



For a life in dignity

Big changes start small.



**HEKS
EPER**
Bread for all.

Foreword



On 1 January 2022, HEKS/EPER and Bread for All effectively merged to form "Swiss Church Aid HEKS/EPER". This merger is a reaction by both agencies to changes in society and church which necessitated a joining of forces.

This is a way of ensuring that the donations entrusted to us will continue to be used responsibly, efficiently and effectively. And by linking up the two areas of development policy and development cooperation, we are able to further optimise the impact of our projects and measures in Switzerland and abroad.

As a non-profit agency we need strong partners by our side. Help us move one step closer to our vision of a humane and just world.

Thank you very much!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter Merz". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Peter Merz, Direktor



Switzerland: “HEKS/EPER New Gardens” promotes the social inclusion of people with a migration and refugee background in Switzerland.

For a life in dignity

HEKS/EPER, Swiss Church Aid, supports projects to combat poverty and injustice in more than 30 countries and provides humanitarian aid for victims of disasters of natural hazards and armed conflicts worldwide. In Switzerland, we champion the rights and causes of refugees and the socially disadvantaged. Through its development and social policy work in the realms of climate justice, the right to land and food, migration and inclusion, HEKS/EPER strives for systemic change – worldwide and in Switzerland.

In Switzerland



Inclusion

We support the socially disadvantaged so that they can have a stake in society.



Advocacy

Our commitment is to ensuring that refugees are able to find shelter and protection and live in safety.



Social and Development Policy

We highlight the causes of global inequality and strive for greater justice.

Abroad



Development cooperation

We support rural communities and marginalized in obtaining access to land, water, food and incomes and in claiming their right to basic services, to have a say and to lead autonomous lives.



Church cooperation

We strengthen members of marginalized, support the sick and people with disabilities and in so doing foster solidarity and social cohesion.



Humanitarian aid

We supply people in extreme need with essential items and help them to rebuild vital infrastructure and livelihoods.



Romania: Jointly with the “Diakonia” Foundation of the Reformed Church in Transylvania, HEKS/EPER operates a home care service based on the Swiss model.



Brazil: Biological and cultural diversity is under growing threat from single-crop farming. HEKS/EPER supports peasant families and traditional communities in securing their basic food supply.

Our priorities

Our expertise and experience abroad are what legitimise us for the development and social policy work we do in Switzerland. HEKS/EPER places the emphasis on the four priorities of climate justice, the right to land and food, refuge and migration, and inclusion.

Right to land and food

Enough food is produced on earth to feed the entire world population. Yet more than 800 million people are experiencing hunger around the world. Peasant families, fisher people and livestock farmers in rural areas contribute significantly to global food security. Yet they are hardly supported in return. On the contrary, the growing industrialization of agriculture is making it ever more difficult for them to access land, water, seeds or other natural resources, when such access is not simply denied them.

HEKS/EPER therefore strives to ensure that peasant farmers, pastoralist families and traditional communities are assured of access to land, water and seeds. They should maintain their locally-adapted land management methods and engage in ecologically sustainable cultivation, in this way also arming themselves against climatic changes. And through value chains, they should be able to find markets in which to sell their products at fair prices.

Internationally, HEKS/EPER campaigns for the enforcement of fundamental human rights such as the right to food and water. Ground-breaking UN declarations like the “Declaration on the Rights of Peasants” should not be allowed to remain mere statements of intent. Policies in countries with poverty and inequalities must be designed such that it reinforces small-scale agriculture and agro-ecological cultivation methods. Switzerland for its part must shape its agricultural and economic policy coherently and make it consistent with the rights of peasant families. Private companies domiciled in Switzerland must also fulfil their human rights obligations in the pursuit of their activities abroad.



DR of the Congo: Citizens have been suffering as a result of armed conflicts for decades now. HEKS/EPER is improving the social and economic living conditions of rural dwellers.



Cambodia: Climate change is particularly perceptible here. HEKS/EPER promotes the building of water canals, trains smallholders in organic farming and supports the development of local seeds.

Climate justice

The worst impacts of climate change are being felt by those who have contributed the least to it. People in Africa, Asia and Latin America are primarily the ones enduring the adverse consequences of climate change. Ever more frequently they must contend with very protracted dry spells or heavy rainfall that destroy their crops. Rising sea levels or progressive soil erosion are also destroying valuable agricultural land.

The industrialised countries bear the brunt the responsibility for global warming and its impacts. Hence HEKS/EPER's calls for climate justice: those who caused climate change should contribute the most to climate protection. They should adequately support the people in countries with poverty and inequalities so that they are able to cope with the deteriorating circumstances.

