

Vétérinaires
Sans Frontières
Dierenartsen
Zonder Grenzen



Activity report

2019

VSF BELGIUM

MEMBER OF VSF INTERNATIONAL



Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Belgium is a Belgian NGO and a member of the VSF International network that fights hunger and poverty in Africa. Our objective is to strengthen the capacities of populations of livestock keepers by sustainable means so that they can lead a dignified existence.

Millions of people in Africa make a living from their livestock. Vétérinaires Sans Frontières helps livestock keepers to build a better future. This future starts with healthy animals. But we do far more than just vaccinate and care for the herds.

We work with local populations to improve their livestock breeding techniques and everything associated with them: from microcredits to sales, from the management of water and fodder to training, as well as agricultural equipment, emergency aid, peace talks and political advocacy.

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healthy people**

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Foreword →

Marc Joolen
General Director



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As I'm writing these words, Europe is being particularly hard hit by coronavirus. Although the scale of the pandemic is still unclear in Africa, there is no doubt that the continent will be significantly affected. Lockdown is having an impact on the income of millions of livestock keepers who can no longer sell what they produce. In Europe and in Africa, it is still too early to say how long the consequences of this virus will last.

The health crisis we are currently living through reminds us more than ever of the close relationship between human health, animal health and the environment. We have long understood this connection at Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Belgium. Collaboration between veterinarians and doctors, agronomists and environmental specialists is vital when it comes to dealing with zoonoses (diseases which are transmissible from animals to humans) and the harmful effects of climate change. We fervently believe this.

Last October, we organised a study day in Gembloux, inviting students in these different fields to consider the added value of interdisciplinarity in the fight against climate change. The "One Health" principles are reflected in all our projects in the field. For example, over the last two years, our veterinary staff in Niger have worked with Médecins du Monde's medical staff to provide care for livestock keepers and their herds.

In the Sahel and in the African Great Lakes, the needs and the interests of the people we help are at the heart of our concerns. Whether they are sedentary or nomadic livestock keepers, veterinarians or farmers, whatever their ethnicity or their religion. We provide training courses and animals to help the most vulnerable people to keep goats in Rwanda and to keep poultry in Burkina Faso. But Africa's potential in terms of livestock is not limited to its role in the fight against poverty. This potential is also a springboard to entrepreneurship. To give them the means to succeed, we are making it easier for Burundian livestock farmers to access loans and we are building livestock markets in Mali. We also encourage Ugandan and Tanzanian pastoralists to share the grasslands and the water points on which their livestock depend to ensure their sustainable management in the long-term. And because animal health remains the *sine qua non* of all our activities, we are setting up networks of veterinarians to care for livestock, as we have done in the Democratic Republic of Congo, for example.

We have worked hard and enthusiastically in 2019, despite difficult circumstances at times. The wave of insecurity affecting the Sahel countries has had significant consequences for our local teams. The political situation is also unstable in some Central African countries, where elections have just been held. Despite these difficulties, we remain focused and we dare to feel confident about the future. In Brussels, we have moved to a space which is better suited to our team's way of working. At the beginning of 2020, we opened an office in Benin and we are currently working on returning to Mauritania in the near future. Increasingly, we are thinking of repositioning ourselves to provide emergency aid, in addition to our development activities.

One thing is certain: we will need your support to respond to these challenges. We have made progress thanks to donors, contributors and supporters. I would like to extend my warmest thanks to those who support our organisation every year. But I would also like to pay tribute to my colleagues in Africa and Belgium who work tirelessly to carry out our mission. They are at the heart of our organisation and we are particularly proud of them.

I invite you to learn more about their work in all its diversity as you read the following pages. I hope they will convince you to continue to show us your support.

Brussels, May 2020

Healthy animals, healthy people

Our mission is to empower disadvantaged livestock-dependent communities in the South to improve their well-being.

An international network

We are a member of the Vétérinaires Sans Frontières International network, made up of 12 national NGOs in Europe and Canada. Together we work in more than 40 countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia, serving the most vulnerable rural populations. Our aim is to support family-run livestock keeping and farming. We believe in the importance of a healthy relationship between humans, animals and their environment. Through our veterinary services and our work with local populations, we help to improve food security and food sovereignty around the world.

The network enables us to better co-ordinate the location of our work and makes it possible to pool our resources. It also encourages members to share their experiences and their expertise; this helps to develop our skills and those of our partners.

VSF International has been headquartered in the same building in Brussels as Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Belgium since 2014.

www.vsf-international.org



VSF INTERNATIONAL
VÉTÉRINAIRES
SANS FRONTIÈRES

Financial transparency

Would you like to know more about where our funds come from and how we manage our expenses? Our financial report will be available in September on our website www.vsf-belgium.org and can be obtained on request from info@vsf-belgium.org or +32 (0)2 539 09 89.

Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Belgium subscribes to the ethical code of the AERF/VEF. You have a right to information. This implies that donors, partners and staff are informed at least once a year of the use of funds received.



