

An aerial photograph of a water well in a rural setting. A man in a white shirt is pulling a rope from a circular opening in the ground. Another person in a yellow shirt is working at a larger, more complex well structure. Several yellow and blue plastic jerrycans are scattered around the wells. The ground is dry and dusty.

Strategy 2023–2027

Consolidation – Focus – Transformation



**HEKS
EPER**
Bread for all.

Big changes start small.

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Editorial

Big changes start small



In recent years, unpredictable events and developments such as the Coronavirus pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the resulting disruption of peace in Europe, and the energy crisis have demonstrated just how difficult it is to foresee even the immediate future. This Swiss Church Aid (HEKS/EPER) Strategy 2023-2027 therefore does not purport to be a detailed plan of our future activities. Instead, it is more about creating framework conditions for the organization, which enable it to cope with a broad range of possible developments and challenges.

For about a year, HEKS/EPER staff members, managers, the Executive Board and Board of Trustees have been working on the strategy and setting key priorities, supported in part by outside experts. The body that was born of the merger between Swiss Church Aid and Bread for All is to be consolidated by building on the strengths of both organizations. For this we need to join forces. In the future, we will focus our activities on the four priority issues of the "Right to land and food", "Climate justice", "Flight and migration" and "Inclusion". This will entail linking the experience we have gained from projects and programmes in roughly thirty countries and in Switzerland, with our political work.

We will be resolutely pursuing the vision of a just world, where the dignity of all people is respected, peace reigns, and the natural environment is preserved. This calls for changes. What is at stake is nothing short of systemic change at the social, economic and political levels. But if the world is to change, so too must the organization. It is undergoing a process of constant transformation in terms of our thinking, culture, processes and structures, aimed at enhancing the impact and efficiency of HEKS/EPER's work.

We are aware that neither HEKS/EPER nor the churches can solve the world's problems. But for the people concerned, we are making crucial contributions on a small scale, so that our vision can gradually become reality in specific local, regional, national or international contexts.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Schmid'.

Walter Schmid, Präsident



Introduction

The HEKS/EPER Strategy 2023-2027 lays down “transformation” as the goal of HEKS/EPER’s work and as the guiding principle for organizational development. The first strategic phase of the merged agency will be devoted to consolidating the strengths of both organizations, with specific points of focus in selected areas. This is intended to create the scope for transformation.

The merger of the Aid Organization of the Protestant Church in Switzerland with Bread for All gave rise to Swiss Church Aid (HEKS/EPER). The 2023-27 Strategy systematically lays out HEKS/EPER’s rights-based work by means of an overarching transformation model: the supreme goal is systemic change at the social, economic and policy levels. We are doing our part to improve the living conditions of people in Switzerland and around the world, to promote their rights, raise awareness and mobilize society, policy-makers, business and churches to this end. For this purpose, we harness **synergies derived from interconnecting** programme and policy work, and also work at home and abroad.

We are also pursuing **organizational transformation** so as to effectively and efficiently implement the transformation model and the corresponding performance mandate. We intend to carry this forward in various areas and dimensions in the 2023-2027 strategy phase.

