

# Development co-operation : human dignity first and foremost

Autor(en): **Keller, Gabrielle / Eichenberger, Isabelle / Crivelli, Pablo**

Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad**

Band (Jahr): **29 (2002)**

Heft 1

PDF erstellt am: **23.07.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-906557>

## **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Inhalten der Zeitschriften. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern.

Die auf der Plattform e-periodica veröffentlichten Dokumente stehen für nicht-kommerzielle Zwecke in Lehre und Forschung sowie für die private Nutzung frei zur Verfügung. Einzelne Dateien oder Ausdrucke aus diesem Angebot können zusammen mit diesen Nutzungsbedingungen und den korrekten Herkunftsbezeichnungen weitergegeben werden.

Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. Die systematische Speicherung von Teilen des elektronischen Angebots auf anderen Servern bedarf ebenfalls des schriftlichen Einverständnisses der Rechteinhaber.

## **Haftungsausschluss**

Alle Angaben erfolgen ohne Gewähr für Vollständigkeit oder Richtigkeit. Es wird keine Haftung übernommen für Schäden durch die Verwendung von Informationen aus diesem Online-Angebot oder durch das Fehlen von Informationen. Dies gilt auch für Inhalte Dritter, die über dieses Angebot zugänglich sind.

and the constitutional state; the promotion of wellbeing and the boundary conditions for sustainable development; the improvement of social justice (viz. the status of women); and protection of the natural environment.

**Partnership with relief agencies**

Swiss public development co-operation covers four areas: bilateral and multilateral development co-operation, humanitarian aid, co-operation with countries in Central and Eastern Europe led by the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC), a branch of the Department for Foreign Affairs, and financial assistance and trade promotion under the responsibility of the State Secretariat for the Economy (SECO). Needless to say, some of the development work is performed by the thirteen Swiss relief agencies, which play a key strategic role. In 2000 the government allocated CHF 166.4 million to these agencies to support their own projects as well as federal projects managed by them, and for humanitarian aid.

Humanitarian aid is defined as a short-term effort to rescue human lives and alleviate suffering following a natural disaster or armed conflict. Development co-operation, on the other hand, is a long-term action whose aim is to fight poverty by offer-

ing people aid for self-help. A development programme often replaces a humanitarian effort, for example to kick-start the economy after a disaster. In 2001 the Swiss Disaster Relief Corps, now renamed the Corps for Humanitarian Aid, was active in the Indian state of Gujarat following the earthquake in this region. After providing short-term humanitarian aid, Switzerland opened a fund worth CHF 1 million to help restore normal living conditions in the worst-affected area. India is one of the countries on which Swiss development co-operation focuses, with an annual budget of CHF 30 million. It also takes measures to promote the economy and trade.

**Eastern Europe**

Humanitarian aid serves a specific purpose and is provided by the government wherever it is most urgently needed, while Swiss development co-operation is primarily aimed at 17 so-called focal countries and regions and four countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America which are the subject of special programmes. After the fall of the Berlin Wall Switzerland set up programmes to support countries in Central and Eastern Europe on their path to democracy, constitutionality and a market economy. Nowadays such →

*(continued on page 7)*

**Human dignity first and foremost**

As a reversal of the Swiss flag, the red cross on a white background is recognised throughout the world as a symbol of a humanitarian Switzerland. The seven red cross principles drawn up in 1965 are: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, freedom of will, unity and universality. Our country can also boast these virtues. After all, our humanitarian tradition is not limited to the terms of the Geneva Convention. As a neutral state, Switzerland is in an ideal position to lend the poorest people of the world a voice, act as a mediator for justice and peace, and offer every member of the human race the protection they need.

Naturally not everything in the garden is roses. It is not in Man's nature to give without expecting something in return. Privileges are hoped for. All too often aid measures are politically motivated and it is a sad fact that some projects are selected more because of their media impact than their actual urgency. This way one might even justify building a well in the desert which no-one needs.

But it's easy to criticise. And if you carry on in this vein you become bitter and stop trying to help. Swiss humanitarian work may have a shadowy side, but it has a more important positive side. Anyone who has met people who are painstakingly removing land mines somewhere in Africa or Kosovo, attempting to identify the victims of Srebrenica, caring for those wounded in war or endeavouring to give traumatised refugees hope for a new life, knows that there are many men and women for whom human dignity means more than their own wellbeing. That is how it should be. And we must support this work with all our hearts. Gabrielle Keller

Translated from the German by N. Chisholm

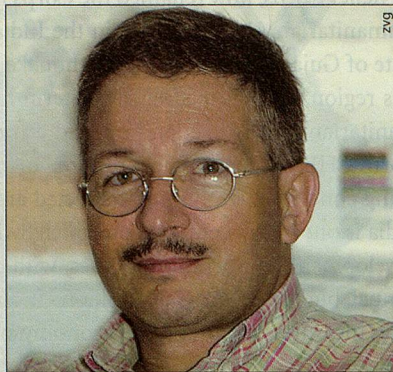


Poverty has many faces. Slum near Sao Paulo.

