Dear friends of Welthungerhilfe,

What does education have to do with resilience? Quite a bit! Education enables people to better cope with difficult situations, crises or natural disasters.

There is agricultural training for example, which helps peasant farmers to create a stable economic basis for themselves, which can take the edge off a crisis. Or advice on nutrition and hygiene, which helps families to cope with difficult situations and stay healthy. Literacy courses also contribute to a high degree of physical and social resilience; apart from more self-confidence and social participation, they also lead to a higher income. The women in Somaliland are an example. We report about them on page six.

Education also creates awareness and sharpens the sense of contexts. This allows people to better handle the consequences of extreme weather events, or they even become able to actively contribute to mitigating them. In Nepal, already the youngest learn how important it is to protect the nature of their home country (please read more on page four).

Thanks to your support, we can implement these important projects and prepare people for the challenges of the realities of their lives.

Yours sincerely,

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Title photo: Literacy courses give women in the Central African Republic access to more power and knowledge.
Knowledge can save lives. All over the world, education and training opportunities make young and old people stronger and more resilient.

**Turkey / Mardin and Istanbul**

In order to improve the interaction between Syrian refugee- and Turkish families, two community centres offer computer courses, health seminars, and cultural and sports activities.

**Nepal / Dhading District**

Newly built schools teach the „green school“ approach: Boys and girls learn how to protect the environment and prepare for disasters such as earthquakes, floods and landslides.

**India / West Bengal, Jharkhand and Orissa**

Community colleges prepare young people for jobs with a future: from becoming a silkworm breeder to a solar technician. Adivasi and Dalits from the poorest areas profit the most.

**Ethiopia / Bahir Dar**

Street- and orphaned children receive a stable home, a crucial prerequisite for successfully attending school. School uniforms and teaching materials are also provided.

**Somaliland / Awdal region**

Since younger and older women learn how to read, write and calculate in literacy courses, their opportunities for social participation have increased significantly.
Nepal: Protecting nature with „Green Schools“

When the earth shook in Nepal in 2015, this became the most devastating disaster in the country’s history and caused great suffering for many thousands of families. At that time, 8,308 schools were completely or partially destroyed and 950,000 girls and boys had no place to study. In the particularly affected district of Dhading, Welthungerhilfe – together with local partners – rebuilt four schools, and these now offer a very special approach.

Poverty and unemployment prevail in the villages of Dhading. Many families belong to disadvantaged groups like the Tamang or Dalits. When not even roads, electricity or drinking water are available, then there is even less money for education. As a result, many destroyed schools were not rebuilt or restored insufficiently. This makes the Welthungerhilfe schools all the more important for the village communities. The buildings are not only more stable and better equipped than before the quake, the teaching methods and contents are also new. The concept is called “Green Schools” and lets 945 students learn how humans and nature can live in better harmony, how to better protect themselves from disasters, and how school lessons can be fun.

In the past, there was only traditional teaching for the boys and girls: the teacher stood in front and lectured on topics that were mostly unrelated to their mountain world. Most of the parents are farmers who try to squeeze enough of a harvest for the entire family from their small plots on often steep slopes. But more and more often, heavy rains and erosion destroy the meagre harvests. The farmers are not able to look up existing solutions in books. Like around 37 percent of all adults in the Dhading district, they cannot read. And although most students will later also become farmers like their parents, the topic of sustainable agriculture has not played a role in the classrooms so far. That has now changed.

Becoming aware of both the value and danger of nature
What students and teachers do together, for example, is to create school gardens. There, the students learn how to use compost as fertiliser, which is inexpensive and does not harm Binoculars and field guides help to identify different kinds of birds.
nature. And since they now use their own hands in class, they remember what they have learned much better. Whoever wants to get even more involved in the subject, can attend the meetings of the eco-clubs after class, which are now available at each of the new schools.

The fact that people can only do well in the long term when the natural surroundings in which they live are healthy, is something that the boys and girls learn on guided tours through the forests. The lowest valley of the Dhading District lies at a mere 488 metres above sea level, while the highest peak reaches 7,409 metres. The flora and fauna of the district are respectively diverse. But up to now, most students and teachers hardly knew anything about the biodiversity surrounding them. Equipped with binoculars and field guides, they now learn to distinguish between the various kinds of birds and what they can do to preserve biodiversity. In painting and writing contests, they focus on environmental issues; they have thoroughly cleaned up their school grounds and surroundings and have set up rubbish bins.

“Our outdoor activities really convey a true love of nature. That is something that schoolbooks alone cannot achieve, but it is so important. Because: only those who know and love nature will also be willing to commit themselves to protecting it,” says Raju Acharya. He is the chairman of “Friends of Nature.” The Nepali conservation organisation is Welthungerhilfe’s partner in the implementation of the Green School project.

Since their school has become “green,” the children have also learned how to eat healthily and improve their hygiene. Only 39 percent of all households in the district have access to clean drinking water. This means that students often miss classes, because they suffer from diarrhoea and have to stay at home. But not only diseases, also natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods and landslides have already been the reasons for boys and girls not being able to come to school. As part of the school project, the students are now developing plans with their teachers to minimize the dangers of natural disasters for their schools and villages.

