

SOLIDAGRO

Annual report 2024

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With our partner Dwagulu Dekkente during a co-working day at Pomona (Melsele, Belgium). Photo by Sverre Pots from Solidagro.



Foreword

Dear partner and sympathiser,

Peace. In 2024, it seemed increasingly distant. Yet peace is a basic condition for building just societies and ecological resilience together, globally. The war rhetoric seems to find billions of budgets for renewed defense without much effort. At the same time, social programs face continuous cuts...

2024 was also an election year in Belgium. The new coalition agreement contains a number of austerity measures that directly affect Solidagro and our partners. For example, the Belgian government wants to reduce the tax reduction for donations from 45% to 30%. While this is only a small drop in the ocean of the Belgian budget, it is a hard blow to numerous international solidarity initiatives.

According to the latest budget note, the budget for international cooperation would be reduced by as much as 25%, though the specifics remain unclear. What is clear, however, is that this is a short-sighted decision, with concrete consequences on the ground as well as for Belgium's international position. International cooperation is not a matter of charity, but of justice.

Belgium's expenditure on international solidarity is only 0.4% of its Gross National Product. Past promises were to increase this to 0.7%. We ask for at least 0.4% to continue to be provided so that we can continue to provide the necessary support to agroecological initiatives that contribute to a just food system.

Peace. For years, Solidagro has supported partners Bisan and Palestinian Agroecological Forum (PAF) in the West Bank, although their work has been greatly hampered by intimidation from Israeli occupiers. To make their work safe, first and foremost we demand an immediate ceasefire across Palestine. In addition, Belgium and the European Union must use their influence to end Israel's years of violations of international law. I warmly invite you to read our position on this on p. 17.








Despite the difficult context, we are pushing for a better food system, through knowledgeable local partners. A system that does not destroy the environment, respects farmers' rights and allows everyone to eat healthily. In this annual report, we show the main results we have achieved with our partners, staff and supporters.

For 2025, my main wish is a return to a lasting peace and a recognition of the importance of international cooperation from our government. Though your recognition is also worth so much to us. To everyone who contributed his/her/their bit to our work over the past year, a heartfelt thank you!

Paul Verbeke



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Solidagro visits its partner Agrecol Andes in Totorá, Bolivia. Agrecol Andes supports farmers through investments, access to markets and political advocacy. © Agrecol Andes

What does Solidagro do?

We go all out for citizens and farmers to stand up for the right to food and water through sustainable, ecological agriculture. In the chain from production to consumption, we convince organisations, farmers and citizens in Belgium and six partner countries to switch to agroecology. In partnership, we strengthen movements standing up for agroecology and plead with governments to adopt policies that protect food sovereignty and promote agroecology.

Our projects

Together with farmers' organisations, local partners and communities living off agriculture, we work in our partner countries to find concrete solutions through:

- Supporting initiatives such as construction of vegetable gardens, wells, irrigation systems, seed banks, introduction of adapted crops;
- Supporting regional and national networks that strengthen support for an agroecological food system among farmers, citizens and policymakers;
- Encouraging the formation of farmers' organizations so that farmers are stronger to claim their rights and overcome shared challenges, e.g. by buying materials together (seeds, fertilisers, machinery) or selling the harvest;
- Building demonstration farms where farmers and organizations receive training and support around fertilisation, vegetable growing, healthy food or running a business or cooperative.

In Belgium, too, we are taking steps towards more agroecology, although this involves citizens rather than farmers directly. We bring the two together in the Landbouwbrigades (translated: agriculture brigades). At the same time, we share our international approach with the Belgian networks Voedsel Anders and Coalition Against Hunger. In this way, we show that many challenges and solutions within agriculture are globally connected.

Integrity

Solidagro is committed to integrity through its code of conduct which all domestic and foreign employees, volunteers and partners have signed. You can read this code of conduct at the bottom of www.solidagro.be. In the team, an integrity officer (Tim de Roeck), integrity adviser (Elisa Tondeleir) and two complaints managers (Paul Verbeke and Birgit De Clerck) are committed to a healthy and transparent organisation.

No complaints have been submitted to Solidagro's integrity hotline in 2024. You can file a complaint at www.solidagro.be/en/registration-form-for-a-complaint.

Note

In this report we use the term "farmer" to refer to workers of all genders in agricultural production.

Our partner countries



The four domains of agroecology

Agroecology remains complex and incomprehensible for many. For Solidagro, agroecology is the movement, practice and science of how agriculture and the environment can reinforce each other in a sustainable way. It spans four domains:

1. Ecology



AE **avoids** using and dependence on **agricultural chemicals**



AE **nurtures** biodiversity and soil



El strengthens the **correlation** between humans, animals and plants



AE is committed to **water management** by better integrating water put and save

2. Economy



By focusing on **diversified** crops instead of monocultures, the risk of losing income due to and crop failure.



Farmers **control their own resources**. They no longer have to borrow from multinationals for their seeds, manure and other investments



AE **strengthens the local market**. Agricultural production is not destined for export.



AE demands **fair wages for farmers**, giving them financial resilience to make their businesses more sustainable

3. Politics



AE wants **control of seeds and land** in the hands of farmers farmers and citizens



AE needs **political support** and **investment**



AE encourages **farmers** to make their **voices heard** by local authorities

4. Society



Society is involved in agriculture. People know **where their food comes from**.



AE encourages exchanges between farmers to **share knowledge**



EA encourages **diversity** and **solidarity** between population groups and empowers women and young people

Our year of policy work

What a year! With more than 130,000 citizens and 139 organisations advocating for European seed legislation that lays the foundation for a truly sustainable and resilient food system. However, the elections brought challenges. Because how do you influence policy when no government has yet been formed? At European level, influencing policy proved to be a matter of long breath and perseverance.

In the autumn, we did the Life Without Taste campaign with several partners. In doing so, we drew the attention of policy-makers, among others, to the importance of seed biodiversity and the rights of farmers to harvest, use, share and sell their own seeds. Our call for support was heard and acknowledged: on the 23rd September and 12th December we were invited to the Agency for Agriculture and Sea Fisheries to share our recommendations. In doing so, we reiterated the importance of and support for agroecology.

