The school of thought on international development is currently subject to an important transformation. A shift is taking place from a North-South agenda to a universal and sustainable development agenda. This shift in thought translates a number of fundamental changes that have already taken place over the past years, such as the increasing convergence between a growing number of countries, the fact that official development aid is no longer the main driver of progress and the more important role of middle-income countries in regional development.

In September 2015 this change process will reach its crystallization point with the formulation of the post-2015 agenda, the new sustainable development goals of the United Nations. This new agenda will build on the progress of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Belgian Development Cooperation is acutely aware of this change. Hence in 2014, everything was prepared to let Belgian involvement in international development enter a new phase. For example, a new management contract with the Belgian Technical Cooperation (BTC) was put into effect, which enables our country to anchor its approach of strong local partnership. The Belgian Investment Company for Developing Countries (BIO) now operates within a new legal framework so that a strong private sector can contribute to the sustainable development of countries. Moreover, within the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DGD), the reform of non-governmental cooperation took place, as stipulated in the new law of 2013 on Belgian Development Cooperation.

The following years, the Belgian development policy will revolve around two central axes: a rights-based approach and sustainable and inclusive growth. This includes a focus on fragile states, with priority for the Great Lakes region and West and North Africa. All of this has one purpose: to increase the impact of the Belgian Development Cooperation in the field.

Nevertheless, 2014 was a particularly difficult year. Recently, António Guterres, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, stated in retrospect, “Never in the 64-year history of the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has it had to address so much human misery as in 2014.”

Worldwide, more than 50 million people fled from old and new conflicts. A number that has never been this large since the Second World War. The Belgian Development Cooperation paid particular humanitarian attention to the plight of Syrian refugees, victims of the most serious political conflict of our time.

Also, in the fight against Ebola our country took its responsibility. We released over EUR 37 million in emergency aid. But above all, the tireless efforts of many compatriots received widespread appreciation. Under very difficult circumstances, they assisted affected populations in West Africa with their expertise in health and tropical medicine.

In the next years, it will be critical to build on the work started in 2014. Together with its partners, the Belgian Development Cooperation wants to implement the choices made in order to increase its impact in a sustainable manner. Today, more than ever, the Belgian Development Cooperation is ready to meet that challenge.
2014 was the culmination of a series of fundamental reforms in the legal and regulatory framework of the Belgian Development Cooperation. Much work remains to be done: the Belgian development policy must reform further to join in with international developments and to formulate a response to new challenges concerning peace and security, as well as climate change. This will require new choices and priorities. Visibility, efficiency and effectiveness are more than ever important keywords.

I encourage you to not only read this annual report as a report, as a responsibility to our audience, but also as the result of a thorough professional commitment on behalf of the colleagues from the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DGD).

I hope you will enjoy it!

New management plan

The Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DGD) implemented a new six-year management plan in 2014. This sets out a clear and ambitious vision of the major internal and international challenges, with seven key objectives:

• A policy aimed at sustainable human development and poverty reduction, with a focus on the least developed countries and countries in fragile situations;
• DGD is a central knowledge and decision-making hub about and for development Cooperation;
• Providing better linkages between humanitarian aid and development cooperation in long, complex crises;
• Strengthen the public support for the Belgian development policy;
• Striving for more coordination and better policy coherence for the benefit of development;
• Focusing on aid effectiveness and on results;
• Improve the functioning of the internal organisation (risk, process and quality).

The management plan is translated into operational plans by directorate, subsequently into working plans for each department and finally into evaluation cycles for individual employees. Every six months, the DGD Strategy Committee monitors the implementation of the management plan on the basis of 30 indicators.

Examination of the internal control system by the Court of Audit

At the end of 2013, the Court of Audit announced an audit of the DGD’s internal control system. This gave rise to an extensive questionnaire which included a self-assessment followed by an in-depth examination of a series of grant files. The audit occurred in a period when reforms gradually took shape, such as the new law on development cooperation, a new management contract with the implementing agency BTC, the new regulation concerning non-governmental actors, the creation of a new service for the monitoring of grants. The recent operational plans of the various management departments and the new staff monitoring tool (‘Crescendo’) as of 2014 contribute to a better overview and control of the organisation. All these measures are aimed at a more efficient operation of the Belgian Development Cooperation.

Based on the recommendations of the final report, expected in 2015, the DGD will draw up an action plan. This involves topics like integrity risks, process management, document management, risk and performance management, grant management, control mechanisms.
The Belgian official development assistance

In the 70’s it was internationally accepted that the official development assistance (ODA) from the rich countries should amount to at least 0.7% of their Gross National Income (GNI). Belgium has also set itself the legal obligation to achieve this standard from 2010 onwards. However, due to the financial crisis and the difficult budgetary circumstances, this goal is not yet within immediate reach. After a strong growth during the 2008-2010 period (0.64% of GNI in 2010 - the highest ODA figure ever achieved) the Belgian development aid gradually fell back to 0.45% in 2013.

