

SWISS SOLIDARITY'S 250TH APPEAL
HISTORICAL INFO FILE



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1. History

1.1 History of Swiss Solidarity – the “Chain of Happiness”

“Y’a du bonheur pour tout le monde” – There is happiness for everyone! Swiss Solidarity’s story began in 1946 in Lausanne with a song, the need to do something to ease the suffering caused by the Second World War and a large dose of enthusiasm. Radio broadcaster Roger Nordmann and entertainer Jack Rollan were the founding fathers of our 73-year-old success story.

The first appeal they launched on 26 September 1946 via Radio Sottens (now Radio Télé Suisse RTS) was to help children damaged by the war. They had soon set up their own radio programme, the “Chaîne de Bonheur” or “Chain of Happiness” – named after the fact that the person who was best able to realise another’s wish could propose the next good deed. Initially the programme collected donations in kind, and was overrun with packages and relief supplies.

From radio programme to sponsor

Nowadays the organization accepts donated money rather than items. The money raised goes towards aid projects run by our 26 partner NGOs. A large number of the projects involve reconstruction following earthquakes, tornadoes or other natural catastrophes. But we also frequently raise money for the victims of war and conflict, and to help children in need.

We also help disadvantaged people in Switzerland, in particular young people who need help getting established in a social or work environment; children who suffer domestic violence, either directly or indirectly; and people whose property and belongings have been destroyed in a natural disaster.

Switzerland shows solidarity

The original idea of showing solidarity with the victims of disasters, either in Switzerland or abroad, still motivates us today. Along with our partner the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation (SRG SSR), over the past 73 years we have launched via radio and television around 249 appeals for donations for the victims of natural disasters and conflicts. Each appeal triggers a huge wave of solidarity throughout Switzerland, especially on national fundraising days.

We can only show this strong solidarity in Switzerland with the generous support of the public, the strong partnerships with the SRG SSR, Swisscom, private radios, the media and of course our operational partners, the NGOs.

Our founders were primarily radio broadcasters with large hearts. Today we are the biggest private donor to humanitarian NGOs in Switzerland. For 36 years we have been a private foundation and the humanitarian wing of the SRG SSR.



1.2 Swiss Solidarity – it all began 73 years ago

“Y’a du bonheur pour tout le monde” – There is happiness for everyone! A song, a bold idea and a lot of enthusiasm marked the beginning of Swiss Solidarity’s history in 1946.

Faced with the poverty and misery in the country following the Second World War, radio presenters and entertainers Jack Rollan and Roger Nordmann felt the need to do something. A chain letter they received sparked off an idea – to start a chain reaction with a radio programme.

It was a bold idea. And it wasn’t easy convincing their bosses at the radio station that it was a good one. But they succeeded! On 26 September 1946 Radio Sottens, now RTS, broadcast the first “Chain of Happiness” programme designed to help war-damaged children.

There is happiness for everyone!

A person who was able to meet a call for help particularly well was allowed to propose the next good deed. This first appeal for donations soon developed into a weekly radio programme, the “Chaîne du Bonheur”, or “Chain of Happiness” – now known in English as Swiss Solidarity. The aim was not to break the chain.

The radio programme was marked by a song entitled “Gavotte” and in particular by the chorus: “Y’a du bonheur pour tout le monde” – There is happiness for everyone – a song familiar to everyone in the French-speaking part of Switzerland at the time. The two founding fathers, who toured the villages with their programme, became regional stars.

The idea was soon picked up by radio stations in the German-, Italian- and Romansh-speaking areas of Switzerland, and so the “Chain of Happiness” spread throughout Switzerland.

Over the 73 years since then, we have made more than 249 appeals for donations for people in need.

From sausage and cigars to complex humanitarian projects

In 1946 – shortly after the end of the Second World War – many people in Switzerland suffered great poverty: there were five-year-old children who had never possessed a pair of shoes, or mothers bringing up five children single-handed on just 317 francs a month.

So initially people primarily donated material items. The radio studio in Lausanne was soon overflowing with boxes of cigars, sausages, mattresses, shoes, toys and much more. But a radio station is not a charity, and so Radio Sottens asked the Swiss Red Cross to come on board, and this humanitarian partner took charge of distributing the donations.

Today we have 26 operational partners and over the years have received a total of CHF 1.8 billion in donations. What was once a radio programme has now grown into the largest private Swiss donor for humanitarian aid, and is now the humanitarian wing of the SRG SSR.

1.3 Swiss Solidarity in the German-speaking part of Switzerland

Although the history of Swiss Solidarity began with a radio show in Lausanne, just one year later the radio studios of Basel and Lugano took up the idea, and enthusiasm for the “radio chain letter” spread throughout Switzerland.

The first fundraising campaign conducted from Basel on 19 October 1947 was for the so-called “oil soldiers”. These were Swiss military men who, having eaten cheese toasted sandwiches fried in machine gun cooling oil, had to suffer all their lives from the consequences of poisoning.



From 1954 onwards, there was no longer a weekly show and campaigns were only run when there was a major disaster or other special event.

Mr Swiss Solidarity

Since the 1970's the voice and face of Roland Jeanneret in particular marked Swiss Solidarity in German-speaking Switzerland. Back in 1977, the DRS radio journalist initially stood in for his boss, who was unavailable on a fundraising day.

