

Vision Statement

1st February 2007

Our origin

Our work is based on the original ideas of the Emmaus movement from which we emerged: “Serve those most in need”.

Since 1959 we have been working successfully towards a world without leprosy. Half a century of experience has taught us to view leprosy with a holistic perspective. Our efforts extend far beyond fighting the leprosy bacillus. Sensibilisation to the disease and breaking down the stigma, medical treatment, rehabilitation and re-integration are as much a part of this as are training and research. Thanks to our work hundreds of thousands of people have been healed and saved from disabilities. Tens of thousands of people with disabilities have been treated and re-integrated into society.

Today we employ the skills that we have acquired in successful leprosy work also for comprehensive health care for poor people, irrespective of their social, political, ethnic and religious affiliation.

Our vision

Our vision is a world in which no one suffers any longer from leprosy and other poverty-related diseases or experiences discrimination because of disease or handicap.

Our aims

Our aim is

- ... to provide poor and sick people with access to health services.
- ... to enable people to live an independent life, despite illness or handicap.
- ... to strengthen poor countries' independence of international aid in the long term.
- ... a socially-orientated and fair health policy.
- ... to break the circle of poverty and illness, and in doing so contribute to achieving the UN millennium goals.
- ... to enable disadvantaged people and communities to improve their living conditions through their own efforts and in doing so contribute to the implementation of the WHO Ottawa Charter.

With all our projects, we make a contribution to getting closer to these aims.

We create awareness among the Swiss population about the fate of people in the South, who are afflicted by poverty-related diseases.

We wish to grow, so as to enable more people to break the vicious circle of poverty and disease.

Our convictions

Every human being has a right to health care.

Social justice is possible.

Healthy living conditions are a prerequisite for social, economic and personal development.

Nobody should suffer discrimination because of illness or handicap.

Respect for the diversity of people and cultures is a pre-condition for successful work.

Equal rights for men and women are the basis for fair collaboration based on trust.

Everyone is entitled to human dignity and human rights.

Good governance is an important pre-condition for development.

Our activities

In our projects poor and sick people are treated, rehabilitated and re-integrated into society.

We support poor and sick people through targeted measures such as micro-loans, occupational training or educational courses, so that they can live an economically independent life.

We make it possible for children affected by poverty related diseases to have access to schooling, thus breaking the vicious circle of poverty and illness.

We provide poor people with access to health care, by supporting health services with medicines, building up infrastructure and further training of health staff.

We combat the stigma which is attached to leprosy and other diseases of poverty.

We work for equal rights, by supporting patients' organisations and self-help groups.

By training and explanation we promote health awareness among the populations affected.

By means of basic and further training we develop expert knowledge in the project countries. In this work we deliberately use and encourage local experts and partners.

We support research which directly benefits those affected.

We also create a voice in Switzerland for poor and sick people from countries in the South.

Our organisation

We are a Swiss aid organisation operating worldwide, skilled in dealing with poverty-related diseases. We have local representatives in our focus countries, and our head office is in Berne.

We are the reference point for leprosy in Switzerland.

As a result of our year-long experience in leprosy work we are experts in the battle against poverty-related diseases, their causes and effects.

Our governing board is made up of personalities from medicine, research and business world, as well as proven specialists in the field of non-profit management.

The small, efficient team at the head office consists of specialists in the fields of programme management, fundraising and administration.

Our partners

We work with partners who share our values and quality requirements. Our collaboration is based on responsibility, participation and transparency.

Our sources of funds – individual donors as well as private and governmental institutions – make our daily fight against poverty and disease possible.

Our partners in the projects are people and organisations that work on behalf of people affected by leprosy and other people threatened by poverty and disease.

We collaborate with other national and international organisations that are active in the field of poverty and disease: non-governmental organisations, governments, companies, research institutions and universities.

Our working methods

The philosophy of Total Quality Management' forms the basis of our work. We are committed to a high standard of quality and strive for constant improvement in our performance.

We work with agreed objectives and routinely assess the results and the effect of our activities and projects.

Our local co-ordination offices provide support for the partners in the planning, execution, evaluation and improvement of the projects. In this way, they ensure the projects' quality and efficiency and monitor the purposeful use of resources.

We rely on long-term collaboration with reliable local partners who carry out their projects independently.

We are open to new projects and partnerships.

We are committed to complete transparency in the use of resources.

We cultivate our networks.

We deal carefully with our financial, material and human resources.

We respect the basic health-policy conditions of the countries in which we operate.

Our projects are adapted to the needs of the people affected and the local conditions.

Our special features

We hold the ISO 9001:2000 certificate, as well as the NPO Label for Management Excellence, which both confirm the management ability, transparency, professionalism and reliability of our organisation.

Already since 1963 we have held the ZEWO Quality Seal, which confirms that we use the money from donations purposefully and effectively and guarantee complete transparency in presenting our accounts.

We keep the organisation in Switzerland lean, by working decentrally with local experts in the co-ordination offices in our focus countries. This allows us to react quickly and flexibly to new challenges.

In collaboration with our local partners, we explore new paths and find new solutions, in order to achieve our goals.

We particularly work on bringing aid to those people in need who otherwise do not receive adequate support.

Our team

Our organisation lives through the commitment and skills of its staff.

We work as a team and invest in continuous team development.

Mutual esteem, dealing with each other respectfully and openness to criticism and changes are important to us.

We encourage individual responsibility and initiative.

We facilitate and support the professional and personal development of our staff.

Working with pleasure and joy enhances our creativity.