



ANNUAL REPORT 2021



**HEKS
EPER**
Bread for all.

EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

The Russian army's invasion of Ukraine has altered the global picture. Cities are being bombed, and millions of people are fleeing. People are coming together to demonstrate and to hold church services for peace, and calls are being made for violence and destruction to be given no chance. There is growing fear of a major war. We are witnessing up close just how fragile peace and freedom can be, and just how much humanity depends on protection and solidarity. As an aid organization, we will be strongly challenged to make our contribution.



Wars, civil strife and displacements are now part and parcel of many people's lived reality around the world. Their lives are becoming a daily struggle for survival, as they must seek protection and grapple with food shortages and the lack of prospects. They are being persecuted and oppressed, their land is being confiscated, and their rights are being trampled on. Anyone who fights back will suffer as a result. Authoritarian regimes contemptuous of human rights are becoming ever more widespread and gaining a firm grip on power. Where does this leave justice?

And above all, there are the environmental threats, of which we have become all too aware in recent years.

Global warming is no longer something abstract, but is being felt in real terms. The threat of climate change is not perceived equally acutely by everyone, but in the long run, we all inhabit one finite planet. Therefore, besides its theological significance, the integrity of creation has taken on a direct, existential meaning.

« Formulated decades ago by the Ecumenical Assembly in Basel, the goals of «Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation» are assuming ominous urgency.»

Formulated decades ago by the Ecumenical Assembly in Basel, the goals of «Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation» are assuming ominous urgency. They remain benchmarks for our work. The articles in this Annual Report illustrate the way they guide us at home and abroad, whether in mounting reliable projects or in our relief efforts in situations of dire emergency. What clearly emerges is that our support for people in need of help is inseparable from our own way of life. Justice is indivisible.

Linking HEKS/EPER's programme work with the Bread for All development policy campaigns is also one of the principal concerns underlying the merger of the two foundations, which took place during the year under review. This paves the way for things that belong together to grow together in the years ahead – the commitment to a life of dignity at home and abroad, and the call to responsibility. This applies equally to HEKS/EPER's work at home and abroad. Oppression and hardship trigger migration. Our asylum policy is being put to the test. Very soon, refugees from the Ukraine – and elsewhere – will be needing our support, not just wherever they may find themselves abroad, but also in Switzerland.

HEKS/EPER and Bread for All, both firmly anchored in the Protestant Church, adhere strictly to the vision of justice, peace and the integrity of creation. We intend to be guided by it, all the more so in times of great uncertainty. Standing together with you all.

Walter Schmid
Chair of the HEKS/EPER
Board of Trustees

Jeanne Pestalozzi
Former Chair of the Bread for All Board of Trustees
Vice-Chair of the HEKS/EPER Board of Trustees

OVERVIEW OF 2021



PAGES 4 TO 9 OUR THEMES ABROAD: DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION, CHURCH COOPERATION AND HUMANITARIAN AID

In **28**

countries, HEKS/EPER actively ran programmes and projects in 2021.

90 000

people were able to improve their living conditions in 2021 thanks to HEKS/EPER's work abroad.

60 000

People boosted their incomes thanks to HEKS/EPER assistance.

PAGES 12 TO 17 OUR THEMES IN SWITZERLAND: INTEGRATION AND ADVOCACY

61 803

people in Switzerland were assisted by HEKS/EPER in 2021 in claiming their rights and in becoming integrated.

In **3**

projects, new schemes for refugees and temporarily admitted persons were created in 2021.

319

HEKS/EPER intercultural interpreters were deployed in 2021.



PAGES 20 AND 21 INTERVIEW WITH PETER MERZ, DIRECTOR OF HEKS/EPER: REVIEW AND OUTLOOK 2022

353

people were permanently employed by HEKS/EPER in 2021 in Switzerland.

16,5 %

represented the share of administrative costs, incl. fundraising (Zewo maximum: 25%).

49

locations throughout Switzerland hosted the anniversary exhibition «75 years of HEKS/EPER».

PAGES 22 TO 25 ORGANIZATION, RESULTS-ORIENTED ACTION, RESPONSIBILITY, TRANSPARENCY AND QUALITY CONTROL

15

key indicators were monitored abroad as standard impact assessment procedure.

In **4**

HEKS/EPER project countries, compliance with the commitments outlined in the voluntary code CHS* was assessed.

25

data protection courses were organized in 4 languages for more than 300 HEKS/EPER employees.



PAGES 26 AND 27 NOTES TO THE 2021 FINANCIAL REPORT, BALANCE SHEET AND OPERATING STATEMENT

74,3

million francs went to projects in Switzerland and abroad.

24,9

million francs came from donations.

15,3 %

of the proceeds comprised contributions from church sources.

* Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability



HEKS/EPER MAKES A DIFFERENCE ABROAD

In 2021, HEKS/EPER was present in 28 countries around the world and, jointly with its local and international partners and with project participants, worked to realize their rights to food, land and water, as well as their entitlement to equality and co-determination.

In the countries where HEKS/EPER was active, the year 2021 was again largely influenced by the pandemic and its consequences. COVID-19 amplified the existing challenges – extreme poverty, climate change and armed conflicts – and hampered the progress of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 development goals. Earlier progress in combating hunger, for instance, was in part cancelled out by the pandemic: Roughly 960 million people experienced chronic hunger in 2021 or were at immediate risk of it – we are a long way from the goal of «zero hunger» by 2030.

In many countries, human rights also came under renewed pressure. The poorest people in countries of the Global South suffered badly from the negative consequences of the pandemic. Rural dwellers, women and marginalized social groups were particularly affected.

In 2021, HEKS/EPER supported countless people in claiming their rights to food, land and water, as well as to equality and co-determination. More specifically, HEKS/EPER facilitated dialogue between people and communities, and government authorities and the business sector, aimed at negotiating equitable legal, economic, political and social conditions. HEKS/EPER is convinced that it will take strong civil societies in these countries to pave the way for self-determined and sustainable development that benefits everyone.

Enhanced powers for the countries

It is therefore crucial for HEKS/EPER partner organizations and the staff of HEKS/EPER country offices not only to work competently and efficiently, but also to have more decision-making powers in project planning and implementation. They, after all, are the ones close to the people and their problems and with potential solutions in their sights. In consequence, the International Division assigned greater human and financial resources as well as decision-making powers to programme countries.

Cooperation as equals

Furthermore, the International Division tackled sensitive issues such as sexual violence, power imbalances and racism in the international cooperation environment. The aim was to reflect critically on programme work in the countries and derive measures on that basis, and to promote cooperation on equal terms with project participants, inspired by mutual respect and learning.

More information on project work in individual countries:
en.heks.ch/worldwide

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Peasant families in the Global South found themselves confronted with various challenges other than COVID-19, such as the threat to their habitats from climate change or agro-industry. The development cooperation goals pursued in 19 countries included securing land rights and promoting climate-resilient cultivation methods and inclusive market systems.

200 000

people enjoyed better access to natural resources or successfully boosted their incomes thanks to continuing training and market-related measures.

GEORGIA: ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

The South Georgian commune of Marneuli close to the border with Armenia and Azerbaijan is inhabited mainly by ethnic minorities. Its citizens are engaged mainly in agriculture, but farming methods inimical to health and the environment are widespread, and climate change is causing lower yields. Launched in early 2021, the project aims to improve the incomes of rural dwellers by introducing more ecological and climate-resilient agricultural practices.

More than 400 persons benefited directly from the activities conducted during the first year of the project – invariably carried out in ethnically mixed groups, including women and young people. A task force comprising persons of Armenian, Azerbaijani and Georgian backgrounds and representing the private, public and civil society sectors (75% women) placed the main emphasis on promoting climate-friendly agriculture and on organizing the relevant training programmes.

In addition, a climate change scenario 2021–2050 for Marneuli and a corresponding adaptation plan for agriculture were drawn up; they are now being discussed with the communal administration, and are expected to be included in the communal strategy.

CAMBODIA: HIGHER EARNINGS FROM CASHEWS

The project implemented by HEKS/EPER in three provinces in north-eastern Cambodia aims to sustainably improve the earnings of rural dwellers from cashew cultivation. Despite the ongoing pandemic, HEKS/EPER was able to expand the scope of the project in the year 2021.

HEKS/EPER supported the development of a national cashew association and facilitated access for cashew producers to high-quality means of production and new cultivation methods, which ultimately gave rise to a more efficient cashew value chain. Information and educational materials were also produced and published via an app and on Facebook. This information was accessed almost 90 000 times between December 2020 and October 2021.

At the same time, the project also focused on better land rights for poor rural communities and indigenous population groups in the three provinces. There was also remarkable progress in this realm. For example, the project reinforced alternative dispute settlement committees so as to ensure that despite the poorly functioning court system, indigenous communities were able to settle their land disputes. Up to the end of 2021, these committees had successfully resolved five land disputes and enabled 290 indigenous households to secure land (1600 hectares).



CHURCH COOPERATION

35 000

people in Eastern Europe and the Middle East benefited from church cooperation projects.

In 2021, HEKS/EPER continued to support its partner churches in Eastern Europe in playing an active and responsible role in their societies. HEKS/EPER remained a key partner and support, especially in youth and educational work, also for churches in Syria and Lebanon, which are facing immense difficulties after years of warfare.



SYRIA: SCHOLARSHIPS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The civil war has driven some one million of the roughly 1.8 million Christians originally in Syria to leave the country. Despite this, they still have a highly meaningful presence in the country: the Christian minorities stand for a pluralistic society. Church schools are also places of encounter and openness towards the values and traditions of various religions. In this way they are contributing significantly to amicable coexistence and to future peace in Syria.

The project therefore supports schools in Protestant church parishes and provides scholarship contributions for students from difficult family backgrounds, irrespective of their religion. In 2021, the project enabled 2300 young people to attend the private schools run by partner church organizations UAECNE and NESSL. Regular school operations were drastically reduced owing to the pandemic. Schools responded immediately and offered remote learning. HEKS/EPER supplied the required devices for 40 students, paid for the Internet connections, and reimbursed teachers any additional expenditures incurred so that lessons could continue.