Asked what he should do exactly, his boss told him that it was very simple: "Get as much money rolling in as possible!".

Jeanneret put his heart and soul into Swiss Solidarity from the start, becoming a delegate for German-speaking Switzerland from 1991 and from 2000 the "voice of Swiss Solidarity", responsible for all communication activities. He retired in 2011, after two decades devoted to the organization.

60% of donations from German-speaking Switzerland

German-speaking Switzerland also plays a large role in terms of the volume of donations. Around 60% of all donations come from German-speaking Switzerland, 25% from French-speaking Switzerland, 10% from the Italian part and 5% from the Rhaeto-Romanic part of Switzerland.

1.4 Swiss Solidarity in Italian-speaking Switzerland

In the canton of Ticino, the *Radio Televisione Svizzera italiana* was very keen on the idea from Lausanne. Sergio Maspoli and Lohengrin Filipello took over the concept from Roger Nordmann and, under the title of "la buona azione", enthusiastically participated in the Christmas appeal of 1948 for the benefit of war-damaged children. Everyone who was anyone in the canton, from the bishop to the state councillors, took part in the campaign, which enabled a Christmas tree to be decorated with hundreds of donations.

From "la buona azione" to the "Catena della Solidarietà"

The enthusiasm of those first hours still remains strong today. And "la buona azione" soon became the "Catena della Solidarietà". A well-known presenter from the RSI [Swiss Italian radio] takes on the voice of Swiss Solidarity, which also ropes in other well-known personalities. In the fundraising centre in the historic RSI radio studio in Lugano-Besso, they are helped by 30 loyal volunteers, all former employees of the Post, who meet there each year. The charismatic Carla Norghauer currently acts as anchor, supported by the Swiss Solidarity delegate in Ticino, Eugenio Jelmini.

Donations above-average

The Italian part of Switzerland brings in above-average donations in most appeals. The canton with around 5% of the Swiss population donated 15% of the total for earthquake victims of Nepal, for example.



1.5 International “Chain of Happiness”

After the Chain of Happiness was launched in 1946 in Lausanne, it was not only adopted in 1948 by Radio Beromünster in German-speaking Switzerland and Radio Monte in Italian-speaking Switzerland, the chain letter also led to the creation of an international programme. On 23 December 1948 this programme collected donations for war-damaged children.

In addition to the three Swiss radio stations, radio stations in Paris, Trieste, Vienna, Montecarlo and the Südwestfunk Baden-Baden joined the campaign.

In 1948 there were even negotiations with American representatives for an intercontinental “Chain of Happiness”.

Emergency Appeals Alliance

Up until 1968 several fundraising campaigns were run by the international Chain of Happiness. In 1949 the international appeals reached approximately 250 million listeners. From 1968 onwards we functioned and raised funds on our own for several decades, until 2008 when we once again joined other organizations similar to Swiss Solidarity in their structure and the way they function. These are nine organizations in Belgium, Germany, Great Britain, Holland, Italy, Japan, Canada, Sweden and Austria.

The objective of these partnerships is to share experiences and insights from national and joint fundraising appeals and to gain more negotiating power collectively.

2. SRG and other media

2.1 The humanitarian arm of SRG SSR

The Chain of Happiness – now Swiss Solidarity – was founded by a journalist and entertainer at Lausanne’s radio station (Radio Sottens). In the beginning we were radio programme and fundraising platform in one. From 1954 onwards the weekly programmes were discontinued and to this day we only raise funds when catastrophes occur or circumstances demand it.

A child of the SRG SSR

For 37 years we were part of SRG SSR. Over time there were more and more appeals and collaboration with our partner NGOs became more complex. Professional structures were required in order to keep up with the changes. This was also recognized by the former SRG SSR director-general Leo Schürmann, who made Swiss Solidarity independent in 1983. We have been an independent foundation for 36 years, but are still closely linked to the SRG SSR, acting, so to speak, as its humanitarian arm.

On a fundraising day, radio and TV SRF, RTS, RSI and RTR put most of their programmes at the service of Swiss Solidarity. Swiss TV stations also participate in the appeal and report on the specific catastrophe, the fundraising centres and the current donation amount.

SRG SSR and Swiss Solidarity today

How close the connection of SRG and Swiss Solidarity is today may be seen by looking at the governing bodies. Our president Pascal Crittin is also director of RTS and seven of the 14 members on the foundation board are SRG SSR representatives.



Even though the weekly Swiss Solidarity programme was terminated in 1954, it is still broadcast regularly on the radio.

Swiss Solidarity ambassadors

For many years the programme “Glückskette Aktuell” was an integral part of the SRF1 listeners’ Sunday. First Roland Jeanneret and then Ladina Spiess, the voice of Swiss Solidarity in German-speaking Switzerland, reported on the use of the donations and directly from the affected areas.

At the beginning of June 2015 the weekly programme was replaced by several “Doppelpunkt”, a 45-minute cultural and political programme, broadcast throughout the year.

Jean-Marc Richard, the Swiss Solidarity ambassador in French-speaking Switzerland, reports regularly about us and our work in his programmes. Claudia Cathomen and Carla Norghauer do the same for RTR and RSI respectively.

