



# Rights-Based Approach Local to Global

Annual Report 2020



THE  
LUTHERAN  
WORLD  
FEDERATION

actalliance

# Overview

The core of all we do as the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) are people and communities, and they are the key actors in determining their own futures. In the turmoil of 2020, dominated by COVID-19, the rights of the most vulnerable have been threatened even more acutely, and the need to put them at the centre of sustainable solutions needs to be emphasised all the more. Solutions need to respond to the voice and actions of those at local level, and global approaches need to result in real impact on the ground. Therefore, the distinctive 'local to global' character of the work of LWF is an ever more important part of our added-value. Adopting a 'rights-based approach' means we support people to organize and empower themselves, respecting above all their dignity in working with a 'people-centred' focus.

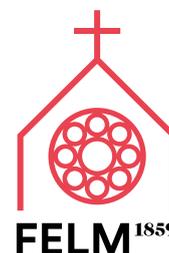
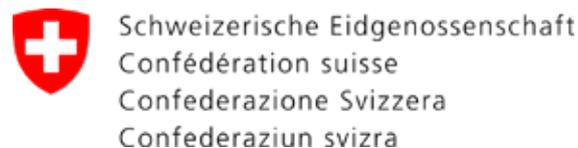
We aim to ensure that their voice is heard at all levels – local, national and international – and that decisions and promises made at the international and national level are translated into concrete improvements in people's lives at local level. Our 'local to global' (L2G) methodology – perhaps better described as 'local to global to local' (L2G2L) – emphasises that intended impact of the approach in concrete ways for real people. LWF aims to facilitate and enable, working alongside other actors in local and national civil society, and in collaboration with other international actors. Our presence in Geneva and our close collaboration with related agencies and international partners means that together we have authentic and credible leverage with important international actors, including the UN, governments, private sector and other so-called 'duty-bearers'.

LWF continues to develop this approach intentionally and strategically through programming linking local level action for change to national and international level advocacy. This includes the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process and other

international accountability mechanisms, always with the goal of securing real change at local level in areas such as the rights of marginalized communities, refugee rights, women's rights, and land rights. LWF's on-going presence in country close to communities has enabled us to keep the "local" aspect of L2G going during the COVID-19 crisis, and we adjusted and adapted when need be to the health measures, including by organising online events and advocacy meetings rather than physical visits, ensuring that voices from the ground kept being heard at global level.

The approach continues to be further mainstreamed and adopted across LWF as a major expression of its strategic direction for 2019-2024. The 'Action for Justice' unit, which straddles the LWF departments, has a key role in ensuring this joined-up and coherent approach as we move forward in 2021 and beyond. In addition to the human rights mechanisms in Geneva, LWF has expanded its reach towards key decision-making processes and institutions such as the UN Security Council in New York, the Global Protection Cluster, and regional governmental bodies such as the African Union and the European Union.

Collaboration and co-creation with our friends and partners continue to be a key to this. So far, concrete engagement and resources have come from Bread for the World, Act Church of Sweden, Finn Church Aid (FCA), the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM), the Canton of Geneva, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the German National Committee, and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR); we have collaborated with the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre (BHRR), the Mukwege Foundation, the University of Geneva, Climate Alliance, FIAN, UPR Info and many more local partners. As we expand the approach we look forward to this collaboration growing.



## IMPROVED ACCESS TO LAND FOR REFUGEES IN CHAD

“Before I didn’t have any land to cultivate. Now I have land, seeds, and tools”, says Zenaba Arbab Abdallah. In Chad, LWF and its partners have worked so refugees have a better access to land through local negotiation committees with host communities.



Learn in this short video how local action is linked to national and international advocacy for concrete long-term changes.

