



# **Annual report**

Jahresbericht

2024

# **W** CONTENTS

**Q4** 2024 at a glance 2024 auf einen Blick

106 Impact investing
Wirkungsorientiertes
Asset Management

**08** Milestones Meilensteine

**14** Supported projects Förderbeiträge



Holistic health and prevention
Ganzheitliche Gesundheit und
Prävention



Human development for well-being
Wissenssysteme stärken



10 Active lifestyle
Aktives Leben



### Dear partners and friends,

We are pleased to share key developments in the Ursimone Wietlisbach Foundation's journey in this Annual Report 2024. Three years after its establishment, the organization successfully set up a professional office led by an experienced CEO. The arrival of Stefan Germann enabled us to accelerate development efforts and consolidate our strategy. The groundwork for implementing this strategy is now in place. For the founders, this marks a significant milestone in their philanthropic commitment, which they underscored in March 2022 by joining the Giving Pledge.

Through long-term investments and partnerships, the Ursimone Wietlisbach Foundation seeks to ensure that as many individuals and communities as possible have access to holistic health, personal development, and an active life. In Switzerland, we are committed to the region where our roots lie. In the Mekong region, we have a second geographical focus, where we already maintain strong relationships. This year's report also highlights how we are aligning our asset management approach with our mission, ensuring that our investments reinforce – rather than undermine – our long-term goals.

The Board of Trustees and the office extend their sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to the Foundation's success in 2024. In the years ahead, we will continue working with our partners to enable more people to lead fulfilling lives – lives marked by meaning, joy, and shared sustainability.

## Liebe Partner und Freunde

Es freut uns, Sie mit dem Jahresbericht 2024 über wichtige Momente in der Entwicklung der Ursimone Wietlisbach Foundation zu informieren. Drei Jahre nach der Gründung der Stiftung konnten wir eine professionelle Geschäftsstelle mit einem erfahrenen CEO etablieren. Stefan Germanns Eintritt hat uns erlaubt, die Aufbauarbeit zu beschleunigen und die Stiftungsstrategie zu konsolidieren. Das Fundament für die Umsetzung der Strategie ist gelegt. Für die Stifterin und den Stifter ist dies ein wichtiger Meilenstein im Rahmen ihres philanthropischen Engagements, das sie im März 2022 mit ihrem Beitritt zu «Giving Pledge» unterstrichen haben.

Die Ursimone Wietlisbach Foundation will über langfristige Investitionen und Partnerschaften sicherstellen, dass möglichst viele Menschen und Gemeinschaften Zugang zu ganzheitlicher Gesundheit, persönlicher Entwicklung und einem aktiven Leben haben. Mit der Schweiz engagieren wir uns dort, wo unsere Wurzeln liegen. Mit der Mekong-Region haben wir einen zweiten geographischen Fokus, zu dem wir bereits über enge Beziehungen verfügen. Der diesjährige Bericht zeigt auch, wie wir unser Asset Management mit unserem Auftrag in Einklang bringen. So stellen wir sicher, dass unsere Investitionen unsere langfristigen Ziele unterstützen und nicht untergraben.