2.2 Back to the roots with Jeder Rappen zählt, Coeur à Coeur and Ogni centesimo conta

SRG SSR supports not only our appeals for ongoing natural disasters, but also special appeals for issues that are not necessarily highlighted by the media.

Between 2009 and 2018, SRF and Swiss Solidarity ran the highly successful *Jeder Rappen zählt* fundraising event in aid of these appeals. The tenth such event was the last in the appeal, but a follow-up project is being planned.

In the past ten years we and the SRF, with the support of our partner NGOs, have raised more than CHF 60 million in donations. Since 2016, similar events have been run by RTS (*Coeur à Coeur*) and RSI (*Ogni centesimo conta*) in their respective broadcasting areas. The main focus of all three fundraising events is to generate awareness among the younger generation of Switzerland’s humanitarian values.

Music and entertainment are a key feature of the fundraising, just as was the case when the original Swiss Solidarity was first launched. Whereas in the 1940s a gavotte may have been broadcast through the loudspeakers, today the music requests of the donors are a key element of the fundraising events.

Jeder Rappen zählt - topics, donations, presenters, songs and highlights

Year	Topic	Donations	Venue	Presenters	Song
2009	Fight against malaria	CHF 9,348,113	Bern	Mario Torriani, Nik Hartmann, Judith Wernli	“Jede Rappe zellt” by Adrian Sieber, Rapper Greis, Muriel Rhyner and Sad
Highlights	<p>The first year - and the first live marriage proposal in the glass box. Flavia asked her Marcel if he would marry her. The answer was YES!</p> <p>Swiss President Hans-Rudolf Merz officially opened the first ever <i>Jeder Rappen zählt</i>.</p>				



2010	Child victims of war	CHF 11,524,444	Bern	Tom Gisler, Nik Hartmann, Anic Lautenschlager	"Chinder im Chrieg" by Baschi
Highlights	The huge donation. Egyptian entrepreneur Samih Sawiris calls the glass box telephone and announces that he will raise the total amount donated by 20%. This is an additional almost CHF 1.5 million, bringing the grand JRZ total to over CHF 10 million.				

2011	Mothers in need	CHF 7,223,153	Lucerne	Nik Hartmann, Anic Lautenschlager, Kathrin Hönegger	"Mueter" by Adrian Stern
Highlights	A lovely story: Debbie reveals to Nik on the phone that she is expecting a baby. Her husband didn't know. In 2014 and again in 2018 for the final JRZ, Debbie returns to the glass box with her husband and children.				

2012	Water - every drop counts	CHF 7,502,827	Lucerne	Nik Hartmann, Kathrin Hönegger, Franziska von Grünigen	"100 milles gouttes d'eau" by Gustaf
Highlights	Another massive donation. A banker from Zug donates one million francs to hear his favourite song by Mike Candys. A pedalled water pump constructed by students at Lucerne University on Europaplatz vividly illustrates the topic 'Water'.				

2013	Kinder in Slums	CHF 3,234,553	Zurich, Basel, Aarau, St Gallen	Mario Torriani, Judith Wernli, Kathrin Hönegger, Nik Hartmann	-
Highlights	JRZ a bit differently. JRZ on Tour is the name of this year's event - the mobile glass box is in St Gallen, Zurich, Aarau and Basel. Highlight: Freddy Nock walks across a tightrope high above the Bahnhofplatz in Aarau.				

2014	Families forced to flee their homes	CHF 7,021,273	Lucerne	Nik Hartmann, Philippe Gerber, Tina Nägeli	"Leaving Tomorrow" by Bastian Baker
Highlights	Jungle Drum fever is spreading. A generous family donates CHF 300,000 to see Nik and co. dancing to Jungle Drum. In 2018, in the final JRZ event, the dance is repeated - and another CHF 300,000 is raised. In partnership with UNHCR, Lucerne University and our partner NGOs, in Lucerne we construct a refugee camp to illustrate to visitors the realities of refugee life.				



2015	Young people in need	CHF 4,233,096	Bern	Nik Hartmann, Michel Birri, Anic Lautenschlager	“Streets of my hometown” by Pegasus
Highlights	<p>The “Rappen runners” are underway. In two days, they run from Lucerne to Bern, raising CHF 40,000 en route. And this year we are visited by Xherdan Shaqiri, the shooting star of the national football team. He raises over CHF 100,000 in a selfie campaign.</p> <p>Donors can find out what it means to overcome a hurdle on a climbing wall.</p>				

2016	Children fleeing alone	CHF 6,644,811	Lucerne	Stefan Büsser, Rosanna Grüter, Fabio Nay, Tina Nägeli	“Lion’s Heart” by Anna Känzig
Highlights	<p>Unique in the history of JRZ: For the first (and last) time, a presenter has to be replaced. Rosanna Grüter loses her voice and is replaced by Tina Nägeli.</p>				

2017	Education. An opportunity for children in need	CHF 1,751,757	Lucerne	Stefan Büsser, Fabio Nay, Tina Nägeli	“Dreamer” by Yokko
Highlights	<p>A walk for a good cause. Daniela Ryf invites people to walk with her around the lake. Nik Hartmann comes along too to report. Altogether they raise around CHF 20,000.</p>				