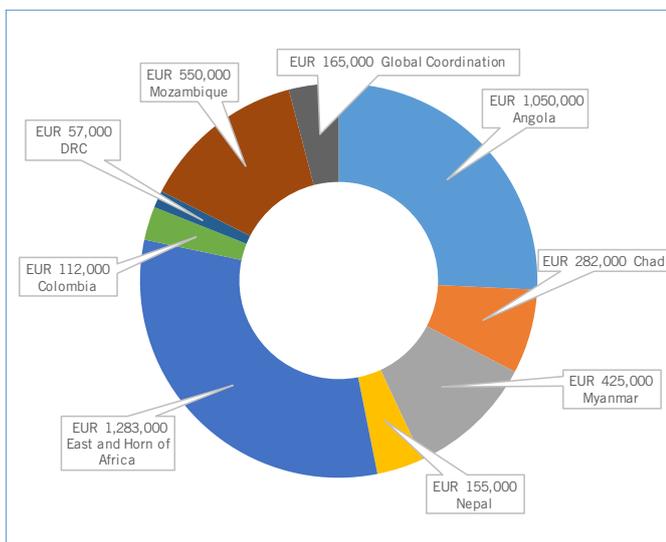
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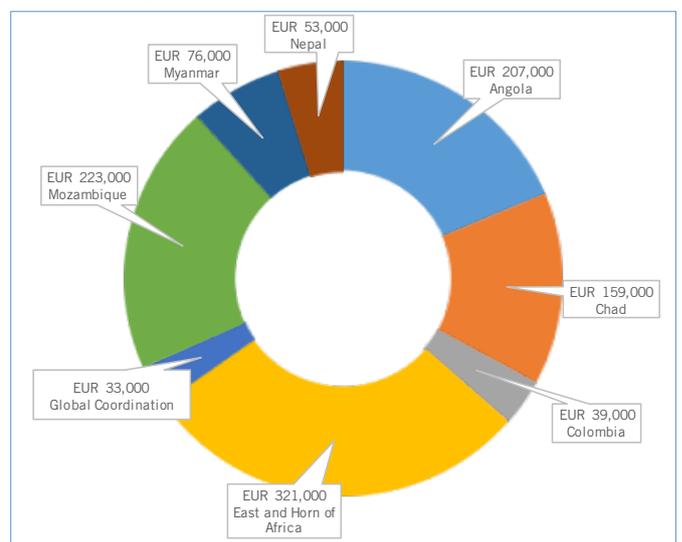
## Countries engaged in Rights-Based Approach (RBA) L2G projects in 2020



### Overall funding for the RBA local to global projects (2018–2021)



### 2020 expenditure for the RBA local to global projects



# 1. Rights of Refugees

## Improving refugees' economic rights in Ethiopia

**I**NTERNATIONAL LWF Ethiopia has been supporting civil society organizations (CSOs) in their engagement in the Universal Periodic Review in the past few years, for example by facilitating representatives to meet diplomatic missions in Geneva. The Government of Ethiopia accepted 16 recom-

mendations on rights of refugees and IDPs, out of which 4 were made by states that the Ethiopian UPR delegation engaged with during the pre-session.

**N**ATIONAL LWF is supporting national civil society partners to conduct an assessment on the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Human Right Action Plan, with the aim to provide recommendations for the next Action Plan, in a context where space for civil society has seen some improvements lately in Ethiopia. LWF and civil society partners are keen to support and ensure the actualization of Government pledges towards refugees' economic empowerment in the next phase, including with implementation of the Out of Camp policy allowing refugees to live and work outside refugee camps as well as support for provision of work permits for refugees.

**L**OCAL In line with the Pledge on Work and Livelihoods, LWF has supported refugees and their hosts to achieve some food self-sufficiency and increased income through input provision for crop and vegetable production. 28 refugees and host community members were selected among the most vulnerable from Abware and Shedder, and received vegetable seeds and tools to improve self-reliance outside of the camps, thus alleviating their dependence solely on the humanitarian assistance. LWF offered trainings on production of vegetables, on financial management as well as on child protection and gender equality, inviting also community leaders.