EFQM
Recognised for Excellence
3 Star - 2020

In 2019



251,009

families
received
our help



15,028

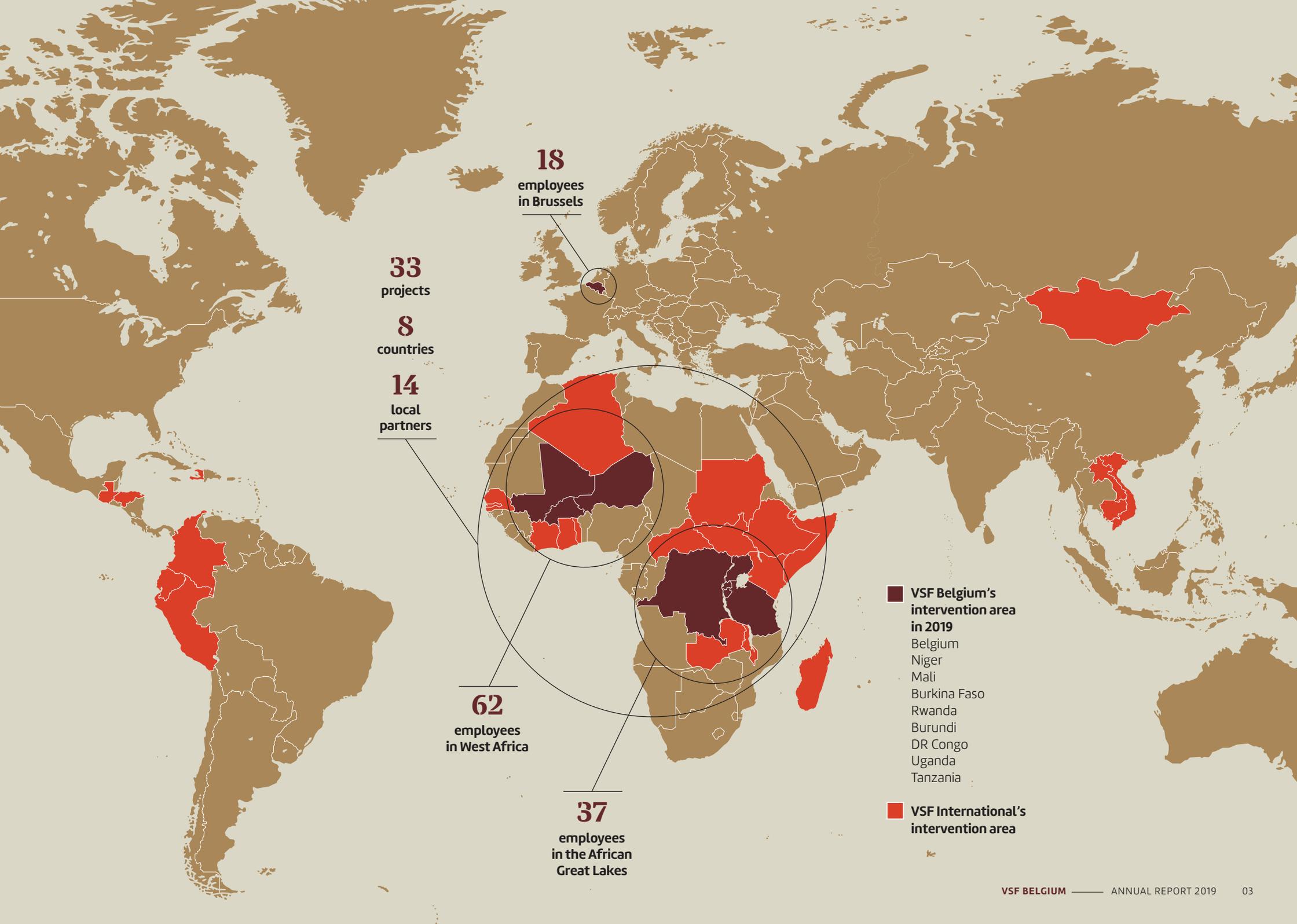
animals
were distributed

1,922

animal health
workers received
our support

101

private
veterinarians
were assisted



33
projects

8
countries

14
local
partners

18
employees
in Brussels

62
employees
in West Africa

37
employees
in the African
Great Lakes

- **VSF Belgium's intervention area in 2019**
- Belgium
- Niger
- Mali
- Burkina Faso
- Rwanda
- Burundi
- DR Congo
- Uganda
- Tanzania

■ **VSF International's intervention area**

01.

West Africa

Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Belgium has worked in the Sahel for more than 25 years. From Mali, our area of operations has extended progressively to Niger and Burkina Faso. Today, these three countries still form the core of our activities in the region.



Regional instability

2019 was a year of security challenges in the Sahel. Attacks by armed groups resulted in many civilian casualties and led to thousands of people fleeing. This situation is specific to the cross-border area shared by the three countries, which is particularly dangerous.

Since 2012, armed groups have established themselves in northern Mali. They have spread gradually to rural areas before reaching the centre of the country and neighbouring countries. Today, the entire border area is under their control. They can be found especially in the Tillabéri and Tahoua regions of Niger and in the Sahel and Centre-Nord regions of Burkina Faso.

The wide-ranging consequences of this insecurity affect communities and their livelihoods. Insecurity has led to unprecedented population displacement and the number of displaced people continues to increase. At the beginning of 2020, there were as many as 480,000 displaced people in northern Burkina Faso, 310,000 in northern Nigeria and 180,000 in Niger. Forced to leave their fields and livestock behind, these displaced people are destitute. Consequently, 9.4 million people in West Africa need immediate assistance in 2020.

We are pursuing our activities, in the fields of both development and humanitarian aid, in the midst of this complex crisis. Our security and risk-anticipation strategies have made it possible for us to continue to offer our services to communities of refugees, displaced people and indigenous people.

Technology to improve herd mobility

In addition to our activities in each country, we also work at a regional level to improve herd mobility across borders. In eight countries along the coast (Benin, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Nigeria, Togo) and in the Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger), we work to secure transhumance and to make it easier for livestock keepers and their herds to access grazing resources and markets. This helps to bolster the contribution that pastoralism makes to food and nutrition security, socio-economic development and regional integration in West Africa.

With a view to ensuring peaceful transhumance, we are reinforcing the traditional information systems of pastoralists in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso with new technologies. Livestock keepers can use mobile phones and radios to access real-time information about the state of pastures, water points and market prices. They can then make the best decisions for their herd.

These three countries alone account for almost half of West Africa, spanning an area about 91 times the size of Belgium, and are home to 18% of the region's population, a large majority of whom are livestock keepers. They are also among the countries with the lowest levels of human development, according to the United Nations' annual ranking. In these circumstances, our presence is all the more important.

Burkina Faso

In 2019, we continued our work and focused on strengthening the resilience of vulnerable households, food and nutrition security and the economic empowerment of Malian refugees. We also led a consortium of local and international NGOs to carry out a project to encourage activities related to transhumant livestock keeping in particularly vulnerable areas. This project has helped us to develop regional expertise with a clear objective: to create conditions which are conducive to livestock keeping in these insecure areas and to revive young people's interest in these activities which are increasingly declining in popularity.

Testimonial

Nathalie Ouedraogo 

Working from the office in Kaya in Burkina Faso, Nathalie Ouedraogo (32 years old) manages our support programme for small poultry farmers in the Sahel and the Centre-Nord regions. She's a sociologist who specialises in gender and, since 2017, she has co-ordinated our activities to build skills, working closely with a team in the field. She also works to develop connections between the various stakeholders within the poultry industry and analyses the profitability of our beneficiaries' farms; this helps us to see whether the information we provide during training courses is being correctly applied. Nathalie, who is from a farming family, sees this role as being particularly meaningful.

"Farmers are the basis of any country's development. When looking at the chain in its entirety, I've seen that it's always the farmers who suffer the most because they don't have the ability or the techniques to improve, nor the means to defend their own interests. That's why men and women must be given the means to thrive. For women, this is an opportunity to have more power; in turn, this leads to more recognition and better integration in society.

I'm working to improve the situation and I find it incredibly satisfying to work with these people who have significant skills but who haven't yet had the opportunity to develop these skills.

I've found that the livestock keepers with whom we work have shown a real desire to develop their professional skills. It's not something that has been imposed on them. On the contrary, our project activities respond to a need. Most of these livestock keepers are already trying to sell what they produce with their hen houses, but they are limited by a lack of means and technique.

They want to make their small-scale livestock keeping a profitable economic activity because they understand that it's a way to overcome food insecurity today. This is increasingly important in view of climate change which is destabilising traditional livelihoods.

Because of our support, they are able to increase their production while complying with technical, hygiene and, above all, animal health standards. Of course, everything can be improved, but they have a genuine desire to make progress which is very important to ensure a project's success."



172

**livestock keepers
attended our
microbusiness
training courses**

120

**families
were taught
about poultry
farming**

150,000

**chickens were
vaccinated
and wormed**



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Food insecurity

In Burkina Faso, we operate in the Sahel, Centre-Nord and northern regions. Communities in these regions are significantly affected by food insecurity. To feed themselves, they combine livestock keeping and agriculture. They also fish and grow fruit or forest trees, climbing plants or shea nuts.

In these areas with fragile ecosystems, rainfall is low and unpredictable and soils are sandy. This prevents farmers from achieving satisfactory yields. **Even in years with abundant rainfall, harvests are insufficient to cover the nutritional needs of the population for more than seven months.** Livestock keeping therefore plays an important role in the life of these communities. The families of livestock keepers sell their small ruminants to buy grain at market.

However, livestock keepers face many difficulties. **Climate change is exacerbating the lack of pastures after the rainy season and the lack of permanent water points for animals.** Fields and housing are increasing almost everywhere, limiting the mobility of herds. Over the last three years, growing insecurity in the Sahel region has increased the vulnerability of livestock and livestock keepers.

