



Bridging the Gaps



# 2023

## ANNUAL REPORT



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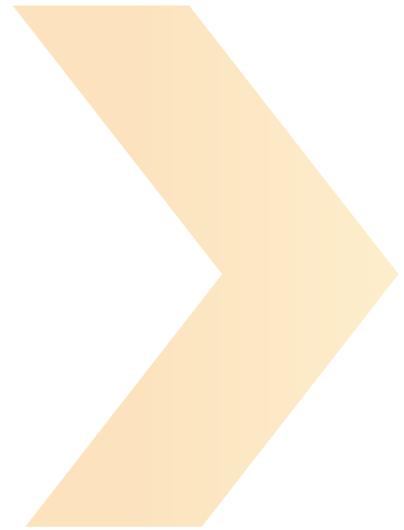
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# OVERVIEW



# OUR MISSION



Since our founding in 2000, we've worked in more than 34 countries, implementing over 450 projects, providing critical protection and education programs to build the resilience and self-reliance of women, girls, and youth.

**Our mission is to alleviate suffering and catalyze sustainable development in crises, conflicts, and fragile contexts.**

We provide humanitarian assistance during emergencies, in protracted crises, and in fragile environments, which can relieve the deepest sufferings.

We work with groups made vulnerable by violence, armed conflicts, and disasters – from adolescents and youth in refugee camps to displaced communities in urban and rural settings – to bridge the gaps and respond to the real needs and challenges of the communities.

At the same time, by providing the tools to become self-reliant, provide for their families, and become actors of positive social change, we build people's resilience.

# **OUR** COMMITMENT TO THE SDGs



The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by the United Nations (UN) in 2015, serving as a global call to action to – among other aims – end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030, all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

We are committed to helping achieve these ambitious goals. From Quality Education (SDG 4) to Gender Equality (SDG 5) and Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10), many of our projects cut across sectors and goals. Each of our country teams and the projects they're implementing are doing their part to help reach these goals.



# PROGRAMS BY COUNTRY

## DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO



99,010,212  
POPULATION



653.70  
GDP PER CAPITA (USD)

2012

RET began local  
operations

19

Projects

55,765

Program  
participants

557,650

Lives impacted

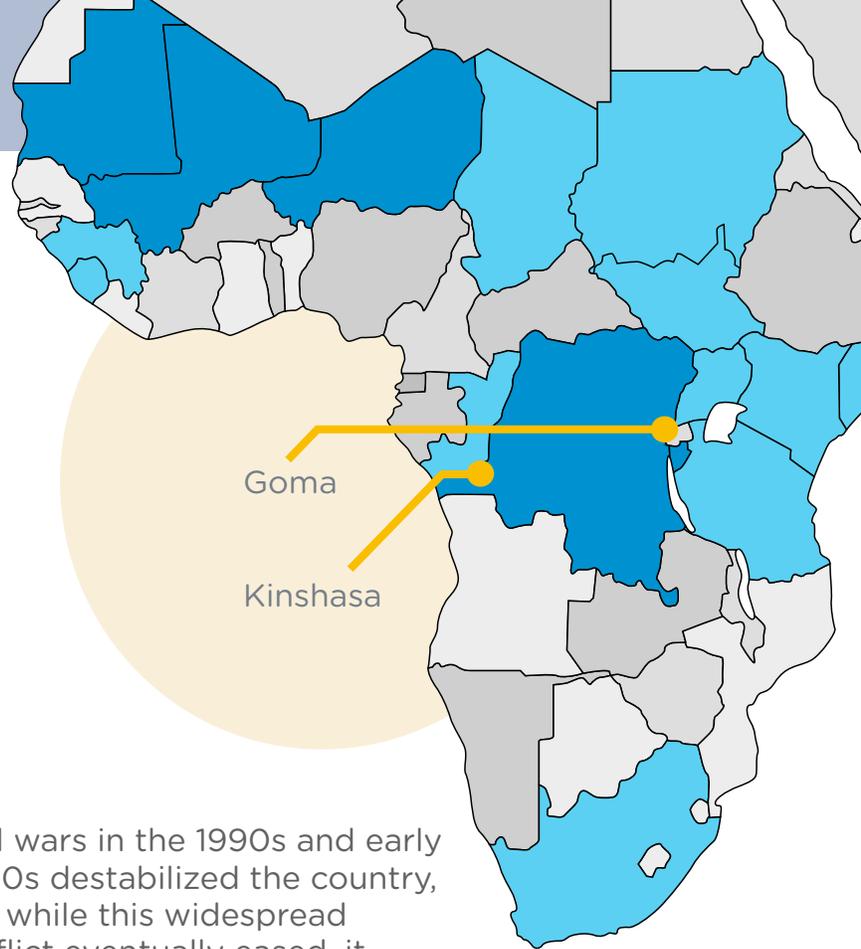


# DRC

Our programs in DRC have focused on:

-  Democracy and governance
-  Economic growth and development
-  Education and capacity building
-  Gender equality and social inclusion
-  Health and WASH
-  Nutrition and food security
-  Peace, stability, and transition
-  Protection

The Democratic Republic of Congo, abbreviated as DRC, is a central African country and home to the largest Francophone population in the world - approximately 72 million people speak the language. While extremely rich in natural resources like cobalt and copper, political instability, corruption, a lack of infrastructure, especially after centuries of colonial extraction, have left the sprawling country severely underdeveloped. An estimated 74.6% of its citizens live in extreme poverty (less than USD 2.15 per day).



Civil wars in the 1990s and early 2000s destabilized the country, and while this widespread conflict eventually eased, it has given way to regional violence. Collectively, these conflicts have contributed to a fractious atmosphere and several challenging factors, including the large-scale use of child soldiers, forced labor, and frequently, violence against women and children.

Since 2012, RET has directly supported more than 55,765 participants in DRC (20% of them women) through 19 projects. This has included the critical but fraught effort to demobilize and rehabilitate some 1,177 ex-combatants, and in our estimation, has impacted more than 557,650 indirect beneficiaries.

Among several active projects by RET in the country, a multi-year (2021-2024) undertaking

has focused on improving the food security and nutrition situation in the provinces of Ituri and North Kivu.<sup>[1]</sup> This has included efforts by RET to educate a wide demographic – from demobilized child soldiers and youth formerly associated with armed groups to the Indigenous Batwa population, female heads of households, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) – on how to self-produce food as smallholder farmers and sustainably manage natural resources.

Food security remains a critical issue in conflict-affected regions of eastern DRC, and since 2021, this intervention has established and guided agricultural cooperatives, which serve as hubs for activities such as ploughing and seed sowing.



Our work in DRC has contributed to the following Sustainable Development Goals:

**SDG 2**  
ZERO HUNGER

**SDG 3**  
GOOD HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING

**SDG 4**  
QUALITY  
EDUCATION

**SDG 5**  
GENDER  
EQUALITY

**SDG 8**  
DECENT WORK  
AND ECONOMIC  
GROWTH

**SDG 10**  
REDUCED  
INEQUALITIES

**SDG 16**  
PEACE, JUSTICE,  
AND STRONG  
INSTITUTIONS





By providing training and resources, we empower local farmers with the knowledge and tools needed to increase agricultural productivity. We've also implemented Village Peace Committees (*communautés de paix villageoises*, or CVP) to foster peaceful relations and inclusive coexistence between ethnic groups and integrate stigmatized, vulnerable, and traumatized groups, especially youth ex-combatants and indigenous Batwa, into the local community and economy.

During its three-year implementation period, this project will directly affect

6,200 program participants and impact 40,000 in total. To ensure its durability, the project includes an element of psychosocial support, which has so far sensitized 4,800 smallholder farmers and family members on mental health issues and existing psychosocial support services. It's also supported 10% of the smallholder farmers (120 people) with home visits conducted by a psychologist and/or psychosocial workers – all aimed at promoting their integration into local communities.

*[1] This project is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and implemented in partnership with IPAPEL (Provincial Inspectorate of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Livestock), ACPEJ (Action des Ex-Combattants Pour l'Encadrement des Jeunes et la lutte contre l'enrôlement des enfants et les violences sexuelles basées sur le genre), FDAPIID (Foyer de Développement pour l'Autopromotion des Pygmées et Indigènes Défavorisés), and PAP RDC (Programme d'Appui au Développement des Population Forestières).*

# LEBANON



5,489,739

POPULATION



4,136.10

GDP PER CAPITA (USD)