In the policy note on agriculture and horticulture 2024-2029, Jo Brouns, Flemish minister of Environment and Agriculture, already underlines the crucial importance of local varieties. Yet we remain alert and critical, as we expect final legislation only in 2025 after many negotiations. To reinforce our vision, we sent an open letter to both Jo Brouns and former Federal Agriculture Minister David Clarinval.

Flemish elections

Following the 11 outlines for an agroecological policy, Voedsel Anders analysed the Flemish coalition agreement 2024-2029. Remarkably, Flanders will finally work on a long-term vision for agriculture, within its ecological boundaries.

Such a vision is certainly not premature. As recently as July 2024, the European Commission took Flanders to the European Court of Justice for not taking sufficient measures to tackle nitrate pollution. Putting the problems further ahead is no longer an option. It is time to tackle them!



The Flemish coalition 2024-2029 stipulates that Flanders will finally work on a long-term vision for agriculture within its ecological limits. In the photo: the Flemish government Diependaele I. Source: Vlaanderen.be



The agroecological network Voedsel Anders collaborates with Jo Brouns, Flemish Minister of Agriculture. In his new policy document, he emphasizes the importance of local varieties. Image from 2022 by © Always Hungry

Strong coalitions and constructive collaborations will be essential in the coming years, so that agroecological pioneers have a full voice in shaping a strong Flemish agricultural vision.

Outlook

In the coming year, we will put our shoulders to the wheel in preparing for the European Union's new common agricultural policy, which will take effect in 2027. We advocate an agricultural policy anchored in an international and agroecological perspective. Based on the principle 'Act local, think global', we will strengthen our European policy work with thematic exchanges between our international partners.



TO BE PROUD OF

513 citizens signed the European petition for a seed law that respects farmers' rights and biodiversity through the Life Without Taste campaign

Decolonisation: a continuing work-in-progress

In 2024, the entire international team took renewed steps to strengthen support for decolonisation. We did so by making a full commitment to strengthening equal partnerships – an enduring challenge within the international solidarity sector. But what is that, equal partnership? We put our heads together and came up with six core values for sustainable cooperation with partner organisations. From these values, we make an action plan for the future.

Decolonisation challenges the ways in which colonisation by Western countries (16th–20th centuries) continues to shape our thinking, our economy, and the power relations between countries and territories today. Even now, for example, high-income countries often continue to exploit the resources of low-income countries. For Solidagro, an important part of our decolonisation process is strengthening the culture of partnership, with equality as the guiding principle. Because real change starts with how we work together. We are building that culture based on six core values that guide our relationships and the way we work.



OWNERSHIP

An equal partnership starts with the realisation that each organisation steers its own course. This means respect and understanding of each other's autonomy: each partner determines its own mission, vision, operation and objectives.



EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment is a process of awareness and recognition. It starts from the idea that all forms of knowledge and experience are valuable. By recognizing that richness, we can achieve stronger and more supported goals together.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

A fair partnership demands that we do not look away from inequality. It is crucial to (re)acknowledge and actively address historical and current power relations – often rooted in colonialism, capitalism and imperialism.



PARTICIPATION

True participation is about co-creation: working together on a shared agenda. This will only succeed if we name and address unequal power relations.



RESPECT AND TRUST

Respect and trust are inseparable. Respect for everyone's perspective, knowledge and experience forms the basis. Trust grows when people feel they are treated fairly, their voices are heard and there is openness in cooperation.



TRANSPARENCY

Transparency is about communicating clearly, honestly and understandably – without overwhelming anyone with information. Important information is shared with respect for confidentiality. This is how we build openness and mutual understanding.

Outlook

In 2025, we will launch a conversation with our partners: what does equal partnership mean to them? What role do they see for Solidagro? What are we still missing? These will be important – and sometimes confrontational – conversations, but they are necessary. Fortunately, we can continue to build on the foundation laid in recent years.

INTERESTING LEARNING TIPS

Podcast: The Power Shift: Decolonising Development – The DEV HUB

Film: Soundtrack to a Coup d'Etat – Johan Grimonprez

Book: Africa is not a country – Dipo Faloyin

Belgium

Just like our partner countries, Belgium plays a role in the change towards a sustainable food system. There is work to be done and we are rolling up our sleeves! We stand up for farmers and citizens with actions such as February without Supermarket, campaigns on biodiversity and various youth activities.

In early 2024, farmers and their supporters marched en masse to Brussels to protest decades of policies that have promoted economies of scale, free trade, and high-tech “science fiction” as solutions to the challenges in agriculture. Solidagro believes that a shift toward an agroecological food system is not only necessary, but also entirely achievable.

The protests showed that the current policy is in need of a change of direction. The activists’ demands: more efforts to enforce fair prices for agricultural products and a fair distribution of European support to enable a sustainable food system. We supported their demands and published an open letter to counter the polarisation between nature and agriculture.



Peasant protest on 1st of February 2024. © Brieuc Van Elst

Short chain, big impact

To support farmers, we participated in February without Supermarket. For a month, we at Solidagro bought our food directly from farmers and producers as much as possible and called on you to join in. When farmers sell through the short chain – skipping as many possible intermediate links to the consumer – they can determine their supply and prices themselves, independently of supermarket chains, for example. After all, those will run with a lot of profits. The farmers deserve a fair wage!

For consumers, the short chain has more than just ethical benefits. You buy fresh, seasonal produce with a lower carbon footprint. Our own items are also organic, therefore healthier. You also know more about the origin of your food through the short chain because of the more direct link with the people behind it.



As part of the action, we did a local lunch with the different organisations in our building and a workshop with a cooperation of local producers named ‘Smaak van Waas’, during which we baked our own spelt bread using local spelt. Afterwards, we enjoyed homemade sandwiches with delicious local produce.