Because of the terrorist threat, herds are unable to move along the usual transhumance routes and cannot access pastures or local animal health services.

Permanent access to food has also become problematic, both for the families of livestock keepers and their animals. **The population is highly dependent on markets for food. But livestock keepers' purchasing power is continuing to decline.** The grain and livestock feed sold at these markets come from areas where the rains are abundant and the soils are fertile. They are available in small quantities and sold at a high price. Livestock keepers make very little money from the sale of their animals, which have been weakened by a lack of water and food. For the most vulnerable families, this income is no longer sufficient to buy the grain they need to feed themselves. **Consequently, many households struggle with food insecurity and poverty.**



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Project in the spotlight ↓

Chickens for grain

Diversifying their sources of income has become a key issue for Burkina Faso's livestock keepers and they are well aware of this. In addition to small ruminants, they are also beginning to sell poultry so that they can feed themselves. This is an accessible way for the poorest families to obtain grain.

But there are numerous challenges, both in urban and rural areas. The poultry mortality rate remains high, largely because of Newcastle disease, a highly contagious viral infection in domestic birds. Local livestock keepers work in isolation and are unable to produce enough poultry meat to meet demand. In towns and cities, imported poultry is increasingly common at local food markets.

To help the local population to deal with these problems, we have developed **a village poultry farming model.** Having successfully tested this model in Mali, we are now implementing it in Burkina Faso. This approach focuses on strengthening poultry production while providing livestock keepers with market access so that they can sell their poultry.

Encouraging entrepreneurial spirit...

In the Centre-Nord region, we organise management training for experienced poultry farmers. They often lack knowledge of how to run a business, something which is essential if their livestock keeping activity is to become profitable. **In 2019, 172 livestock keepers attended our training courses.** During different modules on managing microbusinesses, our teams helped them to develop business plans with the aim of accessing microcredit with which to expand their livestock-keeping activity.

We also help livestock keepers to market their poultry, by putting them in contact with potential buyers or by organising fairs in towns and cities.



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... and encouraging careers among the most vulnerable

Furthermore, our activities also target the most vulnerable segments of the population. We want to give these people the opportunity to begin keeping livestock to improve their situation. **In 2019, we chose 120 families in the Sahel and Centre-Nord regions and taught them about poultry farming.**

Firstly, they were trained in the basics of habitat, health, nutrition and running a poultry farm. Our teams also helped them to build chicken coops and distributed concentrated feed, feeders and drinking troughs. Each family then received nine hens and a rooster of a local breed. Enough to start a small livestock farm!

At the same time, throughout the Sahel and the Centre-Nord region, our animal health staff carried out major vaccination campaigns targeting the main deadly diseases for poultry. In 2019, **150,000 chickens were vaccinated and wormed.** The mortality rate has halved in comparison to 2017.

Significant differences between men and women

According to a survey carried out among our beneficiaries, men earn an average of four times the amount that women earn from poultry farming. One of the reasons for this is that men can travel more freely; it is easier for them to travel to markets in other areas. In contrast, women must rely on local markets which rarely attract large buyers. However, **while men reinvest their income in livestock, women keep their income for their families. They use about three-quarters of their profits to buy food for their children or to send them to school.**

Mali

In Mali, livestock keeping provides significant added value in terms of urban development and benefits for the population. It is the main source of income for more than 30% of the population, rising to 80% in rural areas. However, more than eight million Malians, or four of every ten inhabitants, still live in extreme poverty.

Helping the most vulnerable, despite insecurity

For more than twenty years, we have worked with livestock keepers in the regions of Koulikoro and Kayes in southern Mali. More recently, we have extended our activities to the Mopti region in the centre of the country. In recent years, the political instability and insecurity caused by jihadis have made our work increasingly difficult. Insecurity, which was previously a problem in the north of the country, has now spread to the centre and to some areas in the south, where most of our activities are concentrated. The population is also having to cope with the effects of severe and prolonged droughts. This situation prevents the poorest people from providing for themselves and exacerbates their vulnerability.

In this context, the support we provide to Malian livestock keepers is crucial. Most of our activities focus on improving the food and nutrition security of poor households in the Mopti and Koulikoro regions. With our local partner, Initiatives Conseil Développement, **we help the most vulnerable people, particularly women, to join forces and undertake activities that complement livestock keeping to guarantee them an income.** We then provide them with equipment and working capital. We also provide some vulnerable families with goats, sheep or chickens. Our material and technical support enables them to meet their own needs and gradually to work their way out of poverty.

In addition, our activities **make it easier for livestock keepers to access animal health services, livestock markets and livestock food banks.**



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We also raise awareness among government staff of the needs of livestock keepers in crisis situations so that appropriate emergency aid measures can be taken.

Project in the spotlight ↓

Giving livestock keeping the means to develop its potential

In 2019, we worked in the Espace Economique Partagé de Massantola (Shared Economic Space of Massantola), in the Koulikoro region, to improve livestock productivity and the marketing of animals, meat and milk. The objective is to make this area a centre of competitiveness adapted to the mobility of the livestock keepers. In time, it will include livestock markets, a network of veterinary practices, agricultural and livestock input banks and producer organisations, all working

together. With our local partners, **we are helping to set up this infrastructure with the aim of stabilising the incomes of local livestock keepers while reducing the rural exodus among young people.**

We have operated in the area since 2017 and we have already strengthened three veterinary practices, which are now part of the local economy. These practices offer their services to livestock keepers and the local population. Veterinarians vaccinate their animals, offer advice and provide them with veterinary medicines. Under their supervision, we have also established three secondary veterinary warehouses. They ensure fair access to animal health services in more remote areas. **This infrastructure enabled our teams to vaccinate more than 200,000 goats, sheep and cattle in 2019.**

A market to stimulate the local economy

Home to a significant number of goats and sheep, the Massantola area is ideal when it comes to providing small farmers with market access. The area's high population density ensures a high attendance rate and sufficient consumption of the products on offer. These are essential prerequisites to ensure that prices are affordable for the local population and profitable for livestock keepers.

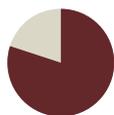
To make it easier for livestock keepers to access supplies and to sell their animals in the area, we have built a livestock market in Sirakorola. We also set up three livestock feed stores and funded producer cooperatives to make it easier for small and



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medium-sized producers to access agricultural and livestock products. In this way, they can supplement their animals' feed during lean periods. In addition, we ran training courses on fattening livestock for 25 women-only producer organisations. To provide them with opportunities and income, we linked them up with livestock markets and commercial agents in the region.

In 2019, at the market in Sirakorola alone, local livestock keepers were able to sell more than 330,000 animals, **more than three times as many as the previous year**. We hope that these sales will continue to grow in the coming years. By 2021, **we plan to build two more livestock markets. Our services could then benefit some 70,000 people**. This offers excellent perspectives for livestock keepers in the region.



80%
of income
in rural areas
comes from
livestock keeping



200,000
goats, sheep and
cattle vaccinated

330,000
animals sold
at the market
in Sirakorola

70,000
people reached
by 2021



Niger

Niger has a population of about 20 million people and more than 46 million livestock of various species. Nearly half of the population lives below the poverty line, resulting in the world's lowest Human Development Index (based on the 2019 ranking). More than four out of five Nigeriens earn their living from agriculture and livestock keeping in rural areas. Animals are therefore vital for the food and socio-economic security of millions of people.