*Refugees are able to develop livelihood opportunities through the out of camp policy, an important step for better integration with host communities.  
Photo: LWF/ Mohammed Mehadi*

# 2. Land Rights

## Land rights and community empowerment in Angola

**L**OCAL In the past few years, LWF Angola has worked to empower 43 communities in Moxico Province so they know their rights and are able to take action with relevant duty-bearers. In 2020, 9 advocacy initiatives were conducted, resulting in concrete benefits such as the provision of seeds to combat hunger or the resolution of a water conflict. Community Development Committees are now recognized as municipal human rights commissions by authorities, resulting in their reports being channelled to ministries in the capital. As a consequence, government was able to take action to respond to communities' claims, for example organizing civil registry campaigns.

As land grabbing has been a worrying growing threat in Moxico, the project has focused more specifically on securing access to land enabling them to access public agricultural credits. In 2020, 21 farmers' associations and cooperatives were able to legalize

their land, the culmination of a lengthy process that now protects them from any future abuses. 16 communities also had their community land delimited in the framework of the public program *Minha Terra* (the government scheme to legalize rural community land) and 18 were able to apply to public agricultural credits. In addition, 5 land conflicts were mediated at local level to the benefit of affected communities. While COVID-19 resulted in putting on hold travel between regions and many planned activities, processes and advocacy initiatives did not stop as they were carried out by communities themselves and by their village legal counsellors, who were previously identified and trained by LWF.

**N**ATIONAL LWF strategically partnered to support the platform *Rede Terra* to develop various ambitious initiatives. In 2020, *Rede Terra* was entrusted by the Minister of State to provide information on recognition and registration of land in favor of local communities. Articulation and coordination spaces were created, allowing infor-

mation sharing about the program *Minha Terra* and the land law revision process, as well as greater collaboration among CSOs. A joint position statement on the revision of the land law and general land issues was shared via an online event. Direct advocacy was also conducted towards presidents of major parliamentary groups. As a result, some proposals were included in the second draft law.

LWF also supported civil society organizations in the eastern region of Angola to organize a regional conference on monitoring natural resource management by extractive companies, attended by 120 participants from CSOs, NGOs and traditional authorities (40 participants in person and 80 on-line).

**I**NTERNATIONAL LWF and its civil society partners in Angola submitted an oral statement to the Human Rights Council, in which they committed to supporting the implementation of UPR recommendations on access to justice; rights of the child; rights of women; rights of indigenous people and minority groups; rights of refugees; land rights; and business and human rights. The planned workshops to support Angolan civil society on Land rights and UPR implementation were postponed to 2021 and will be conducted online.

### 3. Rights of marginalized communities

#### Advancing land, legal identity, and women's rights in Myanmar

Despite the worrying context in Myanmar since the Coup of February 2021, LWF is still committed to continue its efforts in advocating for land, legal identity, and women's rights, and 2020 offered a wide variety of opportunities to engage at local, national and international levels.

**L**O C A L LWF conducted 17 consultations with 383 community members (53% women) from the three project sites (Ann, Chin and Kayin), collecting concerns on rights issues affecting them. COVID-19 restrictions then forced the team to adapt. For example, staff trainings on land rights were convened online, and village-based staff were subsequently able to cascade trainings to community groups with a total of 614 participants (40% women). The remoteness of partner communities created communication challenges in several locations. LWF facilitated dialogue platforms between local duty-bearers and representatives of Village Development Committees and other community development groups. A notable achievement is that 99 households were able to register their land.

**N**A T I O N A L LWF shared the findings of its consultations with the UPR forum of national NGOs, led by Equality Myanmar, and provided technical and logistical support in submitting their alternative report to the UN. A video clip was created in Burmese to explain civil society's role in the UPR process and was shared as training material with 29 CSOs. LWF also co-facilitated a UPR advocacy coaching workshop for the staff of 19 CSO Forum members.