UKRAINE: MULTIFACETED CHURCH COOPERATION

The pandemic has further compounded the health and economic situation of the people in Transcarpathia. Families already living in precarious circumstances before the pandemic were the ones mainly affected by scaled-back health services, and joblessness. Reduced social assistance and spiralling food prices further exacerbated poverty. In 2021, HEKS/EPER provided assistance in a number of ways.

The Mezovari and Hetyen daycare centres provided a structured daily routine for 92 children and young people with disabilities. Some 79 Roma children were able to attend afternoon classes. They received a warm meal, help with their homework and participated in a range of recreational activities. In December 2021, and reacting to the economic crisis, HEKS/EPER also distributed food packages and warm blankets to 86 Roma families and to 92 families of children with disabilities. The home care project provided 288 elderly and sick people with care services and through its soup kitchen and bakery, the Beregszasz centre for social and welfare work (Diakoniezentrum) assisted 240 people listed by the local social service. The Centre also looked after 25 people in the home for the elderly and dozens of women and children affected by domestic violence found protection in 15 rooms.

HUMANITARIAN AID

The main HEKS/EPER humanitarian interventions in 2021 were the emergency assistance programmes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh, as well as support for refugees in Uganda. But rapid and flexible reactions were needed time and again – for example, following an earthquake in Haiti in August, or after a fresh escalation of violence in the Gaza Strip in May.

17,4 Mio.

francs were allocated for humanitarian aid projects in 28 countries worldwide.



DRC CONGO: SUPPORT FOR DISPLACED PEOPLE

The HEKS/EPER project provides emergency assistance in the hard-to-reach areas in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The aim is to improve the living conditions of the people most affected by armed conflicts in the region. Having been forced to flee, many of these people returned to find their native villages destroyed and plundered.

Some 6600 households received seeds and farming equipment so as to improve their food security. In addition, the project secured access to clean drinking water for 29532 households and access to washing facilities for 19742 people. Moreover, 150 latrines were built for 3000 people and good hygiene practices were explained to more than 220 000 people. Cash-for-work programmes were mounted to repair critical road links and to reinforce a bridge and make it once more passable. These activities created a temporary source of income for 5188 families. Repairs to access roads made it possible simultaneously to supply humanitarian aid to the conflict-ridden area and to transport the region's agricultural products to markets in urban centres, thereby helping to revive the local economy.



VENEZUELA: EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES

Venezuela's basic supply systems are in partial collapse as a result of the political crisis, hyperinflation and international embargoes. The corona pandemic has further exacerbated the situation. HEKS/EPER runs an emergency aid programme in the country that targets the neediest people and has benefited more than 200 000 people over the past two years.

In 2021, HEKS/EPER-supported soup kitchens in the Federal State of Apure distributed more than 23 200 warm meals to some 600 people, for the most part elderly and living in precarious circumstances. Another 2000 people in the greater Caracas area received food items and toiletries. HEKS/EPER also assisted nine healthcare facilities in upgrading their hygiene conditions and expanding their capacity for disinfection and the prevention of infection, among other things by organizing for clean water supplies and the proper disposal of refuse. As part of nationwide anti-COVID campaigns, HEKS/EPER informed about 25 000 people in Apure about the virus and the requisite hygiene measures. In the coming year, HEKS/EPER plans to expand the emergency aid programme to the Federal State of Táchira, which borders on Colombia and is also badly affected by the crisis.

HEKS/EPER MAKES A DIFFERENCE GLOBALLY

PROJECT COUNTRIES 2021

Europe

- Armenia
- Georgia
- Hungary
- Italy
- Kosovo
- Romania
- Serbia
- Slovakia
- Ukraine

Africa

- DR of the Congo
- Ethiopia
- Niger
- Senegal
- South Sudan
- Uganda

Asia

- Bangladesh
- Cambodia
- Iraq
- Palestine/Israel
- Lebanon
- Myanmar
- Syria

Latin America

- Brazil
- Columbia
- Haiti
- Honduras
- Venezuela
- Development Cooperation
- Church Cooperation
- Humanitarian Aid

Fally Sathie, Senegal: «In the past, the entire coastline from Foundiougne to Kaolack was covered with mangroves. We lived from fishing and were also able to work our land. But we are now feeling climate change. The coast is being eroded and I can no longer live from fishing alone; I also sell bread as a sideline. The sea and the mangrove forests are like our bank, we live from them. The mangroves prevent the sea from doing too much damage. HEKS/EPER is helping us to regenerate and protect the mangroves.»

Project 764.335: Residents of the Saloum Delta protect their mangroves



Eutimio Moncada, Venezuela: «I am 74 years old and I live alone in La Nula. My family has gone abroad to find work. For a long time, I collected garbage and took it to the garbage dump and could earn some money that way. At that time, I would beg for left-over food from shops. With the pandemic that no longer worked. With no food, I sometimes had to hunt birds to be able to eat at all. Thanks to the HEKS/EPER soup kitchen, I now receive a warm meal every day.»

Project 880.319: Emergency assistance for the needy and support for health centers



Shaara Salissou, Niger:

«Before the project started, I knew nothing about moringa cultivation. I bought moringa leaves, but didn't grow the plant. My children were always malnourished. Along with other women, I now run a moringa plantation and sell the leaves in the village. We use organic fertilisers, since chemical fertilisers are bad for our health. The project has helped us a lot. I can now provide meals for my children and our diet has become more varied. We can also use moringa powder for various illnesses.»

Project 756.350: Moringa and vegetable cultivation in Mayayi, Maradi



Laura Bocskai, Ukraine: «For me, my carer was like a godsend. After my stroke, the home care service provided me with a sick-bed, diapers and medicines. Besides material and medical assistance, the home care service also provided me with moral support. It was very important for me to be able to confide in someone about my worries.»

Project 951.319: Home care service in Transcarpathia



1

Nana Sartania, Georgia: «In the past, I had serious problems drying and safely storing the hazelnuts we produce. This meant that some of the nuts would always rot. Since we started collaborating with the farmers' cooperative and taking advantage of the free drying and storage service of the «Pakka Georgia» partner processing factory, the nuts have been able to retain their quality and we can sell them to «Pakka» at a good price.»

Project 918.036: Cultivation of organic fair-trade hazelnuts



2

Ayesha, Bangladesh: «I live with my husband and four children in Rohingya refugee camp 8E. A huge fire broke out here in March and destroyed our accommodations. Thanks to HEKS/EPER, we now have new lodgings with bamboo walls and a concrete floor. It is even better than our previous accommodation, made of bamboo poles and tarpaulins. It would get very hot in the summer and wet in the winter. I now have really good accommodation for my children. I wish my children could go to school and that some day we can all return to Myanmar and live in freedom.»

Project 610.431: More solid shelters for Rohingya refugees



3

Demitu Regassa, Ethiopia:

«At first, I was hesitant when Gurmuu and HEKS/EPER suggested that I train as a beekeeper, as I had never done any training before. It has given me a lot, however. I now produce honey and I have even become an instructor myself! I have already trained a group of 20 women and then another group of 19 women. They are doing very well now and are working very hard for good results.»

Project 706.384: Beekeeping brings more income to smallholder families



4

Denise Kabuo Bushenge, Democratic Republic of the Congo:

«I live in Katolo and the HEKS/EPER toilet-building programme has been a big help to us. In the past, we often suffered from diarrhoea at home, and we lived in fear of being bitten by a snake in the bushes.»

Project 788.385: Emergency aid for families affected by conflict in hard-to-reach areas



5

HEKS/EPER at 75 years

HEKS/EPER celebrated its 75th birthday in 2021 with a series of anniversary events that looked back at moving moments and milestones from the past three-quarters of a century. These included the year 1958 in India, for example, when HEKS/EPER launched its first development aid project in the Global South.







HEKS/EPER MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN SWITZERLAND

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, HEKS/EPER Branch Offices continued to stand by socially disadvantaged people in the region. Things did not come to a halt in 2021: projects could be successfully developed and accredited.

In the year 2021 too, the changing Corona protection measures and restrictions posed major challenges for vulnerable population groups. Although conditions were more difficult, HEKS/EPER remained in contact with its target groups, such as older migrants, sans papiers (undocumented people), socially disadvantaged families, and isolated people. Staff members provided information, for example via WhatsApp, about the latest developments and measures, produced podcasts covering several topics – ranging from health to social insurances – and circulated information videos in various languages on social media channels. To reach the most vulnerable groups, such as sans papiers, HEKS/EPER staff offered advisory services and individual mentoring.

New programmes for new target groups

In some HEKS/EPER regions, programmes were further developed in 2021 with the specific aim of reaching new target groups. To better address the needs of older people with a migration background, for example, the Aargau/Solothurn Branch Office created the «Marzipan Café» (see page 14), while the «Age and Migration AltuM» project in Zurich brought together older refugees and volunteer mentors in partnerships under the AltuM Tandem scheme. Tandem models were also trialled in the «New Gardens» project in Berne. This scheme is reaching newly rejected asylum seekers. The flat-rate payment for integration was increased on the back of the Federal Government's decision, as part of the integration agenda, to accelerate the integration of temporarily

admitted persons and refugees. Furthermore, the hurdle of having to apply for a work permit was replaced by simple registration with the employment office. In the Canton of Zürich, the «Integration» unit was tasked with examining all integration schemes and accrediting them if successful. In 2021, the «HEKS/EPER Visit steps» programme was accredited by that unit and made available under the integration agenda. The programme offers temporarily admitted persons and recognised refugees in the Zürich region an opportunity to prepare themselves gradually for the job market.

Sign of trust

Other branch offices also scored successes. Under the new service contract with the Canton of Basel City, «HEKS/EPER Bridge-builders» will be providing their services in all schools in the Canton starting in 2022. In the future, the «HEKS/EPER Housing» project run by the Aargau/Solothurn Branch Office will also be able to provide its services on behalf of the canton, to facilitate autonomous living arrangements for people with disabilities. These accreditations and new contracts in the year 2021 can be viewed as an important indicator of the trust reposed in the professionalism displayed by HEKS/EPER in Switzerland.

**More information on the project work of
HEKS/EPER Branch Offices:
en.heks.ch/switzerland**

INCLUSION

In 2021, many already disadvantaged or isolated people suffered particularly badly from the social isolation that came with the pandemic. HEKS/EPER adapted its roughly 40 integration/inclusion projects flexibly and devised new schemes through which to stand by project participants throughout these challenging times and facilitate their social and economic integration in Switzerland.