However, livestock keepers face many difficulties in Niger. Inadequate veterinary care encourages the spread of disease. Repeated droughts, which are a consequence of climate change, have led to the reduction and degradation of soils, pastures and water points, which are nevertheless essential for agriculture and livestock keeping. Crises affecting food supply and pastoral activity have now become chronic. In addition, there is growing insecurity linked to terrorism, particularly in the border areas with north-eastern Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Mali.

Testimonial

Mariatou Adamou Hama 

Mariatou Adamou Hama (29 years old) is a young Tuareg veterinarian from Niger. In November 2019, after graduating and finding her first job, she was chosen to receive support from Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Belgium. In the summer of 2020, after attending our training course and receiving financial and material support, she will be able to open her veterinary practice in Balleyara, about a hundred kilometres from Niamey, the country's capital. She will lead a network of community animal health workers.

"I always knew I wanted to study veterinary medicine. My Tuareg family really loves animals. My parents are livestock keepers, as were my grandparents and great-grandparents before them. As we say in Niger, agriculture and livestock keeping are inherited. It's in our blood.

A veterinarian is the first line of defence when it comes to protecting human health. I saw how my parents struggled to access treatment for their animals. I thought that studying veterinary medicine would help me to help my family and, more generally, to help my country, because Niger is a country of livestock keepers.

What really pushed me to become a veterinarian was that I wanted to prove that women can do this kind of work. One day, I hope that there will be as many female veterinarians in Niger as there are male veterinarians.

If I wanted to set up business as a private veterinarian, I would have to pay for everything. It would have been impossible for me to find the money to pay for the land, the practice... I couldn't afford all that. Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Belgium is here to help me to turn my dream into a reality. I want to set up a practice which is worthy of its name, with a pharmacy, an operating theatre, a treatment room and a waiting room, just like the practices I've seen in Senegal, Mali and in documentaries."



46
million
livestock

26
early warning
structures
to prevent
the spread
of disease

14
mobile clinics



© Tim Dirven / VSF

Improving the lives of livestock keepers

Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Belgium has worked across Niger's vast territory for twenty years. **In 2019, our work improved the livelihoods of thousands of vulnerable livestock keepers and agro-pastoralists, the majority of whom are women.**

As ever, we are working hard to improve the living conditions of livestock keepers here. To keep their livestock healthy, we help **private veterinarians** to set up business in rural areas. We also provide the most vulnerable people with animals (goats, sheep and poultry) and help them to improve their livestock keeping techniques in order to improve their food security. We also set up **milk collection centres** to promote local milk and to make it easier to sell. At these centres, livestock keepers can access multiple services – loans, veterinary care and sales of animal feed – and attend training courses on hygiene and milk quality.

An important part of our work focuses on **preventing conflicts linked to natural resources**. Pastures and water points are the cause of many rivalries and conflicts, particularly between agricultural farmers and livestock keepers. These tensions are

exacerbated by climate change and insecurity. To resolve these issues, we have developed a system for collecting and sharing information about the availability of resources to help livestock keepers to manage their movements better.

Project in the spotlight 

One health

Tillabéri and Agadez, located respectively in south-western and northern Niger, are two regions which are particularly vulnerable to droughts and floods. **Environmental disturbances are known to encourage the spread of zoonotic diseases**, i.e. diseases that can be transmitted from animals to humans. Consequently, we have chosen to take action in the communities of Sakoira and Ingall, in partnership with Médecins du Monde.



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We have worked together for two years, combining our expertise to **prevent health risks**. Our approach involves training local stakeholders and improving access to healthcare, both for local populations and for their livestock. By pooling our resources, we have been able to expand our area of operations and contact some **90,000 people directly**, in order to offer them our services.



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Preventing diseases and their spread

To ensure the long-term future of our activities, we have trained local authorities in the prevention and management of zoonoses, diseases which can be transmitted from animals to humans. **In two years, we have set up 26 early warning structures to prevent the spread of disease**. These structures are responsible for reporting cases of disease within communities and their herds to the national health service, where specialists analyse the information which has been collected and take the necessary measures.

Our training courses were also aimed at medical and veterinary staff in both regions. **116 medical wor-**

kers and 41 animal health workers attended our courses. Under the supervision of a veterinarian, the latter now provide a community veterinary service to livestock keepers in Sakoira and Ingall. With their help, we have organised **campaigns to make livestock keepers aware of the close links between their health, the health of their animals and environmental crises**. These campaigns were an opportunity to emphasise basic hygiene measures and to provide information on the first symptoms of diseases.

More accessible care for livestock keepers and their herds

Nonetheless, our common objective was to contribute to improving health in the most remote areas. Staffed by teams of human and animal health workers, our fourteen mobile clinics travelled around in these two communities for two years to provide healthcare for livestock keepers and their animals. We also organised **39 joint vaccination sessions**. Livestock keepers were therefore vaccinated at the same



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time as their animals; this saved them and us considerable time and money. **Between 2017 and 2019, we treated or vaccinated more than 8,000 people and nearly 32,000 animals.**



39
joint
vaccination
sessions

8,000
people
and
32,000
animals
treated or
vaccinated



02.

The African Great Lakes

Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Belgium has been active in the African Great Lakes since 2001, when we first began our activities in Rwanda.

Once again, 2019 was synonymous with geopolitical tensions in the African Great Lakes. The situation has been worsening for several years now, particularly in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo. An estimated 340,000 Burundians have fled to neighbouring countries since 2015, while there are more than 5 million internally displaced persons in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In 2019, the region suffered several armed incidents, particularly in North and South Kivu. These two provinces are still in the grip of the Ebola virus and are controlled by more than 140 armed groups; they remain our most unstable areas of operation in Central Africa. Tensions between the countries in the region have also led to partial and total border closures, in particular Rwanda's borders with Uganda and Burundi.

Across the region, increased tensions have led to reduced trade and local pockets of food and economic insecurity. Episodes of drought and flooding, caused by climate change, are increasingly common and exacerbate the vulnerability of the local population. In December, heavy rains severely affected thousands of households in Rwanda and Burundi.

Although insecurity sometimes forces us to take measures to protect our staff, we continue to work closely with the local population and in their interest, as we always have done. Despite the difficulties, we are convinced that our activity is still vital for many vulnerable families. In 2019, nearly 57,000 families in the African Great Lakes benefited from our support, provided by means of ten projects.

At present we also work in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda and Tanzania. These countries share some of the lowest human development indexes in the world, along with real potential for livestock keeping.

Burundi

Burundi is the second most densely populated country in Africa. Two thirds of the population live below the poverty line, putting the country in the bottom five in the world ranking of living standards.

Agriculture and livestock keeping are the main livelihoods for 90% of Burundians. However, there are enormous challenges in terms of food and economic insecurity, particularly in rural areas. For the majority of farmers, production is more for consumption than sale but it is often not sufficient to feed the entire family. The most vulnerable, which means six out of ten people, own land which is not very fertile and which rarely exceeds half a hectare. They also own very few animals, with one or two goats at most.

Developing small livestock keeping

Of course, the Burundian government is aware of these problems. In recent years, the authorities have adopted various policies to boost the recovery of agricultural production and to combat food insecurity. Local and international NGOs are joining these efforts in an attempt to integrate vulnerable households into the local market and to involve them in agricultural development.