In addition, as part of the coalition of INGOs in Myanmar, LWF acted as lead author in drafting the section on right to education of the INGO UPR report, working with NRC and Child Fund. A joint alternative report signed by 13 organizations gathered important recommendations under 6 topics: citizenship, freedom of movement, women's rights, rights of persons with disabilities, children's right to education, as well as housing, land and property.

**I**NTERNATIONAL As international travel was made impossible by the COVID-19 global pandemic, alternative online modalities were found for local actors to raise their issues to diplomatic missions ahead of the UPR review. The INGO Forum Myanmar organized a virtual briefing for diplomatic missions in Yangon, hosted by the embassy of Switzerland, which

“I think everybody should know their rights and what human rights violation is”, says Daw Anucari, member of Nun Power Development Organization.

— Capacity Building Workshop on Human Rights and Women Rights and UPR Consultation Discussion.

Photo: LWF/Chit Su Wai Aung



was an opportunity to present highlights from consultations and key recommendations. Online meetings with 4 diplomatic missions in Geneva as well as the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs also provided key platforms for local voices.

## Empowering communities to protect their rights and their river in Colombia

In Chocó, Colombia, local communities won a historic ruling in front of the Constitutional Court in 2016: the River Atrato, which had been polluted by extractive industries for decades, was recognised as a subject of rights. Afro-Colombian and Indigenous communities of the Atrato Basin also had their rights to life, health, water, food security, healthy environment and culture reaffirmed. A Commission of Guardians was set up, comprising women and men from local communities, to safeguard the rights of the river and promote the implementation of the court ruling.

“Human beings are part of nature, not above it.” Harol Rincon Ipuchima, COICA (Coordination of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin)

## LOCAL

LWF supported the Guardians of the Atrato in identifying and developing livelihood initiatives outside of mining, such as crafts, traditional medicine, fishery, etc., thus promoting their economic, social and cultural rights.

## NATIONAL

LWF and its partners are following up on the Court ruling through advocacy towards various institutions, including the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture, to hold the Colombian government accountable in implementing the Court decision. LWF has played a key role in creating spaces for dialogue and for participation of Guardians as well as municipal and department level officials into national debates.

## INTERNATIONAL

As plans for a visit from Guardians to Geneva were cancelled due to COVID-19, LWF organised a webinar with key local and international partners (such as FIAN, Climate Alliance, UNEP, COICA) in the framework of the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Paris Agreement. Members of the Commission of Guardians presented their main priorities and challenges in relation to the Court ruling, as well as their vision and perspective on the relationship between man and nature. The experiences and calls for action from the communities affected by this specific human rights situation in Colombia were shared on social media.

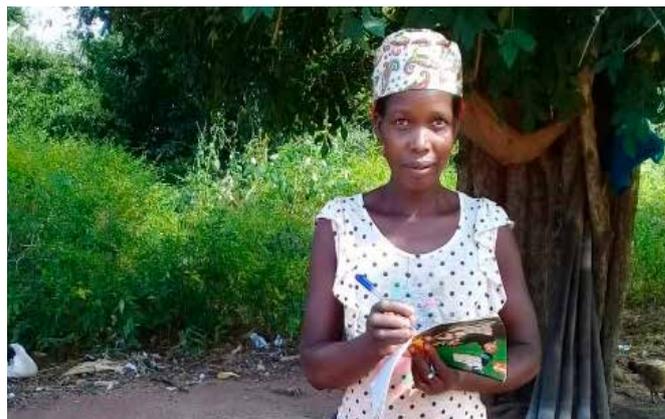
## 4. Rights of Girls and Women

### Advancing girls' and women's right to education in Mozambique

The context in Mozambique has been particularly difficult in the past couple of years, with Cyclone Idai causing tremendous damage, armed conflict in Sofala Province and even more so in Cabo Delgado, and finally COVID-19 restrictions paralyzing economic and social activities. LWF and its local partners JustaPaz and AMPDC have continued their engagement in advancing girls' and women's rights, in particular right to education and protection from early marriage.