2014

RET began local operations

15

Projects

810,000

Program participants

8,100,000

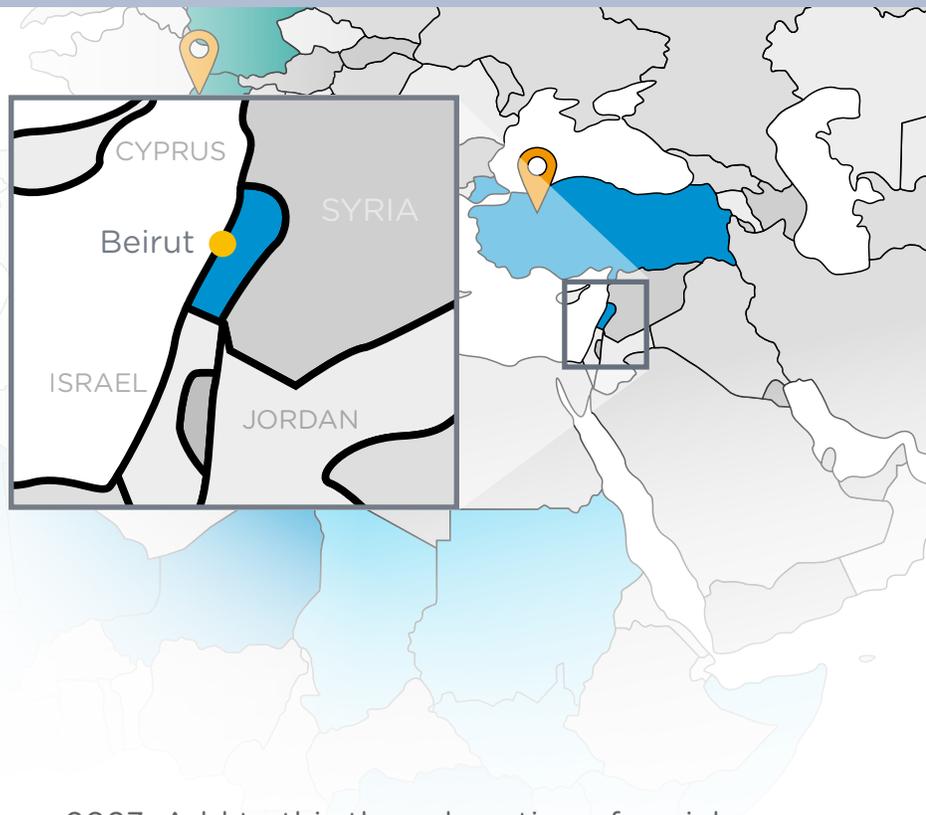
Lives impacted



# LEBANON

Our programs in Lebanon have focused on:

-  Education and capacity building
-  Gender equality and social inclusion
-  Nutrition and food security
-  Peace, stability, and transition
-  Protection
-  Youth empowerment



With Syria to the east and north and Israel to the south, Lebanon has taken on an even more critical regional role in 2023. The last decade has seen it severely impacted by the ongoing Syrian civil war, and the conflict in Israel has further strained the country.

UNHCR estimates that Lebanon currently hosts 1.5 million refugees from Syria, and UNICEF estimates the country is home to 210,000 Palestinian refugees. The influx has added pressure to an already fragile socio-economic situation, marred with political instability, inter-community tensions, coupled in some areas with sectarian divisions.

The economy also remains extremely fragile: Inflation has been in the triple digits since 2021, and the World Bank estimated the rate at 231.3% in

2023. Add to this the exhaustion of social services, a political vacuum, a decrease in security, and a deteriorating quality of life, and it becomes abundantly clear how important our work is in Lebanon.

In 2023, we continued working with Lebanese and Syrian refugee households with a specific emphasis on female-headed households – and communities in the rural areas of Ballbek- Hermel<sup>[1]</sup>. Low productivity and profitability meant that these groups were facing food insecurity in addition to endangered livelihoods. Along with local partner GATE Lebanon and Lebanese Agricultural Research Institute (LARI), we're working with Lebanese and Syrian refugee households to improve food security and livelihoods by providing technical training, seeds and equipment provision, and training on integrated pest management (IPM) in order to increase their agricultural productivity, overall resilience, and promote peaceful co-existence.

Lebanon continues to face an acute economic crisis (its per capita GDP has



dropped by 56% since 2019 – from USD 9,225.80 to USD 4,136.10), making livelihoods programs critically important to individuals, families, and rural communities who are often hit hardest by these trends.

In 2023, we supported the local fish farming industry by distributing an incredible 1.7 million fish fingerlings to 167 local fish farmers, representing a significant leap forward for the region’s industry. Beyond the sheer numbers, this effort was about instilling a sense of responsibility among farmers for the industry’s future sustainability.