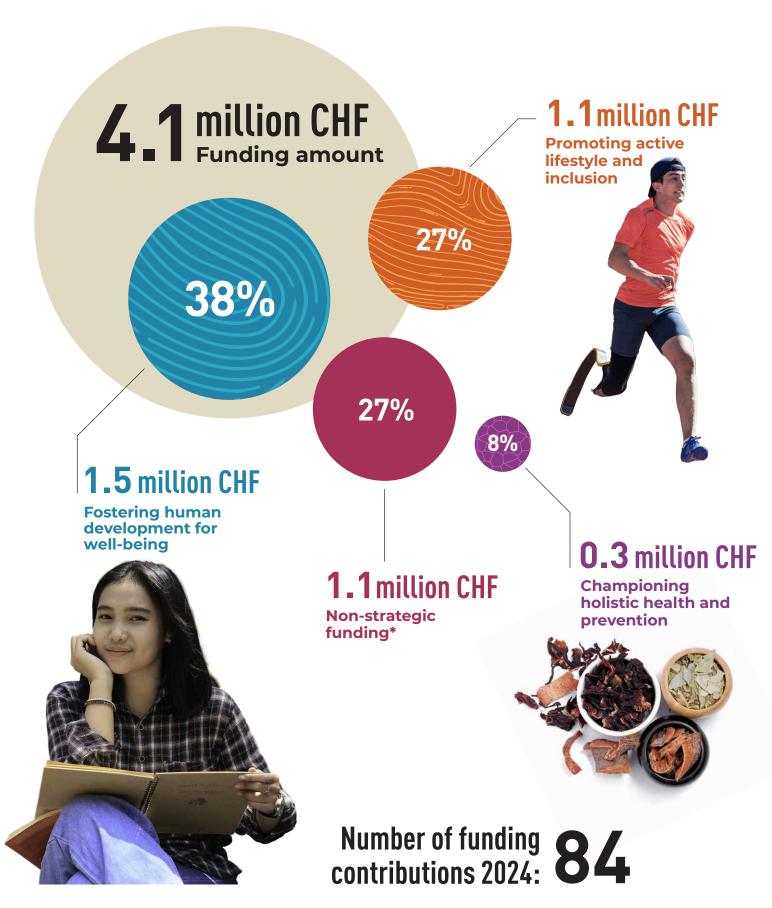
Der Stiftungsrat und die Geschäftsstelle danken allen, die 2024 zum Erfolg der Ursimone Wietlisbach Foundation beigetragen haben. Wir werden uns auch in den kommenden Jahren zusammen mit unseren Partnern dafür einsetzen, dass möglichst viele Menschen ein erfülltes Leben führen können – geprägt von Sinn, Freude und gemeinsam gestalteter Nachhaltigkeit.

**Urs Wietlisbach** 

Co-Founder and President
Mitgründer und Präsident

Simone Wietlisbach
Co-Founder and Vice President
Mitgründerin und Vizepräsidentin

**Stefan Germann** CEO



<sup>\*</sup> The non-strategic awards align with the organization's mission and focus on areas where the founders are personally engaged. These awards are not open to external applications. 2024 marked a transition period for Ursimone Wietlisbach. From 2025 onward, funding will be more tightly focused on the three strategic areas of impact.

# Lean organization for optimum effect

In 2024, the Board of Trustees held four meetings and focused on strengthening internal structures and capabilities. At the same time, funding activities were continued and expanded in Switzerland and the Mekong region.

In May 2024, Stefan Germann assumed the role of CEO. With more than 30 years of experience across the foundation, NGO, health care, and innovation sectors, he brings extensive expertise at both Swiss and international levels. The office is based in Zug. Over the course of the year, Stefan Germann assembled a small, high-performing team with the skills needed to manage day-to-day operations effectively.

The organization places strong emphasis on maintaining a lean structure, running efficient and largely digital processes, and ensuring optimal use of resources for its funding activities. It also works with external experts on specific topics as needed.

#### **Board of Trustees**

Urs Wietlisbach, Co-Founder and President Simone Wietlisbach, Co-Founder and Vice President Dr Michael Lorz

#### Office

Stefan Germann, CEO (100%)
Marko Röder, Head of Investment and Finance Solution (40%)
MJ Dinsay, Executive Officer (50%)
Alysha Flury, Finance Officer/Business Analyst (50%)
Donovan Müller, Research Assistant (30%)

2024 stärkte die Stiftung ihre internen Strukturen und weitete ihre Förderaktivitäten in beiden Schwerpunktregionen aus. Der neue CEO, Stefan Germann, stellte ein kompetentes, kleines Team zusammen. Die Organisation setzt auf effiziente Strukturen, digitale Prozesse und gezielten Ressourceneinsatz.



# Unique roots in impact investing

The Ursimone Wietlisbach Foundation's approach to impact investing is rooted in a firm conviction held for over a decade: that meaningful impact should be achieved not only through grant-making but also through intentional asset management. Initially a bold and forward-looking commitment, this approach remains best-in-class today. The Foundation invests all of its assets with BlueEarth Capital, an affiliated private market specialist dedicated to delivering both strong financial returns and measurable social and environmental impact.