933

persons were supported by HEKS/EPER in becoming professionally integrated.

COUNSELLING FOR WELL-EDUCATED MIGRANTS THANKS TO «HEKS/EPER MOSAIQ», EASTERN SWITZERLAND

Many well-educated migrants here are doing jobs for which they are obviously overqualified and which have nothing to do with the occupation in which they are trained. Professional potential is lying idle – a loss for the people concerned, and for the Swiss economy. «HEKS/EPER MosaiQ Eastern Switzerland» aims to do something about it. For five years now, the responsible office has been providing well-qualified migrants with realistic advice about their professional chances in the Swiss job market and offering individual and long-term assistance in regard to the recognition of foreign qualifications, career planning, and career starts. «MosaiQ» also offers a mentoring programme under which 178 hours of volunteer work were done in 2021, as well as a German conversation course, assistance at networking events, and company visits.

Over the past year, the unit's three staff members provided counselling for 114 people and mentored 33 persons under a longer-term programme. A total of 17 foreign qualifications were recognized, nine participants were able to obtain a permanent position or an internship thanks to the mentoring, and 11 persons undertook basic or advanced training. «MosaiQ» is therefore making a real contribution to equal opportunity while helping to remedy the skills shortage.

«VITALINA» FOR ACTIVE PARENTS AND HEALTHY CHILDREN, BASEL

Children's health is a priority for all parents. Yet, irregular work, low income, social dislocation, lack of education or a combination of these factors often make it difficult for some parents to meet their children's needs. The consequences could be a less than wholesome diet and not enough regular physical activity. The «Vitalina» project aims to combat this. A total of 17 intercultural mediators, comprising four men and 13 women, visit neighbourhood meeting points, playgrounds or association events to make contact with foreign language-speaking parents with pre-school children and talk with them about day-to-day family life and eating habits. They cover 18 languages and specifically try to target socially disadvantaged parents who are not taking advantage of the existing schemes such as counselling for mothers and fathers. More than 800 persons could be reached directly and informed in this way in 2021.

Many events and meetings were cancelled due to COVID-19. In cooperation with the Cantons of Basel City and Rural Basel, «Vitalina» therefore produced audio files with coronavirus-related information in various languages, and distributed them via WhatsApp and other digital channels to some 11 500 foreign-language speakers.



«HEKS / EPER ALTUM» SUPPORTS OLDER MIGRANTS, AARGAU / SOLOTHURN

Almost a quarter of the people 55 years and over in the Canton of Aargau were born abroad. Many are facing financial and health problems, but are hardly being reached by the schemes available through ordinary structures (Regelstrukturen). The «HEKS/EPER Age and Migration AltuM» project run by the Aargau/Solothurn Branch Office aims to promote social inclusion and good health for older migrants. The programme organizes targeted activities



such as get-togethers over coffee, information events and courses covering topics relating to daily life and to ageing. At the same time, it works closely with organizations like «Pro Senectute», the home care service and communal authorities to encourage them to take account of older migrants in their programmes.

«AltuM» created the «Marzipan Café» in June 2021 to better address the special needs of older refugees in the Aargau area. By the end of the year, 19 meetings had been held with 17 participants. Initially, the central focus was on often difficult situations, such as family separations, and immediate needs like financial constraints. From time to time, however, the meetings are expected to centre on recreation and confidence building, for example through events like games afternoons, a discussion on the topic of «Happiness», or candle-making.

By taking a recreational approach, activities promote the targeted acquisition of vocabulary so that participants can learn, in a low-threshold manner, how to express themselves in German. Besides discussions and the promotion of social networking, very specific aids are offered, such as downloading the COVID certificate App, or signing up for the vaccine.

STEP-BY-STEP TOWARDS AN APPRENTICESHIP WITH «HEKS / EPER KICK», BERNE

The transition from school to the world of work is a major challenge for many young people. As one of the bridging programmes of the Canton of Berne, «HEKS/EPER KICK» therefore provides support for 45 adolescents and young adults. From the very first day, the participants themselves take charge of their «Apprenticeship Search» project. In parallel, they are mentored by 14 staff members from the fields of work, education and coaching. This work



training is a way of exposing participants to the requirements of the world of work. An outside placement with a company allows them to garner some initial experiences relating to their desired profession. For two days a week, they attend a training module customised to their particular needs. Besides, they are assisted in drafting letters of application or in preparing for job interviews. They are all supported by a personal coach, which further enhances the success of the programme. In the 2020/2021 school year, for instance, 68 per cent of the participants found a definitive solution, despite the pandemic.

The psychological burden among the target group has become markedly worse in recent years. The persisting pandemic has further compounded the situation. This prompted «HEKS/EPER KICK» to launch a pilot project in the summer with an even lower threshold for access to mentoring. The purpose of that scheme is to prepare and empower young people from the very outset to tackle the search for an apprenticeship. It relies on close supervision by the coach as well as meaningful tasks as part of their work training. All 12 places in the pilot project were taken from the very start, and within the first four months of the programme, four participants were already able to switch over to the regular «KICK» activities in order to start their «Apprenticeship Search» project.

ADVOCACY

In 2021, HEKS/EPER continued to offer legal advice and assistance for socially disadvantaged persons such as asylum seekers, recognized refugees and sans papiers (undocumented persons) and persons affected by discrimination. As of August 2021, many people from Afghanistan contacted the HEKS/EPER legal advice offices with questions regarding family reunifications and humanitarian visas.

59%

of the submissions made by HEKS/EPER legal advice offices on behalf of asylum seekers were approved in 2021.



WESTERN SWITZERLAND: LEGAL ADVICE OFFICES FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS «SAJE», LAUSANNE

The «SAJE» programme provides legal advice and defence for asylum seekers and temporarily admitted persons in the Canton of Vaud. Under the programme, the legal advisers work mainly in the four areas of appeals procedures against negative decisions, reconsideration procedures, family reunification procedures and approvals for hardship cases. In 2021, «SAJE» conducted 993 advice sessions, accepted 263 new mandates and was therefore responsible for a total of 769 cases by the end of the year. A total of 557 decisions were obtained from the authorities, of which 54 per cent were positive. Besides, during the year under review, «SAJE» opened the «BCJ Vaud» office, which was mandated by the State Secretariat for Migration to legally represent asylum seekers under the extended procedure in the Canton of Vaud.

As of September 2021, the «SAJE» set up a telephone and personal on-call service for Afghans in Switzerland who were worried about their relatives back home. Along with videos in Farsi, the advice sessions served to provide information about the possibilities for legally bringing endangered relatives to Switzerland and offered assistance in drafting the relevant applications. In 2022, the «SAJE» will take over all pending dossiers, many of which are blocked due to the difficulty of contacting Swiss embassies.



ZURICH / SCHAFFHAUSEN: ZURICH LEGAL ADVICE OFFICE FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS (ZBA)

The ZBA represents asylum seekers and temporarily admitted persons in legal and social matters. It strives to secure Switzerland's protection for people who would be risking life and limb should they return to their country of origin. Personal contact with the client is paramount for good advice and legal representation. Owing to COVID-19, personal advice sessions had to be well coordinated and conducted with face masks and appropriate distancing. In 2021, the ZBA legal advisers conducted 2782 counselling sessions and drafted 221 legal submissions. The ZBA received 429 decisions, of which 282 were full or partial approvals (65 per cent).

The takeover of power by the Taliban in Afghanistan led to a sharp spike in applications in August 2021. Many Afghan nationals living here turned to the ZBA in the hope of being able to bring their relatives to safety in Switzerland. Unfortunately, Switzerland is following a restrictive policy for the granting of the humanitarian visas. Nevertheless, the ZBA offered its support wherever there was an opportunity for a family reunification. In the case of Afghans living here and who had been rejected before the change of power in August, the ZBA requested that they be accorded provisional leave to stay, as a return to Afghanistan would be unreasonable at present.

