

# Annual Report 2017

Transnational Services  
Unaccompanied Minors  
Migrant Support Services

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Service social international – Suisse  
Internationaler Sozialdienst – Schweiz  
Servizio Sociale Internazionale – Svizzera  
International Social Service – Switzerland

In times of growing mobility, the life of a large number of children and their families spans Switzerland and abroad. ISS intervenes with its specialized services in these dire circumstances.



# Acting on behalf of a child simultaneously in Switzerland and across borders

**Olivier  
Geissler**  
Executive Director

**Rolf  
Widmer**  
Chairman of the Board  
of the Foundation



In 2017, ISS Switzerland celebrated its 85 years of existence and is pursuing its mission to support people whose story spans Switzerland and abroad. Since 1932, our organisation has played a role in thousands of individual migratory situations relating to children and their families.

The creation of the International Social Service is closely bound up with migratory issues on the one hand, and with child protection on the other (see article on p. 2). The Transnational Services of our organisation are more than ever necessary in an era of ever-accelerating human mobility.

This year, we are celebrating in our country an important event for children: the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Switzerland's ratification of the United Nations Convention on The Rights of the Child – an essential instrument in our daily work.

ISS Switzerland and its partners of the Alliance for the Rights of Migrant Children (ADEM) took this opportunity to take stock of the progress that this Convention has enabled as well as the challenges it still raises, notably in terms of international child protection.

ISS Switzerland, with the support of its international network partners, has met the socio-judicial needs of many children and their families concerned by migration. This is the core mission of ISS, whose positioning makes it unique at international level. Thanks to our interdisciplinary team in Geneva and Zurich, we act in situations requiring coordinated interventions in several countries. We respond daily to requests from authorities, private individuals and professionals. Over the past year, ISS Switzerland intervened in 1611 situations relating to 60 or so countries.

We wish to thank both cantonal and federal authorities for their cooperation, as well as the people and donors whose financial support enables us to pursue our work over the long term.

Our sincere gratitude is also due to our staff members in Geneva and Zurich, our volunteers, our interns, our partners in Switzerland and abroad, as well as the Board members of our Foundation, who devoted themselves throughout the year to the causes defended by our organisation.

# ISS Switzerland, core business unchanged since 1932

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, many Europeans left their country, including Switzerland, in search of a brighter future overseas. These migrations were mostly ill-prepared and those with prospects of a secure future abroad were far and between. The impact of this mobility on the lives of families spread across several countries were not taken into account.

This is why in 1914 the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), started to look into the fate of migrant women and children and set up a central body in Geneva in 1924. As needs increased, an association called "*Aide aux émigrés – Section suisse du Service international d'aide aux émigrants*" was set up in 1932. The latter handled local caseworks and worked intensively with private social agencies in Switzerland and abroad.

During and after the war years, the association accompanied a large number of refugee children, trying to trace their relatives abroad or finding alternative placements. In 1953, ISS Switzerland started its collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which would last for over 40 years, for the purpose of supporting refugees in French- and Italian-speaking Switzerland. The opening of an office in Zurich facilitated the expansion of its work across Switzerland.

In the 1980s and 90s, ISS Switzerland oversaw the development of private international law and worked alongside the authorities to promote implementation of the Hague conventions on intercountry adoption, child abduction and then the international protection of children.

Since 1989 and the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ISS works to promote the instrument in order to enhance awareness of the rights of children concerned by migration that have links with Switzerland.

In the 2000's, ISS Switzerland started to collaborate with local partners in the Balkans, Eastern Europe and West Africa with the aim of finding solutions for children that cannot be raised by their own family.

Throughout its history, ISS has done its utmost to respond to the social, economic and political challenges addressed by the mobility that characterizes its era. Our organization's current concerns still resonate strongly with those that were at the root of its foundation in 1932.