But climate justice also means reducing our carbon footprint here in Switzerland and making our lives and economic activities climate neutral. This is why HEKS/EPER also advocates for climate justice at the policy level, more specifically for the goal of "net zero by 2040". Global warming must be limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius, as agreed in the Paris Climate Agreement.

Refuge and Migration

Worldwide refugee and migration flows pose a major challenge to many countries. They often mean untold suffering for those involved. People driven by poverty, violence or hunger to leave their homes often set out on dangerous escape routes and so risk falling victim to violence, exploitation and human rights violations.

Since its inception in 1946, HEKS/EPER has championed the cause refugees and displaced people. In Switzerland today, HEKS/EPER assists them through legal advice and by organising integration projects to give migrants a greater stake in society. Internationally, HEKS/EPER provides humanitarian aid for people on the move and helps displaced people and local communities to live side-by-side in mutual respect. In countries with high poverty and inequality, HEKS/EPER promotes activities to counter the impacts of climate change – one of the key reasons for

the displacement of many people – and sets democratic processes in train through policy dialogue and networking. This brings new prospects to people in their home countries and in turn reduces the pressure to migrate.

In Switzerland, HEKS takes positions on asylum, migration and integration policy and champions the human rights-based administration of justice. This helps secure a better hearing for migrants' concerns.



Bangladesh: The Rohingya have been brutally expelled from their home country, Myanmar. They live in refugee camps and depend on humanitarian aid.



French-speaking Switzerland: Radio podcasts are used to inform older migrants in their mother tongues about social and health-related matters.

Inclusion

Social inequality is growing worse around the world, and in Switzerland. It has been compounded by the corona pandemic. Disadvantaged people are grappling not only with financial problems, but besides, often find themselves socially excluded.

Through some 60 projects in 13 cantons, HEKS/EPER endeavours to ensure that everyone in our country can have a stake in its social, cultural, political and economic life. HEKS/EPER supports people of Swiss and foreign origin who are impacted by unemployment or any other social limitation in leading autonomous lives. HEKS/EPER conducts programmes and projects in the areas of job market integration, the structuring of daily routines, encounters, assisted living, language, intercultural understanding, child and parent education, and age and migration.

HEKS/EPER also assists disadvantaged communities abroad in perceiving and claiming their rights. These encompass, for example, inclusion in the society and economy, a say in politics or access to health systems or education, especially for girls and women, the landless, victims of conflicts or members of minorities. In South-eastern Europe, HEKS/EPER supports social recognition for the Roma minority, for example. In Bangladesh we advocate for Dalits and Adivasis to enjoy the same rights as the majority population.

Our Values

The dignity of every person is central to our work.

Justice

We support people and communities in claiming their rights.

Autonomy

We strengthen people, families and communities so that they can lead autonomous lives.

A voice

We respect the needs and concerns of the people involved in our projects.

Respect

We treat people with respect and are committed to peaceful coexistence.

Solidarity

We name the causes of poverty and injustice and support people in extreme need.

Help without borders

We support people irrespective of their political, cultural, ethnic or religious identity.

Closeness to people

We cultivate dialogue and promote interpersonal encounters.

Effectiveness

We constantly monitor whether and how our support changes the lives of people and communities we work with for the better.

Accountability

We undertake to be transparent about the use and impacts of the funds entrusted to us.

Our working methods

HEKS/EPER gears its support to the resources and needs of the people concerned and implements programmes in concert with them. Staff members are in constant dialogue with programme participants, partner organizations, sponsoring institutions, donors and Cantonal Reformed Churches.

HEKS/EPER works mainly with local employees and local partner organizations abroad. They are close to the target groups and familiar with their environment.

In Switzerland, in addition to its Zürich-based headquarters, HEKS/EPER maintains offices in the regions of Aargau/Solothurn, Rural Basel/Basel City, Bern, Eastern Switzerland, Zurich/Schaffhausen and in French-speaking Switzerland. They implement programmes and projects in Switzerland.

Transparency

For HEKS/EPER, transparency means that we comprehensively inform the general public, donors, contracting parties and programme participants about our work, structures and the origin, use and impact of the resources entrusted to us.

HEKS/EPER adheres to the ZEW0 guidelines. The ZEW0 seal of approval is awarded to non-profit organizations that report exhaustively on their activities, keep transparent accounts and use their donations effectively, economically and for their designated purpose.



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HEKS/EPER has been awarded the ZEWo seal of approval. This attests that its donations reach the right place and are used efficiently for good causes.



**Your donations
in good hands**

HEKS/EPER is a member of
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