HEKS/EPER MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN SWITZERLAND

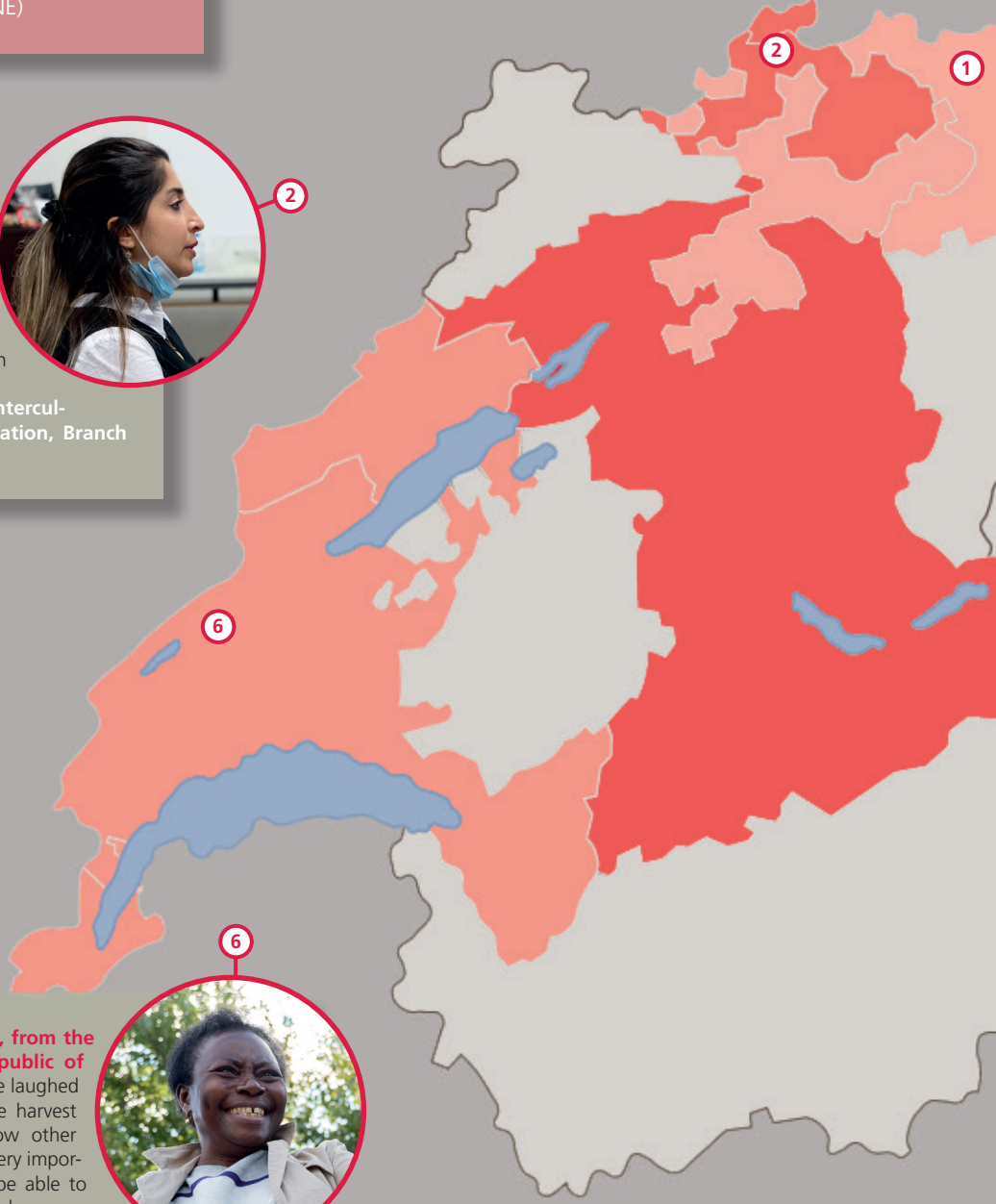
HEKS/EPER IN SWITZERLAND

- 1 Branch Office Aargau/Solothurn
- 2 Branch Office both Basels
- 3 Branch Office Berne
- 4 Branch Office Eastern Switzerland (SG/TG/AI/AR)
- 5 Branch Office Zurich/Schaffhausen
- 6 Branch Office Romandie (VD/GE/NE)

Nadia Di Bernardo Leimgruber, Head of the Integration Unit at Solothurner Spitäler AG: «To be able to ensure good quality healthcare, we must be able to communicate properly with our patients. When language barriers hamper communication, we run the risk that successful therapy and treatment may be compromised by misinterpretations and misunderstandings. The «HEKS/EPER Linguadukt» intercultural interpreters help us to ensure that there is understanding and are thereby making a key contribution to removing barriers to access and unequal opportunities.»
«HEKS/EPER-Linguadukt» – Intercultural interpreting services in north-western Switzerland



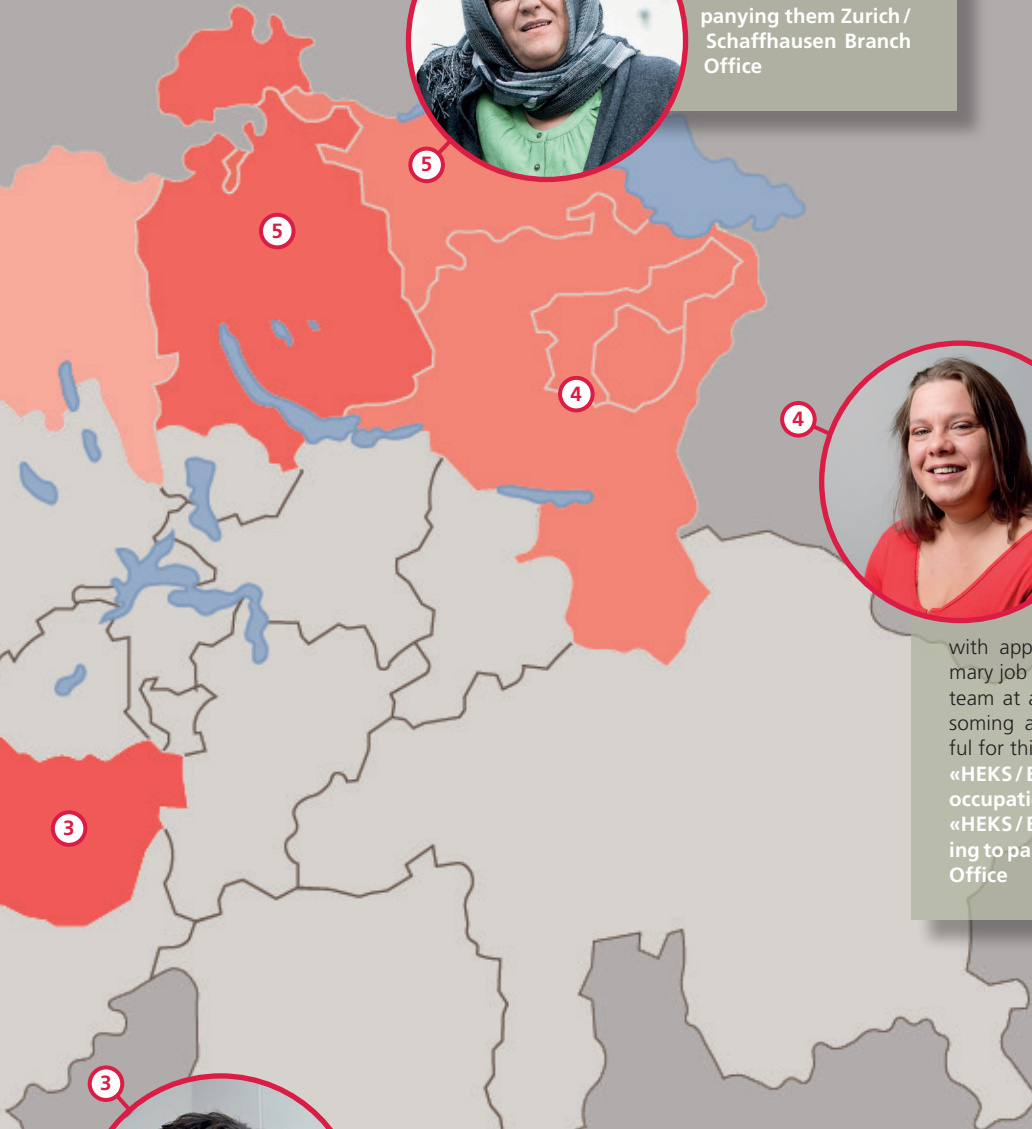
Rosalin Sharaf: «The more knowledge you acquire, the more ideas you get, to which you feel drawn. The «MEL» intercultural interpreter training is opening many doors for me in various worthwhile activities.»
«MEL» – Skills training for intercultural interpreting and mediation, Branch Office for both Basels



Virginie Nkaba, from the Democratic Republic of the Congo: «We laughed a lot, shared the harvest and got to know other cultures. It was very important for me to be able to meet and get to know new people.»
«New Gardens Western Switzerland» – Refugees and residents garden together in French-speaking Switzerland.

Fatima Mohammed, from Syria: «Halima supports us in everything! She helps me and my husband with the bills or explains the health insurance invoices, she goes with us to the doctor or to the authorities and she helps me with my homework from the German course. We have this folder where we keep bills or mail, and when Halima visits us, if there's something we don't understand, we look at it together.»

«HEKS / EPER Age and Migration» – «AltuM» tandems between older refugees and volunteers accompanying them Zurich / Schaffhausen Branch Office



Sandra Tanner, St. Gallen:

«Thanks to «HEKS/EPER Visite», I have finally made it back into the world of work. I started a part-time job in a second-hand store, which considerably facilitated my re-entry. Once I had found my feet, «HEKS/EPER Visite Job» helped me with applications and job-seeking in the primary job market. I now work with a wonderful team at a gas station, where I am really blossoming and enjoying work. I am very grateful for this.»

«HEKS / EPER Visite», meaningful part-time occupation for the long-term jobless, and «HEKS / EPER Visite Job», starting or returning to paid work, Eastern Switzerland Branch Office



Ahmad Abo Alros, from Palestine:

«Before my first appointment at «MosaiQ» I was downcast and dispirited. I had been living in Switzerland for four years and over that time, I had made no progress with my studies or found a permanent job. I depend on social assistance.

This is no way to live. I would like to make my contribution to this society, in which I live. Thanks to «MosaiQ», I now have another prospect. I can do a three-month social internship at a refugee transit centre and finally have some meaningful occupation.»

«HEKS / EPER MosaiQ» – Unit for Qualified Migrants, Berne Branch Office



HEKS/EPER at 75 years

Late March 2021, two HEKS/EPER staffers set up the photo exhibition «HEKS/EPER at 75 years» at the Hôtel de ville in Lausanne, where it premiered. In the months that followed, the highly acclaimed touring exhibition was presented at 49 venues across Switzerland, where visitors gained moving insights into the history and work of HEKS/EPER – from its founding in the aftermath of the Second World War, up to the time of the coronavirus.





«KEEPING HEKS / EPER OUT OF THE POLITICAL DIALOGUE IS CERTAINLY NOT A GOOD APPROACH.»

Yet again in the year 2021, programme work during the corona pandemic posed a huge challenge for HEKS/EPER. Besides, there were major milestones such as the merger with Bread for All and the 75th anniversary. Director Peter Merz looks back at an eventful year and talks about the tasks ahead.

For HEKS / EPER too, 2021 was the second year to be shaped by the pandemic. What were the organization's takeaways from its experiences in 2020 and how did those experiences impact its programme and project work?

Peter Merz: For our work in Switzerland, we took a pragmatic approach to cooperating with participants and contractors to implement project activities and agreed services – with good results and to the satisfaction of project participants.



In our programme countries too, we were able to draw on the experiences and solutions from the first year of the pandemic. Access to protective equipment and vaccines is still problematic in most countries, however. This significantly influenced the work of our country offices and partner organizations. We also had to provide additional emergency assistance to prevent countless families from sliding into precarious situations of poverty.

In the second year of the pandemic, we were able to build on experiences from the

previous year when it came to digital forms of work and online meetings. In 2021, we were also much better able to take in stride frequent, short-term changes of plans, they became the routine, so to speak.

Another significant event for HEKS / EPER was the 75th anniversary. Setting aside the historical dimension, what was the importance of this anniversary for the aid agency of the Protestant Church in Switzerland?

We can be proud of what we have achieved in this three-quarter century.