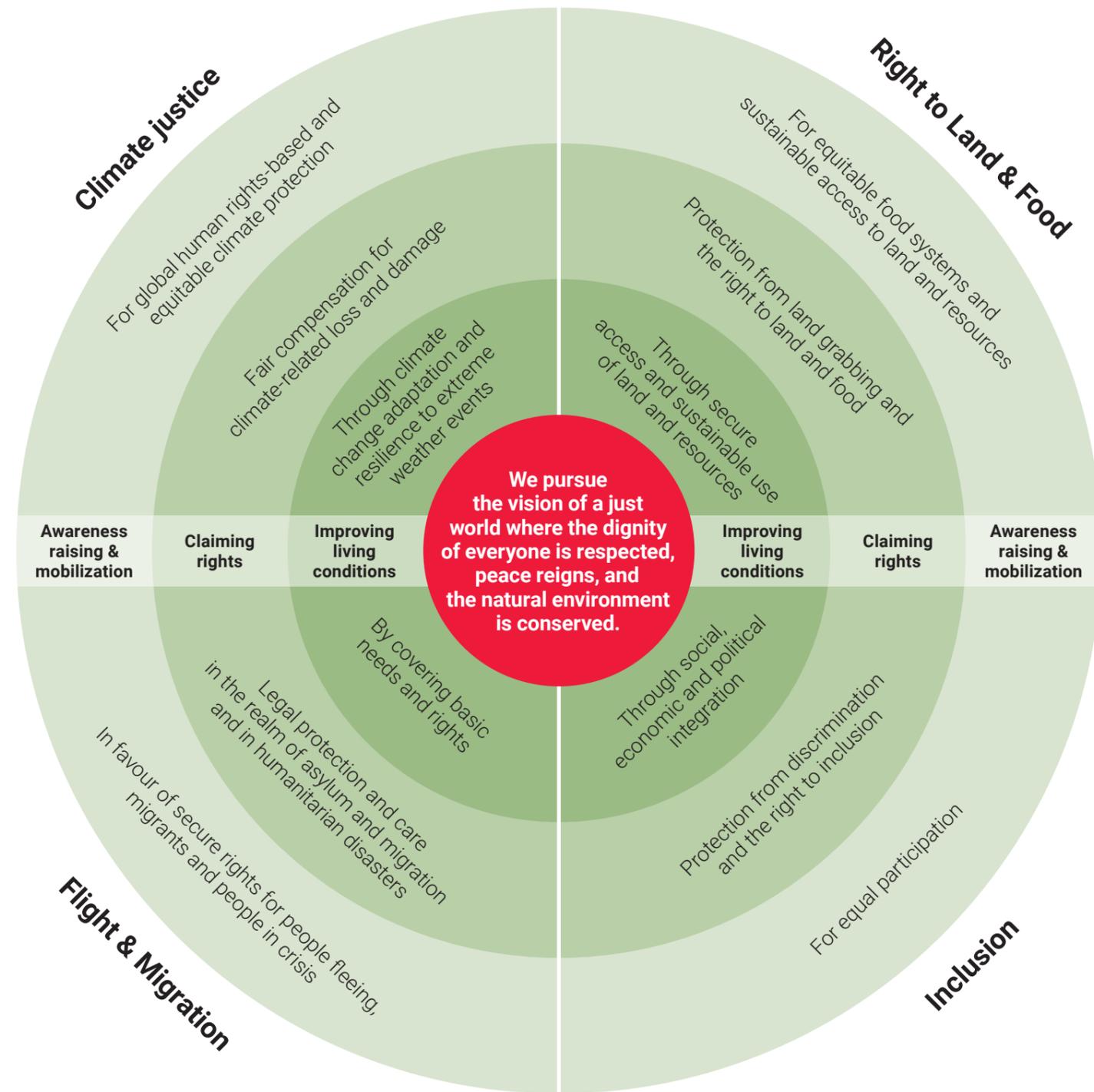


Point of focus
Climate justice

Transformation model

Our transformation model systematically lays out the work of HEKS/EPER in the four priority areas of “Climate justice”, “Right to land and food”, “Inclusion” and “Flight and migration”. The goal is systemic change at the social, economic and political levels. We are doing our part to improve the living conditions of people in Switzerland and around the world, promote their rights, raise awareness and mobilize society, policy-makers, business and churches to this end.

The seven mandates of the **Protestant Church in Switzerland (PCS)** are “Development Cooperation”, “Humanitarian Aid”, “Church Cooperation”, “Development and Social Policy Engagement”, “Advocacy”, “Integration” and “Information and Awareness-Raising”. These mandates are being implemented in the framework of the four priority areas. **Humanitarian aid** will have a particularly high profile. In this strategy phase, we pay special attention to the cross-cutting approaches of “**Gender and Diversity**” and “**Digital Inclusion**”. We will also be continuing or developing other cross-cutting approaches.



Organizational transformation

We are also pursuing an organizational transformation so as to **effectively and efficiently implement** the transformation model and the corresponding performance mandate. We intend to carry this forward in various areas and dimensions in the 2023 to 2027 strategy phase.

Organizational transformation means systemically transforming the organization in terms of mindset, culture, processes and structures. It is an ongoing process of advancement aimed at boosting the impact and efficiency of HEKS/EPER's work, as depicted in the transformation model.

To achieve organizational transformation, we set goals in the following **eight sub-areas**: "Role-based cooperation model", "Participation", "Innovation", "Digital inclusion", "Gender and diversity", "Staff development", "Leadership culture" and "Identity". In these eight sub-areas, transformation is framed within the **three dimensions** of "Structure and processes", "Culture" and "Mindset".





Point of focus
Right to land and food



Self-perception

We pursue **the vision of a just world** where the dignity of everyone is respected, peace reigns, and the natural environment is conserved. With the 2030 Agenda as a reference framework, we are pursuing this vision in the **four thematic priority areas** of "Climate justice", "Right to land and food", "Flight and migration" and "Inclusion". The seven mandates of the Protestant Church in Switzerland (PCS), as sponsor of our organization, are being implemented in the framework of these thematic priorities. Work will continue in the areas of "Business and Human Rights" and "Civil Society and Conflict Transformation", under the umbrella of these four priority areas. Humanitarian aid is of special significance and has a high profile.

We position ourselves as **the aid agency of the Protestant Church in Switzerland**, based on **human rights and fundamental Christian values**: respect, charity, co-determination, transparency and impact are both an aspiration and a legitimation. They shape our commitment. We live out our self-perception as a Swiss organization that is both internationally active and also regionally active and anchored. HEKS/EPER maintains dialogue with the Church and its members support us in implementing our vision. HEKS/EPER is an expression of church solidarity with the world.

Of key importance to our **identity** are our values which, for some, are derived from Christian faith, and for others, from human rights and humanitarian tradition. The support that we receive from Church, society and institutional donors are a reflection of HEKS/EPER's rootedness in civil society. Our professionalism is based on **technical standards** and the requirements of our field of activity.