Since 2014, we have worked with our local partner, Union pour la Coopération au Développement – Appui au Monde Rural, to develop small livestock keeping in eight communities in the provinces of Ngozi and Kayanza, in the north of the country. The main objective of our activity is to improve the resilience of the most vulnerable people in Burundian society. To achieve this, we have developed a **holistic approach**, which has also inspired our approach in Rwanda (see article on p. 17).



© Gaël Vande Weghe / VSF

Project in the spotlight ↓

Microcredit: a springboard out of poverty

Microcredit is proving to be particularly effective when it comes to giving the most vulnerable livestock keepers the means to take their future into their own hands. Since 2016, we have made it easier for Burundian smallholders to access these loans. The objective is not only to improve their means of production in order to develop their livestock-keeping activities but also to diversify their sources of income. With the loans they receive, livestock keepers can begin different livestock keeping activities (keeping cattle, poultry or bees or fattening livestock).

Local banks are usually reluctant to grant loans to livestock keepers, whose activities are considered too risky. Our advocacy work enabled us to reach an agreement with a local microfinance organisation, UCODE-Microfinance. **In four years, this organisation has released more than 69 million Burundian francs (nearly 34,000 euros) in the form of loans to finance livestock-keeping activities.**

Solidarity groups to access loans

We start by bringing together groups of livestock keepers and training them in the livestock-keeping techniques of their choice. **To ensure the profitability of their future business, it is vital that they learn the required skills before starting out.** However, to do so, they also need funds. To encourage them to take out a loan, our facilitators explain the benefits and the process of applying for a loan. We then help each group of livestock keepers to put together a joint application.

Each group collates its members' applications for loans and then submits a single application to the microfinance organisation. This organisation assesses the application and loans an amount to each joint liability group, which then divides it among its members.

Investing for better development of livestock keeping

Since 2017, 25 groups (or a total of 188 livestock keepers) have submitted an application for a loan. In 2019 alone, 15 applications were filed to fund the activities of 119 livestock keepers. The members of each group of livestock keepers borrowed between 100,000 and 400,000 Burundian francs (about 50 to 200 euros). **Even the smallest loans can be enough to start a small livestock farm: 100,000 Burundian francs (50 euros) will buy two goats, a pig or ten chickens, for example.**

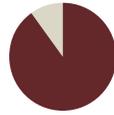


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In two years, half of the loans were used to finance goat-breeding activities. One in three livestock keepers chose to keep cattle and one in six chose to keep pigs. This has significantly improved the food security of the beneficiary families. The use of organic manure has seen bean and potato production double and maize production triple in four years. **The beneficiaries' share of income from livestock keeping has increased from 20% to 55% since 2017.**

This income is mainly used to improve their agricultural capacities (by purchasing or renting land) and to send their children to school.

Some livestock keepers also use their income to pay for healthcare, to improve their homes or to develop a small business. With one exception, all the groups have managed to meet the repayment deadlines. These results bode well for the future of these livestock keepers.



90%
of Burundians
live from
agriculture and
livestock keeping

50 euros
will buy



2
goats
or



1
pig
or



10
chickens



Rwanda

In Rwanda, poverty affects more than a third of the population, primarily in rural areas. Outside towns and cities, Rwandans earn 80% of their income from agricultural activities, despite low yields. The country's population density reduces usable land and has led to a deterioration in natural resources and declining soil fertility.

As a major source of manure, livestock keeping has always played an important role in the lives of rural Rwandan households. Not only does it improve crop yields, it also generates income which can be used to pay for school or medical expenses, to build up savings, to buy clothing or to improve housing. Animals kept as livestock also help to strengthen social bonds. However, the performance of livestock keeping activities is limited by the low level of education among agro-pastoralists and limited access to veterinary services.

Since 2001, we have worked in Rwanda's Southern Province, one of the poorest regions in the country. We work with our partners and local governmental bodies to improve access to animal care and renewable energy (biogas). We provide the most vulnerable families with goats to increase these families' resilience. By helping them obtain microcredit, we also offer them the opportunity to develop income-generating activities.

Testimonial
Félicien Mubirigi ↓



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Félicien Mubirigi (72 years old) and his wife Constance (68 years old) live in the village of Gasharu in southern Rwanda. Around their house, they own small plots of land on which they grow crops for food. Unable to produce enough to make a living, they have spent their lives working in other farmers' fields. At most, this difficult work earned them 600 Rwandan francs (0.60 euros) for 6 hours of labour. This is scarcely enough to buy a kilo of beans at the market.

In late July 2019, Félicien and Constance learnt that they would be given four goats. The couple were relieved to hear this good news; until then, they had been living hand to mouth, with no guaranteed income: "Over the last few years, we've found it increasingly difficult to find work. They said that we were too old. Farmers preferred to employ younger people who were able to work faster", Félicien explains.

Just like the 203 other families chosen in 2019, they have attended several training courses to learn about livestock keeping techniques, among other things. They also received materials with which to build a goat shelter.

On the day in mid-October when goats are being distributed, Félicien is very impatient. A huge change is coming, thanks to these animals: "These goats give me and my wife hope that we will be able to enjoy a quieter life as we get older. Soon, I hope that our harvests will be better and that we won't have to look for work elsewhere."



25%
increase
in maize and bean
harvests



**4 households
in 5
pay for their
health insurance**

Project in the spotlight ↓

A problem tackled on several fronts

Since 2017, our team has adopted a holistic approach to helping vulnerable families and it has had promising results. By strengthening the technical skills of livestock keepers, we aim to improve their food security. **Our approach focuses on material capital, in the form of animals and land on which to grow crops, and also on training for livestock keepers, solidarity and collective savings. A problem as complex as poverty must be tackled on several fronts.**



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Two generations, a single chain of solidarity

The principle is simple. Within a single village, we choose 50 families, after consultation with the local authorities. After assessing the situation of each family, **25 families are chosen to benefit immediately from our**

support; the other families are part of a “second generation” and will have to wait a year. These families include many widows and orphans who have a family to support.

For the first 25 households, we provide **material support**. We provide each household with four goats, a goat shelter and fodder crops to grow for food. We also give them all necessary materials to build a small vegetable garden which they can then fertilise with manure from their goats to grow vegetables. They also receive fruit trees and improved stoves to help to reduce their consumption of charcoal and wood.

Together, they take part in a **training course on keeping goats**, focusing on nutrition, habitat, reproduction, care for kids and prevention of the most common diseases. Our partners also offer other training courses on various subjects ranging from combining agriculture and livestock farming to hygiene, human health and family planning. We also encourage beneficiary families to start saving collectively to strengthen the community and to facilitate exchanges of money.