The project will continue through 2024, and in that time, we will also:

- Assist with infrastructure rehabilitation: Construction a 2 mi/3.2 km irrigation system in Al Qaa, ensuring safe water reaches the most vulnerable.



Our work in Lebanon has contributed to the following Sustainable Development Goals:

**SDG 2**  
ZERO HUNGER

**SDG 5**  
GENDER  
EQUALITY

**SDG 4**  
QUALITY  
EDUCATION

**SDG 16**  
PEACE, JUSTICE,  
AND STRONG  
INSTITUTIONS

- Restore two main agricultural roads, which will allow over 2,000 individuals better access to their farmland.
- Build the institutional capacity of six municipalities through training on local economic plans to promote Public- Private Partnership (PPP) investment in agribusiness and agriculture to increase local economic development projects.

*[1] This transitional development project is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented in partnership with GATE Lebanon (local Lebanese non-governmental organization) and the Lebanese Agricultural Research Institute - LARI.*

# MALI



22,593,590

POPULATION



833.30

GDP PER CAPITA (USD)



2022

RET began local operations

19,400

Program participants

1

Project

194,000

Lives impacted

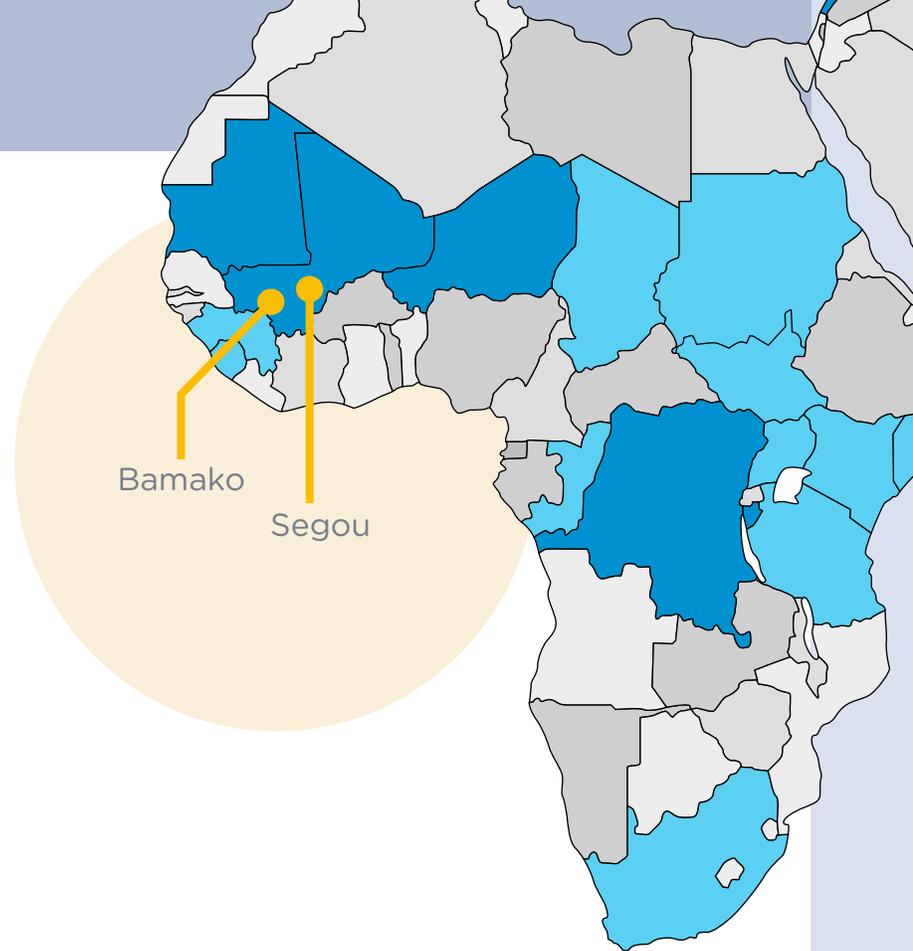
# MALI

Our programs in Mali have focused on:

-  Economic growth and development
-  Education and capacity building
-  Gender equality and social inclusion
-  Nutrition and food security
-  Peace, stability, and transition
-  Protection

Landlocked and with territory running deep into the Sahara Desert, Mali's population is concentrated in the southern part of the country in the savanna. RET's work in the country has focused on the Segou region, about 120 mi (200 km) from the capital city of Bamako. The last decade has been turbulent for this African nation, with armed conflict breaking out in early 2012, followed by a military coup. Since then, insurgencies have gathered pace, and two more coups (2020 and 2021) have taken place, the first of which overthrew the civilian government, and second of which saw another change of military power. The withdrawal of French troops in 2022 has made the security situation even more tenuous, with the Islamic State occupying large areas of southeast Mali.

