de Monaco - Association des Amis du musée
- La Savoyarde en mémoire de l'abbé Poupon
- Logement Fraternité
- Montagne et Prière

Foundations and endowments

- European Climate Foundation
- Fondation AnBer
- Fondation Banque Populaire Rives de Paris
- Fondation Brigitte Bardot
- Fondation Caritas France
- Fondation Cémavie - Crédit Mutuel Loire-Atlantique et Centre-Ouest
- Fondation CMA CGM
- Fondation d'Entreprise BFC Solidarité
- Fondation Descroix Vernier
- Fondation de France
- Fondation groupe EDF
- Fondation Macif
- Fondation Michelin
- Fondation Orange
- Fondation Saint-Gobain
- Fondation Sancta Devota
- Fondation Somfy - Les Petites Pierres
- Fondation Suez
- Fondation VINCI pour la Cité
- Fonds de dotation Antigone
- Fonds de dotation La Poule Rousse
- Fonds de dotation Rondeau
- General Mills Foundation
- Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities
- The Owens Corning Foundation

Foundations under the anti-exclusion umbrella organisation

- Fondation Orléans

Foundations under the AnBer foundation umbrella organisation

- Fondation Les Uns Les Autres
- Fondation Nature et Solidarité 59
- Fondation Shiriki
- Fondation Stéraphan

Foundations under the Caritas France umbrella

- Fondation Avenir Solidaire
- Fondation Bruno
- Fondation des Épiniers
- Fondation François, Monique et Pascal Bilger
- Fondation Girafe Formations
- Fondation Les Primevères
- Fondation Lucq Espérance
- Fondation Tolot
- Fondation Xamafra

Foundations under the Fondation de France umbrella organisation

- Fondation Camachara Solidarités
- Fondation Castorama
- Fondation Daniel et Nina Carasso
- Fondation Guy Nicolas
- Fondation Hardy
- Fondation JM Bruneau
- Fonds Merymu

Foundations under the Fondation Notre Dame umbrella organisation

- Fondation H.
- Fondation Isabelle et Hubert d'Ornano

Foundation under the Trans-Atlantic Fund umbrella

- Fonds Denise et Jean Verspieren

PUBLIC PARTNERS**European Institutions**

- Commission européenne - Direction générale des partenariats internationaux

Central Government

- Direction générale de la cohésion sociale
- Ministère de la Culture
- Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères - Centre de crise et de soutien
- Ministère des Sports, de la Jeunesse et de la Vie Associative - Direction de la Jeunesse, de l'Éducation Populaire et de la Vie Associative

Regional/Local authorities

- Communauté urbaine Le Havre Seine Métropole
- Directions départementales de l'emploi, du travail et des solidarités
- Directions régionales et interdépartementales de l'hébergement et du logement
- Région Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes
- Région Île-de-France
- Région Pays de la Loire
- Région Sud - Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur

Other public organisations

- Agence française de développement
- Agence Nationale pour les Chèques-Vacances
- Caisse nationale des allocations familiales et les caisses d'allocation familiales

As well as all the authorities (municipalities, joint community authorities and departmental and regional councils) that support us.

We would also like to thank all the companies that support us through skills sponsorship: Air Liquide, Allianz, Astek, Atos, BNP-Paribas, Credit Mutuel, EDF, Michelin, Nokia, Orange, Société Générale, Vinci Construction.

And, of course, we thank all the individual donors who enable us to carry out our day-to-day activities.



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

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Juillet 2025

LE SECOURS CATHOLIQUE — CARITAS FRANCE IN

FIGURES



€340M

IN FUNDS INCLUDING 82%
DEDICATED TO SOCIAL PROJECTS

2024 IN FRANCE



1,120,000

PEOPLE SUPPORTED
IN FRANCE



58,000

VOLUNTEERS
INVOLVED



5,000

CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS
SUPPORTED WITH SCHOOLING



2,500

RECEPTION
CENTRES



235,000

FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN
SUPPORTED



80,000

PEOPLE MET ON
THE STREETS



50,000

VISITS TO COMMUNITY
GROCERIES



20,000

PEOPLE SUPPORTED WITH
LEARNING FRENCH

2024 WORLDWIDE



3.4 MILLION

PEOPLE SUPPORTED
WORLDWIDE



335

PROJECTS IN 48
COUNTRIES OR REGIONS



38

EMERGENCY
INTERVENTIONS