## LOCAL

Concrete initiatives in the districts of Buzi and Chibabava (Sofala province) were conducted so women and girls can access their right to education. As a result, 10 girls benefitted from school material and were also granted a scholarship, an important support to prevent them from dropping out of school. In addition, literacy classes benefitted 312 women who are now able to read and write. Dissemination of manuals on the recently adopted law criminalizing child marriage in 23 schools, adult education centers or girls' clubs have been key in raising awareness on girls' rights, along with radio programs, including on the topic of sexual and gender-based violence in time



“I got married when I was 12 years old and I have seven children. I never had the opportunity to go to school. Thanks to the literacy classes, I can now help my children with their homework and I can finally understand the signs on the street.”

— Isabel José Chada – 39 years-old

Photo: Zacarias Muzimbana/AMPDC

of COVID-19. During the time schools were closed, the project opened 4 resource centers so girls could develop livelihood opportunities, notably by sewing masks. 2 conferences gathered districted authorities, local communities and key stakeholders to reaffirm action for the prevention of child marriage.

## NATIONAL

The project was key in providing technical and financial support to the Human Rights Forum, the CSO coalition working on UPR, notably to conduct consultations in the southern part of the country. JustaPaz made sure that the alternative report captured the human rights concerns of their partner communities, such as the need to combat gender-based violence and early marriage, to improve gender parity rates in education and to have a greater representation of women in decision-making bodies. Collaboration with the Government, through the Ministry in charge of Human rights was fruitful as JustaPaz contributed to the process of validation of the State mid-term action plan report to the UPR second cycle.

## INTERNATIONAL

LWF provided support for edition and submission of the CSO alternative report and will develop online advocacy engagements for local actors to meet diplomatic missions around the UPR pre-session early 2021.

### Fighting Gender Based Violence Among Refugees in Uganda

## LOCAL

Since 2016, LWF has followed-up on recommendations from the Universal Periodic Review to improve access to justice and reduce the incidence of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), particularly among refugee populations. LWF developed a variety of concrete initiatives to shift attitudes regarding SGBV: training for local leaders, dialogue meetings of women councillors, radio talk shows and spot messages reaching over 40,000 individuals. 8 legal aid clinics reached 637 beneficiaries in Pader, Rwamwanja, and Adjumani and raised awareness on the roles of the local leaders in providing justice to both the survivors and perpetrators of GBV, as well as on access to justice, family law and land rights, providing spot free legal counselling and advice where necessary.

A high number of judicial cases linked to GBV were on hold due to challenges in ensuring access to justice, as such, LWF strategically partnered with judicial district authorities to set up 3 mobile court sessions in Kamwenge and Adjumani, either in the prisons or directly in the settlements hosting refugees. Significantly, it brought justice nearer to the people and acted as a solution to the long distances (up to 80 km) to access formal courts. The majority of cases settled were linked to GBV, and more generally, 74 persons were able to access their right to justice, such as accused persons on remand or in prison for more than 2 years without trial who were accorded speedy trial. As a result, authorities reported a dramatic drop in GBV cases compared to previous years.



*A witness testifying during a mobile court session in Adjumani, Uganda.  
photo: LWF/Geraldo Anyite*

“Fighting between husbands and wives was very common including child marriages. I would receive about 8 GBV cases and about 3 child marriages in a day a few years ago. These days, it takes me 2-3 months to receive 1 case”, says a leader in Mahani zone, Rwamwanja.

## NATIONAL

With the Act Alliance members, LWF continued its advocacy engagement on the Sexual Offences Bill to make sure that the national legal framework to handle sexual offences fills the gaps on prevention and response mechanisms, which are absent in the current law, thus hindering access to justice for survivors. Inputs from various key stakeholders including the Church of Uganda, Uganda Joint Christian Council and Dan Church Aid were incorporated to the final proposals of the Bill to Parliament. The Bill was eventually adopted early 2021, an encouraging step forward.