Agroecology for young people

In March, during the Inspiration Day with UGent and HOGENT, some 100 biotechnology and engineering students got to work around agroecology. In groups, they worked out creative ideas to enable the transition to agroecology within each link of the food chain. A few months later, at the Odisee Hogeschool in Sint-Niklaas, we welcomed American agroecologist Mark Shepard. His lecture on sustainable agriculture and water management provided valuable insights and motivated students to think outside the boundaries of traditional agricultural models.

In addition, we reached young people beyond the students from agricultural colleges. With Picknick Plein Public – a sustainable lunch for third-grade secondary school students – and exchanges between young people from Sint-Niklaas and Tambacounda (Senegal), we involved young people in the agroecological movement.

By actively involving young people and letting them think about solutions, we invest in a new generation that understands and promotes the importance of sustainable agriculture.



Inspiration day with HOGENT and UGent, 2024 © Tim Buhck.

Life Without Taste

With the Life Without Taste campaign, we showed the importance of new European seed legislation. This could ensure that large companies (agribusiness) gain more control over seeds, leading to less variety in crops. However, greater biodiversity is needed for a strong food system. Only crops and varieties that can evolve locally over generations are strong enough to survive extreme weather and disease. These two problems will become more and more frequent due to climate change. The campaign also explored how our international partners address the issue of seed sovereignty.

We called for signing a petition to urge policymakers to review the new law and protect biodiversity. As of January 2025, 178,500 Europeans had already signed this petition. The Peasant Action Brigades also got to work around seeds. During their co-working days, they talked to farmers about the role of seeds in their daily work.

Supporting the agroecological movement

Besides our focus on young people and the seed campaign, we put a lot of effort into Voedsel Anders and The Peasant Action Brigades. Voedsel Anders is the Flemish network for agroecology, made up of 30 member organisations, including Solidagro. In 2024, we helped the network organize the festivals Kiemkracht and Food.Film.Fest.



Every year we organise Kiemkracht, the festival for agroecology in Flanders. This year we celebrated it from 7th to 9th March at the Vooruit in Ghent.

We also continue to build on De Landbouwbrigades, our initiative with partners Wervel and FIAN Belgium to bring farmers and citizens together. Through 22 co-working days and actions throughout Flanders, we support agroecological farmers.

Together, we increase the agroecological movement and its influence on citizens, farmers and politicians. Until everyone is with us!



Working day of De Landbouwbrigades at Oogstgoed Gent-Brugge

“Weeding chicory, a picnic in the sun and learning about forgotten vegetables while having fun: the cooperation day at the organic farm Goedinge was an inspiring day full of hands in the soil, new insights and nice encounters. I will definitely be back!”

Ruben Van Daele,
participant of De Landbouwbrigades

Outlook

In early 2025, our sector was hit hard. The governmental coalition agreement revealed that less money will go to international solidarity. One of the measures is that the tax deduction for donations will be reduced from 45% to 30%. A cold calculation with far-reaching consequences for organisations that make a difference every day and for more than a million Belgians who make a commitment by supporting charities.

Together with our umbrella organisation for international solidarity, 11.11.11, we have already taken to the streets to urge politicians to recognise the importance of our work. Belgium is not an island — no matter how small, we have a role to play in the world!



TO BE PROUD OF

650 young people came to our activities

300 screenings of films on agroecology went on during Food.Film.Fest.

Bolivia

In 2024, Bolivia's social movements were making great strides. Together with our local partners, they campaigned for a more sustainable food system. Large-scale forest fires, which even forced schools to close due to noxious smoke, created strong unity among civil society and a massive call for change.

The Bolivian Agroecological Movement (MAB) joined forces with strong networks and presented an ambitious roadmap for increased agroecological investments to the president. This led to an invitation to the Ministry of Agriculture, where the MAB is now collaborating on the National Strategy for Agroecology (ENA), with support from German Development Cooperation (GIZ). An important step towards a sustainable future!

“By participating in the National Strategy, we can clearly position ourselves as producers and sellers of healthy food”

Guadalupe Sermenio,
producer of the collective Circuito Corto

What is really on our plates?

We supported our Bolivian partners in their campaign “Get the poison off your plate, eat healthy food!”. This received plenty of attention from the media in Cochabamba and the national media in La Paz. The trigger was the research carried out by partner Agrecol Andes, which showed that there is an alarming amount of pesticides in foods Bolivians eat every day, such as tomato, lettuce, celery, potato, maize and wheat. During the campaign, the partners informed consumers about healthier, agroecological alternatives. The campaign was a great success and caught national media attention.

Young people make themselves heard

With support from partner Gaia Pacha, more than 20 youth organisations joined forces in Juventud Consciente (‘conscious youth’). This dynamic network presented a powerful manifesto to the Cochabamba government, with clear demands for food security, water security and greater youth participation. Their energy and cooperation are growing and the network is rapidly expanding to the national level.

Pojo provides water after 15-year drought

With support from Solidagro, Fonds Elisabeth & Amelie and Agrecol Andes, the citizens of Rodeo Adentro in Pojo constructed a water system. This gave 35 families, the health centre and the school – with pupils from six surrounding villages – access to clean water, for which for the past 15 years they had depended on the municipality, which brought water by truck. The village also uses the water to irrigate vegetable gardens.



Solidagro visits an Agrecol Andes project in Totora. Thanks to water storage and an irrigation system, farmers are better able to withstand drought. © Agrecol Andes.

“To access the water, we had to build 7 kilometres of pipe. We all contributed: the government of Pojo, the community and Agrecol Andes,” said Cesar Coria, mayor of Pojo. He further approved a law to protect the areas where water is collected, for example through forest agriculture.

After the partners got laws passed at the municipal level in Pojo, there was a snowball effect. Regional policies also came in, covering 13 municipalities in the Cono Sur region. The local work of Solidagro and partners is now clearly starting to make an impact on a larger scale.

Bolivia is burning, what do we do?