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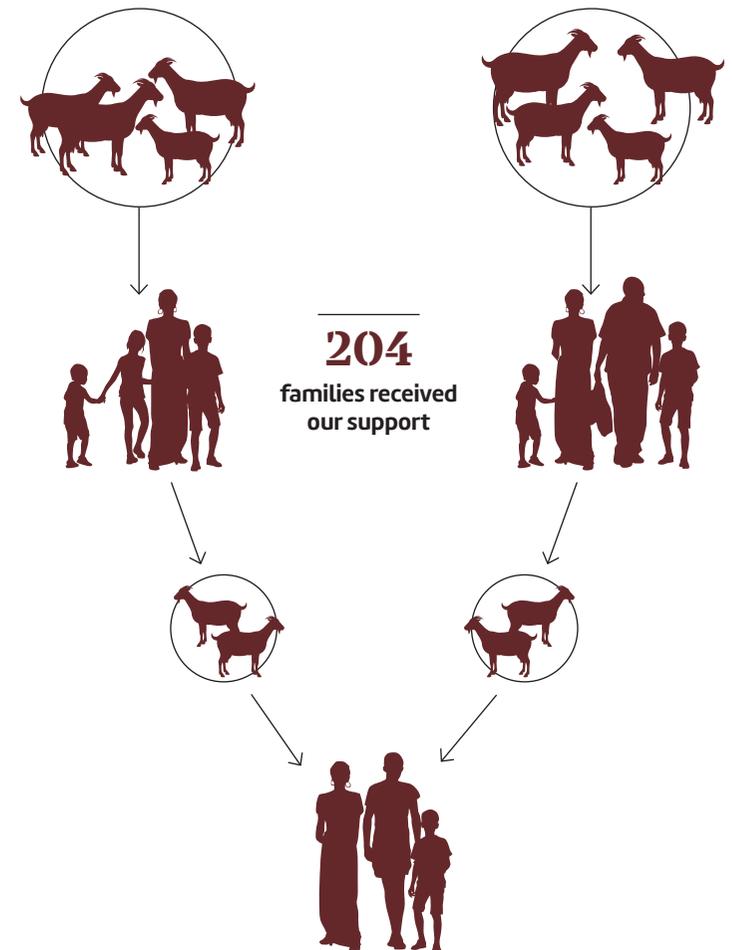
A snowball effect

At the outset, priority families agree to give back two goats when their first kids are born. These animals are given to a second-generation family, which will do the same a year later. Within each group, social cohesion encourages solidarity, trust and independence. In this way, **although our support is limited to a single group of 25 people, a chain of solidarity is created that benefits several “generations” of families.**

We already observed an improvement in the beneficiaries’ living conditions when the project was halfway through. In 2019, **204 families received support from us**. Every family will have to give two animals to another family by the end of 2020. By the end of the project in 2021, we expect to reach four times as many Rwandan households.

By providing goats and other support, we are helping to strengthen the food security of these families which leads to improvements in their health. In 2019, the maize and bean harvest increased by a quarter in comparison to 2017. Income from livestock keeping and other activities has enabled more than **four households in five to pay for their health insurance themselves** (compared

to two in five in 2017). So far, all the families who have received goats have honoured their commitment and given two kids to a neighbouring family.



Democratic Republic of Congo

Despite its wealth of natural resources and agricultural potential, the Democratic Republic of Congo faces significant food insecurity. Torn apart by armed conflict which has lasted for almost thirty years, many villages in the east of the country live in extreme poverty.

In South Kivu and Tanganyika, where we currently work, more than seven in ten people live below the poverty line. Most people depend on livestock keeping to provide for themselves. Livestock keeping is a vital source of income and protein and provides organic manure, which is required for agricultural activity. When properly practised, it can increase incomes and create jobs.

However, Congolese livestock keepers face many constraints. They are accustomed to working in isolation rather than joining forces to work together and their businesses are scarcely profitable. Without access to technical training and the means to buy nutritional supplements, their animals produce just enough to feed their families.

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For more profitable livestock keeping

Nevertheless, we are convinced that livestock keeping can contribute to the agricultural and socio-economic development of these two regions. With our local partner APDIK (Association Paysanne pour le Développement Intégré au Sud-Kivu), we provide livestock keepers with support to increase their productivity and to make it easier for them to market their products.

Having spent ten years tackling food insecurity through livestock keeping in North Kivu, we have worked in South Kivu since 2017. **Our objective is to strengthen the technical skills of livestock keepers in the region.**

Our training courses help them to better manage their livestock and to sell what they produce. With this in mind, we have supported dairy farmers in South Kivu and Tanganyika to increase their dairy production since 2019. To make it easier to sell their milk and derivative products, we encourage livestock keepers to work together in groups and put them in contact with collectors, processors and sellers. They all benefit from training provided by our local teams.



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Project in the spotlight ↓

Livestock keepers, key players in improving animal health

Livestock keeping can only be developed if animal health is optimal. Unfortunately, as in many of the regions where we operate, this is where the problem lies. That is why our activities always include work to improve animal health services.

Both in South Kivu and Tanganyika, livestock keepers do not have an efficient system to monitor animal health. Perennial insecurity and the poor state of the roads make the area difficult to access. This discourages qualified animal care staff from setting up business there and complicates the supply of veterinary products. **In the absence of professionals, livestock keepers take care of their animals as best they can, which poses risks to animal health and to that of humans and the environment.**

A service by livestock keepers, for livestock keepers

To promote animal health in the long term, we support private vets and encourage them to set up business in rural areas. Together, we help to make veterinary services more accessible to livestock keepers. Having begun in North Kivu, our local animal health network is now progressively expanding to the most remote areas of South Kivu and Tanganyika. This system relies both on private, professional vets and the livestock keepers themselves.

In 2019, we supported ten vets and veterinary technicians, enabling them to work in the best possible conditions. In addition to basic equipment (veterinary products and material), we helped them to access loans. This money provides them with working capital and can be used to buy a motorcycle or a bicycle with which to visit livestock keepers.

However, the area to be covered (which is more than six times the size of Belgium) is too large to meet the needs of all the livestock keepers. **To assist them, our vets trained 83 animal health workers** within local communities in basic care.

These livestock keepers are then responsible for the initial veterinary care of animals in surrounding villages and act as an intermediary between vets and other livestock keepers.



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Animal health care and zoonosis prevention

In 2019, our veterinarian network treated animals belonging to almost **10,500 livestock keepers** in South Kivu and Tanganyika, amounting to more than **22,000 cattle, goats, sheep, pigs, poultry and rabbits**.

Private vets are also involved in raising awareness among livestock keepers. Particular attention is paid to zoonotic diseases: the network monitors outbreaks of diseases such as Ebola and, in particular, promotes the pasteurisation of milk to limit the spread of tuberculosis. With the help of illustrated materials, they teach livestock keepers how to identify diseases in their animals. If symptoms are discovered, livestock keepers are encouraged to use the services of the animal health network. This strategy has been well received by livestock keepers and seems to be working, given that **the mortality rate of livestock is continuing to fall**.

In the two years during which this strategy has been implemented in South Kivu, mortality has decreased from 5% to 2.29%.

83
animal health workers were trained within local communities



22,000
cattle, goats, sheep, pigs, poultry and rabbits were treated

2,29%
Livestock mortality rate decreased from 5% to 2.29%

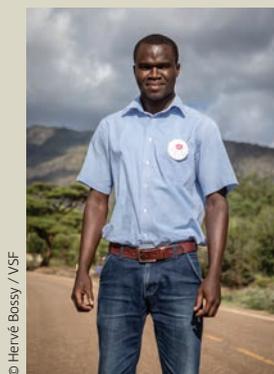


Uganda

Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Belgium has worked in the province of Karamoja in Uganda since 2006. Our work is focused on four areas: animal health, access to loans and income diversification, animal products and market access, and natural resource management and conflict reduction.