In 2014, the total Belgian development assistance represented approximately 0.46% of the GNI, a slight increase compared to 2013, but far from the individual target of 0.51% for the member states of the EU-15.

The Belgian official development assistance includes:

- funding from the development cooperation budget (about two thirds of the total official development assistance);
- funding from other federal governments and via the European Commission;
- part of the costs for the reception of refugees and the costs for students from developing countries studying in Belgium;
- contributions from regions, communities, provinces and municipalities;
- debt cancellations agreed at international level.

DGD aid per channel

Governmental cooperation 23.9 %
Non-governmental cooperation 20.4 %
Multilateral cooperation 42.3 %
Humanitarian programmes 8.4 %
Support to the private sector, BIO 4.5 %
Awareness-raising in Belgium (excl. NGOs) 0.5 %
Administration, evaluation, other 0.1 %

DGD aid per sector

Education 102.0 mil.
Multisector: scholarships and training 20.7 mil.
Healthcare 117.6 mil.
Population and reproductive healthcare 26.6 mil.
Water and sanitation 27.5 mil.
Government and civil society 69.2 mil.
Conflict, peace and security 1.6 mil.
Social services 43.2 mil.
Transport and storage, communication 14.7 mil.
Energy 6.5 mil.
Banks and financial sector, enterprises 17.7 mil.
Agriculture, forestry, fishing 106.6 mil.
Industry, mining and engineering 3.2 mil.
Trade and tourism 5.6 mil.
Conservation 84.3 mil.
Multisector (excl. scholarships and training) 55.3 mil.
Humanitarian aid 80.5 mil.
Debt relief 21.0 mil.
Awareness-raising in Belgium 28.3 mil.
Sector non-specified 389.1 mil.
In the policy statement of the new Minister for Development Cooperation the human rights approach is one of the two central axes of the Belgian development policy. All development challenges relate to internationally recognized and accepted human rights, both civil and political rights, as well as social and cultural rights. The rights approach emphasizes the universality, indivisibility and inalienability of human rights, the principles of participation and inclusiveness in decision-making, non-discrimination, equality and fairness, transparency and accountability.

In addition, Belgium holds the opinion that a development approach based on human rights is an essential step to achieve sustainable results in the basic sectors of development cooperation. Consider, for example, health care, including reproductive health, education and training, agriculture, food security and basic infrastructure.

Social protection for all

In 2014, the Belgian Development Cooperation continued its efforts in order to promote social protection as an effective means to reduce poverty and inequality. Social protection enables people to overcome periods of crisis and avoid social exclusion. Economic development also benefits from it, as social protection supports the demand for products and services.

Moreover, social protection is one of the fundamental human rights that everyone can resort to. Yet 75% of the world population has no access to adequate social protection. Nevertheless, ‘Social Protection Floors’ (minimum conditions to ensure global social protection) are easily affordable according to the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The total cost for the creation and operation of social protection worldwide would only amount to 2 to 6% of the GNP. Even poor countries are financially capable of achieving this.

The realisation of the Decent Work Agenda, as defined by the ILO, is a priority for the Belgian Development Cooperation. This agenda includes four objectives: creating jobs, formulating fundamental labour rights and promote their compliance, extend social protection and promote social dialogue. Belgium developed a genuine partnership with the ILO concerning Decent Work, not only by providing financial support, but also through the joint organisation of seminars and events.

Promotion and defence of human rights

Social protection refers to any policy that addresses risk, vulnerability, inequality and poverty through systems of transfers (in cash or in kind/services) to the population. It thus aims to protect people from the risks that can push them into poverty, or keep them there, and this by enabling them to enjoy basic protection, care and services and to lift the social and economic barriers that prevent access to this kind of protection.
The Belgian Development Cooperation supports sustainable family farming. With the support provided through the Belgian Technical Cooperation (BTC), it wants to contribute to greater food security in its partner countries and to sustainable economic growth.

This approach is based on four pillars:

- Increase in production (training, irrigation, seeds ...);
- Market access for the sale of production (means of transport and strengthening of cooperatives);
- Building the capacity of ministries, civil society and farmers’ organisations;
- Strengthen the position of women.

In addition, Belgium is one of the major donors to international organisations for agriculture and food security (FAO, IFAD, WFP and CGIAR). The Belgian Development Cooperation also indirectly supports the agricultural sector and food security through numerous NGOs, universities and various scientific institutions.