Over the past decade, Bolivia has passed a disastrous package of laws promoting deforestation. Chief among them is the dubious Law 741, which allows burning of land up to 20 hectares. By 2024 alone, the consequences have been devastating: 4 million hectares of forest and pastures have been burned, along with more than 1 million wild animals, several indigenous communities have been affected and air pollution is affecting public health across Bolivia. Schools had to close regularly due to the smoke pollution.

Outlook

National elections will take place in Bolivia in August 2025. In the run-up, a fierce power struggle rages between current president Luis Arce and former peasant leader and president Evo Morales of the same party, Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS). The struggle is causing major divisions and conflicts, including in the working areas of the partners. We expect great challenges, but perhaps also opportunities to get agroecology on the agenda of/with the politicians.



TO BE PROUD OF

35 media outlets announced the ‘Get poison off your plate, eat healthy food!’ campaign

1500 citizens visited the agroecological market during the campaign

Burkina Faso

For ten years, the people of Burkina Faso have been suffering from conflicts between armed groups and government and international forces. Today, more than 2 million people are internally displaced. In this context, agroecology offers a future perspective for those who have to leave their homes. Our partners support small-scale organic farming as a sustainable solution. Solidagro does not work in conflict zones and does not provide humanitarian aid. Most of the farmers we work with are not directly affected by the violence.

The refugee crisis is leaving deep scars. In the municipalities of Zabré, Zoaga, and Zonsé alone, where our partner PAG-LA-YIRI operates, 4,000 internally displaced persons have arrived. PAG-LA-YIRI, a network of rural women, has worked with local authorities to identify needs and help families leave. The new arrivals have been integrated into agricultural cooperatives, given access to agroecological knowledge, and received training in leadership and communication. The partner APEDR (Association pour la Protection de l'Environnement et du Développement Rural) has also offered prospects: more than 100 displaced persons have been able to work on an agroecological site where they grow food for their own consumption and for the market.

Engagement and participation

In all villages in the municipalities concerned (Nandiala, Yako, Zabré, and Mogtédó), more than 200 local organizations and groups of farmers joined forces to raise awareness of agroecology.

Their massive participation in events such as World Food Day in Yako, the seed fair in Nandiala, the agroecological consultation framework training in Zabré, and the product fair in Mogtédó is evidence of a growing commitment. From market gardeners to seasonal farmers, the conviction that sustainable agriculture is a driver of change is growing everywhere.

World Food Day, organized in November by our partner APEDR, was a highlight. Farmers, young people, policymakers, and experts came together to discuss issues such as access to seeds, land rights, and the impact of climate change. An agroecological market was also organized to show that it makes sense to generate income with organic, healthy, and local food. We supported this initiative with our partners to spread the message that it is possible to change the agricultural system step by step, even in a country in crisis.



Agroecological market on World Food Day in Yako © APEDR

A movement is growing

Solidagro supported no fewer than 176 agricultural cooperatives in Burkina Faso in 2024. They received advice on agroecological techniques, human rights, and citizen participation. At the same time, we encouraged the production of local and sustainable fertilizers. Although the government allocates less than 1% of the national budget to agroecology, the movement is growing from the grassroots level.

Outlook

Next year, we will strengthen the agroecological community in Zabré and further support agricultural cooperatives in their development. We are committed to a rights-based approach and to sharing good practices – addressing environmental, economic, and social aspects – in order to continue strengthening the resilience of small-scale agriculture in the region.



TO BE PROUD OF

5100 female farmers and **3700** male farmers have mastered agroecological techniques and are defending their autonomy.

176 agricultural cooperatives, including 94 women farmers' cooperatives, have been supported by us from 2022 to 2024.



The Philippines

In 2024, the Philippines faced severe drought due to El Niño and climate change. The importance of agroecology became all the more obvious, and farmers therefore welcomed the methods proposed by our partners, such as growing drought-resistant rice on fields managed by the whole community. In this way, the partners not only improved access to food but also strengthened community ties.

As we showed in the Life Without Taste campaign, Filipino farmers are concerned about the Seed Industry Development Act. That law threatens to restrict their right to keep, use, exchange and sell seeds. That is why our partner MASIPAG organised the Binhi ('seed') Conference in April, where farmers and activists signed a manifesto to stop the policy plans and defend sustainable agricultural practices.

In addition, MASIPAG and other farmers' groups oppose the Philippines' accession to UPOV (International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants), which restricts farmers' freedom. In fact, joining could lead to monopolies, less biodiversity and less control for farmers over their seeds. Currently, the Philippine government has 'initiated' membership, but is not yet a member. Belgium has been a member for years, along with 79 other countries.

Festival for indigenous crops: Gulay pa more

More vegetables, more biodiversity! That was the message of festival Gulay pa more ('More vegetables!'), organised by the national network Agroecology X in Metro Manila. We support that network administratively and financially under our program. Gulay pa more highlighted the diversity of indigenous crops as a counterweight to monoculture and uniform hybrid seeds. There was a market, music and workshops. With 5,000 visitors and a lot of attention from the local media, it was a great success.

Co-organiser John Sherwin Felix: "We want to create an inclusive, safe space for indigenous peoples, activists, farmers and others. We need to challenge the structures that perpetuate injustice and inequality in the way our food is grown, distributed and valued."



Gulay pa more: festival of indigenous plants in Metro Manila.
© Agroecology X

Young people in action for the climate

Young people play a key role in the future of sustainable agriculture. Our partner CCNCI (Climate Change Network for Communitybased Initiatives) organised a youth camp on environment and climate justice with Bicol Farmers School. Participants learned about environmental protection and sustainable farming techniques so that they can take action themselves in their communities.

CDPC (Center for Development Programs in the Cordillera), a network of 16 human rights organisations in the Cordillera region, is also targeting young people and beginning farmers. In Kalinga, they received hands-on training in organic farming, such as making natural leaf fertiliser and biological pest control with plants like paswik, madre de cacao and tagumbao.

"We grow organic vegetables and use kitchen waste as fertiliser. We talk about high prices, low wages and human rights. Our free time has become productive."

