



Bridging the Gaps



A YEAR OF SAVING LIVES

RET GERMANY
2025 ANNUAL REPORT

WHO WE ARE

In a world where crises and conflicts disrupt millions of lives, RET stands as a beacon of hope and transformation.

Founded in 2000, we have spent the past quarter century supporting communities afflicted by violence, armed conflicts, and disasters. Our journey spans 35 countries and more than 460 projects, positively impacting the lives of over 2.5 million individuals.

Our approach is holistic and community centered. We engage with adolescents, youth, young mothers, and families in refugee camps, as well as displaced communities in both urban and rural settings. By providing critical protection and education programs, we bridge gaps and promote resilience, empowerment, and community transformation.

We believe that young people are not merely beneficiaries but partners and future leaders of their communities. Our commitment extends beyond immediate relief.

We focus on building the capacity of youth to be positive changemakers and eliminate communities' dependency on aid. This includes formal and non-formal educational initiatives, as well as programs in food security, nutrition, economic empowerment, and entrepreneurship



LETTER FROM THE CEO

A Mission that Matters More than Ever



Elçin Demirel Topuz
President & CEO

Dear friends and partners of RET Germany,

As I write to you at the close of 2025 – my first year as CEO of RET Germany – I am struck by how deeply this work has confirmed everything I believed when I first joined the field in southeastern Türkiye over a decade ago: that sustained, locally grounded programming is the most powerful instrument we have for building stability.

Across every country where RET Germany works, the evidence is the same: When communities are supported and when young people have skills, families have livelihoods, and local institutions have capacity, they do not simply survive crisis. They help prevent its escalation.

None of this is possible without the trust of our partners:

- To the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO), our profound gratitude for your continued commitment to principled, results-driven development cooperation.
- To our partners in German civil society, the private sector, and beyond — thank you for standing with the communities we serve. Your investment in long-term programming, rather than short-term relief, makes the difference between fragility and resilience.

In 2025, RET Germany deepened its programming across several critical countries:

- In the Niger-Nigeria border region, we officially launched CIGABA — a BMZ-funded initiative addressing food

security, livelihoods, and social cohesion in a zone where cross-border tensions and economic fragility are tightly linked.

- In eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, we partnered with local organization BVES to launch a new initiative supporting demobilized adolescent girls and survivors of gender-based violence in North and South Kivu, where RET Germany continues to build peace from the ground up through Village Peace Committees.
- In the Akkar region of Lebanon, we extended our agricultural livelihoods and legal protection work and formalized our partnership with the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture — a milestone that reflects our commitment to working through and strengthening national institutions.

Looking ahead, RET Germany will continue to consolidate and deepen its impact across the Sahel, and we will look to expand our engagement to Türkiye and the Horn of Africa and carry forward our peace and security mandate across all geographies.

What gives me confidence is not just the strength of our programs, but the quality of the relationships we have built with local partners, with communities, and with you. The world is changing fast. But RET Germany's commitment to doing this work well, transparently, and alongside those we serve remains constant. Thank you for making it possible.