Strengthening agriculture and food security

Family farming

The United Nations declared 2014 as the International Year of Family Farming. After all, family farming is crucial to a planet feeding 9 billion people by 2050, without harming the environment and at the same time giving millions of farming families the chance to work their way out of poverty.

Worldwide there are about 500 million family farms - that’s 80% of all farms. Together they feed the entire world population. In many developing countries, but also in Belgium, the vast majority of farms have a family character. They produce raw materials, which in addition to food are also a source of fuel, fibres and green space. Family farms form the network of a rural society and stimulate the local economy and employment.

The aim of the International Year of Family Farming is to promote the role of family farming and small-scale farms. They contribute to eradicating hunger, reducing poverty, obtaining food security through sustainable production and sustainable development of rural areas.
Gender and protection of the environment

The gender dimension seeks empowerment of women and equality between men and women in society. The Belgian Development Cooperation integrates this dimension in all its interventions. It also ensures protection of the environment and natural resources and fights against climate change, drought and global deforestation.

Gender equality

In recent decades, the attention to the status of women worldwide has increased significantly, both in our own country and in our partner countries. Gender equality is a fundamental human right and a matter of social justice. All UN member states are bound by the Beijing Declaration, a resolution adopted in the context of the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995). This resolution is a commitment to the fulfilment of the Beijing Platform for Action, that defines twelve policy areas in which equality between women and men should be improved. This commitment involves both northern and southern countries.

In response to the Beijing Platform for Action, Belgium adopted the law on gender mainstreaming in 2007. This includes tackling inequalities in our own country, but also has consequences for all interventions of our country abroad.

In practice this means that interventions by the Belgian Development Cooperation should help improve the autonomy of women, including providing enhanced access to finance their economic activities, to the means of production in agriculture and health care and family planning. A society can only evolve in a sustainable manner if both men and women can participate.

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy to systematically integrate gender into development policy, across all policy choices and in all phases of programming and across the project cycle (formulation, implementation and evaluation). This strategy must ensure that development brings about the (factual and legal) equality between men and women.

Environment

Globalisation, the growth of the world economy and the population explosion weigh on the environment, resulting in food shortages and the depletion of natural resources. Climate change exacerbates the impact of desertification, land degradation, drought, floods, extreme weather and rising sea levels. These issues affect everyone, but the intensity of the impact differs. The least developed countries are often hit the hardest because of their geographical location, high population growth, low national income, limited institutional capacity and a greater reliance on climate-sensitive industries such as agriculture.

The new environmental strategy will give new impetus to the efforts of the Belgian Development Cooperation to integrate sound management of the environment and of natural resources in all its activities. This may include reliance on the Belgian universities and scientific institutions for policy support (e.g. KLIMOS and RBINS).
Case studies of the Belgian Development Cooperation in 2014

The Belgian Development Cooperation determines the priorities, activities and results of its governmental cooperation based on a geographical approach by region. For example, multi-annual cooperation programmes are developed with the 18 partner countries. It is impossible to provide details on all the interventions of governmental cooperation in Africa, Asia and Latin America, hence only the major achievements of 2014 are discussed below.

The healing properties of saffron

Not only is saffron a precious spice, it also helps treating mild depression. The compounds safranol and crocin provide a good mix of adrenaline, dopamine and serotonin. Growing and commercializing this ‘red gold’ is therefore a good thing.

In the Moroccan region of Sous-Massa-Draâ, the Belgian Development Cooperation strongly supports the cultivation of saffron for an amount of EUR 12 million. Through sustainable agriculture, Belgium tries to fight against poverty.

The healing properties of saffron result in an even bigger win-win operation than originally assumed. With the help of the Moroccan government, the 24 cooperatives in Taliouine now want to triple the production by 2020 through further professionalisation and commercialisation. Besides saffron cultivation, the cultivation of dates is also supported.

Mental health care in Rwanda

Twenty years after the genocide in Rwanda, mental health remains a priority sector for the Belgian Development Cooperation. The objective is to train staff that is close to the victims and to provide quality health care.

During the 1994 genocide, almost a million people died in less than one hundred days. Using machetes, guns, grenades, whole families were ruthlessly wiped out without distinction, from newborns to the elderly, solely on the basis of their origin. Even the neuropsychiatric hospital Caraes Ndera, in the east of Kigali, did not escape from the murderous madness.

More than one in four Rwandans are affected by severe depression and post-traumatic stress disorders, a figure well above the international averages. In 2013, 49,161 patients visited the hospital for an average stay of 28 days. 61% of these patients were referred to psychiatric care, where one-third of the symptoms are schizophrenia, schizotypal disorder and delusional disorders.