For us, the anniversary is as much an obligation as a mandate to further develop our organization and to continue to undertake relevant work. Through the now completed merger, the Protestant Church in Switzerland has tasked us with continuing our engagement for a just world.

The merger of HEKS / EPER with Bread for All in November 2021 was a third historical milestone and one of the organizational goals for the year 2021. What were the major challenges encountered during the merger process, and what insights did you gain from this process?

Over and above the challenging day-to-day operations during the COVID-19 pandemic, the merger had to be carried forward jointly with a wide range of collaborators, a task that demanded additional, time-consuming engagement. The additional resource allocation needed was one of the challenges. Yet another was and still is the need to sharpen the thematic focus and simplify work processes. All involved parties had to agree on a common, forward-looking perspective. In developing the strategy for the years 2023–2027, we will need to narrow the focus even further in 2022.

One of the justifications for the merger

was that it was the only way in which HEKS / EPER would be able to hold its own in a competitive environment. What specifically does this competition consist of and how does it influence programme work?

It is a competition for the goodwill of donors, for talented staff capable of functioning in an NGO environment, and for mandates from the government and from international donors that are attractive in programmatic and financial terms. To that end, HEKS/EPER must be capable, on the one hand, of developing new projects; on the other, it must find niches and undertake relevant programme work in a fast-changing world.

The work of NGOs is attracting ever more critical scrutiny from politicians and the media. Their room for manoeuvre is being increasingly curtailed not only abroad, but in Switzerland too, where there are growing calls from some prominent voices for NGOs to be excluded from the political dialogue – and here, the «Responsible Business Initiative» comes to mind. What countermeasures is HEKS / EPER able and willing to take?

I am surprised by the intensity of the discussion and the curbs some are attempting to impose on our work of information and education here in Switzerland. This is no doubt a reaction to the clout wielded by Swiss NGOs and their professionalism in mobilizing opinion on subjects like climate justice, responsible economic management or respect for human rights. But it is also an expression of the inability of politicians and the business sector to address the demands of citizens for concrete measures or to develop and implement them in a timely manner.

Distancing and excluding HEKS/EPER and other NGOs from this dialogue is certainly

not a good approach. Instead, we need to engage in dialogue and work jointly for systemic development in society and the economy. Churches too should continue their strong commitment and take positions on societal and development issues. As a newly constituted organization, we will therefore be continuing intense dialogue with churches, the business sector and lawmakers.

Are there other external factors that HEKS/EPER must anticipate in connection with the new Strategy Period 2023–2027?

To deliver professional and effective programme work, we are finding it increasingly necessary to have international NGO partners and alliances in networks like «Act Alliance», alongside our domestic partner organizations or church partners. Suitable consortia would enable HEKS/EPER to acquire and deploy greater programme resources and also gain access to EU funds, for example. Programme work

in challenging and fragile contexts must meet ever more exacting standards under the internal HEKS/EPER Compliance and Security Guidelines and the specifications of contracting entities. This calls for additional expertise, and more investment in training for staff and project participants in the effective application of the guidelines and in securing resources for the reporting and handling of instances of non-compliance with or disregard for these standards. Moreover, HEKS/EPER too must actively forge ahead with the digital transformation. To that end, further capacity building is also needed in this field in order to simplify and digitalise support processes and provide solid training for staff.

Lastly, the competitiveness of our programmes in Switzerland must also be guaranteed. Here, we are largely dependent on service mandates in which our wage costs and ancillary programme costs are a major factor. Clear technical and thematic positioning is needed when it comes to developing programmes to

be implemented in Switzerland. Besides international and domestic contracting entities, our base consists of a very faithful and solidarity-driven community of people and institutions that take a keen interest in our work and support us financially. We need to preserve the stability of and further build on this base. We also aim to get the younger generation on board through new programmes.

Further information on how HEKS/EPER works:
en.heks.ch/working-principles

CAMPAIGNS, ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS IN 2021 – AN OVERVIEW

In addition to its programme work, HEKS/EPER 2021 has also positioned itself on various political matters and has done important awareness-raising and educational work in the framework of campaigns, events and publications.

A sad day for the climate

HEKS/EPER and Bread for All support the CO₂ law, convinced that climate justice can only exist if Switzerland too accepts its share of the responsibility for the climate crisis and implements appropriate, binding measures. Unfortunately, a small majority of voters rejected this groundbreaking law on 13 June.

GEWALTig!?

In the light of the pandemic, the traditional HEKS/EPER conference on church cooperation could only take place online last year. Held on 29 May, the theme of the event was «GEWALTig – Von hoffnungsvollen Aufbrüchen gegen die Gewalt». Different speakers gave outstanding presentations that explored a wide range of possibilities for preventing violence.

HEKS/EPER celebrates a birthday

The 75th anniversary was a milestone for HEKS/EPER in 2021. Besides the major anniversary event held on 21 October in a

packed Zurich Grossmünster Cathedral, the HEKS/EPER photo exhibition also travelled to 49 locations throughout Switzerland. The well-attended exhibition offered a moving overview of the history and evolution of HEKS/EPER programme work since its inception in 1946. In addition, film director Barbara Miller's anniversary film was well received at its «lunchtime cinema» showings across some 10 cities.

Commitment to humane migration

In March 2021, HEKS/EPER published an extensive position paper entitled «Refugee or Migrant? Understanding Migration as a Spectrum» In it, HEKS/EPER lays out migration-related visions and demands. One key HEKS/EPER demand is for the full Federal Assembly to endorse the UN Migration Pact – Switzerland having played a significant role the drafting of it. Making migration human rights-compliant and a positive experience will require coordinated action on the part of migrants' countries of origin, transit and destination. The UN Migration Pact lays the groundwork for such cooperation. The fall of Kabul clearly illustrated the importance of having legal and safe escape routes. Regrettably, the Council of States and the National Council again decided at their 2021 summer and autumn ses-

sions to suspend discussion of the matter, pending further clarifications. The year 2021 ended with yet another regrettable political decision, as the Swiss Parliament brought in a travel ban for temporarily admitted persons.

Branch Office Zurich / Schaffhausen – 40 years on

For 40 years now, the HEKS/EPER Branch Office for Zürich/Schaffhausen has been standing by and assisting refugees and migrants through counselling and a range of schemes. An anniversary event was held, where numerous invited guests were informed about the branch office's plans to continue its meaningful work for the social and professional integration of people at a disadvantage in society.

«HEKS WEISS»

The Eastern Switzerland Branch Office of HEKS/EPER again hosted a «Knowledge Workshop» (WissensWerkstatt) in 2021, this time in a new format. Under the theme «HEKS WEISS», it held five webinars that served to elucidate concepts from daily life and the world of work. Key notions such as «age» and «racism» were redefined, or social concerns like «job market integration» were discussed.

ORGANIZATION AND PRINCIPLES

HEKS/EPER AND THE MERGER WITH BREAD FOR ALL

HEKS/EPER is the aid organization of the Protestant Church in Switzerland, founded in 1946 by the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches (FSPC), today the Protestant Church in Switzerland (PCS). For HEKS/EPER, the dignity of every human being is at the centre its commitment. All human beings should be able to lead a life in dignity and in social, economic and political security. HEKS/EPER operations adhere to the specifications of the Zewo Quality Label. The Zewo seal of approval distinguishes non-profit organizations that utilize donations economically, effectively and for their designated purpose.

The merger with the church-run development organization Bread for All became legally valid on 22 November 2021. The newly formed organization will launch its operations on 1 January 2022 under the name Swiss Church Aid (HEKS/EPER) and with a new visual image.

2030 AGENDA

For the current decade, the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) constitute a key reference framework for HEKS/EPER's work abroad – and in Switzerland. The HEKS/EPER Switzerland Division drew up a study outlining the way in which it promotes the 17 goals through its work. HEKS/EPER projects for the social inclusion of underprivileged people in Switzerland, for example, contribute to Goal 10 «Reduce inequality within and among countries»; the HEKS/EPER legal advice offices, for their part, guarantee asylum seekers and other socially disadvantaged people equitable access to justice (Goal 16 «Peace, justice and strong institutions»).

The study promotes keener awareness of possible blind spots and enhances the capacity of programmes in Switzerland to reach particularly disadvantaged people with even more effective support – which is entirely in line with the guiding principle of «Leaving no one behind».

ACCOUNTABILITY

HEKS/EPER has relied for years now on various compliance tools to effectively discharge its obligation towards donors, contracting entities, staff and programme participants to practise transparent and responsible governance.

Because irregularities can never be entirely ruled out even with high standards in project management, controlling and compliance programmes, HEKS/EPER maintains several feedback and complaints systems. With the «HEKS/EPER Integrity Line», for example, the organization provides its staff and project participants with an independent reporting system through which to report misbehaviour or breaches anonymously and simply. Every HEKS/EPER country office also has a compliance officer to whom staff members, partners and programme participants may address their complaints. HEKS/EPER looks into every complaint and gives feedback to the person filing the complaint.

DATA PROTECTION

One aspect of compliance to which HEKS/EPER paid special attention in 2021 was data protection. Enterprises are required to handle personal data, whether of donors, project participants or staff members, in a responsible manner. This is stipulated, for instance, in the Federal Data Protection Act and in cantonal data protection laws. Together with organizational and technical measures, the behaviour of staff members is critically important in this regard. For this reason, HEKS/EPER appointed a data protection adviser and initiated and implemented a series of measures. Accordingly, internal instructions on data protection and security were issued, in particular, more stringent rules on ICT security. Interactive data protection courses were also organized in four languages for some 300 staff members. Work was also begun to review and where necessary adapt contractual arrangements with data processors contracted from outside, so that they too will exercise the requisite care in protecting data.





RESPONSIBLE COMMUNICATION

Through their communications and fundraising campaigns, development organizations influence the public perception of the Global South and the picture of development cooperation held by the Swiss public. HEKS/EPER is all too aware of its responsibility in this regard and has therefore joined forces with the member and partner organizations of Alliance Sud, the coalition of Switzerland's leading development agencies, to draw up a «Manifesto for responsible communication on international cooperation». Together with nine other development agencies, HEKS/EPER has subscribed to the manifesto, which lays out seven intra-industry principles intended as guidance to NGO staff members.