2018	A roof over your head	CHF 6,201,689	Lucerne	Anic Lautenschlager, Judith Wernli, Nik Hartmann	“JRZ Allstars” by Stefan Buck von Hecht, Anna Känzig, Baschi, Marc Sway, Ritschi, Adrian Stern, Dabu von Dabu Fantastic, Seven and Gustav
Highlights	<p>The final JRZ event, for now at least: Nik, Anic and Judith dance to Jungle Drum again, and the “Rappen runners” are underway again. Seven organizes a crowd of several hundred saucepan-bearing Lucerners at 7 in the morning.</p> <p>With the support of UNHCR and Eawag, university students again create an interactive exhibition on Europaplatz to raise awareness for the JRZ theme.</p>				



How *Jeder Rappen zählt* donations are used Every cent counts for 'A roof over your head' (2018)

To find yourself without a roof over your head is a tragic experience for any adult. But if you are a child, it is even more traumatic to lose your home because of war or a natural disaster such as an earthquake, flood or hurricane.

In 2018, we raised **CHF 6,201,689** to help people with no roof over their head, providing them with safety and care and also giving them a sense of dignity and protection from abuse, disease and epidemics, and natural disasters.

With the money raised, we have so far funded 3 projects run by 3 NGOs.

In Switzerland, we have funded 16 projects for children who are the victims or witnesses of violence or abuse, and who urgently require care.

Education. An opportunity for children in need (JRZ17)

In the 2017 issue of *Jeder Rappen zählt* we raised **CHF 4,751,757** for children and young adults in Switzerland and abroad who have not yet been able to go to school or who have poor qualifications.

According to the UN, 264 million children throughout the world do not attend school, although schooling and vocational training are the key to a successful future: a future in which people can have control over their own lives and be active members of society.

With the money raised we have funded nine projects abroad run by nine of our partner NGOs. In Switzerland seven projects have received funding. The support provided does not just take the form of integrating children and young adults into the school system, it also involves helping young people to gain a foothold in the world of work and training teachers and public authority employees to ensure that the education provided is of a high quality.

Children fleeing alone (2016)

Over 65 million people worldwide find themselves fleeing from war, persecution and extreme poverty. People in Switzerland donated **CHF 6,644,811** so that we could help these children, either while they were fleeing, in their arrival country or in Switzerland.

Our partner NGOs *Terre des hommes* – helping children worldwide, *Save the Children* and *ADRA* are using this money in Greece, Italy and Serbia to help children travelling without parents or another responsible adult and who are stranded in one of these countries.

We also support around 33 projects that look after unaccompanied minors here in Switzerland. These projects help children and young adults to become integrated in society and to find work.



Young people in need (2015)

In Switzerland and other countries there are many young people who need help gaining a foothold in a job or in life. We raised **CHF 4,233,096** for these young people in need.

This money was used to support 22 projects throughout Switzerland which help young people on their path to adulthood and in finding a career.

We financed eleven projects abroad run by our partner relief organizations. In Columbia and El Salvador, for example, young people received training that made it easier for them to find work, and so escape the spiral of poverty and violence.

Families forced to flee their homes (2014)

In 2014 more than 50 million people around the world had been forced to flee their homes. We received **CHF 7,021,273** in donations to provide the emergency relief that these people so urgently require.

Thanks to these donations, we were able to fund 16 projects by our partner relief organizations, helping refugees and internal refugees by providing food, water, medical and psychological care and accommodation.

We supported people in refugee camps and also those living in extreme poverty outside of the camps, for example in Lebanon or Jordan.

Children in slums (2013)

Children who grow up in the slums of this world lack everything: from an education to food and water. Furthermore, they are often victims of exploitation and abuse. We raised CHF 3,234,553 for these children in need.

Thanks to this money, we were able to fund ten projects by our partner relief organizations. In Brazil, for example, street kids received a hot meal, medical care and legal counsel, and so had a chance to get off the streets.

In Benin, children working at the market were better protected from abuse and exploitation.

We also spent **CHF 368,719** on helping children in Switzerland, for example paying for a pair of glasses or a trip to the dentist.

Water (2012)

About 800 million people around the world have no access to drinking water. Every day 3,000 of them die from diarrhoea, mainly as a result of contaminated drinking water or poor hygienic conditions. With the **CHF 7,502,827** we raised, 25 projects were funded in 19 different countries.

Our partner relief organizations used this money to build wells, sanitary installations and rainwater collection systems.

They also taught people simple rules of hygiene. This means that they are less likely to suffer from diseases caused by dirty water and lack of hygiene.



Mothers in need (2011)

In war zones, developing countries, and in Switzerland too, mothers often have to cope with their children on their own. We raised CHF 7,223,153 in donations, which allowed us to support 23 projects run by 12 partner relief organizations in 15 different countries.

For example, in Gaza we provided psychological support to women and children who had experienced violence. In Guinea we provided medical care to mothers and their infants. And in Columbia, women who had been forced to flee because of conflict received vocational training so they could provide for their families themselves.

Child victims of war (2010)

All victims of war are very vulnerable, but children in particular are put at risk. They may lose their homes, be forced to become child soldiers or become the victims of landmines.