Maisha Bora | The good life

Approved in 2014, the new programme of the Belgian Fund for Food Security (BFFS) in Tanzania will start in the beginning of 2015. The programme is called ‘Maisha Bora’ or ‘The good life’ in Maasai. Five partner organisations carry out activities in the northern districts of Longido and Simanjiro.

Both districts are located in a very dry region. The population is predominantly Maasai, livestock is the main economic activity and there is little or no potential for agricultural development. The programme will focus primarily on livestock, water, nutrition and the development of the private sector.

The overall budget of the programme amounts to EUR 13,742,173. BFFS will fund EUR 11,270,996, partner organisations EUR 2,471,177 through their own contributions.

Health in Uganda

The healthcare sector achieves slow progress, although the achievements remain far from the national targets. Positive results were obtained in the fight against child mortality and malnutrition.

While in 2013 the focus was on the recruitment of additional staff, in 2014 the Ugandan government made efforts to improve salaries and staff training. The implementation of the Belgian bilateral projects is duly taking place. The innovative Private-no-For-Profit project (supporting the guidance and supervision of non-profit private medical science - mainly of religious origin) started in 2014 and the responses have been very positive.

In recent years, the contribution of the private non-profit sector to the national health system was applied to close the gap. The non-profit institutions represent over 40% of hospitals, 17% of health services at lower levels, and 65% of schools for nurses and midwives. They deliver an estimated 35 to 40% of all health services to the population, mostly in rural and hard-to-reach areas.
Quality care in northern Mali

Thanks to a successful partnership between Mali, the French Development Agency and the Belgian Development Cooperation, the regional hospital Sominé Dolo in the northern region of Mopti was inaugurated by the Malian president Sévaré in March 2014. The hospital is one of the achievements of the ‘Programme d’Appui au Développement Sanitaire et Social’ of Mopti, valued at EUR 16.9 million, funded by the Belgian Development Cooperation, the French Agency for Development Cooperation (EUR 8 million each) and Mali (EUR 0.9 million).

The programme aims to improve the supply of healthcare, the elimination of inequalities in access to health care for people in the region of Mopti, the organisation of training for healthcare personnel and improving management capacity.

The project has achieved impressive results. In 2011 the region counted 92 doctors, compared to only 29 in 2003, and 83 midwives in 2011 compared to 27 in 2003. Associations of women and youth organisations work on actions to raise awareness around health determinants. The number of health insurance funds and members has risen sharply.

Education in the Palestinian Territory

With a total envelope of EUR 33 million education still represents the most important sector of the Belgian Development Cooperation in the Palestinian Territory. In 2014, Belgium took over from France as ‘leader’ in the education sector.

One of the biggest challenges of the Belgian Development Cooperation in the field of education, are construction projects in Area C and East Jerusalem. Still, 2014 saw the inauguration of a mixed school in the south of Hebron. The school is intended for a Palestinian community (Arab Al-Frejat) counting 800 people, including 80% Bedouins. This school responds to the needs of its mainly Bedouin students who often live in very isolated areas without access to basic services.

The same trend is noticeable in Bubanza, another province enjoying Belgian support. In 2014, for the first time, an impartial admission test was organised for the magistrates’ education. These interventions are designed to enhance the independence of the Burundian justice system.

Attention to interculturalism in Bolivia

In February 2014, a new cooperation programme between Belgium and Bolivia for the period 2014-2016 was approved in La Paz. It is a programme for governmental cooperation and the budget amounts to EUR 18 million.

The water sector - in the broad sense of the word - was selected as the most important area of intervention for the future. Belgium will support the environmental sector and contribute to developing capacity, under the motto ‘Buen Vivir - Vivir Bien’, in other words, the welfare of the local population.

For the first time in the history of our cooperation with Bolivia, special attention has been paid to the intercultural component. In this context, two interventions have been planned. The first relates to the revaluation by the local population of the recent archaeological discoveries in Lake Titicaca. The second seeks to promote an intercultural teaching system for higher education.

The integration of interculturalism and the paradigm of ‘Buen Vivir - Vivir Bien’ advocated by the Bolivian government, makes this new cooperation programme very original and strengthens its consistency.
BELGIUM’S 18 PARTNER COUNTRIES
FOR GOVERNMENTAL DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION

2014

EAST AFRICA
10. Uganda
11. Tanzania
12. Mozambique

ASIA
18. Vietnam

MIDDLE EAST
14. Palestinian Territory
Women holding the plough in Ethiopia

Amaretch (29) is a single Ethiopian mother of two, who lives with her parents. To cultivate her 0.75 acres of land, she stands alone. In her region, Tigray, women may own land, but they are not allowed to plough it. It must be done by a man who is then entitled to receive half the harvest. Such practice is not exactly beneficial for food security in a region where 30 to 40% of the households are female headed. Tigray lost many men under the Derg regime and during the war with Eritrea.