An intact environment helps to overcome poverty

The four green model schools as well as radio broadcasts have managed to convince other villages and schools as well. They now also want to live in harmony with and profit from nature, but no longer at its expense. “Friends of Nature” Chairman Raju Acharya: “In the beginning, many parents didn’t talk to us. Perhaps they thought that environmental protection was more important to us than combating poverty. But I am convinced that both can only go hand in hand. An intact environment not only enables high-yield agriculture, but also, for example, makes sustainable tourism possible.”

Education makes people more resilient against the risks of climate change and reduces deaths caused by environmental disasters. Should investments in the field of education stagnate, forecasts predict a 20% increase of this death rate per decade.

(UNESCO World Education Report 2016)
For decades, the shepherd families in the Awdal region in the north-west of Somaliland moved from one pasture to the next. However, in search of a more secure existence, more and more of them are settling down. They now need to find new sources of income and must learn how to organise life in a village community. All these changes also offer opportunities, especially for the women, giving them more access to more social participation. The key is education.

In the traditionally organised communities, women have so far been completely excluded from social and economic developments. “I used to know nothing at all and had to ask other people to read to me. Now, I already feel so much more educated and stronger. I’m ready to learn!”, says ambitious student Fadumo Nour Khain. At 22, she is one of the youngest in her class. 40 women regularly visit the village school in Ruqi and for the first time in their lives learn how to write, read and calculate. Today, the teacher is testing their spelling skills and asks the students to come to the blackboard one by one. They are not used to having such a large audience, so they cross the room a bit warily. But all of them manage their assignments without making any mistakes – and their shy smiles reveal how proud they are.

Taking the future into your own hands

The women quickly see the advantages and opportunities of a school education: more independent and better decisions, acting more autonomously and having a say. Sometimes, it is the little successes that boost self-confidence, for example when the women can suddenly do the math along with the vendors on the market. “I am able to do so many things now, and they are changing my life and my future in a positive way,” explains Fadumo Nour Khain happily and enthusiastically and is already looking forward to being able to help her children with their homework later. To become a role model – this idea has also motivated other mothers to go to school. Because having to reveal their ignorance in front of their children has made them all feel ashamed. Due to their lack of education, many women in Islamic-influenced Somaliland continue to be excluded from many areas of life. Many families still do not accept that girls go to school, and after the wedding the wives are expected to take care of the household. Not surprisingly, the number of illiterate women is very high.

At ten locations in the rural districts of Baki and Boroma, Welthungerhilfe is conducting literacy classes and courses in math for a total of 400 women. The lesson plan also
includes nutritional consultations. Here, the project participants learn how to prepare balanced and vitamin-rich meals, especially during pregnancy and breastfeeding, and when feeding infants and toddlers. Inadequate sanitary conditions and hygiene practices repeatedly cause severe gastrointestinal diseases in the settlement areas. During hygiene training, women now learn how to protect themselves and their families against infectious diseases: from the proper handling of drinking water, the importance of washing hands with soap and water, to the safe disposal of human and animal faeces.

**Career prospects**

Depending on their interest and good grades, there are even career opportunities opening up for the women. Welthungerhilfe is training 40 women to become nutrition, hygiene and sanitation advisors. During village festivals or at community meetings, they pass on their knowledge and become contact persons for the population. That way, they contribute to improving the living conditions in the long term. In addition, a certain quota in the water committees of the municipalities is reserved for women. These committees are responsible for maintaining wells and distributing resources, and they are urgently looking for female staff that knows how to read, write and calculate.

And what do the men think about their wives going to school? At first, some of them were sceptical, but now they respect the commitment of their wives and see them with completely different eyes. Since every student wants to apply her newly acquired knowledge as quickly as possible, tasks within the family are now being redistributed. Women who are already experienced in dealing with numbers, for example, now plan and calculate the income and expenses of their small farms together with their husbands. Smiling, Fadumo Nour Khain adds: “My husband was the one who signed me up for the classes.”

Knowing how to read, write and calculate makes it much easier to manage everyday life.
The “Skill Up!” programme encourages young people to acquire qualifications, and in Tajikistan for example, 500 young women are taking advantage of this opportunity. In a multi-country approach, the project provides career opportunities that enable young people to establish a livelihood in their home countries. The future seamstresses in Tajikistan not only learn how to tailor fabrics, they also study bookkeeping and learn how to market their finished pieces.

At the training centre in Gharm and in other locations, the participants work hands-on. The degrees they receive are approved by the government. Especially for young women in this poorest of the former Soviet republics, the training means a lot, and the demand for handmade traditional clothing is growing. The female customers appreciate the option of letting trained seamstresses produce their clothing. That way, they no longer have to do it themselves as was the custom for women for the longest time. They can use the additional free time to invest in their own training, which in turn leads to them being able to contribute more towards the development of their villages. Therefore, becoming a self-employed seamstress offers good perspectives for the future. Start-up funding makes it possible for the young women to acquire a sewing machine and fabrics.