With gratitude and determination,

Elçin Demirel Topuz
President & CEO



1 in 70

**People globally
are forcibly
displaced,
around 117M**



5

**Countries
where RET
Germany was
active in 2025**

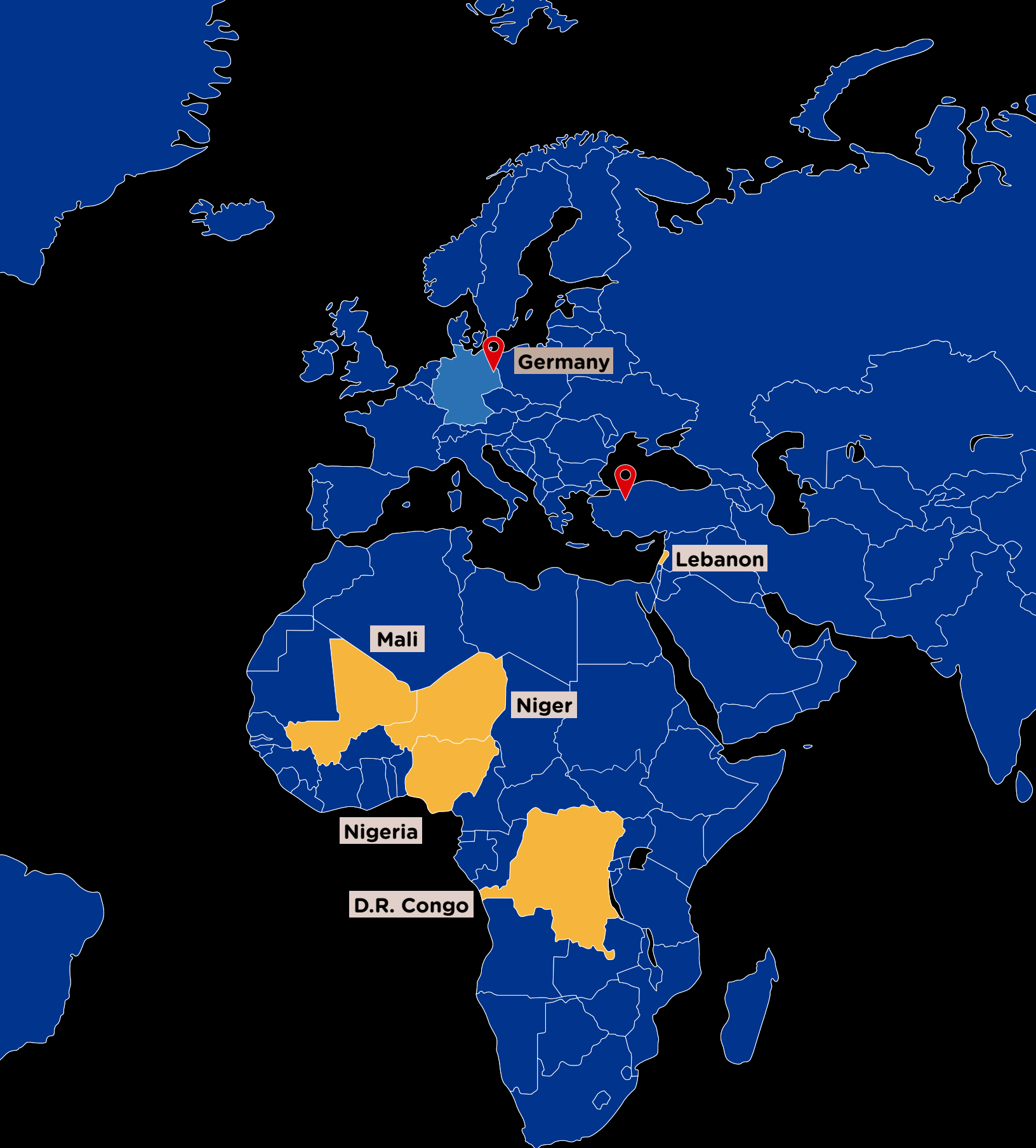


WHERE WE WORK

Since 2000, RET has supported communities affected by violence, armed conflicts, and disasters.

RET HQ
Berlin

Regional Office
Ankara





AFRICA

Strengthening Inclusion and Resilience in Fragile Systems

In 2025, our work in the Democratic Republic of Congo (D.R. Congo) was defined by a deliberate move toward inclusive education systems and resilient community structures, even as both contexts experienced volatility, economic shocks, and surging protection needs.

Our work across Mali, Niger, and Nigeria reflects a deliberate strategy: Protect education systems, reinforce communities, and create pathways to stability where few remain. Here's a snapshot of what we achieved.

7M

**Internally
displaced in
D.R. Congo –
200,000 more
than 2024**



In D.R. Congo, we marked a pivotal transition year. After RET Germany's successful completion of a four-year BMZ-funded resilience project in August, we left communities with reinforced agricultural cooperatives, Village Peace Committees (CVPs), and nutrition sensitive farming systems. This will empower them to withstand shocks in conflict affected Ituri and North Kivu, as well as resolve local disputes before they spiral into larger conflict.

By late 2025, we launched a new program funded by the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO) to continue strengthening resilience in communities where conflict undermines daily life.

The new program will build on the trust generated through the BMZ project's 99% overall achievement rate and focus on demobilizing youth – especially girls – in eastern D.R. Congo and making steps towards ending a protracted crisis that has displaced millions.

HOW KAUMBI BECAME SELF-RELIANT



In D.R. Congo, Kaumbi transformed her life through RET Germany's agriculture program. Once struggling to support her children, she learned to cultivate and manage her own crops, gaining the confidence and income she needed to stand on her own.

With new skills, tools, and training, she now grows enough to feed her family and sell in the local market, allowing her to pay school fees and plan for the future. Her journey shows how practical livelihood support can strengthen resilience, restore dignity, and open a path to true self reliance.





In Mali, RET Germany closed its first major, multi-year, BMZ funded project in the country, an achievement of scale and significance.

Over 5,800 youth gained agricultural and artisanal skills, including agro ecology, food processing, solar installation, plumbing, masonry, and repair trades. This is education in the broadest sense: Equipping youth to earn a living, reduce recruitment risks, and rebuild local economies.

The project also strengthened 25 cooperatives, advanced social cohesion initiatives, and delivered community peace actions and demonstrated our ability to change lives by linking livelihoods to peace and community transformation.

Soumaïla's Story



In Mali's Ségou region, Soumaïla transformed his harvests and his confidence through RET's climate adaptive agriculture training. He grew up farming with traditional methods, but poor yields left his family vulnerable.

After learning new techniques such as seed selection, soil preparation, and the use of natural biopesticides, his production improved dramatically. Today, Soumaïla applies a blend of ancestral knowledge and modern practices, resulting in healthier crops and greater food security for his household.