## INTERNATIONAL

Community consultations and coordination are underway towards the elaboration of a civil society Universal Periodic Review report to be submitted to the UN Human Rights Council in 2021. LWF has had a key role in leading the refugee rights cluster in this respect. In addition, as Uganda will soon be reviewed under the Committee for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, LWF will also contribute to the review by raising concerns and recommendations from its work on the ground in fighting gender-based violence.

# Examples of Impact in 2020

	Key processes	Key achievements
 LOCAL	In Myanmar, 11 communities were trained in land rights and legal identity and dialogue meetings were held between rights-holders and duty-bearers to clarify processes and create personal rapport.	99 families (including 21 women) received land registration and 351 children (including 190 girls) received birth registration certificates. In addition, national ID Cards were issued through one-stop centres.
	In Mozambique, land conflicts are documented and communities are taken into account in land allocations while contributing to input in a new legal framework.	4 communities received their land title, which will protect them of any future abuse.
	In South Sudan, consultations on the UPR were conducted in Wau, Torit and Yambio. The findings from these community consultations shall be used to develop the civil society report to be submitted in 2021.	As a concrete initiative to foster women's rights, 4 women's groups in Maban County received training on bakery and started a small business. A women's group in Magwi was supported with hair dressing materials to improve their livelihoods.
	In Nepal, LWF has focused to improve the human rights situation for Santhals, ex-Haliyas and Dalits. Through its partners, LWF has been strengthening the capacity of local organizations to generate evidence and organize advocacy to claim their rights.	Community led actions have resulted in local duty bearers taking positive measures, e.g. allowing important resources to build safe shelters for 110 households, a community health center and multipurpose community buildings for Santhals, or releasing 13,046 rehabilitation packages for freed Haliyas.
 NATIONAL	In Kenya, a draft UPR implementation matrix was developed by 26 CSOs as a monitoring tool by which the Government of Kenya will be held to account on the UPR Cycle 3 commitments.	The refugee platform KADANA was strengthened and is growing autonomous: formal registration process, advocacy related to the impact of Covid restrictions on refugees and emergency relief actions were speedily undertaken in 2020.
	In Chad, LWF and partners engaged key national level duty bearers regarding the adoption of the asylum law. A national consultation workshop was held to share recommendations from refugees, returnees and nationals.	The adoption of the Asylum law by the Parliament in December 2020 is an important landmark towards protection of refugees' human rights and an achievement after extensive advocacy by civil society in the past few years.
	In Uganda, LWF continued its advocacy engagement with the Act Alliance members on the Sexual Offences Bill to make sure that the national legal framework to handle sexual offences fills the gaps on prevention and response mechanisms for GBV survivors.	The Bill was eventually adopted early 2021, an important milestone to enable survivors to access justice.
 INTERNATIONAL	LWF Nepal was actively involved in 2 UPR alternative reports submitted to OHCHR reflecting the issues of Freed Haliya, Santhal and Dalits on rights to rehabilitation, education, health, proper housing, caste-based discrimination and disability.	As international travel was made impossible by the COVID-19 global pandemic, alternative online modalities were found for local actors to raise their issues to 5 diplomatic missions ahead of the UPR review.
	In Kenya LWF is set to lead the ReDSS (Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat) local integration and social cohesion agenda. ReDSS aims at maintaining stakeholder engagement towards durable solutions for displacement-affected communities in East Africa and the Horn of Africa.	4 recommendations related to refugee rights were accepted by the Government of Kenya. 3 of these recommendations were made by states that were lobbied by LWF and its partners.
	In South Sudan, LWF has played a convening role in the civil society coalition that now sits regularly with the Inter-ministerial committee on Human rights.	2 shadow reports on CRC and CEDAW were submitted and an oral statement on Sexual & Gender Based Violence was presented during the 45 <sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council.

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Cover photo: Youth playing on the banks  
of the Río Pogue, Atrato, Colombia. LWF is  
supporting local communities to uphold their  
rights and those of their river.  
Photo: LWF/G. A. Moreno Clavijo

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