RESULTS-ORIENTED ACTION

Through its projects, HEKS/EPER aims to achieve the greatest possible impact and conducts systematic reviews of the outcomes and effectiveness of its work. Project monitoring is done through visits to projects, digital surveys and regular project evaluations. In addition, each year HEKS/EPER conducts in-depth impact assessments with outside support – these took place in Palestine/Israel and Bangladesh in 2021.

After 62 years of development cooperation, HEKS/EPER pulled out of India definitively at the end of 2020. To record the wealth of experiences garnered from years of project work in India, HEKS/EPER commissioned what is known as a capitalization of experiences (CapEx), with respect to the India programme. The study yielded revealing insights and recommendations regarding different key interventions under the India programme, for example, relating to mobilization for land ownership, or income generation. You can learn more about impact assessments in international work [here](#).

QUALITY CONTROL

HEKS/EPER has been a member of the alliance around the «Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability» (CHS Alliance) since 2018, and is there-

fore committed to observing the nine standards of the voluntary code for enhanced quality and effectiveness in all its projects abroad. Each member of the alliance must undertake an internal self-evaluation that can objectively gauge the extent to which the standards have already been successfully implemented and identify any existing gaps. HEKS/EPER conducted this self-evaluation in 2021 in Bangladesh, Niger, Georgia/Armenia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. An initial assessment yields gratifying results. On a scale of 0 to 4, HEKS/EPER achieves a score of 3 for 5 out of 9 CHS standards, indicating full implementation of those standards. Compared with other aid agencies, HEKS/EPER is mostly well above average for 8 out of 9 standards. But the feedback and complaints system needs to be improved upon. HEKS/EPER hopes that the new whistle-blowing tool will bring added value in this regard (see chapter on «Accountability»)

TRANSPARENCY

For HEKS/EPER, transparency means comprehensively informing the general public and more particularly its donors and contracting entities about its work, its structures, as well as the origin, use and impact of resources. Failures and setbacks must also be discussed. HEKS/EPER has laid out its transparency principles in a code of conduct and reviews compliance with them each year. In 2021, HEKS/EPER fully met 39 of the 50 transparency targets, and 11 in part. The 2021 transparency report (in German) can be accessed [here](#).

More about HEKS/EPER:
en.heks.ch/portrait

BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Walter Schmid, President, Winterthur Dr. iur. Lawyer; Lecturer and Visiting Lecturer at the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and the University of Lucerne.



Michèle Künzler, Vice-President, Vernier Theology Studies; current Head of the Department of Business Taxation, Municipality of Thônex; former Cantonal Councillor, Canton of Geneva.



Jeanne Pestalozzi, Vice-President, Dietikon; Lic. phil. I; President of «Compagna Schweiz» and «compagna conviva»; former President of the Board of Trustees of «Bread for All».



Nicole Bardet, Romont; Bachelor of Science in Management HEC; Member of the General Management of Alternative Bank Switzerland; former President of the Board of Trustees of «Bread for All».



Rolf Berweger (until the end of 2021), Zug; Swiss-certified Banker; various management positions in the financial sector in Switzerland and abroad; Church Council Pres. of the Reformed Church of the Canton of Zug.



Elisabeth Bürgi Bonanomi, Bern; Dr. iur., Lawyer; Lecturer in Law & Sustainable Development; Joint Head of Sustainability Governance Impact Area, University Berne; former Board of Trustee member at «Bread for All».



Jean-Luc Dupuis, Semsales; Computer Engineer; Senior project manager at a major bank; former President of several church parishes.



Simone Fopp Müller, Köniz; Dr. theol. at the University of Berne in Practical Theology; Pastor, Zollikofen Reformed Church Parish.



Barbara Hirsbrunner, Scharans; Registered nurse; Specialist teacher of religion; Church Councillor of the Cantonal Evangelical Reformed Church in Graubünden; former Board of Trustee member of «Bread for All»



Pierre Jacot, Lausanne; Graduate psychologist, University of Lausanne; Specialist in action methods; Head of Stiftung CEP; former Board of Trustee member at «Bread for All».



Daniel Reuter, Zurich; Parliamentary Secretary; MAS ZFH Supervision and Coaching in Organizations; Vice-President of the Council of the Protestant Church in Switzerland (PCS).



Fritz Schneider, Bremgarten b. Bern; Agric. Engineer (ETH); M.A. degree, University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada; adviser on development co-operation since 2015.



Christoph Sigrist, Zurich; Adjunct Professor, Faculty of Theology, University of Berne; Pastor, Grossmünster Zurich.

EXECUTIVE BOARD



Peter Merz, Director; M.A. in Environmental Engineering (ETH), Postgraduate in Business Management (ETH); Diploma of Advanced Studies in Leadership.



Bernard DuPasquier, Deputy Director (as of 1.1.2022); Theologian; CAS «Bonheur dans les organisations», HEG Geneva; former Director «Bread for All».



Carmen Meyer, Head of the National Division; Remedial teacher and doctor; Dr. med. M.Sc Tropical Medicine; MAS ETH Development and Cooperation.



Bernhard Kerschbaum, Head of Global Cooperation; Graduate Economist; banker; Advanced Training in Security/Crisis Management, Intern. Negotiations and Conflict Transformation.

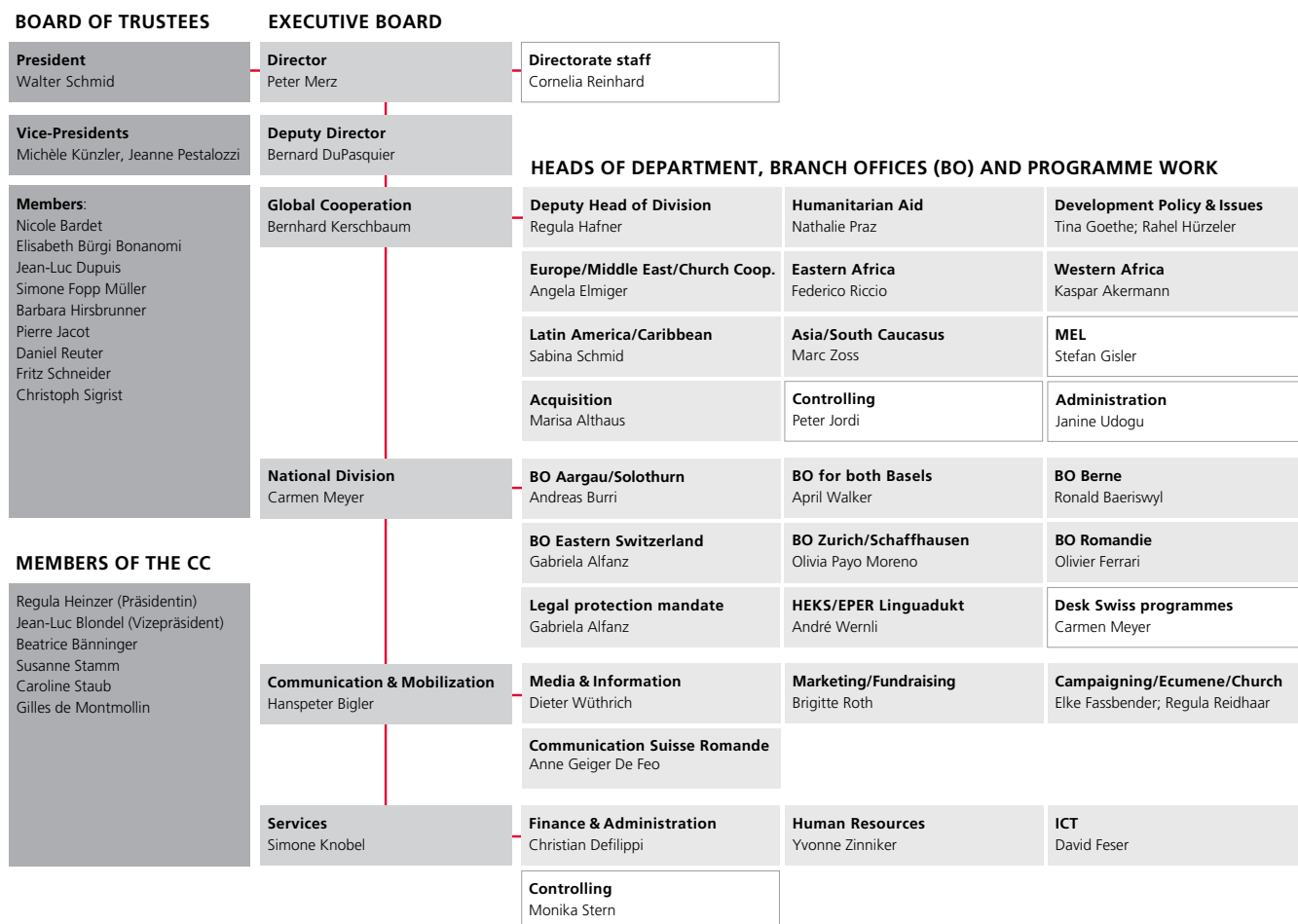


Hanspeter Bigler, Head of Communications & Mobilization; Lic. phil. History and Philosophy; Dipl. NPO Management; Master of Advanced Studies in Communication Management.