Fortunately Amaretch was able to rely on the programme of Caritas and ADCS. After many long conversations with her parents, the elderly in the village and especially the church leaders, the taboo gradually broke down. “I remember it as if it was yesterday, how terrified I was three years ago with the ox on the field for the first time,” she says, laughing. “But today, ploughing is routine for me! And my parents, who initially were firmly against it, think it’s fine now that I plough myself.” They also see the results and benefit from it.

At the start of the programme Amaretch received an ox on loan worth 3,000 birr (EUR 116). After being fattened, it yielded 6,000 birr. With the proceeds, she bought a new ox, along with a sheep, some chickens and rodents. Today she saves 50 birr each month and even invests a little in gold.

Ms Angèle takes the ‘lead’

Taps, reflective chrome, porcelain sanitary fittings and pipes: welcome to the MK ironmongery. Customers walk in and out as well as family, friends and curious people. In this shiny and glittering mecca, Angèle Musanda awaits us with confidence and a broad smile.

“In 2008 I took out a first loan of $9,500.- I then had a street trading business. Using the loan, I was able to open a real store and keep products in stock. After repaying the first loan, I contracted new loans.”

The amount for small loans is advanced by the Congolese bank of the ProCredit group in which BIO invested. “We now work primarily with small businesses such as that of Ms Musanda. That was a highly underserved market segment. In DR Congo the banks especially view micro-entrepreneurs and large companies as clients,” states a ProCredit employee.

ProCredit not only advances money, but also follows the customers in what they do, helps them with accounting and the preparation of a financial plan.

And what are Ms Musanda’s future ambitions? She will now focus on the direct import of whole containers of sanitary material from China and Spain. That is a big step forward for her: she used to buy and sell on the local market and did not really make much profit. For herself, she wants to build a bigger house and moreover, she has “a lot of business plans, but these are secret for the time being.”

Today I have 3 shops with 4 employees and day labourers.
**Odyssey of the potato**

In 1950, Peruvians ate twice as many potatoes as today. Nowadays, the market features a number of commercial varieties planted in large plantations. But indigenous potatoes, grown on small plots in higher areas like Huayana, are a forgotten treasure for the average Peruvian.

Isabel Huilcapuma and Fredy Carrasco, two farmers from the Andes who took their potatoes to the capital Lima, decided that has to change.

“We left our family in the area of Huayana, at an altitude of 4000 meters, and drove with a lorry to the culinary fair Mistura in Lima.

Our objective? To exhibit 84 potato varieties at this event and find out if there is a market for our products.

The Mistura fair is a unique occasion where visitors can get acquainted with local potatoes and taste them. They can even buy potatoes and then come to the conclusion that they really don’t know anything about these products, except that they are delicious and extremely nutritious.

The indigenous potato has a great variety. If you would eat a different type every day, it would take six years and four months to complete this culinary adventure. A guaranteed record in the Guinness Book.”

The purpose of this trip to the Mistura fair in Lima was to raise enthusiasm among the producers and proponents of agrobiodiversity for the direct sale of their products.

**Toilets to avoid snakes**

With the support of the Belgian Development Cooperation the Women’s Union of Ninh Thuan (a coastal province in Central/South Vietnam) concentrates on sanitary facilities. Thanks to micro-credits and the creation of a ‘health fund’, the lives of many families have improved. More than one thousand families appealed to fifteen teams that had studied their needs, supplied them with the necessary information and provided funds to build toilets.

Truong Thi Pham is a courageous woman. As a mother of seven children, she adopted an additional three orphans. “I thought we needed a real toilet for our large family. That is, after all, more hygienic. Moreover, it is dangerous to use the tall grass as a toilet because of the snakes. I was very afraid for the children’s safety!”

So I appealed to the Women’s Union proposal and I took out a loan to build a toilet with a septic tank. I had 13 months to pay off my loan. Each month, I deposited 200,000 dong (8 EUR), which is a large amount for our family. My husband is a mason and I am a weaver, together we earn 600,000 dong per month (24 EUR). To increase our income, we also make rice cakes.

I’m glad that I was able to provide a toilet to my family. Meanwhile, we also have a shower. A sanitary facility that pleases us all!”, Truong states with a broad smile.
Humanitarian aid

More than ever, millions of people were affected by armed conflict and violence in 2014. Many fled and sought refuge in safer areas within their country or in neighbouring countries. Besides, natural disasters have once again caused immense suffering in certain regions of the world. Many Asian countries were affected by tornadoes, storms and floods. Also, cholera, meningitis and yellow fever epidemics broke out in some regions. However, the biggest challenge for humanitarian aid in 2014 was the outbreak of the Ebola virus in West Africa.