With the **CHF 11,524,444** we raised we supported 40 projects run by our partner relief organizations in 18 different countries.

For example, children in war-torn northern Afghanistan received the opportunity to go to school.

And in Congo we ran mobile clinics to treat handicapped children, and trained former child soldiers to raise goats.

Fight against malaria (2009)

Every 30 seconds, a child somewhere in the world dies of malaria. This disease, which is transmitted by the Anopheles mosquito, claims over a million victims each year, making it one of the most dangerous infectious diseases in the world.

We raised **CHF 9,348,113** in donations, which allowed us to support 32 projects run by our partner relief organizations in 18 different countries.

For example, our partner organizations distributed mosquito nets in Malawi, treated pregnant women suffering from malaria in Democratic Republic of the Congo and contributed to the biological control of malaria in Kenya.



Coeur à Coeur - Thématique, dons, animateurs et highlights

Year	Theme	Donations	Venue	Presenters
2016	People in need in Switzerland	CHF 1,231,756 (donations pledged 23.12.16) CHF 1,501,028 in total	Lausanne	Philippe Robin, Pauline Seiterle and Jonas Schneider
Highlights	The first year we highlighted a topic which is often overlooked: people in need in Switzerland. 60 personal challenges were organized to raise money; the cat in the box			
2017	Young people in need in Switzerland	CHF 1,257,461	Lausanne	Philippe Robin, Pauline Seiterle and Jonas Schneider
Highlights	Accounts by young people living in need in Switzerland. 25 concerts on the Place Centrale, 120 guests (incl. Jean-Luc Bideau, Djourou, Didier Cuche), 60 events by individuals, various classes came to answer the phone in the telephone centre			
2018	Right to childhood	CHF 1,519,224 pledged (amount received: CHF 1,400,000)	Lausanne	Jonas Schneider, Tania Chytil and Philippe Martin
Highlights	Another media presenter Yoann Provenzano, 100 events by individuals, a Twint challenge over five days (50 firemen, 50 white blouses, 50 cosplayers, 50 motorcyclists, 200 soft toys)			

How the Coeur à Coeur donations are used

Coeur à Coeur for a right to childhood (2018)

Each year, Swiss child protection organizations register between 30,000 and 50,000 children in need of support because they are witnesses or victims of physical or psychological violence, of neglect or abuse.

CHF 1,400,000 has been donated to Swiss Solidarity since December 2018, and pledged donations continue to be received. Thirteen projects by Swiss organizations have already been funded. These support children in foster homes or fund care facilities for parents and children in fragile situations. They also support children placed alone in emergency care and assessment situations.

Coeur à Coeur - Young people in need in Switzerland (2017)

In 2017, we raised CHF 1,257,461 in aid of young people between 15 and 25 years old who find themselves in a situation of need and run the risk of falling into poverty.

With the donations received, we were able to fund 12 projects run by organizations in Switzerland that help young people facing numerous obstacles, both in the family and in society; young immigrants who



have recently arrived in Switzerland; and vulnerable young women, such as young mothers without any training or immigrant women.

The projects help these young people in need to gain independence and to realize their capabilities, providing them with vocational training and education and with personal help.

Coeur à Coeur - People in need in Switzerland (2016)

The fact that many people in Switzerland live in needy circumstances is often overlooked. Up to a million people are affected - one person in five.

Coeur à Coeur has raised a total of CHF 1,501,028, which has gone towards helping 633 households, and 11 organizations which run projects to help young people in need and unaccompanied minors in Switzerland.

Ogni centesimo conta - topic, donations, presenters and highlights

Year	Topic	Donations	Venue	Presenters
2017	Young people in need in Switzerland	CHF 244,927	Locarno	Julie Arlin, Alessandro Bertoglio, Fabrizio Casati, Lara Montagna
Highlights	Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis visits the event in Locarno, and RSI director Maurizio Canetta swims in Lago Maggiore, which has a temperature of just 8 °C. The French Bulldog Club donates the proceeds from its Christmas event.			

2018	Children in need in Switzerland (2018)	CHF 361,484	Bellinzona	Julie Arlin, Alessandro Bertoglio, Fabrizio Casati, Lara Montagna
Highlights	Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis visits the event a second time, the comedians 'Frontaliers' donate the profits from the sale of their DVD and the Bulldog Club again donates the proceeds from its Christmas event, a total of CHF 600. There is also a 24-hour sponsored run from Chiasso to Airolo (approx. 100km).			



How the *Ogni centesimo conta* donations are used

Young people in need in Switzerland (2017)

In the first issue of *Ogni centesimo conta* in 2017, we raised CHF 244,927 for young people in need in Switzerland. Five projects run by Swiss organizations in Ticino were funded using this money. The projects help young people to gain a foothold in society and in the world of work.

In particular, they help young people who are in difficult circumstances, immigrants who have recently arrived in Switzerland and need help integrating, and young women in urgent need of help.

Children in need in Switzerland (2018)

In 2018, the *Ogni centesimo conta* event was held for the second time in partnership with RSI. CHF 361,484 was raised in aid of children who experience domestic violence or abuse, and who urgently require protection.

