



Switzerland - Swiss Solidarity

NATIONAL POPULATION

7.7 million

STAFF SIZE

19

KEY PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERS

Swisscom

YEAR OF FOUNDATION

1946, 1983 (formal status as foundation)

LIST OF MEMBERS

ADRA – Adventist Developement and Relief Agency	Fastenopfer - Swiss Catholic Lenten Fund	Médecins du Monde Switzerland	Swiss Red Cross
Bruecke / Le pont	Handicap International	MSF – Docters Without Borders Switzerland	SolidarMed
Caritas Switzerland	Helvetas	Nouvelle Planète	Swissaid
CBM – Christoffel Blindenmission	HEKS – Swiss Interchurch Aid	Pestalozzi Children's Foundation	Swisscontact
CFD – the feminist Peace Organization	IAMANEH Switzerland	Salvation Army	Terre des hommes – Helping children worldwide
EDM – Enfants du Monde	Medair	Solidar Switzerland	Terre des Hommes Suisse
			Vivamos Mejor

History

Swiss Solidarity started as the 'Chaine de Bonheur' or 'Gluckskette', a radio program in 1946. It linked people together in a chain of solidarity to help ease suffering in the aftermath of the Second World War. In 1983 Swiss Solidarity was granted legal status as a foundation. Through its close connection with Swiss Radio and TV (SRG SSR), it

raises funds for relief projects in Switzerland (25%) or abroad (75%).

Organization

The Foundation Council (in which SRG SSR has the majority) has overall supervision and oversees the external strategy and budget. Every four years the criteria of partnership are checked. Swiss Solidarity works with 25 accredited Swiss organiza-

tions that run the relief projects. The organizations submit proposals for projects approved for by a project commission. Projects are monitored during execution and after completion. Relief work may last several years during which the designated earmarked funds are carefully invested and audited with a strong focus on ethical and fair criteria. The administrative costs, such as the secretariat and staff have so far been

covered almost every year by the interest gained from careful investments and not by the donations done by the public. However, due to very low interests this is increasingly difficult and Swiss Solidarity is now allowed to take up to 5% of the donations to cover its costs.

Fundraising

Due to its close links with Swiss radio and television Swiss Solidarity is able to act without any delay after a major disaster. There are four levels of activity depending on the gravity and urgency of a disaster. The first level is to post news items on the website. The second, moderate, level is to publish a press release to raise funds. The third level requests the agreement of the SRG SSR, as it includes TV spots and adds on the radio, and the appeal will be broadcasted in relevant news items. The fourth and major level is to launch a fundraising national day event in the case of a major disaster. This includes setting up call centres, broadcasting in all Swiss language regions (a contractual commitment by SRG SSR), and use the appointed ambassadors (or 'Voices') for each language region. The decision to start level four is based on how much funding is needed and can be processed by the partner organizations. Also the expectations of the public is taken into account. Next to the close cooperation with Swiss radio and television, private and printed media usually follows the public media when a level 3 or 4 appeal is launched. General awareness is also created by educational

dossiers that are sent to schools, as well as being available on internet.

Major successes, highlights

The most important success is that Swiss Solidarity, due to its history and its strong link with SRG SSR, is a very strong brand. This makes it possible to reach out to a to the public that has a deep consciousness for support and solidarity. It has built up trust and quality over several decades and therefore is very well known in all Swiss language regions. Furthermore, success is always closely linked to the emotions expressed in the media. For the future it will be necessary however to keep up this strong brand in an increasingly digital and more crowded fundraising world.

Partnerships

Swiss Solidarity has a partnership with Swisscom that pays for all communications, telephones and the set up of call centres during an appeal. Usually there is also a match of donations by Swisscom employees. To engage in partnerships is very important, although competition, for example with environmental organizations is fierce. A complicating factor is that Swiss Solidarity wants to associate with businesses not only on a regional level but on a national level. Swiss airlines, trains and banks are looked into. A review of partnership policies is planned for the near future; to this end, Swiss Solidarity has conducted a poll on donating corporations' views

of about sponsorship and corporate social responsibility.

Challenges and innovations for the future

Swiss Solidarity is very conscious of the changing environment for humanitarian aid. 'Western aid with its principles, values and standards is no longer as exclusive as it once was' says Walter Ruegg, president of Swiss Solidarity. A report commissioned by Swiss Solidarity addresses trends such as the rapid increase of new actors in the humanitarian aid sector; the increasing impact of geopolitical forces on the delivery of humanitarian aid, the need to link emergency aid to prevention and development, and the increasing demands and competition within the fundraising field. Swiss Solidarity is determined to find effective and sustainable ways to deal with these new challenges.

More practical challenge are that although being a strong brand, Swiss Solidarity needs to update its image and attract younger audiences. Therefore investments have been made in communications strategies and social media such as a new app that has been developed. For the first time Swiss Solidarity can individually address donors. Furthermore there has been engagement with the young public radio station SRF3, with whom the 'Serious Request' Music event (Jeder Rappen zählt) is being held in the German speaking part of Switzerland every year since 2009.