In 2014, Belgian humanitarian aid has contributed to supporting the most vulnerable population groups in many crises including Syria, Iraq, the Central African Republic, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the occupied Palestinian territories, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Humanitarian action areas in 2014

Syria

After the air strikes against Islamic State in the north and east of the country, fighting continued and the humanitarian situation further deteriorated. Civilians and civilian targets are still being attacked. Of the 10.8 million Syrians who are dependent on humanitarian aid, 4.7 million are located in inaccessible areas. To meet the needs of this population, the adjusted plan for humanitarian aid in Syria (SHARP) and the Regional Response Plan (RRP) of the United Nations were formulated. Only EUR 2.8 billion of the EUR 6.5 billion were effectively paid.

In 2014, Belgium funded an intervention of UNICEF that focuses on the displaced population in Syria, on the host communities and on children in hard to reach areas. The focus is on water access, sanitation and hygiene, health and nutrition. The Belgian contribution to UNICEF amounted to EUR 3.5 million.

Iraq

More than 5.2 million people were affected by the crisis. Add the 1.8 million refugees in Iraq itself, and the concept of a massive crisis becomes reality. Required financial support is estimated at 2.2 billion USD to survive until the end of 2015. In 2014, Belgium, made EUR 2 million available through the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), OCHA’s flexible fund – the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

South Sudan

The Republic of South Sudan, only independent since 2011, is plagued by a civil war between government and rebellion forces as of mid-December 2013. Violence erupted in the capital Juba and has since expanded to seven of the ten states of the country, with many civilian targets. The result: thousands of deaths, millions of refugees and a widespread famine.

To restore food security, Belgium supported the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) with EUR 700,000.

Central African Republic

The Central African Republic is dominated by a persistent unstable political climate and a difficult socio-economic situation. In December 2012 the rebel group Seleka launched a military offensive. This has led to the deposition of President Bozizé in 2013. Then a civil war erupted which led to a major humanitarian crisis with serious violations of the humanitarian law and thousands left dead. Of the 4.6 million inhabitants, more than half require urgent aid and about 700,000 people have fled and sought refuge in about seventy refugee camps.

In the Central African Republic, Belgium is funding an intervention of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) for a total amount of EUR 4 million. Six key areas are targeted:
- Support victims of conflict and other situations of violence;
- Care for injured and disabled persons;
- Improve the respect for international human rights and humanitarian law;
- Visiting prisoners;
- Reunite families;
- Support and empower local communities.

Ebola Epidemic in West Africa

The Ebola epidemic is an exceptional health and humanitarian crisis with far-reaching implications for the socio-economic, political and security situation in the region. In November 2014, of 14,400 known and registered cases, 5,177 fatalities were counted. For the coordination of emergency interventions, the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) was established in September 2014.

Our country played an active role in the fight against the Ebola virus. Belgium provided humanitarian and logistics assistance as well as research by the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp. Moreover, on December 21, 2014 a B-FAST team was dispatched to Guinea, where a mobile laboratory was established. The team is capable of examining blood samples locally and detecting the virus, which can lead to much faster interventions.
Many compatriots are participating as volunteers in the areas affected by Ebola, especially in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. In Brussels, Doctors without Borders conducts preparatory courses for these volunteers before they leave.

At international level, the commitment of Brussels Airlines was praised. It was the sole airline to retain its flights to Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea-Conakry. Air links can get medical supplies and aid workers on-site quickly, which avoids geographic isolation of the affected areas.

The Belgian Development Cooperation has allocated a total of more than EUR 37 million in humanitarian emergency aid. In addition to that, three humanitarian interventions in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia were funded for a total amount of EUR 7 million. Specifically, these are:

- Doctors without Borders Belgium: for isolation and treatment in the three most affected countries; Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone (EUR 3 million);
- UNICEF: for contingency planning in Liberia (EUR 2 million). This will allow UNICEF to install water systems in treatment centres and organise informational and training activities;
- International Federation of the Red Cross: EUR 2 million for a project that contributes to the reduction of health risks of the affected population in Liberia and to the strengthening of local coordination mechanisms.
How does development education take place in practice?

Development education promotes and provides access to specific initiatives that enable us to act where we live. It invites us to rethink our own way of consumption, to let us feel part of a bigger whole, to promote solidarity actions and values of justice and to introduce fairer and more sustainable economic policies. In short, to help citizens to make responsible and informed choices.

Specific actions of development education:
- awareness of development issues and of North-South relations;
- awareness of the interdependence between North and South;
- engagement in personal or collective action in favour of sustainable and equitable development;
- mobilisation to achieve more equitable and inclusive policy choices at local, national and international level.