It's in this context that RET's local team has been supporting tens of thousands of program participants



through a multi-sector program that includes three pillars:

1. Employability and income opportunities
2. Nutrition and food security
3. Peaceful community relations

By linking these three needs, we're building a durable solution for local communities. With one of the youngest populations in the world and a median age of just 16 years old, Mali's youth need opportunities to generate income and find work. This project has provided vocational training in business management, plumbing, electricity, and mechanics, computer skills, as well as processing of agricultural goods.

With over 40% of the population living below the poverty line and nearly 20% - or about 4.5 million people - suffering from



food insecurity and a quarter of Malian children malnourished, our initiatives like community farms, teaching modern agricultural techniques and climate-smart water management, have enabled women, youth, and entire communities to provide for themselves. This project has also supported disabled members of the communities, who previously suffered from isolation and a lack of viable income opportunities. Now, they have adapted ways to work alongside their neighbors.

In these same villages, we have worked with local authorities – from mayors and village elders to regional governors and government agencies – to encourage



Our work in Mali has contributed to the following Sustainable Development Goals:

**SDG 2**  
ZERO HUNGER

**SDG 4**  
QUALITY  
EDUCATION

**SDG 5**  
GENDER  
EQUALITY

**SDG 8**  
DECENT  
WORK AND  
ECONOMIC  
GROWTH

**SDG 10**  
REDUCED  
INEQUALITIES

**SDG 16**  
PEACE,  
JUSTICE,  
AND STRONG  
INSTITUTIONS

dialogue and promote peaceful community relations through conflict mediation committees. 2023 saw the first full year of implementation of this project, and it has already garnered approximately 19,400 program participants.

Mali is at a critical juncture, and RET is proud to have launched operations and implement this project in partnership with local NGOs ALPHALOG and REFOR while building their capacity for the future.<sup>[1]</sup>

*[1] This project's implementation began in late 2022, will run through 2025, is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and implemented by RET Germany in partnership with ALPHALOG and REFOR.*