Simone Knobel, Head of Services Division; Master's in Strategy and Intern. Management HSG; Master's in Compliance and Master's in Advanced Studies in Applied Ethics.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART (as at 1.1.2022)



NETWORKS, PARTNERS AND ALLIANCES

HEKS/EPER collaborates with the following national and international umbrella organizations and working groups, among others:

- ACT Alliance (network of 125 churches and church institutions)
- Age and Migration national forum
- Aguasan
- Alliance Sud
- Arbeitsintegration Schweiz
- Beam Exchange
- Blue Community Network (network to enforce the human right to water as a public Good)
- Bread for All
- CHS Alliance (Core Humanitarian Standard Alliance)
- Conflict Sensitivity Community Hub
- several SDC networks
- CNS FAO
- Diakonie Schweiz
- EFECW – Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women
- Eurodiaconia
- FAO NGO Working Group
- Friends of the UNDROP
- GISF – Global Interagency Security Forum
- Global Network for the Right to Food and Nutrition
- humanrights.ch
- ICCA Consortium
- International Land Coalition
- INTERPRET
- IRAS COTIS
- KOFF/Swisspeace (platform of Swiss organizations engaged in peacebuilding)
- Landwirtschaft mit Zukunft
- Max Havelaar Foundation
- Palmöl-Koalition
- Plataforma contra la impunidad
- Platform Agenda 2030 Switzerland
- Platteform sans-papiers
- NGO Platform Human Rights
- Right to Food and Nutrition Network
- SEVAL (Swiss Evaluation Society)
- SKOS Swiss Conference of Welfare Organizations
- Swiss Climate Alliance
- Swiss Forum on Rural Advisory Services
- Swiss NGO DRR Platform
- Swiss NGO Platform
- Swiss Refugee Aid
- Swiss Solidarity
- Swiss Water Partnership (SWP)
- Texaid
- Transparency International Switzerland
- Verband Arbeitsintegration Schweiz
- Verein Gleichstellungs-Controlling
- WIDE Switzerland
- WCC World Council of Churches

More information on networks, partners, alliances:
en.heks.ch/who-we-are

FINANCIAL REPORT

GENERAL NOTES TO THE ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Overview

With the completion of the merger with Bread for All (BfA) and thanks to increased receipts for humanitarian aid and from un-earmarked donations, our annual accounts have evolved as follows: operating income has risen to 98,8 million francs and expenditure to 89,2 million francs.

In 2021, HEKS/EPER allocated altogether 74,3 million francs for 217 projects abroad and in Switzerland. Some 13,8 million francs went to supporting development cooperation projects in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe. Another 2,1 million francs went towards church cooperation in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. HEKS/EPER also provided 16,3 million francs in humanitarian aid after droughts and disasters stemming from natural hazards, and in conflict zones. HEKS/EPER spent 27,6 million francs in Switzerland: 17,7 million francs on projects to promote inclusion for socially underprivileged people and 9,4 million francs on the provision of legal advice services for asylum seekers, recognized refugees and other target groups.

Income

Income from operations was a gratifying 9,6 million francs. The result was roughly 4,0 million francs higher than the previous year's figure (2020: up 5,6 million francs). This made it possible to increase the fund and accumulate capital.

Based on the type of income, 15,1 million francs (15 %) could be attributed to cantonal churches, church parishes and other church organizations. Contributions from the Confederation, cantons and municipalities amounted to 21,1 million (21 %), from private persons, 25,3 million francs (26 %), and from Swiss Solidarity, 2,9 million (3 %). Income from services provided by the five Branch Offices in German-speaking Switzerland and the Siège romande contributed 19,1 million francs (19 %) to the overall result. Other revenue and foundations accounted for 15,3 million francs (16 %).

Expenditure

For work done abroad, project spending in Europe was 3,8 million francs (prior year 4,7 million francs). The contraction occurred mainly in Moldova and Georgia. Spending in Latin America was 2,3 million francs (2,6 million francs the previous year). In that continent, a decline was especially noticeable for Brazil, Honduras and Colombia. The unstable political

situation in some project countries, combined with difficult operating environments caused by financial restrictions and embargoes, also accounted in part for the contraction in expenditure. In Asia and Africa, in contrast, project spending rose by 2 million to CHF 9,8 million francs, more specifically in Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Uganda.

Compared with the prior year, humanitarian aid spending varied considerably depending on project country. Overall expenditure rose by 5,0 million francs, including in Bangladesh (up 0,9 million francs), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (up 1,2 million francs), Honduras (up 0,7 million francs), Cambodia (up 0,7 million francs) and in Lebanon (up 0,8 million francs). On the other hand, expenditure fell in several other regions – including in Iraq (down 0,1 million francs), Ethiopia (down 0,4 million francs) and South Sudan (down 0,2 million francs).

Work in Switzerland developed further with the addition of new programmes, which meant a spending increase of 0,9 million francs, to a total of 29,7 million francs (previous year, 28,8 million francs). Costs were optimized across all projects, with income remaining almost unchanged.

Administrative costs

The share of administrative costs in total expenditure (14,7 million francs) was 16,5% (Zewo guideline). HEKS/EPER is therefore still below the maximum for Zewo-certified non-profit organizations (25%).

Financial and real estate income

Income from real estate increased to 0,1 million francs. On the back of favourable stock market conditions, asset investments yielded a net book profit of 2,7 million francs. The value fluctuation reserve was increased by 1,3 million francs, this amount being charged against the operating result. Besides, a further 0,9 million francs were allocated to the value fluctuation reserve, reflecting increased investments in our portfolios (including from legacies).

Funding trends

Owing to the difference between expenditure and income, 8,7 million francs (6,2 million francs in 2020) were taken from operating income and allocated to existing funds for work in Switzerland and abroad. The new fund capital there-

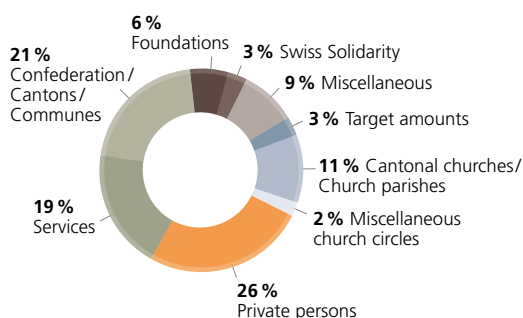
fore stands at 49,0 million francs: 15,7 million francs in Switzerland, 21,2 million francs abroad and 12,1 million francs in humanitarian aid.

Result

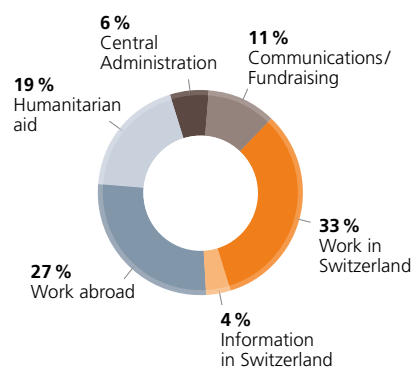
In addition to increasing the value fluctuation reserve (1,3 million francs), an amount of 1,7 million francs was withdrawn from the organization's tied capital, and an amount of 3,3 million francs allocated to free capital. This balances the annual result.

ORIGIN AND USE OF FUNDS 2021

Total income: CHF 98,8 million



Total expenditure for provision of services: CHF 89,2 million



PDF version of full Financial Report at: en.heks.ch/financial-report

BALANCE SHEET in CHF

	31.12.20	31.12.21
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	21'364'030	40'388'719
Securities listed on a stock exchange	23'080'925	34'754'745
Receivables	10'829'436	6'851'825
Prepaid expenses and accrued income	2'214'106	2'240'214
Total current assets	57'488'496	84'235'503
Financial assets	3'191'005	2'649'876
Property, plant and equipment	4'843'355	4'899'195
Intangible assets	526'484	432'610
Earmarked properties	1'769'047	0
Total non-current assets	10'329'892	7'981'682
TOTAL ASSETS	67'818'388	92'217'184
LIABILITIES		
Trade accounts payable	1'193'772	1'514'090
Other short-term liabilities	5'817'483	7'040'432
Accrued expenses and deferred income	4'168'342	4'699'879
Total short-term liabilities	11'179'596	13'254'401
Long-term financial liabilities	1'000'000	1'000'000
Provisions	916'686	991'366
Total long-term liabilities	1'916'686	1'991'366
Total earmarked funds	37'728'671	49'044'209
Total liabilities including fund capital	50'824'953	64'289'975
Foundation capital	200'000	300'000
Unrestricted capital	9'160'215	18'996'044
Tied capital	7'633'220	8'631'165
Total capital of the organization	16'993'435	27'927'209
TOTAL LIABILITIES	67'818'388	92'217'184

REMUNERATION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND EXECUTIVE BOARD

In 2021, the Board of Trustees was paid 73'701 francs, of which 30'752 francs went to the Presidency.

The remuneration of the Executive Board in 2021 (including employer contributions) amounted to 1'501'822 francs, of which 156'674 francs went to the Directorate.

The ratio between the lowest and the highest monthly wage at HEKS/EPER in 2021 was 1:3,4.

THANK YOU

We warmly thank all donors who have supported our work with large and small contributions as well as their personal commitment, for their involvement and their trust. We use donations conscientiously and effectively – for a more just and a more humane world.

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS in CHF

	31.12.20	31.12.21
Income for work in Switzerland	32'907'148	31'951'330
Income for work abroad (excl. humanitarian aid)	23'424'827	24'169'267
Income for humanitarian aid	11'349'735	18'548'678
Non-earmarked income	11'135'817	24'124'986
TOTAL INCOME	78'817'527	98'794'261
Expenditure for work in Switzerland	28'822'926	29'718'319
Expenditure for information in Switzerland	1'060'221	3'313'849
Expenditure for work abroad (excl. humanitarian aid)	18'908'965	23'854'290
Total expenditure humanitarian aid	12'631'630	17'412'051
TOTAL EXPENDITURE PROJECT WORK	61'423'741	74'298'509
Central Administration	4'966'580	5'437'573
Communications (net expenditure)	2'625'391	4'362'668
Fundraising (net expenditure)	4'219'548	5'130'712
Administration and communications	11'811'519	14'930'953
TOTAL EXPENDITURE FOR PROVISION OF SERVICES	73'235'261	89'229'462
OPERATING RESULT	5'582'266	9'564'799
Financial income on investments	743'040	3'066'505
Financial costs of investments	-21'387	-348'488
Real estate performance	161'293	135'997
Extraordinary, non-recurring or prior period expenditure and income	0	-820'000
RESULT BEFORE CHANGE IN FUND CAPITAL	6'465'212	11'598'813
Fund changes: increase (-)/decrease (+)	-6'250'364	-8'740'070
Total fund changes	-6'250'364	-8'740'070
ANNUAL RESULT (BEFORE ALLOCATIONS TO ORGANIZATIONAL CAPITAL)	214'848	2'858'744
Change in tied capital (allocation - / withdrawal +): Strategic development projects organization-wide	285'151	1'690'584
Change in tied capital (allocation - / withdrawal +): Value fluctuation reserve	-576'155	-1'265'833
Change in free capital (allocation - / withdrawal +):	76'155	-3'283'494
	0	0

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BREAD FOR ALL

Annual Report

2021



Broad alliance for more corporate social responsibility



The waste dumps from Glencore's KCC mine sit right next to the town of Kolwezi. Bfa partner organization Afrewatch was the 2021 recipient of a prestigious international award for its work in this mining region in south-eastern Congo. ©Meinrad Schade



The Responsible Business Initiative (RBI) was defeated by a majority vote of the cantons in November 2020. The fact that 50.7 per cent of the electorate accepted the proposal was reason for optimism, however. The civil society organizations that had sponsored the initiative saw this majority popular vote as a clear mandate to continue to pursue the aim of the RBI, which is for Swiss companies to be compelled to observe human rights and environmental standards – including in their activities abroad.