Aligning the Foundation's asset management with its institutional mission has proven to deliver long-term strategic value – supporting more resilient returns while reinforcing the durability and depth of our impacts. This approach not only strengthens sustainability over time, but also complements our grant-making strategy, which deploys more concessionary, impact-first capital.

As of mid-2025, the Wietlisbach family's philanthropic endowment has invested over CHF 250 million – its entire current capital – through Blue Earth Capital. Over the past decade, this investment has delivered an average 10% annual return while simultaneously generating meaningful social and environmental impact.



When we began this journey, most impact investments were seen as concessionary in terms of financial returns. We set out to show that it's possible to achieve meaningful and sustainable impact through smart, entrepreneurial investing, without compromising on returns. Today, Blue Earth Capital – fully owned by the Blue Earth Foundation, where I serve as President of the Board to safeguard its impact mission – has demonstrated that this model works.

Now, the task is to scale impact investing significantly in the years ahead. Endowed foundations and family offices can and should help drive this financial transition towards a future where impact investing becomes the new normal. The Blue Earth Foundation and Blue Earth Capital offer an open platform for other philanthropists, family offices, foundations and other impact investors to scale their own Impact vision through a proven and professional approach. I remain personally committed to contributing to this shift and encouraging others to do the same – because when investments generate both returns and real benefits for people and communities, especially in developing and emerging markets, they are built to last.

## **Urs Wietlisbach**

Co-Founder and President, Ursimone Wietlisbach Foundation



## Scaling impact: A collective responsibility

The Foundation's role as a strategic client of BlueEarth Capital since its inception has helped drive product innovation and uphold top institutional standards in impact investing. This long-term engagement has also contributed to the development of an open-architecture investment platform that enables other asset owners to combine return-focused strategies with dedicated impact management – whether through closed-ended funds, semi-liquid funds, or separate accounts. As the collaboration has deepened, it has supported broader efforts to scale impact investing and mobilize additional private and public capital. With a current asset base of CHF 1.6 billion (as of June 2025), BlueEarth Capital is now a leading player in the impact investing space for pension funds, foundations, family offices and sovereign wealth funds.

The shared goal is clear: to make impact investing the norm, not the exception. Foundations across Europe collectively hold more than €630 billion in assets, yet only a small proportion of this capital is currently directed toward impact investments. There is a strong case for foundations to lead the way – by aligning their endowments with their missions and ensuring that their assets, alongside their grant-making, contribute to positive social and environmental outcomes.



Entrepreneurial philanthropy is rooted in the mindset of achieving maximum impact with the means of investing. This approach can drive more sustainable and scalable solutions for people and Mother Earth. By creating win—win partnerships between foundations and entrepreneurs—based on mutual respect—we can do good while doing well. That means generating measurable impact for people and the planet while also achieving solid financial returns that we reinvest in sustainable philanthropic ventures.

## Simone Wietlisbach

Co-Founder and Vice President, Ursimone Wietlisbach Foundation

The Ursimone Wietlisbach Foundation advocates for a return-driven economy that treats people and the planet fairly. We support business solutions that prioritize resilience over short-term growth, and sustainability over resource exploitation, and we believe that those who hold capital share responsibility for shaping the future. Systemic investing is a holistic approach that combines impact investing with financial returns, strategic grant-making to build and prepare investment pipelines, and policy advocacy to create an enabling environment for lasting societal and environmental change.

Die Ursimone Wietlisbach Foundation erzielt ihre Wirkung auf zwei Ebenen: Klassisch über die Vergabe von Fördermitteln und parallel dazu über eine wirkungsorientierte Anlage ihres Vermögens. Alle ihre finanziellen Mittel werden deshalb über die auf Impact Investing spezialisierte Blue Earth Capital verwaltet. Die Stiftung erzielt so im Asset Management neben soliden finanziellen Erträgen auch eine soziale und ökologische Wirkung.