Thelma,
leader of an urban garden project

Urban gardens: from wasteland to thriving gardens

Good news from Quezon City! Thanks to lobbying efforts, an ordinance was passed that now allows fallow land in the Bakal district to be used for urban agriculture. The local community, supported by local partner PNFSP (Philippine Network of Food Security Programs), is committed to turning these lands into thriving urban gardens.

It is just one of PNFSP's projects to strengthen the link between nature and urban dwellers and make communities more resilient to the impacts of climate change.





City garden in Sitio Bakal, August 2024. © PNFSP



TO BE PROUD OF

18 000 citizens participated in partner campaigns and activities on right to food and agroecology

207 communities advocated agroecological farming by the end of 2024 and applied its practices

600 local actors (governments, academics, NGOs, youth ...) supported communities with expertise, resources and advocacy

In the spotlight:

30 years of collaboration with CDPC in the Cordillera!

“250 communities reached equates to support for more than a fifth of the communities in the Cordillera, more than 65,000 people. We are proud of that impact.”

Julie Mero
director CDPC

For 30 years we have been working with CDPC and the Province of East Flanders in the Cordillera, where communities (some 60% indigenous, living on ancestral lands) are standing up for their rights and their land. CDPC supports farmers' organisations, strengthens traditional knowledge and provides training on sustainable agriculture and resilience to climate change.

Julie Mero, director of CDPC, says: “Over the years, the partnership has strengthened CDPC. We have now reached some 250 communities with over 400 projects. For example, we install solar panels for lighting and water pumps, which serve for irrigation. Often, irrigation is needed to engage in agriculture and communities lack resources to do so.”



Farmers in the Cordillera Region © Roel Nollet, 2014



Visit from Solidagro and the Province of East Flanders to CDPC in Kalinga in 2016 © Solidagro

The Cordillera

The Philippines

Mali

Rebel violence in Mali continues and the humanitarian crisis is getting worse until today. Fortunately, in the areas where our partners operate, it is safe to continue working around agroecology. By investing in sustainable agriculture, water management and good governance, we are committed to fair, social and environmentally friendly agriculture.

“What we have seen in 2024 is really impressive: thousands of farmers are deploying agroecological techniques they learnt in our trainings. Always they are supported by their communities in doing so.”

Alain Traoré,
country representative for Solidagro in Mali

Although there was little national support for agroecological projects due to security concerns, Solidagro received support at the municipal level. Thus, agroecology became part of Konobougou's socio-economic development plan. Over a five-year period, investment in agroecology will be increased.

Improved water management

In Kalaké, Konobougou and Siby, water scarcity puts pressure on agriculture, compounded by climate change and poor infrastructure. That is why we are working with ARAFD (Association Recherche Action Femmes et Développement) and GAAS-Mali (Groupe d'Animation et Actions au Sahel) to build out wells and conductors for drip irrigation, among other things. Thanks to the actively engaged communities, access to water has improved.

Women take the lead

During the program evaluation, it was noticeable that women in Mali are really taking the lead in agroecology and (agricultural) cooperatives. Because of their positive experiences with agroecology – such as improved health, a cleaner environment



Water supply with the community of Dembabougou and our local partner ARAFD. © ARAFD



Sylla Minata Haidara, member of the women farmers' cooperative BENKADI in Noukoula, which is supported by our local partner GAAS Mali. © GAAS Mali

and an extra income that gives them more independence – they are convinced ambassadors. In addition, they excel in solidarity, organisation and sense of responsibility. Although they are still in their early days, these cooperatives could grow into a broader social movement in Mali, provided that more structure, reinforcement and political vision are created.

Stronger communities through good governance

In three communities, leaders learned how to strengthen their communities' development through human rights. They registered farmland, made village plans and improved administration. What started with doubt grew into enthusiasm – especially when it turned out that it also generated additional income. Country representative Alain Traoré: “We trained 93 municipal councilors in the Human Rights-Based Approach and the right to food. This not only strengthens their knowledge, but also their role as guardians of human rights.”

Outlook

In 2025, we will expand our trainings on the Human Rights-Based Approach so that more farmers can claim their rights and strengthen their role in the community. Furthermore, we will continue to conduct trainings with local partners around alternatives to pesticides and chemical fertilisers.



TO BE PROUD OF

3500 farmers, including **1550** women,
have mastered agroecological techniques
and can better protect their right to food.

93 municipal councilors learned what their
rights and obligations are regarding agricultural
policy through training sessions.

Palestine

Over the past two years, we have made pioneering strides towards autonomous and sustainable agriculture with Bisan Center for Research and Development. In the context of ongoing occupation, land grabbing and economic insecurity, we have strengthened communities with innovative projects and targeted capacity building.

Palestinian farmers face major challenges on a daily basis. Land is illegally confiscated, markets are destroyed and access to farmland is made difficult by checkpoints and settler violence. Despite this, Bisan and Solidagro have found a way to offer hope through agroecology – an approach that combines sustainability, environmental awareness and economic self-reliance. This model helps farmers maintain control over their land and resources despite difficult conditions.

Growth of model farms

In our 2023 annual report, you read that we supported Bisan in starting up two model farms where farmers learn agroecology in practice. The first, at Nubani Farm near Ramallah, is in full operation and includes a place to (learn to) make compost, a worm farm and rooms for lessons in theory and practice.

The second, Madama Farm in Nablus, is not yet finished, but already provides work for five families. Production has expanded from pulses to a wide range of crops such as figs, grapes, cabbage and potatoes. Further development is underway with diversification, tree planting and water management. Compared to last year, the crop is much larger and more varied.



Al Nubani Farms © Saad Dagher

Knowledge is power

Palestinian Agroecological Forum's Saad Dagher's trainings are successful. Farmers, agricultural cooperatives and citizens who want to grow their own food learn about composting, natural pest control, soil management and irrigation. By teaching participants how to spread that knowledge further ('train-the-trainer'), we reach more farmers.