We funded six projects run by Swiss organizations in Ticino which provide protection and care for such children, either alone in emergency accommodation, in sheltered housing or in parent-child structures, where the relationship between the children and their parents can be rebuilt and healed.

2.3 Support from private media

In addition to our close connection to SRG SSR, we foster close relationships with the private media. Some of them strongly support us in our fundraising appeals. In German-speaking and French-speaking Switzerland several private radio stations have formed associations to support Swiss Solidarity on fundraising days. In German-speaking Switzerland 'Privatradios pro Glückskette' has supported us for almost 20 years, and in Western Switzerland we have been working for almost a decade with 'Radios regionaux romands'.

A further important aspect is what the media choose to focus on. A crisis or disaster that doesn't get reported in the media raises little interest. So we are dependent on media coverage about a catastrophe, the victims and the impact on their lives.

2.4 Criticism as motivation

Swiss Solidarity generally enjoys a very good reputation in the media. They often report on fundraising days, which has helped us to become so well known.

But the media also regularly take a close and critical look at our work. What was probably the strongest media criticism received so far came shortly after the step into independence, when in 1984 "L'Hebdo", a French-speaking weekly newspaper, featured the headline: "Où va l'argent de la Chaîne du Bonheur?" – where does the donated money go?



A time of change

As part of the SRG SSR until 1983, we primarily informed donors of what happened to their donations via radio and TV programmes. We published our first official annual report in 1983.

The huge criticism of the organization's management, even if regarded internally as unjustified, hit us at a time of change. New structures were created in the newly independent organization and a new team took over management of Swiss Solidarity.

Transparency as a core value

Today we account for each co-financed project. The donors entrust us with their money and expect us to use it effectively and efficiently for the benefit of the people in need whom they donated it for. So we routinely provide information on how the donations are used via our internet site, the annual report, our e-newsletter and on Facebook and Twitter.

3. Broad support from the private sector

The people in Switzerland show their solidarity not just by making generous donations but also in numerous partnerships, some of which have existed since our organization first began operating. Here are examples of three partners who have been supporting us for many years:

Swisscom

Swisscom was one of our very first partners. In 1951 we held our first appeal via a telephone centre, raising money for the victims of flooding in the Po Valley. Swisscom (then part of the PTT) was a major partner. And the partnership is still going strong today.

On national fundraising days, Swisscom provides telephone lines and the freephone number 0800 87 07 07 so that our volunteers can take donation pledges over the phone.

In this and other ways, such as donations-in-kind and direct payments, Swisscom helps us to meet a considerable proportion of our operating costs.

Swiss Post

Like Swisscom, Swiss Post was formerly part of the PTT, and as such has provided important support to our foundation since its beginnings in 1946. The postal account 10-15000-6 forms part of Swiss Solidarity's identity, and our payment slips can be found in all post offices in Switzerland.

Keystone

A picture often says more than a thousand words. When a natural disaster occurs, Keystone allows us to use its pictures free of charge so that we can show the extent of the suffering and damage.



4. Name and logo, then and now

It was a chain letter that led to the idea of the “Chain of Happiness”. The chain letter may have landed in the rubbish bin, but the idea was adapted for the radio: the person who was best able to realise another’s wish could propose the next good deed. It was to become a chain of happiness that never got broken.

Our way of working has changed over the past 70 years and has adapted to modern humanitarian aid. Whereas we initially worked with two and shortly thereafter four operational partners, and at one point the number rose to 30. Today we work with 26 partner NGOs.

That’s why the original logo showed two interwoven links in a chain.

The chain becomes Swiss Solidarity

The new logo preserves the idea of links of a chain and illustrates “Swiss Solidarity” with two intertwined letters ‘s’. And that’s how we view ourselves today. Because the unique wave of solidarity with the victims of catastrophes that seizes the Swiss population on national fundraising days is exceptional, and has defined us since our beginnings.

5. Operational Swiss Solidarity

5.1 Swiss Solidarity’s operational partners

In order to bring the donations in kind to people in need, the “Chain of Happiness” necessarily needed humanitarian partners – after all, a radio station is not an aid organization. The Swiss Red Cross was a partner from the start and soon HEKS, Caritas and somewhat later the Schweizerische Arbeiterhilfswerk (today Solidar Suisse) came on board.

Between 1946 and 1982 the donations were divided up as follows: Swiss Red Cross, Caritas and HEKS each received 25%, the Schweizerische Arbeiterhilfswerk received 10% and the remaining 15% went to various other NGOs.

When the foundation became independent more partners joined, and at one point there were over 30. Today we have 26 partner NGOs. The way in which the money is distributed has also greatly changed. All NGOs have to submit an application for each project, which is assessed and analysed by the project department and commission.

5.2 From the distribution of sausages to professional social welfare

Poverty in Switzerland was a major issue especially in the years after the Second World War, and it was a major concern of our founding fathers to help the affected people. In the beginning mainly donations in kind were made, and the warehouses of Radio Sottens were full of boxes of sausages, cigars and toys.

For example, in 1948 we collected donations of tobacco and chocolate for people living in old people’s homes in Switzerland. We also collected repeatedly for the poor, in those days still called the “frail”.

Cash donations instead of donations in kind

Over time cash donations replaced material donations. But how should the money be distributed among the “frail”?