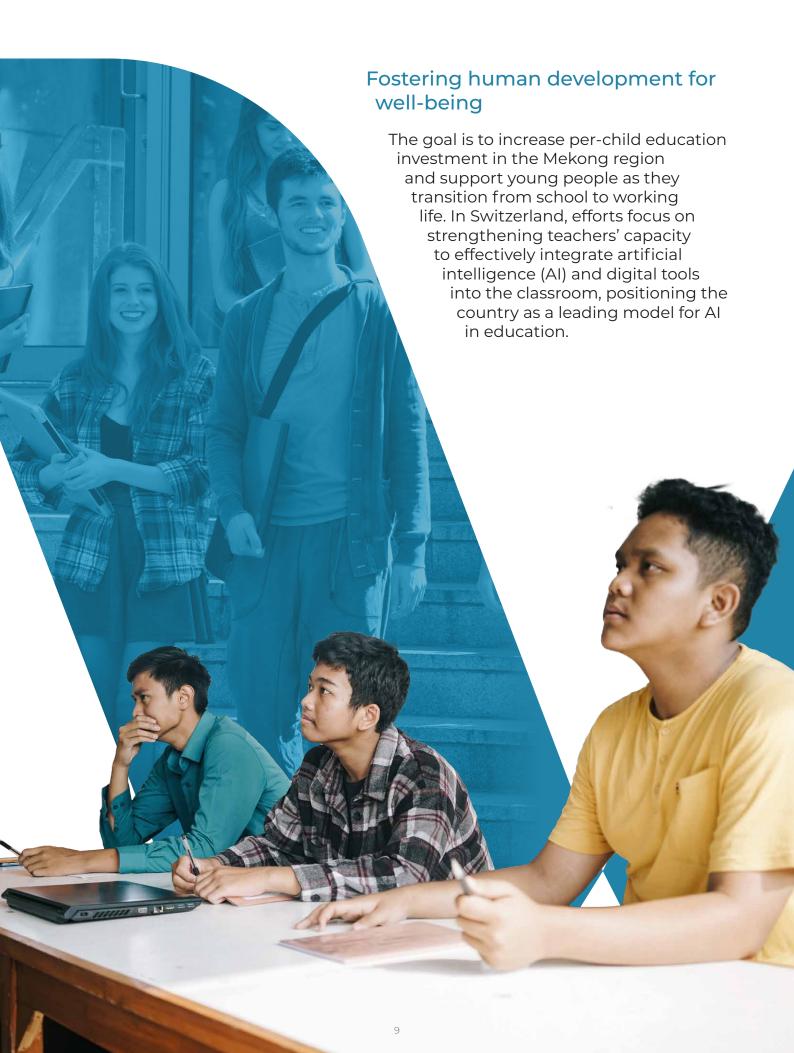
# **Strategic consolidation**

In 2024, the Board of Trustees and the office worked together to consolidate the strategy of the Foundation. This process was grounded in the organization's purpose, the strategic directions developed since 2021, and close collaboration with strong implementation partners.

The Foundation's strategy focuses on three areas of impact: Championing holistic health and prevention; Fostering human development for well-being; Promoting active lifestyle.

2024 schärfte die Stiftung ihre Strategie auf Grundlage ihres Auftrags, früherer strategischer Arbeiten und der Zusammenarbeit mit Umsetzungspartnern. Sie konzentriert sich auf drei Wirkungsbereiche: ganzheitliche Gesundheit und Prävention, Wissenssysteme stärken sowie aktives Leben. Zusammen mit der Strategie entwickelte die Stiftung auch fünf Grundsätze für ihre Arbeit und Fördertätigkeit.











As part of its strategy, the organization has defined five guiding principles for its work and funding activities:



Support research to build a strong evidence base.



Apply research findings to inform policy processes.



Collaborate with partners to deliver programmes and projects aligned with its mission.



Use innovative funding approaches to enhance impact.



Engage stakeholders and communicate strategically to build awareness and support.



# Focus on two regions

Geographically, the Ursimone Wietlisbach Foundation focuses on two regions: Switzerland and the Mekong region of Southeast Asia. With roots in Switzerland, the Foundation has been active there at multiple levels since its establishment. In the Mekong region, it also supports a range of institutions and projects in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and the border areas with Thailand.

