



The Swiss Humanitarian Tradition

Switzerland's commitment to humanitarianism is a centuries-old tradition based on the country's ideals of individual freedom and tolerance. Its role in the founding and continuous support of the International Committee of the Red Cross has cemented Switzerland's international reputation as a humanitarian leader, yet this is but one of many areas in which the Swiss work to relieve suffering around the world.

A large part of Switzerland's humanitarian tradition stems from the fact that it has for centuries been a country where people have sought protection from religious or political persecution: from Huguenots fleeing France in the sixteenth century to Turkish and Balkan Muslims at the beginning of the twenty-first, Switzerland has a long history of providing protection and asylum to those who seek it. See the Swiss Federal Office for Migration's ["Migration Report 2009"](#) for more information about recent asylum and immigration policy in Switzerland.

The [Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation \(SDC\)](#) provides funds and humanitarian aid to countries and people in need across the globe. In 2009, the SDC [gave over CHF1.45 billion](#) to humanitarian aid, development, and cooperation projects.

See the [Swiss Official Development Assistance](#) details for 2009.

The Swiss people play an active role in building their nation's humanitarian traditions, making generous contributions to humanitarian causes around the world. In the two months following the 2010 Haiti earthquake, private donations from Switzerland for earthquake relief and reconstruction totaled \$75 million. At \$9.60 per person, the Swiss people donated more per capita to the relief effort than any other nation by far.

Swiss Solidarity led a 2009 campaign to raise money for organizations fighting malaria in developing countries. Individual Swiss donors gave over \$8.6 million to the "**Every Rappen Counts**" campaign, which in 2010 will benefit children who are the victims of war and conflict. See [here](#) for more information about the 2009 initiative.

For more information about humanitarianism in Switzerland, see:

Caritas Switzerland

HEKS

Helvetas

SolidarMed

Swiss Solidarity

Terre des Hommes International Federation