



**International Geneva**  
**Directory of Swiss Global Health Actors**

**Caritas Switzerland | Caritas Suisse**

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**BACKGROUND AND MISSION**

Caritas Switzerland was founded in 1901 by Father Rufin Steimer who became its first president. It is one of the oldest Caritas, and a member of Caritas Internationalis. Caritas Switzerland is a multidisciplinary, mutual assistance, charitable organisation with headquarters in Lucerne. Its main strategic goal is to fight poverty with strong partnerships. Today, Caritas Switzerland is active in Switzerland and approx. 20 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Europe. Around the world, Caritas provides emergency relief and contributes to post-disaster reconstruction. It also maintains projects in the areas of food security, water, climate protection and disaster prevention, migration, humanitarian aid, as well as education and income generation for children and adults. Switzerland has 16 independent regional Caritas which implement social projects in their respective cantons. Together with Caritas Switzerland, the regional Caritas support the "Reduce poverty by half" action plan. Together with the network of regional Caritas, Caritas Switzerland provides specific assistance to disadvantaged people: families and single-parent families, the unemployed, and asylum seekers and refugees. Caritas Switzerland also organises appointments of volunteers for missions to support the terminally ill and mountain farmers. The services provided by Caritas in Switzerland include: a debt advisory service, Caritas grocery stores, which sell common food items to people with low incomes, and a Culture Card, which enables people affected by poverty to attend cultural and sporting events at reduced prices.

**AREAS OF INTEREST**

- Humanitarian Aid after Disasters and in Conflicts
- Food security
- Migration and Development
- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)
- Climate Protection and Disaster Risk Management
- Education and Income

**HEALTH-RELATED ACTIVITIES**

Caritas Switzerland supports WASH projects in areas with inadequate sanitation and water infrastructure. It installs sanitation and provides basic water infrastructure and trainings. In Ethiopia a large WASH programme prevents the spread of diseases such as trachoma infection. In the area of food security, Caritas Switzerland maintains various projects in Africa and Europe to ensure food security by supporting small farmers or providing food assistance during famines. After disasters and conflict, Caritas Switzerland provides

emergency aid and helps in the reconstruction efforts. These include emergency aid for Rohingya refugees or refugees in Greece, as well as for the victims of the crisis in Syria. It also provides aid after natural disasters, such as the hurricanes in Haiti, Indonesia and Mozambique and the drought in eastern Africa. It pays for basic medical care and provides food supplies for those in need.

#### **GOVERNANCE AND STAFF**

Daily operations are organised by a 8-member Executive Board, headed by Hugo Fasel, Director of Caritas Switzerland. A 7-member Steering Board overviews the Executive Board and is headed by the President of Caritas Switzerland, Mariangela Wallimann-Bornatico. Caritas Switzerland employs approximately 350, corresponding to 267 full-time posts. 210 employees are working in project countries. It depends on a large number of volunteers, especially for projects within Switzerland.

#### **FUNDING SOURCES AND BUDGET**

Caritas Switzerland is mainly financed by direct donations (2018: 28.4%), contributions by cantons and communes (2018: 26.9%) and contributions by the federal government, including the SDC (2018: 12.9%). Total operating income in 2018 was CHF 107.8 million, of which CHF 51.2 million came from donations and private contributions, with the remaining income being generated through contributions by public authorities and sales from goods and services. 46.8% of revenues are used for international cooperation, 41.2% for projects in Switzerland and 12.0% for administrative, fundraising and research activities.

#### **PUBLICATIONS**

For news, see: <https://www.caritas.ch/en/what-we-say/news.html>

For publications on social and economic development, poverty and annual reports, see: <https://www.caritas.ch/en/what-we-say/publications.html>

For position papers, see: <https://www.caritas.ch/en/what-we-say/our-positions/position-papers.html>

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