Located on the border with Kenya and South Sudan, Karamoja has a population of about 1.2 million people. Most people raise livestock semi-nomadically in combination with a small-scale agricultural activity. The province has nine districts and almost as many ethnic groups and clans. In neighbouring countries, other ethnic groups share the same culture and languages, such as the Turkana in Kenya.

Every year, many people fall victim to inter-ethnic cattle raids and thefts which are commonplace in the region. This age-old rivalry is exacerbated by the limited availability of pastures and water points. Its proximity to South Sudan, which has been at war for more than two decades, has led to a proliferation of weapons in Karamoja and complicates the authorities' efforts to reduce conflict and bring peace to the region.



Testimonial

Isaac Sagal



For the past two years, Isaac Sagal (29 years old) has worked for Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Belgium as a Livestock Development Officer in Uganda. Based in Moroto, in the north-east of the country, his job involves monitoring our activities to improve livestock keeping techniques and animal health. He also works closely with our network of 181 Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) to raise awareness. This is a vital role which exists in all our areas of operation.

"I support our network of animal health workers and I monitor the monthly data of their veterinary practices. The aim is to monitor the profitability of the practices so that I can provide CAHWs with feedback and advice on how to make improvements, if necessary. By looking at changes to their stock of drugs and medication, their turnover, their loans and their expenditure, I can observe annual trends, whether positive or negative, and I can advise CAHWs accordingly.

I also monitor the development of our beneficiaries' goats. We use a participatory technique for this, which involves the livestock keeper. This helps me to understand whether there are any issues with the animals or the livestock keeper's technique, so that I can provide appropriate advice. It also provides us with a better idea of the goats' impact on their household. We can then use this information to improve the project and to better meet the beneficiaries' needs.

Livestock keeping techniques are not usually an issue because our beneficiaries come from communities of livestock keepers. Animal diseases tend to be problematic. Herds belonging to different livestock keepers share grasslands and water points here and this encourages the spread of disease. For example, in 2019, two outbreaks of disease affected goats and sheep. Fortunately, we had raised awareness among the local population of the importance of vaccinations and we had distributed vaccination schedules for the major diseases. To ensure that veterinary care is more widely available, we also adopted a "mutual benefit" approach: the livestock keeper pays 50% of the costs for vaccinations or treatment and we pay the other half. By combining this approach with our work to raise awareness, we were able to control the outbreaks."

Moreover, the region's abundant mineral resources (including gold and marble, among other things) now exposes livestock keepers to a new kind of conflict over mining rights, land rights and access to grazing resources. In these circumstances, collaboration between civil society, local government bodies and security agencies is essential for long-lasting peace.

The pasture committees are also tasked with reducing conflicts and helping livestock keepers to recover their stolen livestock. To accommodate everyone's interests, we provide committee members with training courses on group dynamics and teach them business and negotiation techniques.

Raising awareness and encouraging dialogue

We also help them to map the use of resources and land. These maps are shared with the various communities of livestock keepers and help to ensure better pasture management and to avoid the accumulation of livestock around large reservoirs during the rainy season. **By using resources responsibly during this period, livestock keepers' animals can continue to benefit from them during the dry season.**

To mitigate conflicts and ensure peaceful coexistence among the various ethnic groups in the region, we ask these communities to sign agreements on shared resources during inter-community dialogue sessions.



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Project in the spotlight 

Natural resources, a central issue in conflicts

One way to avoid conflict is to protect natural resources and increase their availability. **The more pasture and water points there are, the less likely it is that they will cause conflict.** That is why we are reconditioning strategic water points for human and animal consumption. We are drilling wells and installing drinking troughs for livestock and rainwater storage tanks for people.

To ensure the long-term future of our activities, we are involving local government bodies and village chiefs in resource management. Together, we set up **water and pasture management committees. These committees bring together members of different communities to guarantee their participation and ensure that the interests of each community are represented.** While some focus on maintaining water points and ensuring that hygiene measures are observed, others establish a grazing schedule.



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Fostering peace among livestock keepers

In 2019, our partners' work led to **the signing of four peace agreements on different corridors of pasture between local ethnic groups. These agreements give some 140,000 animals access to more water points and pastures.** We have also reconditioned **31 water points**, which have benefited **9,600 people and 6,400 animals.**

Our ten management committees have also helped to round up twenty herds which had become separated as a result of thefts and raids. Because of their work in raising awareness of the dangers of overgrazing, grass is now growing again around the Kobebe dam to the delight of livestock keepers and their herds; they will soon be able to access this area, in accordance with the grazing schedule.



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4

peace agreements were signed between local ethnic groups

31

water points were reconditioned

140,000

animals were given access to more water points and pastures

Tanzania

Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Belgium has worked in Tanzania since 2015, alongside its local partners Ujamaa Community Resource Team and Heifer Tanzania. Our activities are focused on the north of the country, in the districts of Longido, Simanjiro, Karatu and Mbulu, populated by Masai and Datoga communities of livestock keepers.



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Protecting a way of life

These tribes of livestock keepers, who depend on the land and its natural resources to graze their animals and continue their traditional way of life, are now in danger of losing everything. Although they have always been communal property, pastures are being requisitioned or privatised at the expense of indigenous peoples. Every day, their land is being transformed into tourist parks, nature reserves and agricultural fields, where their herds are no longer welcome.

Climate change, including repeated droughts, also contributes to the deterioration of natural resources and weakens livestock. **Although livestock numbers are not increasing and, indeed, are in slight decline due to disease and a lack of water and pasture, the population is increasing, increasing the pressure on the land.**

Given these circumstances, we have established a network of animal health workers to care for the animals of livestock keepers in the region. To complement their traditional knowledge, we have also taught them improved livestock-keeping techniques.

We have introduced poultry farming in Masai communities. Practised primarily by women, this helps to diversify their income and improve the whole family's diet.

A central part of our work in Tanzania also involves helping nomadic livestock keepers and hunter-gatherers to **protect their ancestral lands**. Although they don't own them, **it is vital for them to be able to access them safely**. We also try to help them manage these lands better so that they can benefit from all the resources they have to offer.

Project in the spotlight ↓

Respect for the rights of pastoral communities

To provide for themselves, Masai livestock keepers need safe access to different types of land. The pastures where cattle graze during the dry season are not the same as those in the rainy season and cows do not eat the same grass as calves. In addition to pastures, other land is reserved for crops, forests and housing. **This allocation of land, traditionally agreed between neighbouring communities, is increasingly threatened by tourism and agricultural projects.** It is particularly difficult to enforce land use because the land is not clearly marked or mapped and does not officially belong to the communities which occupy it.

In Tanzania, the only way for a community to protect its land is to obtain a Certificate of Customary



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Right of Occupancy (CCRO). This is a long and expensive process; most rural communities cannot embark upon this process, given that the majority of people in these communities are illiterate. For this reason, we decided, with UCRT, to help villages of livestock keepers to obtain official certificates of occupation for their land.

An administrative and legal battle

To begin with, we met with local people to explain the existence of laws which enable them to obtain certificates of occupation for their land. We explained the steps required to obtain these certificates, along with the roles and responsibilities involved. Despite these restrictions, many villages agreed to work with us, embarking on an administrative and legal battle to secure their livelihoods.