A range of activities in Belgium

In 2014, Belgium has supported numerous activities of this nature with a wide range of partners. The allocated budgets are among the top three for European countries. A few examples.

Development education on TV

‘Flying Doctors’ is a six-part TV series on the VRT in which production company Geronimo is following the adventures of three doctors and a pilot who bring a plane from Belgium to Congo. There, the Cessna 206 gets a new life as an ambulance plane in the Virunga National Park, where the Belgian prince Emmanuel de Merode is director and head ranger. Each layover is used to visit and provide visibility for local projects. The programme’s aim is to draw attention to the Millennium Development Goals, to development projects and to the partner countries of the Belgian Development Cooperation. This is presented in an entertaining way, to appeal to the widest possible audience. The programme has been quite successful, achieving just under 300,000 viewers on channel Eén. The Belgian Development Cooperation supported this production with EUR 159,000.

International Francophone Film Festival

Every year, including in 2014, the Belgian Development Cooperation also co-finances the International Francophone Film Festival, intended to support audio-visual productions from French-speaking developing countries. During the most recent edition, from October 3 to 10, 2014, the Bayard d’Or Award for best film and best screenplay was awarded to the film ‘Timbuktu’ by director Abderrahmane Sissako. The film is an ode to freedom and tolerance and a strong direct argument against the extremist Islam of jihadists. In a subtle way, it demonstrates life and resistance provided by women and men against those who deprive them of their culture, traditions and religion in the Tombouctou region.
Calling in small producers in the Belgian distribution chain

The NGO Vredeseilanden strengthens the position of small-scale farmers in the agricultural chain, working together with leaders from the food industry and consumers. Innovation for production and consumption systems is paramount. Social, environmental and economic sustainability provides the binding framework.

For example, Vredeseilanden links Beninese rice farmers, Peruvian asparagus producers and Senegalese banana cooperatives with Colruyt. Goal: integrate farmers into the market and better coordination between Colruyt’s purchasing department and small-scale farmers. In 2014 Vredeseilanden, together with Fairtrade Belgium, organised a series of interviews with more than 50 key people working in the Belgian food industry and retail, dealing with the necessary issues of creating a more sustainable business model. The focus was on the role and importance of small-scale farmers worldwide as suppliers of sustainable raw materials and products. This was the impetus to formulate specific recommendations to the food industry in 2015.

In 2014, the Belgian Development Cooperation has earmarked an amount of EUR 153,000 for these activities.

Commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Rwanda genocide

For the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the genocide in Rwanda, the non-profit association Itinérances organised a theatre spectacle ‘Rwanda mais avant? et puis après’. For this, the association received a EUR 36,700 grant from the Belgian Development Cooperation.

From February to June 2014, five public lectures and 8 theatre productions took place in Belgium, Lausanne and Paris. These performances were accompanied by debates or round-tables with 1,500 spectators.

The goal of this project, which will continue after 2014, is to educate the public and especially the younger generations, via the tragedy that took place in Rwanda, about the history and importance of conflict prevention via the tragedy that took place in Rwanda before, during, and after the genocide, during the reconstruction of the country. It is also a way to promote intercultural dialogue, to illustrate the need to bring people together and to transcend our own frames of reference.

Glo.be replaces Dimension 3 – The magazine of the Belgian Development Cooperation

In 2014 the Belgian Development Cooperation’s free magazine changed its name: Dimension 3 became Glo.be. The new name expresses that our world is not the same as 30 years ago: the ‘Third World’ no longer exists and countries that were formerly poor have grown into great powers. In turn - and in their own way - they also provide development cooperation. The change of name was accompanied by a new website and a digital version for tablets.

Glo.be wants to present the different development activities funded and executed by Belgium. But it also allows you to be informed in brief of what is going on in the world of development cooperation. This way, we want to involve the Belgian population in the debate on the challenges our world faces. Teachers and students from secondary schools can find bite-sized information that closely matches the teaching material.

The first issue of Glo.be was devoted to Belgium’s main partner country: Congo. In the second issue of Glo.be, we took a closer look at the changes in the world of development cooperation. Also, agriculture and health received extra attention in 2014.

Testimonials of teachers

Isabelle Mergeay (Collège Saint-Benoît de Maredsous, Denée):
“Glo.be is very suitable for my geography lessons. In this way, I supplemented the official programme item ‘study of a large country (China or India)’ with a thematic sheet on the growing world population. The information is complete, up-to-date and includes many examples. My students can independently use it to get to work. Often, experts are included. I thank you for this wonderful source of information!”