The impact of the sessions is evidenced by stories from participants such as Amina Abu Zinaid, who now runs her own workshops and grows organic oyster mushrooms. Bayaan Quteit also started giving workshops to women in her village near Hebron. Her farm successfully produced cabbages of over 6kg within 40 days.



Training for making a compost station (Al-Falah Farm, Kafr Naama)
© Bisan

"Agriculture is not only about food, but also about justice. Through the training, I understand how agroecology makes a difference to people and the environment. I use my voice to convince others of that."

Hala Barahmeh
social activist and agroecology
training participant



Seeding for change

In December 2023, Bisan distributed seeds to support farmers who lost their income due to the occupation. More than 150 workers from Tulkarm and Nablus received seeds propagated by the women's cooperative Judur Nursery. These seeds of wheat, broad beans, peas and radishes, among others, can be propagated by farmers themselves, which is not the case with hybrid seeds from large agrochemical companies. They were also given a manual on composting and other sustainable farming practices. The success of the campaign was enhanced by the collaboration with Judur Nursery, which contributed to the quality and sustainability of the seeds distributed.

“By distributing seeds and doing trainings, we help farmers rebuild their lives. In a context of occupation and poverty, these are not small things – they are steps towards economic independence and dignity.”

Ubai Al-Aboudi,
director Bisan Center for
Research and Development



Seed distribution by Judur Nursery © Bisan

Growing despite oppression

The project also suffered setbacks. Israeli settlers set fire to farmland and destroyed markets, such as the Hisbeh market in Ramallah. Land was taken illegally, such as Retaj Farm in Asira Al-Qibliyeh, leaving farmers in more financial difficulties than ever. Despite these obstacles, Bisan was able to support farmers with practical knowledge, materials and connection with other farmers.

Ubai Al-Aboudi, director of Bisan, shared the following: “There are no complete or reliable figures on the number of farmers arrested, harassed, mistreated or killed in the West Bank. What is certain is that all the farmers we work with, without exception, have experienced at least one form of human rights violation by the occupying power. These range from physical and verbal aggression to social exclusion, intimidation, attacks on farming equipment and prolonged detention at military checkpoints. These violations threaten not only farmers’ security, but also their freedom of movement and ability to carry out their agricultural activities.”

Outlook

Work is currently in progress to establish two additional model farms and officially launch the agroecology movement in Palestine. The aim is to create a circular agricultural model that strengthens the resilience of communities. With agroecology as a response to decades of oppression, Palestinian farmers are building not only their own future, but also an equitable agricultural model for the whole area. Hope lives on in the land they cultivate, the seeds they plant and the communities they strengthen.



TO BE PROUD OF

150 farm workers were given farm seeds
to propagate during the campaign

68 new farmers received training in agroecology

The colonisation of Palestine: our position

As part of the international community and as an NGO working in Palestine, it is important to make our voice heard against oppression of the Palestinians. We join the global call for a permanent ceasefire and demand an end to the genocide of the Palestinian people and the apartheid regime that Israel has been operating since its establishment in 1948.

This position is inspired by the knowledge, stories and experiences of other citizens, organisations and collectives working for a world full of love, respect and understanding.

We extend our condolences to the countless families who have lost loved ones, their sleepless nights, panic and anxiety attacks and energy-wasting discussions. Your resilience, love, perseverance and energy are an inspiration to us.

Through a policy of colonisation and apartheid, the Israeli government has restricted the freedom of movement, human rights and sovereignty of Palestinian citizens for decades.

Since 7 October 2023, the Israeli army's violence knows no bounds. Tens of thousands of Palestinian civilians, especially women and children, have already died as a result of the genocide. There is a systematic destruction of the Palestinian agricultural and food system. In Gaza, access to the most fundamental basic necessities (food, water, health care, electricity, etc.) is severely cut off and there is an almost complete collapse of the agricultural and fishing sectors. This is causing an unprecedented level of food insecurity and acute famine. At the same time, Palestinian citizens in the West Bank experience constant economic oppression, territorial fragmentation and obstacles to sustainable food production.

We call on all governments to:

1. Denounce any direct or indirect support to Israel as long as there is a genocidal and apartheid regime, freedom of movement is suppressed, and the right of return for hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees is not respected;
2. Take steps to protect Palestinian civilians from acute famine by putting pressure on the Israeli government so that humanitarian aid is widely allowed;
3. Actively push for Palestinian food sovereignty, land justice and farmers' rights. This should be bottom-up, i.e. from the Palestinian citizens and not from geopolitical and economic interests of a minority. The right to healthy food for all through agroecology can play an important role in this.

You as a citizen can support the Palestinians by:

1. Participate in the actions shared on vrede.be or organise an action yourself;
2. Follow the news, for example via the updates on vrt.be;
3. Boycott Israel economically by ceasing to buy from the list of companies on bdsmovement.net (BDS stands for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions);
4. share Palestinian stories, their struggles and their demands for freedom and an end to the occupation.



Senegal

After a dynamic 2023 with many new projects around sustainable agriculture in Senegal, we continued to support them in 2024. Our partners in the Bassin Arachidier ('peanut basin') of the Sine Saloum River worked around historical problems with monoculture and strengthened the economic resilience of several farming communities.

Nationally, we saw encouraging signs of agroecology promotion. The government in current affairs promised subsidies and a new organic fertiliser production unit. For many farmers, the promised funds are now still waiting. Overall, contact is positive between partner CNCR (Conseil National de Concertation et de Coopération des Ruraux) and the new agriculture minister. CNCR advocates more agroecological legislation.

Local breakthrough: mayors opt for sustainable agriculture

We had more success with local governments. For example, the mayors of four municipalities where we work in Toubacouta expressed their support for the climate campaign by our partners ANPDI (Association Nationale des Programmes de Développement Intégré), Caritas Koalack, CNCR, Fédération And Liggey Niombato Toubacouta and DytAES-Dytael de Foundiougne. Politicians rejected chemical pesticides and fertilisers during the forum we organised during the campaign, a clear shift in the mindset of local governments. Some 200 farmers, experts and policymakers participated in the forum.