While these two focus areas differ significantly, the Foundation sees strong potential for synergies between its work in Europe and Asia. Many of the core challenges across its three areas of activity are similar, though differences in development levels and cultural contexts must be considered. By taking these factors into account, solutions can be developed that offer promising approaches in both regions.

Die Stiftung konzentriert sich auf die Schweiz und die Mekong-Region und unterstützt in beiden Regionen eine Vielfalt von Projekten. Trotz regionaler Unterschiede sieht sie grosses Synergiepotenzial. Gemeinsame Herausforderungen in ihren drei Wirkungsbereichen ermöglichen übertragbare Lösungen, die den jeweiligen Entwicklungsstand und den kulturellen Kontext berücksichtigen.



## Strong partners at the core

The Ursimone Wietlisbach Foundation does not implement projects directly. Instead, it works through operational partners. In 2024, the Foundation expanded its network of partnerships in both of its focus regions.

In the area of active lifestyle, the Foundation deepened its partnership with Special Olympics Switzerland. It is supporting the preparatory programme for the Special Olympics World Winter Games 2029, to be held in the Swiss cantons of Graubünden and Zurich. To help mobilize additional donors, the Foundation hosted a roundtable meeting in 2024. This work reflects its commitment to promoting inclusion in both sport and society more broadly.

In the area of human development for well-being, the Foundation collaborated with the Smartfeld association to host a programme design workshop. Participants included secondary school teachers, education researchers, staff from teacher training colleges, and other foundations. The goal is to develop scalable tools and programmes that help teachers integrate AI into their teaching. The resulting initiative, the AI Teacher Accelerator, is scheduled to launch in the second quarter of 2025.

In the Mekong region, the Foundation strengthened its partnership with the Child's Dream Foundation, a key actor in the strengthening knowledge systems field. A Foundation representative joined Child's Dream staff on visits to project sites in Cambodia and Laos, as well as camps for refugees from Myanmar located in Thailand.

Im Jahr 2024 erweiterte die Stiftung ihr Partnernetzwerk in der Schweiz und in der Mekong-Region. In der Schweiz vertiefte sie im Hinblick auf die Special Olympics Winterspiele 2029 die Zusammenarbeit mit Special Olympics Switzerland. Mit Smartfeld baute die Ursimone Wietlisbach Foundation eine Kooperation auf, um Lehrpersonen zu befähigen, verstärkt Al in ihren Unterricht zu integrieren. In der Mekong-Region verstärkte die Stiftung mit der Organisation Child's Dream die Partnerschaft in Bildungsthemen.



# Digitally supported grant application process



In 2024, the Ursimone Wietlisbach Foundation worked with StiftungSchweiz to establish a digital process for submitting and managing grant applications, tailored to its specific needs. The StiftungSchweiz platform gives the Foundation the information it needs to assess applications efficiently and make well-informed funding

decisions. It also supports a more transparent and impact-driven approach to philanthropy.

Im Jahr 2024 führte die Ursimone Wietlisbach Foundation gemeinsam mit StiftungSchweiz einen digitalen Prozess zur Einreichung und Bearbeitung von Förderanträgen ein. Die Plattform ermöglicht eine effiziente Antragsprüfung und unterstützt eine transparente, wirkungsorientierte Förderpraxis.

## **Outlook for 2025**

In 2025, the Ursimone Wietlisbach Foundation will focus on the steady and consistent implementation of its strategy. This includes further expanding its network of partner institutions in both Switzerland and the Mekong region, and awarding its first major grants to newly launched priority programmes across its three impact areas.

In the Mekong region, a portion of the Foundation's funding will support emergency relief and longer-term reconstruction efforts in communities affected by the severe earthquake that struck at the end of March 2025, and which impacted Myanmar most heavily. The support will focus on restoring essential services and rebuilding local infrastructure.