# An Organisation Serving Human Mobility

**Ensure de  
rights of  
the child in a  
transnational  
context**

Our Missions

**Support  
individuals  
and families  
concerned  
by migration**

**Rights  
of the Child**

Our Pillars

**Migration**

Our Vision

**A world where  
the rights of  
children and  
their families  
are respected  
across borders**

# Three Key Areas of Focus to Help Children, Families and Migrants

## Transnational Services for Children and Families

### Objective

Further develop our position as a key player in Switzerland for the international protection of children and adults.

### Missions

- Protection of children and adults regardless of borders.
- Assistance during international family conflicts.
- Birth parent tracing.
- Advice for parents on adoption and new ways of becoming a parent.

### Context

The Hague conventions provide the legal framework for the international protection of children and adults. The conventions alone are not an effective solution for all situations. On the one hand, many countries have not ratified them and, on the other hand, signatories to the conventions only allow administrative based action although multiple interventions are needed, including: transnational mediation, social support and legal advice.

## Unaccompanied Minors (UMs)

### Objective

Further strengthen our experience in this field and become a nationally and internationally recognised skills cluster.

### Missions

- Social, professional, legal and financial support as well as protection for UMs.
- Evaluation and support for better UMs care.
- Training professionals in UMs care.
- Protection of the rights of UMs and awareness-raising.
- Increase the level of cooperation with countries of transit, origin and destination.
- Ensure financial support necessary for integration or facilitate successful return to the country of origin.

### Context

Although the number of asylum application has decreased in 2017, harmonized support and durable solutions are still needed for UMs in Switzerland who will stay on a long-term basis. In addition, the West African Network (WAN), set up by ISS Switzerland more than 10 years ago, provides upstream support for UMs in West Africa.

## Support for migrants, refugees and the diaspora

### Objective

Provide direct assistance to migrants through innovative services that complement public system.

### Missions

- Provide legal counselling on asylum and migration law.
- Facilitate successful return to the country of origin.
- Mobilize diaspora communities in Switzerland for the socioeconomic development of their country of origin.
- Provide migrants with objective information prior transfer to another european country.
- Provide psychological and social support for children, refugees from Syria.

### Context

Switzerland only offers basic aid to newly arrived migrants, which is often insufficient and unsuited to their situation. Therefore, ISS offers and develops additional services which suit more to their individual needs, complementing in this way public services.

# Transnational Services

## A multidisciplinary, child-based intervention across borders

The mission of the Transnational Services (TS) department is to act on behalf of vulnerable children, adults and families beyond the territory of Switzerland: children who were abducted by one of their parents, parents who do not respect visiting rights, unprotected children abroad or children searching for a biological parent following an international adoption.

In all such situations, the TS department intervenes with a multidisciplinary team of social workers, lawyers and mediators from our offices based in Zurich and Geneva. The mandate of ISS Switzerland comes either from a Swiss child and adult protection authority, a court, a social service, a hospital or directly from the persons concerned. We are also called upon by the members of the ISS network to intervene on Swiss territory in cooperation with the local authorities.

In 2017, the TS department has handled 1549 cases ranging from individual situations to information sharing by phone or mail.

In all these individual and unique situations, the TS department places the best interest of the child at the core of its work, in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and related documents such as the United Nations “Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children” which deals with extra-familial placements.

The TS department also uses a mediation-based approach, which involves harnessing the skills and resources of the persons directly concerned and identifying, together with them, solutions that best meet the needs of their child(ren).

ISS Switzerland is a member of the following networks:

Member of the Swiss network of research services

Member of the Child Rights Network Switzerland  
[www.netzwerk-kinderrechte.ch](http://www.netzwerk-kinderrechte.ch)

Committee member of the Fédération Genevoise MédiationS (Geneva)  
[www.fgem.ch](http://www.fgem.ch)

Committee member of Juris Conseil Junior (Geneva)  
[www.jci.ch](http://www.jci.ch)

Member of the International Federation of Educative Communities – FICE  
[www.ficeinter.net](http://www.ficeinter.net)

Member of the AvenirSocial International Commission  
[www.avenirsocial.ch](http://www.avenirsocial.ch)

In addition, in the context of international adoption, ISS offers consultations for adopting parents during their application process.