During climate campaign, mayors spoke out against chemical fertilisers and pesticides © ANPDI



The caravan for climate and agroecology in Toubacouta © ANPDI

The climate caravan: communities on the move

Still during the campaign, a caravan passed through the communes of Keur Saloum Diané, Toubacouta, Keur Samba Gueye and Nioro Alassane Tall. In this way, the partners mobilised many citizens to tell them about climate action and sustainability. Caravans are popular in West Africa to reach citizens in a low-threshold way and respond directly to local questions around deforestation, desertification and sustainable land use.

Our country representative on the ground, Doudou Diallo, says the municipalities were motivated to work closely together to discuss climate change. "No one can mobilise citizens as well as the municipalities themselves, and we are grateful for that," he said. Some 2,500 citizens attended the speeches, a multiple of whom heard about the campaign through three local radio stations and the national broadcaster RTS (Radiodiffusion Télévision Sénégalaise).

"Nobody is as good in mobilizing citizens as the municipalities, that collaborated with us on the climate caravans. We are very grateful for that."

Doudou Diallo,
country representative for Solidagro

Green impact in education and with farmer cooperatives

With Caritas Koalack (Koalack is one of Senegal's 14 regions, located in the south-west of the country), we had an impact through environmental education for schools, where pupils planted coconut palms, among other things, to highlight the importance of reforestation through agroforestry. One of the schools started a vegetable garden in that context. A farmers' cooperative also received a horticultural plot and training to maintain it sustainably and productively. These initiatives strengthened communities and promoted sustainable livelihoods.

Win-win situation

In line with 2023, we worked with ANPDI around goat farming to provide fair wages and increased production within that sector. The 124 women who were trained in 2023 to be goat milkers had stable incomes throughout the year as ANPDI had proposed school canteens in Toubacouta as regular customers.

Inclusive governance as a driver for change

Last year, partner CNCR supported the launch of a DyTael or consultation platform in the Foundiougne region. This year, that DyTAEL (short for Dynamique Pour une Transition Agroécologique Local) once again brought together various players: local politicians, spokespeople from 40 farmers' cooperatives, experts and citizens. Although progress varied by municipality, we saw that the consultation platforms ensured more supported decisions in the administration.

Outlook

We plan to further scale up current agroecological trainings, with a focus on countering soil depletion thanks to organic fertilisers. We are also planning to expand platforms (the DyTAELs) so that more communities participate in decision-making. Finally, we will strengthen partnerships with CNCR, Caritas Koalack and ANPDI on environmental education, reforestation and sustainable agriculture.



Outlook

Want to know more about the plans in the partner countries? You can find them by country page on pages 10 to 18.



Balloon Run 2025 registrations open

Fancy a challenge and a chance to give farmers worldwide a boost? Run, walk or wheel with the Solidagro team on Sunday 7 September during De Ballonloop in Sint-Niklaas! Register via www.solidagro.be/ballonloop2025 for the 5 or 10 kilometers and start your own action page to collect support. With your participation, you literally and figuratively commit to the right to food for all. Of course, you are also welcome to sponsor our athletes or support them during the run itself.

The Peasant Action Brigades head once again to the field

Across Flanders, citizens are committed to agroecological agriculture. You can roll up your sleeves again in 2025: sowing, weeding, harvesting and getting to know farmers in your region. During the participative days, you will learn about local, sustainable food and cooperate. The Peasant Action Brigades are an initiative of Solidagro, Wervel and FIAN Belgium to bring farmers and citizens together. Check the latest news on www.landbouwbrigades.be.

Wanted: volunteers for brand new youth project

We are looking for committed volunteers to support young people (16-19) in their growth as global citizens. Together, we will work on social themes such as gender and agroecology during exchanges between Belgium, Morocco and Senegal. You get the chance to join the trip (if you want) and to help shape the exchanges. We believe everyone can play a role, as in addition to activities, work around communication, content, social media, recruitment and the financial picture. Something for you or for someone you know? Send an email to sverre.pots@solidagro.be.

Films that make you dream and think

From 10 November to 10 December, the fifth edition of Food. Film. Fest will take place across Flanders. Together with Voedsel Anders and many volunteers and farms, we bring five powerful films to your neighbourhood, often with an introduction and/or an after-talk and other fringe activities such as seed fairs. Last year, there were 275 screenings!



No action without strategy: our multi-year plan

Last year, the entire Solidagro team set out on a journey to develop a strategy for the next 5 to 10 years. For this purpose, we looked for answers to fundamental questions such as “who are we?”, “where do we want to go?” and “how do we get there?”. We also set to work on how we relate to each other and to the outside world, in order to ultimately arrive at a well-supported long-term plan.

We are doing well and therefore not looking to change course. Core principles such as the Human Rights-Based Approach – the right of all to healthy food – and agroecology as a response to the challenges facing agriculture today remain at the heart of our approach. However, we did need to refresh and refine our strategy.

To do so, we looked for points of tension: where is there friction and which topics could be the subject of interesting debates? This led us to ten topics, which we worked on in smaller groups. For instance, we discussed how best to get our message across, and what role we as Solidagro play in policy work beyond Belgium.

Everyone could actively think and talk about the themes. Guided by someone external to the organisation with expertise in involving people in decisions, we arrived at a text of about 15 pages. This multi-year plan gives us a clear direction for the next 5 to 10 years.

From principle to practice: our strategic direction

To put our core principles (what we want to do) into practice, we have four strategic pillars (how we want to do it). They shape our thoroughly researched Theory of Change. The team found that these need not change and remain relevant to this day:

- the dissemination and support of agroecological practices;
- strengthening the global agroecological movement;
- policy advocacy;
- education and awareness-raising.

These pillars remain the foundation of our work, together with a diverse mix of partners in our working countries – including in Belgium. To change the food system, we connect consumers, producers, social movements and policymakers around one shared theory of change. We also encourage exchange between partners within the same region, such as Burkina Faso and Tanzania or Bolivia and Peru. This is how we strengthen the agroecological movement together.