This led them to establish the Responsible Business Coalition (Koalition für Konzernverantwortung KKV), so far joined by 110 organizations – including *Bread for All*. In the public consultation process and as part of this Coalition, *Bread for All* was critical of the total inadequacy of the Federal Council ordinance implementing the counterproposal to the Initiative. The ordinance waters down the law to such an extent that hardly any companies still fall

under its due diligence stipulation regarding child labour and conflict minerals. But the criticism fell largely on deaf ears.

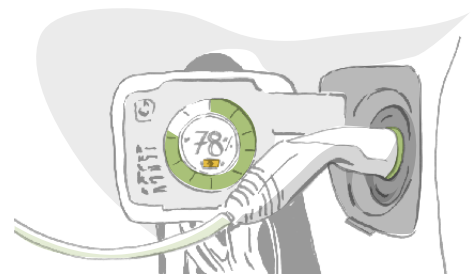
The Coalition received the backing of the EU Parliament, which in March 2021 adopted a Draft Directive on Corporate Due Diligence and Corporate Accountability that goes much further than the Swiss law. A binding decision by the European Commission was postponed until next year, however. This may put further pressure on Switzerland to enact binding human rights due diligence for companies, as is being demanded by *Bread for All* and the KKV.

Award for Afrewatch

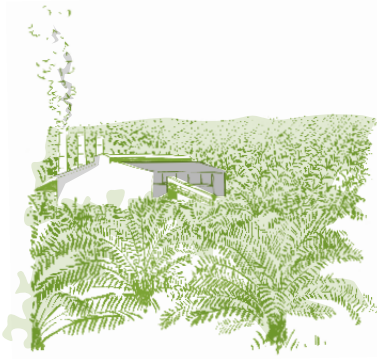
There was gratifying news from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). In November, long-standing *Bread for All* partner organization Afrewatch received a prestigious international award at the UN Forum for Business and Human Rights, as recompense for its work in connection with raw materials mining in the south-east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Shortly thereafter, and concluding a months-long investigation, Afrewatch published a report on the consequences of acid spills in the region of the KCC copper and cobalt mine, owned by Glencore, the Swiss commodity trading company. Glencore's activities were also at the heart of Swiss

theatre director Milo Rau's Congo Tribunal, which was again convened in the Congolese mining town of Kolwezi in December.

The sometimes negative consequences of electro-mobility came into ever sharper focus in the year 2021. This is in fact a key element of the necessary energy revolution. The extraction of the raw materials needed for battery production, such as cobalt, nickel or lithium, are nonetheless causing serious environmental and human rights problems in the countries where they are mined. *Bread for All* partner organization «Electronics Watch» documented these problems in a series of widely watched videos on nickel mining in the Philippines. In Switzerland, *Bread for All* called on battery manufacturers and the authorities to exercise more caution with respect to their supply chains and to ensure better recycling of battery raw materials in the future.



Tax evasion at the expense of the poorest



The Luxembourg-registered Socfin Corporation produces palm oil and rubber on five plantations in 10 countries of Africa and Asia, and markets these products through Swiss subsidiaries. A report published in October 2021 by *Bread for All*, Alliance Sud and the Tax Justice Network revealed that Socfin is shifting profits from its commodity production to the Canton of Fribourg, where they are taxed considerably less than in the countries of production.

Such tax evasion is widespread among multinational corporations. While not illegal, it is unfair, as it robs the producing countries of income they urgently need for their development and in so doing reinforces global inequality. Switzerland also bears some of the responsibility for this. Its corporation-friendly tax policy is one of the underpinnings of this system. The report further documents the close link between tax avoidance and profit maximization at the expense of the citizens of the regions concerned.

Caravans through West Africa

Also supported by *Bread for All*, the caravans organized by the Global Convergence of Land and Water Struggles – West Africa also protested against land grabbing by companies that run plantations. In December, more than 300 participants made stops in 16 places on their way across five West African countries. Besides land grabbing, the discussions, demonstrations, film screenings and exchanges with politicians also revolved around the right to peasant seeds, access to water and the promotion of agro-ecological cultivation methods. More than 15,000 people took part in the events.

In Indonesia, the topic of land grabbing is mostly associated with palm oil production. The «Sustainable Palm Oil» (RSPO) seal being promoted by companies and retailers does not resolve the associated environmental and social problems. Consequently, a network comprising trade unions, and indigenous and environmen-

tal organizations from Indonesia, supported by *Bread for All*, is drawing up its own strategies for a just transition for the palm oil industry. What such a «just transition» for the palm oil industry might look like and how it is to be achieved was the subject of a webinar for interested persons who speak German, organized at the end of November by *Bread for All*.

Successful seed fair

A seed fair organized in late February in Cameroon by *Bread for All* partner RADD (Réseau des Acteurs du Développement Durable) also proved highly successful. Over three days, more than 800 people turned out to buy and exchange peasant seeds at some 100 stands. Rare varieties were documented and a selection could be planted then and there in a training field maintained by RADD. The programme was completed with meetings and information events. The fair revealed the extent of the need for local seeds, which are under threat from standardized, often industrially cultivated varieties in Cameroon as well.

Among the reasons why local varieties are being squeezed out are the rules of the

International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV). They prohibit peasant families from freely propagating, exchanging or selling protected seed varieties. Yet precisely this unfettered use is indispensable to implementing the right to food and contributes significantly to preserving the agro-biodiversity. Coinciding with the 60th anniversary of UPOV, *Bread for All* and eight other organizations issued a call, in early December, for the Union and its rules to be abolished. Protesters disguised themselves as food plants and lay down in front of the UPOV headquarters in Geneva, some even in chains. Almost 300 organizations and networks around the world supported the protest and the call.



Protest outside the headquarters of the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) in Geneva. © Nicolas Righetti

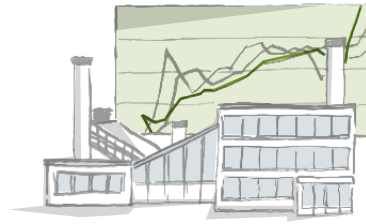
National Bank should phase out fossil fuels

If global warming continues as hitherto, another dozen glaciers will have dwindled in size in Switzerland by the year 2100. In September 2021, *Bread for All* drew attention to this fact by holding a commemoration attended by more than 200 people at the foot of the Basodino Glacier in Ticino, which has now almost disappeared. Disastrous flash floods in the summer had also clearly shown the kind of dangers that await us, should we fail to act decisively against the climate crisis.

Still, countries like Switzerland have sufficient resources at their disposal to repair the damage and fund preventive measures. This is not the case in many countries of the Global South. The 2021 Ecumenical Campaign mounted by *Bread for All* and *Fastenopfer* was therefore placed under the theme of climate justice: those mainly responsible for the climate crisis, namely the countries of the Global North, should assume more responsibility and take effective action to reduce their CO₂ emissions.

National Bank should divest

The Swiss National Bank (SNB) is among Switzerland's leading drivers of global warming. At the end of 2019, it held shares



worth almost six billion US dollars in companies involved in exploiting fossil fuels and is therefore promoting catastrophic global warming of 4 to 6 degrees. In April, *Bread for All* and *Fastenopfer* submitted a petition with 14,000 signatures to the SNB, urging the Bank to divest itself of these holdings.

In the framework of the Climate Alliance, *Bread for All* supported the new CO₂ law, which was narrowly defeated in mid-June. It is now all the more crucial to keep fighting at all levels for Swiss emissions to be reduced to net zero by 2040.

Online course for 50,000 people

The "Climate conversations" are one possible way of cutting CO₂ emissions, as participants learn how to set their own lives on a climate-friendly course. Because of

the corona pandemic, only 20 of the 34 conversations advertised could be held, with a total of 139 participants. In contrast, there was strong demand for training as climate conversation moderators – 27 persons were trained as moderators in four courses.

Individual changes are also among the goals of the Workshop for Inner Change in western Switzerland. In 2021, it officially partnered with the Massive Open Online Course on the subject of inner change. The course was initiated by the Mouvement Colibris (Colibris Movement) in France, which is guided by the principles of frugality, autonomy and sharing with one another, and brought together more than 50,000 people. In addition, the workshop also helped give form to the new stage play "Und wenn alles nicht gespielt wäre", which was performed six times in 2021.



Talking point "Climate justice is highly political"

Why do you stand up for climate justice?

Miges Baumann – I am appalled by the injustice whereby those who contributed the least to the climate crisis are the ones being worst affected by it, i.e., the poorest people in the Global South. They cause virtually no CO₂ emissions, but are already grappling with extremes of weather, droughts, rising sea levels and climate-related illnesses. And much more dramatic consequences of global warming still await the young and future generations.

Is that also a human rights problem?

Yes, the industrialized countries are violating human rights such as the right to food and water, the right to health or the right to development, and are jeopardizing

the survival of humanity with their wasteful use of resources.

What can we do about it?

As an individual, I can reduce my consumption and hence my personal CO₂ emissions. Climate justice is a highly political matter, however. As a citizen, I can therefore strive to ensure, at the political level, that the State and the business sector assume their responsibility. The economy and financial sector, for example, could be made to transition towards fossil-free energy sources and the recycling of raw materials. Moreover, it should be acknowledged that compensation for the substantial damage and losses already caused and still being generated by the climate crisis should occur on a polluter-pays basis.



Miges Baumann championed the cause of climate justice throughout his 15 years as Head of Development Policy at *Bread for All*. He retired at the end of 2021.

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SWISS CHURCH AID

Headquarters

Seminarstrasse 28
P.O. Box
8042 Zurich
Switzerland

+41 44 360 88 00
info@heks.ch
heks.ch
IBAN CH37 0900 0000 8000 1115 1