# NIGER



26,207,977  
POPULATION



585.40  
GDP PER CAPITA (USD)



2021

RET began local operations

5,300

Program participants

5

Projects

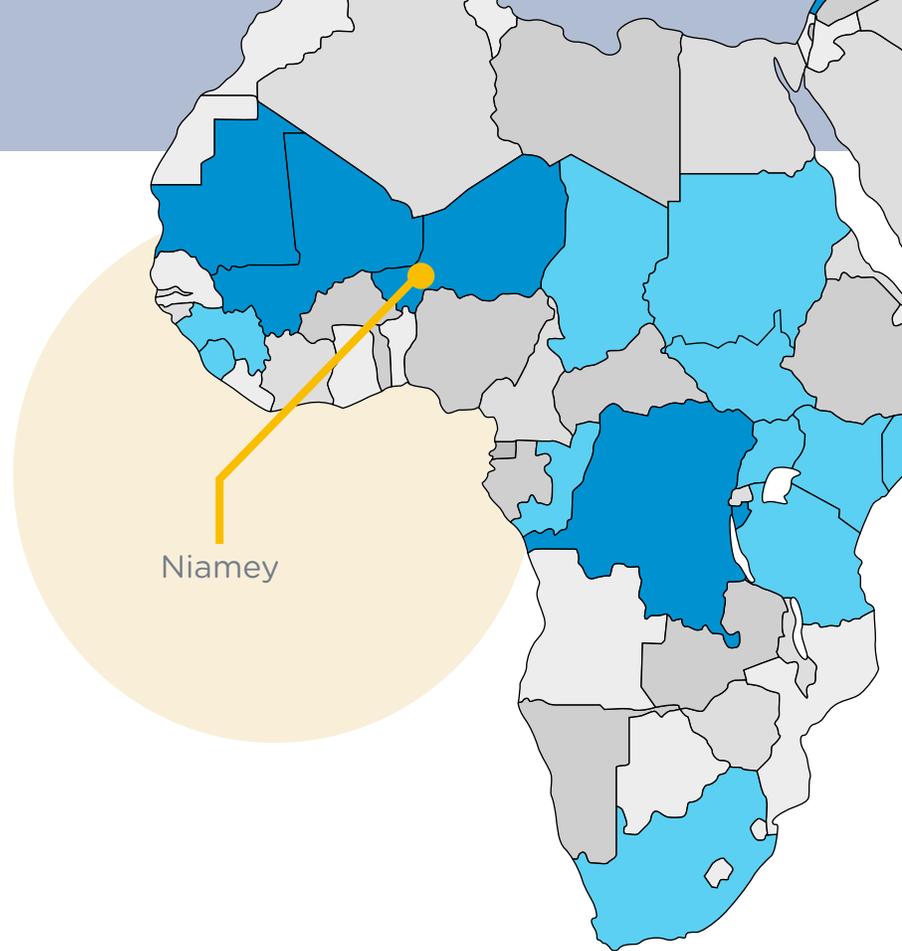
53,000

Lives impacted

# NIGER

Our programs in Niger have focused on:

-  Economic growth and development
-  Education and capacity building
-  Health and WASH
-  Nutrition and food security
-  Peace, stability, and transition
-  Protection



Niger is a West African country that shares a border with seven other countries: Algeria, Libya, Chad, Nigeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, and Mali. The country boasts one of the fastest growing and youngest populations in the world: Nearly 60% are under the age of 18. However, the World Bank estimates that 41.8% (around 10 million people) are living in extreme poverty, and the nation has been the destination for large numbers of refugees from Nigeria and Mali. This, coupled with a volatile security situation, low literacy and education levels, decreases in agricultural outputs, and climate change and natural disasters have made the country a priority for RET in recent years.

In 2021, RET began working to promote girls' access to quality education and empower women in the Tillabery region by improving girls' enrollment and retention rates in schools, raising awareness in communities about the importance of girls' education and women's empowerment, and improving women's income generation through training and support.<sup>[1]</sup>

*[1] This project is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through 2024. It is being implemented in partnership with the local organization Soutien aux ONG, SongES.*



Our work in Niger has contributed to the following Sustainable Development Goals:

**SDG 2**  
ZERO HUNGER

**SDG 3**  
GOOD HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING

**SDG 4**  
QUALITY EDUCATION

**SDG 16**  
PEACE, JUSTICE, AND  
STRONG INSTITUTIONS

# TÜRKIYE



84,979,913  
POPULATION



15,975.70  
GDP PER CAPITA (USD)



2014

RET began local operations

302,000

Program participants

39

Projects

3,020,000

Lives impacted

Our programs in Türkiye have focused on:

-  Basic infrastructure and equipment
-  Economic growth and development
-  Education and capacity building
-  Gender equality and social inclusion
-  Peace, stability, and transition
-  Protection



Spanning both Europe and Asia – very literally, *bridging the gap* between continents – Türkiye has been a hub for RET’s work for a decade. The country shares an extensive border with Syria, and the ongoing civil war has led many Syrians to seek refuge in Türkiye. ECHO estimates that the country now hosts 3.6 million refugees. And while Türkiye boasts both a large population and economy (it passed USD 1 trillion in GDP for the first time in 2023), the lowest and middle socioeconomic groups have been heavily impacted by continued inflation and a weakened lira.

In 2023, we implemented five projects in Türkiye, making it our most active country. It’s also home to our regional office that oversees operations across Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia (EMEA). Active projects included:

### Increasing Resilience of Refugees and Vulnerable Host Community

Members and Fostering Peaceful Co-Existence in Çorum: We aimed to increase the resilience of refugees and vulnerable host community members and promote peaceful co-existence through a series of social cohesion, non-formal education, and protection interventions adopting a community-based approach. The project targeted Syrians and non-Syrian refugees, primarily from Afghanistan and Iraq, including disadvantaged host community members in Çorum as the primary target groups.<sup>[1]</sup>

[1] This project was co-funded by the European Union through its Humanitarian Aid Operations Department (ECHO) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by LEAP in Türkiye in partnership with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) between February and December 2023.



Our work in Türkiye has contributed to the following Sustainable Development Goals:

**SDG 4**  
QUALITY EDUCATION

**SDG 5**  
GENDER EQUALITY

**SDG 8**  
DECENT WORK AND  
ECONOMIC GROWTH

**SDG 9**  
INDUSTRY, INNOVATION  
AND INFRASTRUCTURE

**SDG 10**  
REDUCED INEQUALITIES

**SDG 16**  
PEACE, JUSTICE, AND  
STRONG INSTITUTIONS

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Bridging the Gaps



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