His story shows how practical training can strengthen resilience and create new opportunities for young farmers.

Across Maradi, Agadez, Tillaberia, and Diffa in Niger,

we reinforced community-based protection systems for 31,938 direct beneficiaries, including survivors of GBV, at-risk children, refugees, and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

We delivered case management, dignity kits, psychosocial support, child friendly spaces, and extensive community sensitization. This is core to saving lives in a region marked by abductions, trafficking, and conflict.

In Diffa, RET supported over 5,800 farmers, strengthened 23 savings groups, expanded

climate smart agriculture, and improved household food security – demonstrating how livelihoods and protection work hand in hand.

Through the ongoing Niger–Nigeria cross-border BMZ-funded project, we – along with several local NGOs and partners – established 10 farmer field schools, restored 150 hectares, and created 30 mediation committees, embedding peacebuilding in daily community life.

In Katsina State in Nigeria, RET

Germany and local partner CCDRN focused on stabilizing households and preparing for scale. Around 520 youth and women received cash assistance that jump started or protected their businesses, followed by structured business training.

Four vocational centers were rehabilitated, eight market driven trades introduced, and government partners cofinanced infrastructure – proof of strong local ownership.

Under food security, we worked with the state irrigation authority to prepare land reclamation plans for climate resilient agriculture.

Peacebuilding efforts strengthened 12 conflict mediation structures and trained 42 community leaders in dialogue and early warning.

Across the Sahel, our strategy was clear:

- Anchor education as protection, even when survival needs dominate.
- Save lives through nutrition, cash, and protection services.
- Change lives through vocational, agricultural, and climate smart livelihoods training.

In one of the world's most volatile regions, we remained exactly where our mandate demands: Alongside displaced and vulnerable youth, ensuring their futures remain bright.





MIDDLE EAST & ASIA

Urgency, Protection, and the Fight to Keep Education Alive

In 2025, Lebanon was at the epicenter of overlapping crises: Escalating regional violence, a surge in returns of Syrians to a still fragile Syria, a deepening financial and economic crisis, and mounting social pressures threatening the stability of host communities.

In this environment, our presence remained lifesaving, protection centered, and anchored in our founding mandate: Ensuring that refugee youth, no matter the crisis, have the right to learn, grow, and build a future.

1.3M

**Refugees
returned to
Syria in 2025**



In Lebanon, the Akkar Governorate entered the year among the most vulnerable regions, facing deep strain on food security, livelihoods, and social cohesion, with refugees, women, and people with disabilities least equipped to absorb further shocks.

At the same time, pressure on host communities in Northern Lebanon continued to mount, as competition over scarce resources tested relations between Lebanese residents and refugees sheltering among them, straining the social cohesion this project aims to protect.

In this environment, RET Germany's work in Akkar, through GATE Lebanon and with BMZ funding, grew more urgent. Seven Project Management Units were established, hosted at the Union of municipalities and staffed by more than 75 percent women. Fourteen

demonstration plots served as field schools, and Training of Trainers sessions equipped agricultural engineers to extend climate-smart practices to 1,300 smallholder farmers, 70 percent women, while 1,200 received tools and resources to apply them.

Our livelihoods and gender programming complemented this work by strengthening women's economic independence and community protection. Vocational training reached 350 women from vulnerable groups, 220 gained entrepreneurial skills through the Start Your Business program, and 20 women's associations received advocacy training on gender equality, benefiting 800 women in total. This did more than build skills; it strengthened the social fabric of communities under strain, offering stability and a stronger voice for women.

RET GERMANY BOARD MEMBERS

The RET Germany is part of a global network composed of three independent organizations (RET International, RET Americas, and RET Germany) that coordinate to implement projects and bridge the gaps. Board Members are listed alphabetically.

Anne Willem Bjileveld, Chair

Former Director, Division of External Relations/ Director of Europe at UNHCR; Personal Envoy to High Commissioner for the Western Balkans

Elçin Demirel Topuz, Board Member

President and CEO, RET Germany

Dr. Bahadır Engin, Co-Vice Chair

HR management/ executive. Ph.D. in Social Policy and Employment: Working Conditions and Occupational Accidents

Ute Kollies, Treasurer

Former Head of Office for the UN Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

Dr. Frank Nagelschmidt, Secretary

Attorney at Law, Partner at SES Attorneys at Law Berlin

Bridging the Gaps



RET Germany Annual Report 2025

Copyright © RET, 2026

RET ALLIANCE GLOBAL NETWORK

RET International (Geneva, Switzerland)

RET Germany (Berlin, Germany)

RET Americas (Washington, D.C., United States)



RET Germany



RET Germany



@retgermany

HEADQUARTERS

Lychener Straße 79
10437 Berlin, Germany

GENERAL INQUIRIES

info@retgermany.org

PARTNERSHIPS

Safi Lashley
s.lashley@retgermany.org

MEDIA

Ben Dwork
b.dwork@retgermany.org