Programme work and policy work

Our programme work is based on **strategic country programmes** abroad and on **strategic regional programmes** at home, which are invariably carried out together with local partners and project participants. In Switzerland, we focus on the priority areas of "Inclusion", "Flight and migration" and "Climate justice". Internationally, we execute our programme work in all four HEKS/EPER priority areas. The corresponding projects may be self-funded or externally funded.

In addition to our programme work, and depending on the topic, we engage with development and social policy issues in Switzerland, in programme countries or internationally. We take a constructive approach based on dialogue and problem-solving. **Linking development and social policy work with programme work** is highly important to us and shapes our self-perception and identity. The policy work is legitimized by the programme work. The programme work is supported by the policy work.

One crucial strategic mission is the **continuing development of our policy and thematic work** in the four priority areas. On balance, the resources for the policy and thematic work of the organization as a whole are to be maintained, but allocated in a more balanced manner across the four priority areas:

For **work in Switzerland**, resources and competences for **thematic and social policy work** are being restructured such that HEKS/EPER can provide even more robust support for the affected people in Switzerland, through programme work as well as policy work. The thematic focus of policy work at home will be framed within the priority areas. In the **field of global cooperation**, resources for **thematic and policy work** in the four priority areas will be allocated more evenly.





Point of focus
Flight and Migration



Private sector and partnerships

We foster **cooperation and dialogue with the private sector** based on a shared commitment to achieving our vision in the framework of the 2030 Agenda. We are critical of private sector practices when they violate human rights or environmental standards. In so doing, we reject undifferentiated black-and-white thinking. We promote and cultivate the necessary skill sets within the organization, both for cooperating professionally with the private sector and for **pointing up shortcomings**.

We invest in **cross-departmental partnerships that are of relevance to the organization as a whole**. All existing partnerships are being reviewed for their strategic and operational relevance. We cultivate strategic partnerships especially with Church, NGOs, political stakeholders, the business sector and universities.

Communications

We distinguish and position ourselves by means of a **modern and uniform style of communication**. Visual appearance, imagery and language style are standardized and adapted to the particular target groups. We encourage and require the use of respectful language that is understandable to all, both internally and externally. For all measures, we employ a style of communication that is appropriate to the complexity of the work. We avoid outdated stereotypes and language. We use innovative forms and channels of communication and we are reaching out **increasingly to a younger public**.

We gauge and report transparently on the impact of our work, and on the allocation of funds.





Point of focus
Inclusion



Cooperation and organization

We enhance personal responsibility and self-organization by means of a **role-based cooperation model**. In this way we create conditions that allow staff and managers greater creative freedom, with a view to boosting the impact and efficiency of the organization's overall performance mandate.

We develop an overarching and specific **concept of leadership roles** in terms of leadership responsibility and behaviour, and invest in **ongoing staff development**. We continue to develop employer branding in order to appeal to appropriate target persons. This entails actively promoting identification with HEKS/EPER across sectors.

Participation is a crucial value for us. Groups and individuals with whom we collaborate to improve their life circumstances can participate actively in programme work and influence and help shape it.

Innovation and digitalization

We pursue a **broad concept of innovation**, not limited merely to new offerings (projects, campaigns), but also intentionally encompassing new business models, new roles in networks and forms of cooperation or other management and leadership models. We specifically test the content and potential of new innovation methods for "prototyping" purposes, with resources being deployed in an easily understandable manner.

Digital access is becoming ever more crucial to participating in society and the job market. This is why we pursue the **aim of digital inclusion for all persons** with whom we work.



What does HEKS/EPER mean to me?



Die Arbeit bei HEKS ist für mich das Privileg, einen sinnstiftenden Beruf auszuüben: Ich trage dazu bei, dass es benachteiligten Menschen besser geht. HEKS bedeutet für mich humane Tradition sowie Professionalität mit Herz.

Jeannette Vögeli
Teamleiterin institutionelle Partnerschaften



I have joined HEKS to draw a smile on people's faces and to alleviate their sufferings. Working at HEKS provided me with the feeling of content and fulfillment year after year. HEKS has also been an interesting place of networking and it is an excellent resource of learning and developing my career.

Hakam Awad
Landesdirektor Palästina/Israel



L'EPER est pour moi synonyme de volonté. La volonté de se battre pour améliorer le quotidien de celles et ceux qui, face aux injustices, souffrent ou ne peuvent s'épanouir, mais aussi d'anticiper les défis de demain tout en abordant ceux d'aujourd'hui.

Olivier Ferrari
Leiter Geschäftsstelle Westschweiz



Der Klimawandel beunruhigt mich. Doch ich bin durch die HEKS-Strategie motiviert, mich mit entwicklungspolitischer Arbeit für einen systemischen Wandel einzusetzen, für eine Welt, in der die planetarischen Grenzen und Menschenrechte respektiert werden.

Cybèle Schneider
Fachperson Klimagerechtigkeit

Publishing information

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