2025 konzentriert sich die Stiftung auf die Umsetzung ihrer Strategie, den Ausbau von Partnerschaften und die Förderung neuer Schwerpunktprogramme in der Schweiz und der Mekong-Region. Zudem unterstützt sie Nothilfe und Wiederaufbau in Myanmar, das vom Erdbeben im März 2025 schwer getroffen wurde – mit Fokus auf grundlegende Versorgung und Infrastruktur.

13



# **84 Supported projects**

In 2024, the Foundation Board approved funding for 84 projects and programmes, with a total allocation of CHF 4.1 million.

2024 bewilligte der Stiftungsrat 84 Projekte und Programme mit einem gesamten Fördervolumen von CHF 4.1 Mio.

Organization	Purpose	Amount (CHF)
Stiftung Menschen mit seltenen Krankheiten	Advocates for medical care, research and social recognition of people with rare diseases in Switzerland.	25000
Médecins sans Frontières	Provides emergency medical aid in crisis and disaster areas worldwide, regardless of origin, religion or political conviction.	50 000
Stiftung Sonnenhalde	Provides living, working and residential space for people with cognitive and multiple disabilities in an anthroposophical environment.	15000
Spitex Höfe & Schwyz	Provides professional care and support services at home for people of all ages in the Höfe and Schwyz area. Support for continuing education programmes.	12000
Verein Demenzworld	Committed to raising awareness, removing taboos and innovative approaches to dealing with dementia, with a focus on relatives and those affected.	81 075
Hear the World Foundation	Promotes projects worldwide for the prevention and treatment of hearing loss, especially in children in disadvantaged regions.	15000
Martin Stiftung	Provides care and support for people with cognitive or multiple impairments in the Zurich area through living, working and education. One-off support for new residential home.	20 000
The Sense Foundation	Support for the development of a new preventive health care model.	50 000
Sanni Foundation	Improves the lives of disadvantaged children and families in Myanmar through health care, in particular support for Medical Action Myanmar.	30 000
4 projects under CHF 10 000	Various organizations.	20 000
Total funding on holistic health and prevention		



Organization	Purpose	Amount (CHF)
START Foundation	Promotes entrepreneurship and education in developing and emerging countries through targeted investments in social start-ups and educational initiatives.	
EnableMe Foundation	Advocates for the inclusion and self-determination of people with disabilities, including through digital platforms, advice and community offerings.	300 000
Child's Dream Foundation	Supports disadvantaged children and communities in Southeast Asia with projects in the areas of education, health and child and youth protection.	750 000
Smiling Gecko	Operates a sustainable model project in Cambodia to combat poverty through education, agriculture, crafts and tourism.	200632
Indian for Ever	Supports disadvantaged children and women in India through education and health projects with a focus on sustainable development.	100 000
Aiducation International Switzerland	Awards merit-based scholarships to talented but financially disadvantaged young people in countries such as Kenya and the Philippines to provide access to education.	114000
Stiftung Biberbau	Offers children and young people in Switzerland educational and leisure activities close to nature with a focus on environmental awareness and manual work.	40 000
5 projects under CHF 10 000	Various organizations.	35000
Total funding on human devel	opment for well-being	1589632

Organization	Purpose	Amount (CHF)
Stiftung Passion Schneesport	Promotes snow sports and the training and further education of teachers as well as snow sports lessons for children and young people in Switzerland.	50 000
Stiftung Idee Sport	Promotes the physical and mental health of children and young people through open sports and exercise programmes, especially during non-school hours.	50 000
Stiftung Schweizer Sporthilfe	Supports talented young and top Swiss athletes financially on their way to a sporting and professional career.	139 000
HC Kriens-Luzern AG	Operates the professional handball club HC Kriens-Lucerne and is committed to promoting young talent in handball.	21 620
Hockey Club Davos	Promotes the sport of ice hockey in Davos and in particular supports young talent and the Davos Hockey Club's match operations.	15000
Stiftung Fussballakademie	Promotes the holistic training of young soccer talents in a structured and professional environment.	15 000
FC Luzern-Innerschweiz AG	Responsible for the professional operations of Lucerne Football Club and the sporting development of the junior teams.	15000
Cleven Stiftung	Promotes health and exercise among children and young people, including through sports and nutrition projects.	23 000