We brought each village community together to map the land. In this way, the villagers were able to decide together on the use and the boundaries of each piece of land. Once these decisions are approved by the Ministry of Land, **the land is protected for a period of ten years, until a possible review of the land use plan.**



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At the same time, each village must demarcate the land in question using markers and adopt a municipal by-law which specifies the penalties imposed upon violation of the uses prescribed by law. Only after these various steps have been taken can the community apply for a certificate, which will have to be approved by the village before it can be approved at district level.

The village council and pasture committee oversee the grazing schedule and ensure that the boundaries between different lands are observed. They are also responsible for letting communities know about land use plans which will affect them.

Victory for 23 villages

In almost five years, we have helped 100,000 villagers to learn more about land rights in northern Tanzania. We have also provided training and mentoring on land and natural resource management for village councils and traditional chiefs (men and women) in 28 villages. These villages now have a land use plan for their land and **23 have already obtained a certificate for their community grassland areas.**



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Because of these new regulations, pastoralists can use their land more sustainably. They observe the grazing schedule and land occupation certificates as they move their herds. **Because the villages have clearer boundaries, livestock keepers no longer cross these boundaries without permission and housing and crops no longer encroach on pastures. Consequently, there are far fewer conflicts between neighbouring villages.**

In 2019 alone, we established the boundaries of community grasslands in twelve villages and **we secured 553,186 hectares of land**, for which we have obtained certificates of occupancy. We set up nine inter-village committees, which regulate the flow of livestock on pasture beyond the borders.

Today, this project is coming to an end and we are proud of the results which have been achieved. We are now looking for new opportunities to continue these activities and to enable other Tanzanian communities to benefit.



23

villages have obtained a certificate for their community grassland areas

553,186

secured hectares of land



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03.

Belgium

Raising awareness among students...

From our headquarters in Brussels, we are working to establish a legal framework which will support families of livestock keepers, particularly in Africa. But in addition to our political work, we also want to make Belgian citizens and consumers more aware of the impact of their choices on the rest of the world. That is why, in addition to our advocacy, we have organised educational events on global citizenship and solidarity for veterinary and agronomy students for the last ten years.

The study day we organised for French-speaking students in medicine, veterinary medicine and agronomy was certainly a key event for us in 2019. The theme of the day was One Health, or the health of humans, animals and the environment in the light of climate change. This subject has never been more relevant.

Students were invited to consider a key question: how can the challenges of climate change contribute to greater interdisciplinarity in health?

Project in the spotlight ↓

One world, one health

Over the last few years, interest in the **One Health** approach has grown in higher education institutions, particularly in the fields of agronomy, veterinary medicine and human medicine. And for good reason: this concept, which emphasises the **close relationship between animal health, human health and ecosystem health** is now an essential part of any curriculum which focuses on health or the environment. It advocates a strategy

involving multiple sectors, disciplines and actors, which will be essential in the future to guarantee healthy populations and a healthy environment.

In this regard, **universities and colleges play a key role in training the next generation of agronomists, veterinarians and doctors** who will have to deal with global health challenges during their careers. With this in mind, we developed this study day for students in these different fields. One of the objectives was to highlight the need for collaboration to address health issues in the light of climate change.

A successful first edition

In October, no fewer than 250 students travelled from across Wallonia to attend the event. To raise awareness, we chose a panel of Belgian and African speakers and worked with them to provide varied

and wide-ranging content on the different facets of this complex subject.

Topics included the One Health and EcoHealth concepts and case studies in the field. Interactive activities and round tables were also organised to encourage students to reflect together on the prospects of interdisciplinarity in their current studies and their future careers.

As this constructive day came to a close, **students were encouraged to learn more about other disciplines so**

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as to develop a better understanding of others' contributions and to provide a new perspective on their experiences. We hope that this event will have sown the seeds to inspire these students to work together in the future as they address the health issues related to climate change.



Would you like to find out more about how teachers, students and NGOs view the One Health concept? Visit our site or our DZG-VSF Belgium channel on YouTube to find out what they have to say (only in French).

... and veterinarians

Part of our work to raise awareness in Belgium is aimed at veterinarians. This profession has a close connection to our organisation because of our work and our history. **Belgian veterinarians are passionate about animal health and are particularly conscious of the difficulties facing their colleagues and livestock keepers in Africa.** They can also raise awareness among their colleagues and the general public in Belgium through their practice. This is why we regularly give a few veterinarians the opportunity to experience our NGO's activities in Africa for themselves.



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Every two years, we launch a call for applications for Belgian veterinarians. Our main prerequisite: applicants must be ready to take an active role in our work for at least one year after their trip. The chosen veterinarians then become "ambassadors" of our cause and agree to represent our NGO. They organise activities to improve our visibility in Belgium and share information with various audiences about the lives of livestock keepers and veterinarians in Africa and the solutions we provide.



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This method, which was first adopted in 2014, has since been emulated: **in six years, we have shared the everyday realities of our operations with ten veterinarians, who have worked to help African livestock keepers and their herds.**

Together they have organised dozens of activities to provide information, to raise awareness and even to fundraise for our work. We and these veterinarians have found these experiences to be both personally and professionally fulfilling.

Project in the spotlight 

A first-hand look at livestock keeping in Rwanda

In 2019, we chose another two veterinarians to join our team. In September, Victoria Tüllmann and Jean-Luc Arendt travelled with us to Rwanda's Southern Province. On arrival, our team and our local partners gave them a first-hand look at our work to support livestock keeping activities.

They spent a day with their fellow veterinarians, working in their practice and in rural areas and visiting livestock markets, biogas plants, vegetable gardens, goat farms and an apiary. They were able to enjoy long conversations with the Rwandan veterinarians, livestock keepers and farmers who have benefited from our work. **This was a unique opportunity to develop a better understanding of rural life in these hilly landscapes and the difference that a few goats, a beehive or a bio-digester can make to the lives of the people who live there.** It certainly provided them with plenty of material when it came to explaining the importance of our work on their return to Belgium!

This is exactly what they began to do as soon as they returned home, particularly by organising conferences at veterinary trade shows in Flanders and Wallonia and by speaking with various Rotary clubs. These initiatives to raise awareness have already helped to fundraise several thousand euros for our projects.



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They support us

We carried out our activities in 2019 with the support of many donors. In particular, we worked with:

- 11.11.11
- Acting for Life
- CNCDC-11.11.11
- DGD – Belgian development cooperation
- DFID – British development cooperation
- Enabel
- European Union
- Flemish development cooperation
- Italian development cooperation
- International Fund for Agricultural Development
- International Organization for Migration
- Province of East Flanders
- Province of Flemish Brabant
- SDC – Swiss development cooperation
- UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- USAID – American development cooperation
- Wallonie-Bruxelles International
- WeHubit
- World Bank
- World Food Programme

Contact us



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Headquarters

Avenue des Arts 7-8,
1210 Brussels, Belgium
T : +32 2 539 09 89
E : info@vsf-belgium.org

Regional Coordination West Africa

Badalabougou Sema Gesco,
Rue 139, porte 328,
BP E 1992 Bamako, Mali
T : +223 20 23 33 94
E : g.vias@vsf-belgium.org

Regional Coordination African Great Lakes

Sainte Famille Hotels Building,
Plot Number 1260,
Nyarugenge District,
Kigali City, Rwanda
T : +250 787 77 33 74
E : d.ripoche@vsf-belgium.org

DONATE

On our bank account
BE73 7326 1900 6460 (CREGBEBB)

or online
www.vsf-belgium.org

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