Transnational Services  
help several thousand  
people every year,  
particularly in cases  
of family conflict.



## Focus on a flagship service: family tracing

Some adoptees feel the need to know where they come from and to learn about their life before the adoption. ISS Switzerland has delivered services in this field for many years. Today, the Hague Convention of 1993 on intercountry adoption and Swiss law recognize children's right to know their biological parents. Family tracing is thus a recognized procedure, but it has complex personal and psychological implications and may come up against practical and administrative hurdles: international processes and incomplete or sometimes falsified documentation. And when the person sought is found, he or she may refuse all contact to protect their privacy, or even to avoid overly painful memories. Professionals at the TS department must be mindful of all these elements and work in close collaboration with other members of the ISS network.

In 2017, news hit the headlines of the Swiss and international media: The Government of Sri Lanka officially recognized that during the 1980s between 5.000 and 10.000 children were illegally given for adoption to European countries, including Switzerland. ISS launched an initiative with the Sri Lankan authorities, offering the support of the ISS network for the establishment of a framework whereby the persons subject to these illegal adoptions could obtain information about their past and, where appropriate, find their relatives. The ISS approach thus always combines individual support with a comprehensive approach to the issues at stake and the development of innovative solutions to social challenges of our time.

## Vincent, Swiss national, looking for his Vietnamese origins

Vincent\* was born in Vietnam and adopted at birth by a Swiss couple. At 22, he wants to find his biological parents.

The Swiss cantonal adoption authority then established contact with a local authority in Vietnam, which made it possible to identify several members of his biological family in Vietnam, including his mother.

The cantonal adoption authority then commissioned ISS to provide psychosocial assistance to Vincent and to conduct the relevant cross-border activities, in particular:

- Assess Vincent's application and his motivation in the process,
- Discuss with him the various possible outcomes of this research (refusal of contact, family poverty ...),
- Identify an appropriate partner in Vietnam to undertake an extensive social assessment,
- Share the results of his biological family's social assessment with Vincent.

Thanks to ISS follow-up, in close collaboration with its local partner in Vietnam, Vincent obtained comprehensive information about his family's circumstances and living conditions, as well as pictures. ISS also informed his biological family that Vincent is doing well, that he has a family in Switzerland and that he feels ready to get in touch with them.

Since the family was also open to re-build ties, an initial contact was made. Over time, they may be able to meet. If so, ISS stands ready to cooperate.