Building a learning organisation together

We are stronger when we learn and decide together. That is why we plan the start-up of advisory committees, with people from inside and outside our organisation. That way, we bring different voices to the table together. We are also pushing for more diversity in our team and looking for new, sustainable ways to finance our work.



Colleagues from Bolivia, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, the Philippines and Belgium: together we arrived at a supported multiannual plan © Solidagro



Part of the team during Solidagro Week in 2024 © Solidagro

Campaign 2025: seeds belong to everyone!

Big companies are trying to gain more and more control over what our farmers plant, influencing what we eat. Stricter European rules threaten farmers' rights to use their own seeds, while lobby groups want to push GMOs through. As a result, we risk losing our choice of healthy, GMO-free food. This is both unjust and dangerous. In November, we will stand up for our seeds, our food and our freedom. Join us and make a difference!

SAVE THE DATE!

A new edition of Kiemkracht will take place on 28 February 2026 at VIERNULVIER and St Peter's Abbey in Ghent, this time on the theme of seeds. Kiemkracht is the Flemish festival for agroecology that Solidagro has been co-organising for several years. Stay tuned via our socials!

In 2024 (see also p. 9), we took you into the world of seeds, the source of all our plant-based food. Without realising it, our politicians are currently deciding the future of our food. It is important that your voice and that of the agroecological movement are heard enough in this.

“For us and all (biodynamic) farmers, making the law on GMO's less strict implies the end of free seeds. Growing the seeds of our own leeks, which our costumers appreciate so much, would become a professional risk, as we would risk cross-pollination with patented GMO seeds and financial prosecution.”

Ruben Segers from De Kollebloem,
an organic farm in Herzele (Belgium)

Currently, in European policy, we mostly hear the voice of multi-nationals and their lobbyists. Under the guise of innovation, they want to claim plants as property. We see this in the European Commission's new proposals: the revision of seed legislation imposes additional rules on farmers who want to use their own seeds, while GMO legislation may be relaxed. Thus, farmers lose their right to free use of seeds, and GMOs risk finding their way more easily into our fields as well as supermarkets – without clear labelling or long-term research.

Our campaign is not just about seeds, but about the future of our food. About who decides what we eat. About justice, biodiversity and solidarity with the Global South. And you can help make a difference.

Are you also concerned about genetically modified food? Do you want laws that respect the freedom of our farmers?

Then support our campaign with a donation at www.solidagro.be/en/support



Partners, team, colophon

BELGIUM

Local partners:

11.11.11
Broederlijk Delen
Compagnie Cordial
Dwagulu Dekkente
FIAN Belgium
NGO Federatie
Odisee university college
Oxfam-Wereldwinkels Sint-Niklaas
Quinoa
City of Sint-Niklaas
Viva Salud
Wervel

Financial partners:

Directorate-General for Development Cooperation
Province of East Flanders
City of Sint-Niklaas
Vlaamse Landmaatschappij

Networks:

Voedsel Anders
Coalition Against Hunger

BOLIVIA

Local partners:

Centro de Comunicación y Desarrollo Andino (CENDA)
Fundación Agrecol Andes (Agrecol)
Fundación Gaia Pacha

Financial partners:

11.11.11
Directorate-General for Development Cooperation (DGD)
BVLA Fund via King Baudouin Foundation
Municipality of Destelbergen
Province of East Flanders

Network:

Movimiento Agroecológico Boliviano (MAB)

BURKINA FASO

Local partners:

Association les Mains Unies du Sahel (AMUS)
Association pour la Protection de l'Environnement et le Développement Rural (APEDR)
Association Song Koaadba (ASK)
Association Pag-La-Yiri (PLY)

Financial partners:

11.11.11
Directorate-General for Development Cooperation
Eurofins Foundation
Elisabeth & Amélie Foundation
Southpole

Network:

Conseil National de l'Agriculture Biologique (CNA-Bio)

THE PHILIPPINES

Local partners:

Centre for Development Programs in the Cordillera (CDPC)
Climate Change Network for Community-based Initiatives (CCNCI)
Magsasaka at Siyentipiko para sa Pag-unlad ng Agrikultura (MASIPAG)
Philippine Network of Food Security Programs (PNFSP)

Financial partners:

11.11.11
Action Solidarité Tiers Monde (ASTM)
Directorate-General for Development Cooperation (DGD)
Province of East Flanders
Elisabeth & Amélie Foundation via the King Baudouin Foundation
Ronoylion Foundation
VIKAP (Flemish International Climate Action Programme)

Network:

Agroecology X (via MASIPAG)

MALI

Local partners:

Association Recherche Action Femmes et Développement (ARAFD)
Groupe d'Animation et Actions au Sahel – Mali (GAAS-Mali)
Terre Douce d'Afrique (TDA)

Financial partners:

Directorate-General for Development Cooperation (DGD)
Kanaga asbl
WaterAid
11.11.11

PALESTINE

Local partners:

Bisan Center for Research and Development
Palestinian Agroecological Forum (PAF)

Financial partner:

Directorate-General for Development Cooperation

SENEGAL

Local partners:

Association Nationale des Programmes de Développement Intégré (ANPDI)
Conseil National de Concertation et de Coopération des Ruraux (CNCR)
Caritas Kaolack

Financial partners:

Directorate-General for Development Cooperation
Fondation de France
Elisabeth and Amélie Foundation
11.11.11

Networks:

Dynamique pour une Transition Agro-écologique au Sénégal (DyTAES).
Cadre de Réflexion et d'Action sur le Foncier au Sénégal (CRAFS – via CNCR)

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Solidagro, together with partners in 7 countries, is committed to the right to healthy and fair food made in an environmentally conscious way.

We are building a sustainable food system, from farm to fork.

Without exploitation of people and nature.

Without your donation, there is no Solidagro.

Contribute to a just food system today.

BE19 0012 1876 7412 or www.solidagro.be/en/support

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