Before our social aid programme became as professionalized as it was until 2017, when it ceased to be run in the same way, the supplicants had to approach Swiss Solidarity's director. He listened to their stories and gave a bit of money to those who really needed help.

This form of individual social assistance has now been replaced with support for young people and children in need. In our 'Jeder Rappen zählt', 'Coeur à Coeur' and 'Ogni centesimo conta' appeals we raise money for projects that help young people to reintegrate into their social environment or the world of work, and for children who have witnessed or suffered violence in their own homes. By supporting projects rather than individuals, we can reach out to more people, helping them to change their lives for the better.

6. A knack for finances?

When we launch a fundraising campaign in the wake of a disaster, we are flooded with hundreds of millions of francs in donations. Our biggest-ever campaign was for the victims of the tsunami, when we raised CHF 227 million, and the second largest was for Haiti, when CHF 66 million was donated. These huge sums soon raise critical questions among donors and the media, such as whether we are sitting on piles of money or even gambling it away on the stock market.

Paying bit by bit

Because we invest a large part of the money in longer-term projects such as reconstruction, and at the same time have a highly sophisticated control system, we pay out funds in instalments. For each approved project we pay part of the costs at the beginning of the project, a part after interim results have been successfully presented and the rest at the end, once we have received the final report.

Return on investment

Because we pay out 66 million francs for earthquake victims in Haiti over several years, for example, it makes sense that the money should bring a return in the meantime. That's why we invest it very carefully. Since we became a foundation in 1983, we have almost always been able to cover our operating costs with the interest earned on this invested money. And what is more, in the past 36 years we have earned additional income of about CHF 4 million.

Just in 2001, 2002, 2008, 2010 and 2018, when the situation on the financial markets was not so rosy, did we make a loss. This gave the media in particular a lot to talk about, even though it occurred in just five out of 36 years.

Caution is called for

The times have become much more uncertain financially and we can no longer rely on generating enough interest to cover our operating costs. The Foundation has therefore decided to create a reserve fund, in which we currently hold around CHF 5,5 million. The reserve fund is made up of income surplus and remaining donated funds.

In 2019 the foundation board also decided that from January of that year 5% of all monies raised in appeals would be deducted and put towards our operating costs. If this amount is not required because our financial investments produce enough dividends, this 5% will then be put in reserve as required, or be used for projects.



7. Anecdotes

7.1. An interrupted interview

In 2012 we raised funds for the victims of the Syria conflict. It is common practice for a federal councillor, often the president of the Confederation, to launch the fundraising day.

In 2012 this was Eveline Widmer Schlumpf. SRF SSR was conducting an exclusive interview with her as the phone in front of her rang. She abruptly interrupted the radio journalist, stating that she was there to work and had to answer a phone call.

The caller was probably just as stunned to be speaking to the country's president as the journalist was over having the interview interrupted!

7.2 From the demolition skip to Kabul

We repeatedly receive donations with wonderful or strange stories behind them.

Once a stamp dealer told us that two men had come by his shop in order to sell old stamps. They claimed that they had found them in a skip further down the road. The suspicious stamp dealer went to have a look himself and found a postcard that had had an extraordinary journey.

It had been posted in Geneva to an address in Kabul. But the recipient in Afghanistan's capital city had been untraceable, and so weeks later the postcard came back to the sender. On its return trip the card had been stamped by post and customs no less than 16 times.

As several prospective buyers seemed interested in the odd postcard in his shop window, the stamp dealer decided to put it up for auction. An enthusiast acquired the unique specimen for CHF 22,300! The stamp dealer knew that he didn't want to keep the money and he contacted us with the request to do some good in Kabul.

And that's how a discarded old postcard ended up helping sick children in Kabul.

7.3 Gabi's large donation

Especially on fundraising days, when the wave of solidarity sweeps across the whole of Switzerland, many children phone us with very touching stories.

Like six-year old Gabi, who wanted to make a donation. She and her family had the idea of weighing the family members and donating the weight in francs.

The family members weighed themselves after dinner: 188 kilograms. But because Gabi wanted the donation to be as large as possible, she cleverly pointed out that the dog also belonged to the family. And so they donated a total of CHF 192.50!



7.4 Is that allowed?

The giggling lady on the phone at first didn't really want to let us know what kind of a donation she and her colleagues wanted to make. She finally plucked up the courage and declared that if we broadcast it on the radio, they would donate the whole of the night's proceeds.

A very generous offer! But the call came from a brothel and radio advertising for quick encounters for the benefit of people in need is indeed a bit borderline.

But seeing as it was past 10 pm, children were in bed and it was ultimately for a good cause, we turned a blind eye – or played deaf – and supported the ladies in their fundraising effort. And we received the donation...

7.5 Hashtag #SwissSolidarityForAfrica

In 2017, the hashtag #SwissSolidarityForAfrica caused quite a stir. Social media geeks uploaded to Instagram an incredible 75,000 pictures adorned with the hashtag. Various companies had pledged to donate five Swiss francs for each uploaded photo. The campaign was such a success that on that same day Swiss Solidarity had to find additional companies so as to be able to collect the whole CHF 375,000.