\* fictitious name

# 2017 Key Figures

## Working Internationally

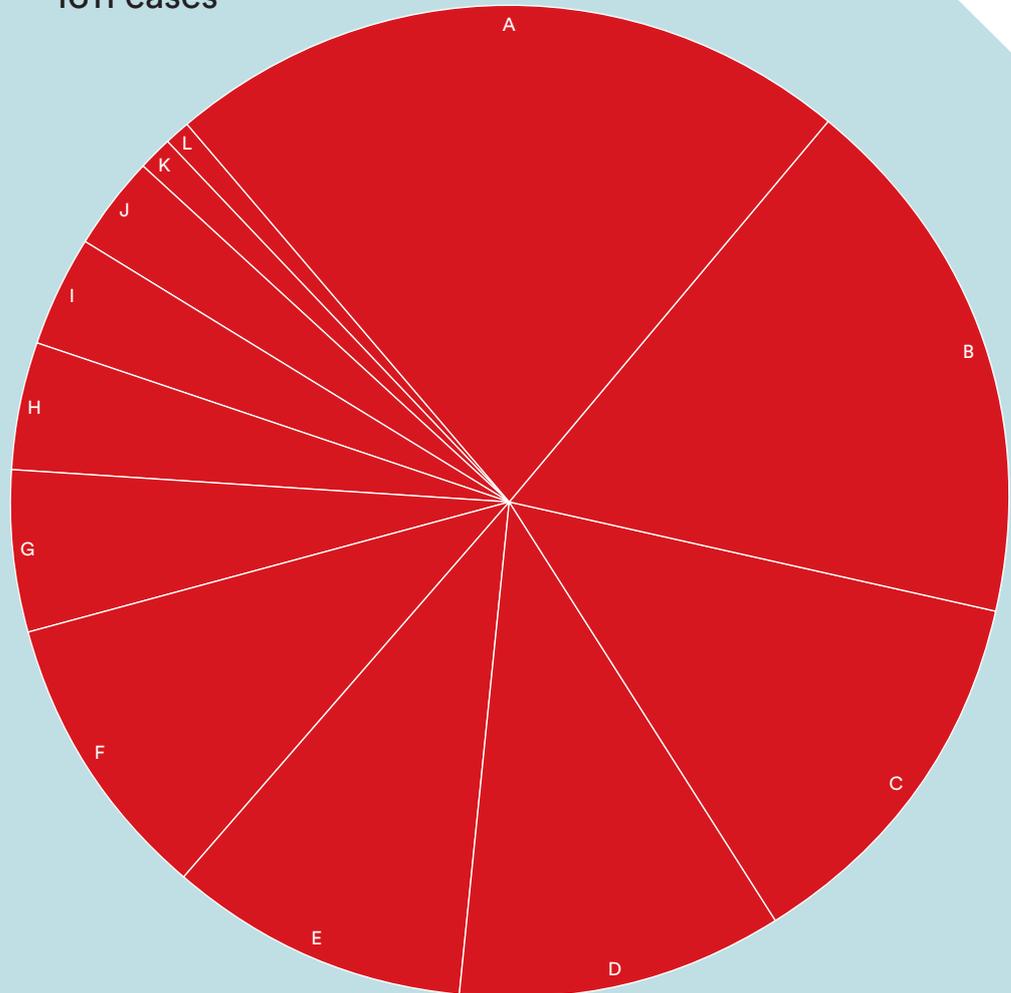
# 112

The number of requests transmitted by our ISS partners abroad, mostly from Portugal, Germany, France, Spain and the Dominican Republic.

# 102

The number of countries in which we have intervened, mostly Eritrea, Portugal, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Germany, Brazil, Spain, Somalia, Guinea, Ethiopia, Italy, Kosovo.