This 45-year-old Swiss citizen from France has been a development aid worker since 1989 and since 2000 has been in charge of the SDC's Afghanistan office in Islamabad – at the centre of contemporary history. When talking of his activities he uses terms like “experience”, “energy” and “creating” – words which simultaneously aptly describe this intrepid and passionate fighter for the humanitarian cause.

Henri-François Morand was heavily influenced by his work in Ruanda and Burundi, where he worked from 1998 to 2000: “I witnessed conditions of indescribable misery. In an environment shaken by psychological suf-

**Henri-François Morand,  
intrepid development  
aid worker**



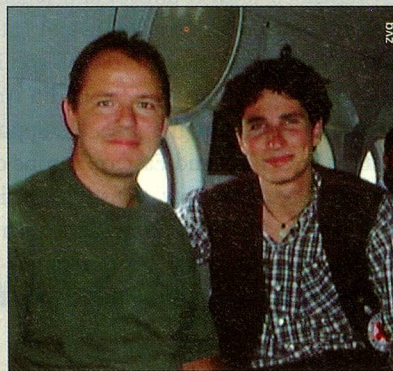
fering we had to distribute food as well as launch agricultural programmes – all this in the midst of a highly complex and dangerous conflict.”

“Switzerland has enormous experience in this area and performs highly practical work in local ‘niches’ which are neglected by major donors. By concentrating our limited resources we managed to achieve critical mass in individual projects. I for one have faith in the undertaking and I believe I carry out my work completely independently (i.e. apolitically). We must continue and we must do even more!”

IE

Gabriele Ghielmini was only 24 years old when he joined the ICRC administration. Yet even then the young Swiss from the canton of Ticino, who has lived with his wife in Rio de Janeiro since leaving the humanitarian organisation in 1999, had a successful development aid project under his belt. As Gabriele explains, the Jari Hotel School in Ethiopia came about almost by accident: “In 1995 I and two students from the Lausanne Hotel School organised a gala fund-raising evening. The event was a success, so we thought: since we obviously have a talent for organising such events, we could use this for a humanitarian purpose. When we presented the head office of Terre des Hommes with the idea of a hotel school project in Ethiopia to exploit the country’s potential for tourism,

**Catering to the less  
fortunate**



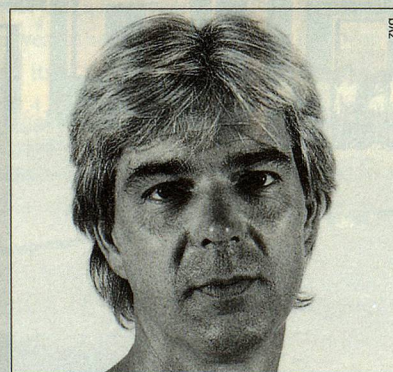
the initial reaction was one of scepticism. But initial doubts were cleared up and a co-operation agreement was

signed between the Hotel School in Lausanne and Terre des Hommes, and ten months later – after the first contact had been made – I found myself again in a third-world country at the age of 23, with a mission to make a dream come true: to use my skills to make a small contribution to improve the lives of other human beings.” “And,” adds Gabriele proudly, “I still receive letters from people who have been appointed ‘Chef de Cuisine’ or ‘Maitre’ in five-star hotels.” The Jari Hotel School is now an independent institution and enjoys an excellent reputation. “Our development aid project set a precedent,” says Gabriele. “Similar institutions are now being set up in other third-world countries.”

PC

“In the eyes of the indigenous population we are rich and therefore powerful – that hurts.” Every time Stefan Studer (50) travels to Brazil for a few weeks, he feels the same mixture of helplessness and pleasure. “It’s frustrating to see how much aid is needed and how little one can do to help. On the other hand I am always overjoyed to see that our projects are making an impact and developing their own dynamic.” Stefan Studer has been an information officer for “Terre des Hommes Switzerland” for 14 years and has been working on projects in Brazil since 1997. To this end he travels to Latin America for several weeks a year.

**Not always easy  
to bear**



“Terre des Hommes Switzerland” is active in north-eastern Brazil in the fight against child prostitution and child labour. The organisation promotes eco-agriculture and supports small farmers in the region: “Poverty is so acute that the situation is sometimes difficult to bear. But lots of people there have enormous courage and lust for life. That inspires hope and energy,” says Stefan Studer.

gk