Jasmine Delaere (Sint-Jozefsinstituut, Tielt):
“I am a geography teacher and discovered the magazine Glo.be today. I have been urging my students for years to be aware of current events, but it is very difficult. Glo.be is perfect to build up their current world view.”
The Belgian contribution to the MDGs

For several years, the annual report of the Belgian Development Cooperation has been providing an overview of the activities related to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This year MDG 3, 4 and 5 have been highlighted. The Belgian Development Cooperation integrates these MDGs in all its interventions in its partner countries.

MDG 3 – Promote gender equality and strengthen the position of women

In 2000, more equality between men and women and more autonomy for women was rightly recognized as an important factor to eradicate poverty. The Millennium Development Goal was formulated in such a way that it was relevant for all other Millennium Development Goals as well (MDGs). This way, an alignment with the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) was achieved, to implement gender mainstreaming in all policy areas.

Research has shown that there is a relationship between the limited progress of MDG 3 (gender equality) and the other Millennium Development Goals. For example, the inadequate results in the field of maternal and child mortality (MDG 4 and 5) are associated with insufficient autonomy of women.

Belgian and European efforts

The Belgian Development Cooperation has devoted much attention to the Millennium Development Goals in its bilateral relations with its partner countries and in particular to MDG 3: equality between men and women and more autonomy for women. This is a common agenda with the partner countries, which is translated through specific programmes and through special attention to gender equality in all programmes in all sectors, particularly in health, agriculture, food security.

The Gender Action Plan of the European Commission was launched in 2010 by the member states and the European Commission in order to make a catch-up effort to quickly achieve the intended results of the Millennium Development Goals. The Gender Action Plan emphasizes the interdependence between the MDGs and human rights, gender equality, democracy, good governance, development, peace and security, climate and energy ..., all priorities of the European Development Agenda.

Access to contraceptives

In the context of the Millennium Development Goals, Belgium defends women’s access to contraceptives. Since 2007, the Belgian Development Cooperation has relied on a policy paper on sexual and reproductive health and rights. The Belgian Development Cooperation departs from a rights-based approach: the right to sexual and reproductive health is part of human rights. Women should be able to make their own choices and, in this way, better control their economic situation. Belgium also pays attention to an integral and positive approach to sexuality and reproduction, accessible to all. In practice, it follows that the Belgian Development Cooperation is dedicated to promoting the integration of sexual and reproductive rights in the national policies of its partner countries; supports the health care systems in its partner countries; pays attention to the overall approach towards AIDS; that Belgium, in general, supports gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in its partner countries; also, with an emphasis on youth and adolescents; including raising awareness, providing information and education.
Belgian support for health care systems

The Belgian Development Cooperation supports health care systems and hence contributes to MDG 4, which aims to reduce the mortality rate of children under five by two-thirds by 2015. From 90 annual deaths per 1,000 children under age 5 in 1990, the figure now stands at 48 (almost 50%)\(^1\). But it seems unlikely that we will achieve the target of 33/1000 before 2015. About 4/5ths of deaths under age 5 occur in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Priority must be given to fragile states and low income countries.

Every day, 800 women die from pregnancy complications, and 222 million women have no access to contraceptives. Therefore, MDG 5, which provides for a reduction of the mortality rate of women at childbirth by three quarters by 2015, remains almost infeasible. However, tremendous progress has been made: maternal mortality has decreased by 45% since 1990. And Belgium, as a member of the international donor community, has contributed to this achievement. Our country assists the most vulnerable states, supporting their healthcare systems, of which mothers and children are the main users. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2008) this is the best way to improve access to reproductive healthcare services. The Belgian Development Cooperation spends an average of 12 to 14% of its budget on healthcare and health is a priority sector of the governmental development cooperation for half of Belgium’s partner countries.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

Healthcare, including reproductive health and the horizontal battle against major endemics including HIV/AIDS, is a priority area included in the law on Belgian Development Cooperation. The policy paper of the Belgian Development Cooperation on sexual and reproductive health and rights (2007) states that human rights and a positive and integrated approach are a basic principle for sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The leading cause of death among girls and young women is a premature pregnancy. Health services often face issues including unsafe abortion practices and unmet sexual and reproductive needs. All these problems are closely associated with a lack of free choice and the necessary knowledge. Decent information and good sex education play an important role in preventing early and arranged marriages, female genital mutilation and gender-based violence.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights and demographic trends have a major impact on the development potential of a country. Consequently, prevention of sexual abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS and unwanted pregnancies is therefore an effective investment. Belgium therefore continues to participate in the sometimes difficult debates about safe abortion, contraception, sex education, child marriage, genital mutilation and discrimination based on sexual orientation and identity.

\(^1\) These are figures for the whole world. For developing countries, the figures are 99 and 53, respectively.
You can download the complete annual report (only available in French and Dutch) from our website www.dg-d.be