## Request Types handled 1611 cases



**A Transnational Child Protection**  
375

**B Parental Rights**  
296

**C Unaccompanied Minors**  
210

**D Protection of Adults**  
177

**E International Child Abductions**  
163

**F Adoption**  
158

**G Migrant Support Services**  
87

**H Aid to return**  
72

**I Binational Couples**  
59

**J Miscellaneous**  
53

**K Alimonies**  
19

**L Subsidiary Aid**  
11

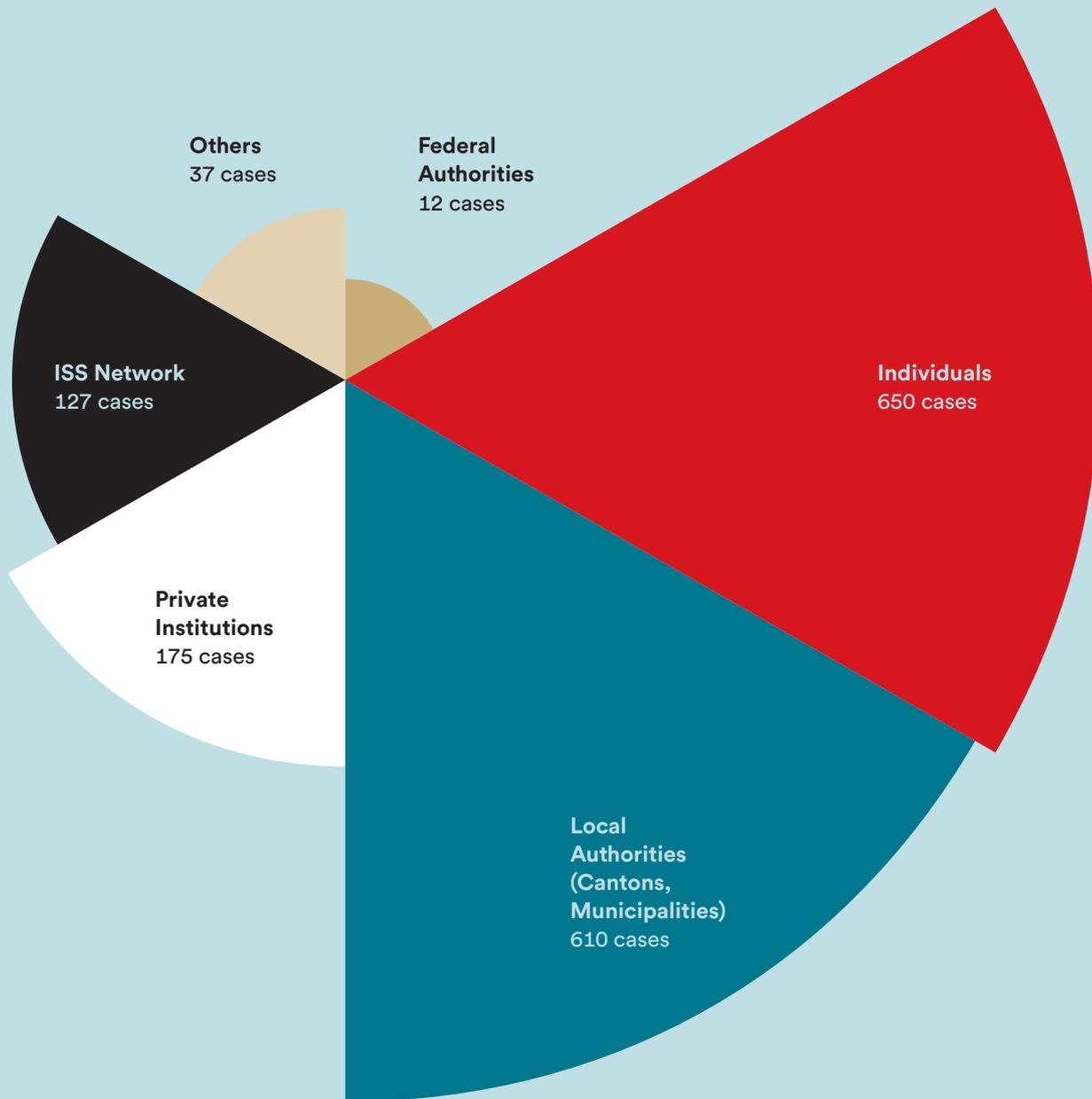
## Origin of Request by Canton

1611 cases



\* including 132 unaccompanied minors

## Origin of Requests 1611 cases



Our main partners in the Cantons and the municipalities are:

- Child and Adult Protection Authorities (APEA)
- Child and Adult Protection Services
- Social Services
- Population and Migration Services
- Voluntary Return Services
- Medical Services

# Protect and Support Unaccompanied Minors (UMs)

An intervention at three levels: individualized support for UMs, support to professionals, and national & international advocacy

## 120

participants at the intercantonal meetings organized by ISS

Although political and social contexts remain uncertain, 2017 was characterized by a slow-down in migrant flows into Europe. At issue are tightening migration policies, the signature of various bilateral agreements and the closure of several strategic borders. As a result, Switzerland has seen a marked decline in the number of asylum applications: 27.207 persons in 2016 compared with 18.088 persons in 2017. Applications filed by UMs have dropped by over 60%.