Organization	Purpose	Amount (CHF)	
Oliver Grob	Sports talent.	12000	
Ralph Weber	Sports talent.	31 500	
Schweizer Handball-Verband	The national umbrella organization for handball in Switzerland organizes competitions, development and the promotion of young talent.	20 000	
Special Olympics	Offers people with disabilities the opportunity to take part in sports and competitions – both nationally and internationally. Preparation and planning for the Special Olympics World Winter Games Switzerland 2029.	110 000	
Maltacamp Schweiz	Organizes inclusive summer camps for young people with and without disabilities, supported by the Order of Malta.	20 000	
FC Basel Nachwuchs	Promotes the training and development of young soccer players in the Basel region with the aim of introducing them to the professional game.	100 000	
Hockeyclub Luzern	Committed to promoting ice hockey in Lucerne, with a focus on promoting young talent and grassroots sport.	15 000	
Spende Pfadi Winterthur	The club supports talented young and top Swiss female handball players.	10810	
Right to Play	Uses sport and play to give disadvantaged children around the world access to education, protection and development.	400000	
Skateistan	Skateboarding and education combined to empower marginalized children and young people in Cambodia.	17 278	
13 projects under CHF 10 000	Various sports associations.	49805	
Total funding on active lifestyle	and inclusion	1 115 013	

Organization	Purpose	Amount (CHF)	
Theater Rigiblick	Kulturhaus in Zurich, which presents interdisciplinary theatre, music and literature productions with a special focus on Swiss artists.	50 000	
Stiftung Festival Strings Lucerne	Promotes classical music by supporting the chamber orchestra and its concert activities at home and abroad.	50 000	
World Minds Foundation	Support for World Minds annual conference.	40 000	
Genossenschaft Caritas Markt	Operates stores throughout Switzerland with heavily discounted food and everyday items for people on a budget.	50 000	
Pro Juventute	Supports children and young people in Switzerland with counselling services, educational projects and campaigns to promote equal opportunities and mental health.	50 000	
Schweizer Berghilfe	Promotes economically and socially disadvantaged mountain regions in Switzerland through targeted support for infrastructure and livelihood projects.	50 000	
Stiftung Sozialwerke Pfarrer Sieber	ieber Helps people in social emergencies in Zurich by providing services in the areas of shelter, addiction, illness and integration.		
Tischlein deck dich	Saves surplus, perfectly good food from being destroyed and distributes it to people living in poverty in Switzerland.	50 000	
Stiftung There For You Provides an online donation platform to support verificing individual social projects in the areas of health, educat livelihoods.		25000	

Organization	Purpose	Amount (CHF)	
Human Rights Watch	International NGO that documents and publicizes human rights violations worldwide and exerts political pressure for improvements. Focus on Southeast Asia.	200 000	
Elea Foundation	Promotes entrepreneurial solutions for poverty reduction in low- and middle-income countries through impact investing and social innovation.	100 000	
International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children	Works globally to protect children from sexual abuse, exploitation and disappearance – through education, research and policy advice.	50 000	
Future for Children Association	Supports disadvantaged children in India and Nepal through education, health care and care in family structures.	25 000	
El Refugio Foundation	Runs a children's and youth centre in Colombia that offers street children protection, education and prospects.	20 000	
Blue Dragon Children's Foundation	Helps children in Viet Nam who are victims of human trafficking, poverty or homelessness – through protection, education and legal support.		
Sawiris Foundation for Social Development			
12 projects under CHF 10 000	Various organizations.	72981	
Total non-strategic funding		1078601	
Total funding		4 101 321	

The Foundation awarded a number of non-strategic grants in 2024. These reflect its core purpose and support areas where the founders are personally committed. As these grants are not open to external applications, they are made at the Foundation's discretion.

2024 marked a period of transition. From 2025 onward, funding will be more strongly focused on the Foundation's three strategic areas of impact.

Das Jahr 2024 war eine Phase des Übergangs. Ab 2025 wird die Förderung verstärkt auf die drei strategischen Wirkungsbereiche der Stiftung ausgerichtet.

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