8. Milestones

1946	On September 26 the first programme "Chaîne du Bonheur" is broadcast.
1947	German-speaking Radio Beromünster adopts the programme.
1948	Italian-speaking Radio Monte Ceneri adopts the programme.
1948	International "Chain of Happiness" launches the first donation appeal.
1954	The weekly programme is discontinued. Swiss Solidarity continues to collect donations when events demand it.
1983	The former SRG SSR director Leo Schürmann makes us independent.
1985	French-speaking weekly newspaper "L'Hebdo" launches a massive attack on Swiss Solidarity, asking where the money goes to.
1991	RTR participates for the first time with a fundraising centre in Chur.
1999	In recognition of our work we receive the international human rights award.
2000	Second largest fundraising campaign in our history: CHF 74 million for the victims of the storms in Switzerland (Valais and Ticino)
2004	We raise CHF 227 million for the victims of the tsunami – the largest fundraising campaign in our history.
2005	After the storms of 2000 we raise CHF 74 million. Along with Gondo, Mörel in Valais is one of the most affected villages. The misuse of donations leads to a court case, after which CHF 860,000 is repaid to us. An investigation shows that Mörel was an isolated case.
2005	The rose-breeder Richard Huber dedicates a yellow rose, which has received several awards, to Swiss Solidarity. The proceeds go towards our fund for children.
2013	We create a new visual identity.
2017	We adopt a new corporate strategy, aiming to work more closely with our donors, beneficiaries and partners.
2019	We dedicate the 250th campaign in our history to women in forgotten areas of crisis.



9. Fundraising appeals

9.1 Extraordinary appeals

- 1946: Holidays for British war orphans in Switzerland
- 1947: “Oil soldiers”: first fundraising appeal throughout Switzerland for damaged soldiers. Mistakenly, machine oil had been used instead of cooking oil and around 100 people suffered poisoning with long-term effects, including paralysis of the legs.
- 1948: Chocolate and tobacco collected for occupants of retirement homes.
- 1948: Swiss Solidarity collects old felt hats, out of which the sick and recuperating sew slippers. The aim of this campaign is to give sick patients a new will to live and new strength to recover by giving them the opportunity to work and earn money.
- 1951: Wool collected for people suffering from the cold.
- 1975: Air Bonheur – one-week holidays on Mallorca for pensioners from poor backgrounds.
- 2000: Severe weather in Switzerland: CHF 74 million for Gondo and other affected regions.
- 2004: Tsunami – the biggest fundraising campaign so far, raising CHF 227 million.
- 2005: General appeal with a range of NGOs: #together4syria.
- 2017: Appeal for Bondo following a landslide on the north face of Piz Cengalo; the subsequent mudslides destroyed parts of the village.
- 2019: Although there is little reporting in the media about the war in Yemen, we decide to launch this appeal and so raise awareness in the humanitarian field of the need for solidarity with the people in this region.
- 2019: We dedicate the 250th fundraising appeal in our history to women in forgotten crises.

9.2 The biggest fundraising appeals

Amount in CHF m	Disasters	Date
227	Tsunami Asia	December 2004
74	Storms in Switzerland (Valais and Ticino)	October 2000
66.7	Earthquake Haiti	January 2010
51.5	Victims of the Syria conflict/refugees	August 2012 – 2016
49.9	War victims in Kosovo	April 1999
49.5	Severe weather in Switzerland (Central Switzerland, Bernese Oberland and Graubünden)	August 2005
42.4	Typhoon Haiyan, Philippines	November 2013
42.2	Floods in Pakistan	August 2010
32.2	Earthquake in Nepal	May 2015



10. Figures

Donations

In 73 years we have received donations in the amount of CHF 1.8 billion (including estimated donations in kind).

Call for donations

In 73 years we have collected money for the victims of over 249 disasters in Switzerland and abroad.

International projects

In 73 years we have financed around 3,750 international projects.

Social assistance

Social assistance has been given since 1946, first with donations in kind, later monetary.

Since the creation of the Foundation in 1983 up to the end of 2017, we provided CHF 41 million francs for social assistance and helped around 105,000 people in need in Switzerland. The individual assistance programme was discontinued at the end of 2017.

Since 2015, in addition to its international project assistance, Swiss Solidarity has supported selected Swiss organizations which support young people in need and children who are the victims of domestic violence in Switzerland. So far over 100 organizations in all parts of the country have received funding for projects of this sort.

We began to fund projects for young people in need in Switzerland with the 2015 'Jeder Rappen zählt' appeal. From 2016, money was also raised by the 'Coeur à Coeur' appeal in French-speaking Switzerland and from 2017 by 'Ogni centesimo conta' in Ticino. For the first time in 2018 we raised funds for children in Switzerland who are victims or witnesses of violence in their own homes. In the past few years we have funded 155 projects of this kind run by 103 organizations to the amount of CHF 12,268,067.

The 'Jeder Rappen zählt' appeal has taken place ten times now. 60 million francs in donations raised has gone towards funding 181 projects abroad and 107 projects in Switzerland. Donations raised by 'Coeur à Coeur' have funded 37 projects in Switzerland, and those raised by 'Ogni centesimo conta' eleven.

Severe weather assistance in Switzerland

CHF 212.3 million has been spent over the past 73 years to help victims of severe weather in Switzerland.