### Individual Support for UMs

In 2017, ISS Switzerland published the second edition of its handbook for the care of unaccompanied minors in Switzerland. This document is the result of the close cooperation between ISS Switzerland and professional partners in Switzerland working in the field. It was formally launched at the intercantonal meetings organized by ISS Switzerland in June 2017.

## 300

young persons mentored since January 2016, thanks to ISS and its partners

After having dealt with the reception and protection emergency following the 2015 arrivals, today the cantons try to work on the medium- and long-term integration of these young people. As most of these UMs are destined to remain in Switzerland, they must be offered support and future prospects.

Using a child rights-based approach, this second edition provides a reference framework to promote quality care and individual support for UMs with a view to finding durable solutions. The handbook delivers practical tools and advice to stakeholders in order to guide them in the identification and assessment of the situation, as well as in the follow-up provided to UMs and young adults. It also provides guidance on effective collaboration with the authorities, institutions, organizations and the community in order to ensure these young people receive

## 20

cantons have set up mentoring programs

## 14

workshops for mentors organized by ISS

## 400

participants at the ADEM – Swiss Red Cross conference

the best possible care. The handbook is based on the recommendations of the Conference of Cantonal Directors of Social Affairs (CDAS). They aim at harmonizing care standards provided to UMs across cantons and represent a breakthrough in the field.

Handbook available on [www.ssi-suisse.org](http://www.ssi-suisse.org) (available in French and German)

## Strong Advocacy through ADEM

With the establishment of a coordination office to strengthen the structure, 2017 was a landmark year for the Alliance for the Rights of Migrant Children (ADEM).

As a stakeholder committed to reforming the asylum sector, ADEM has published several position statements, notably one on the modification of asylum ordinances 1 and 2, with the aim of ensuring that care, housing and education arrangements for UMs are better adapted to their particular needs.

ADEM has also organized its annual national conference entitled: “Overcoming trauma: some perspectives for children and young migrants?”, in cooperation with the Swiss Red Cross and Support for Torture Victims. At this conference, the three organizations issued recommendations on appropriate support and care for children and youth having suffered trauma. See our website under “Notre actualité” (available in French and German only)

## Mentoring for UMs

The vast majority of UMs in Switzerland have come to stay. Their integration is thus paramount and the authorities cannot address the situation singlehandedly: society as a whole must take charge. Too often, human relations end at the doorstep of the shelter; too infrequently, there is interaction with the local community. With the mentoring project “An extra place at your table” set up by ISS Switzerland as a practical response to this challenge, UMs are placed in contact with local mentors.

Through the project, ISS Switzerland and its cantonal partners have established mentorships for more than 300 young persons. Whether they are individuals, couples or families, these mentors assist the youngsters in daily life, during special moments with family, sporting and leisure activities or in their search for internships, apprenticeships or housing. Beyond the project itself, a true connection is established over time: the mentors become a reference, an anchorage point, a new family for these young people. And in some cases, the mentors become their foster families.

## A Mentoring Experience from the Point of View of the Mentee, the Mentors and the Educator

Amin\* met his mentors, Laura\* and Marie\*, just before the summer holidays. Thanks to a game to break the ice, the chemistry between them is right from the start. The conditions are met to start the mentoring.

The first meeting takes place by the lake. It is a beautiful day, it is summer time, what better thing to do than a boat trip? But Laura has doubts, because she knows nothing about Amin's past. Originally from Eritrea, surely he must have crossed the Mediterranean by boat... They decide to ask him when he gets there: Amin is afraid but refuses to give in. He wants to share this moment with Laura and Marie.

Over time, Amin confides in his mentors: about his life in Eritrea, school, life in the shelter, which is sometimes difficult. He wants to leave the shelter, but he is aware how difficult it will be for him to find accommodation. Laura and Marie decide to help Amin and his educator in this quest. After a few weeks, Amin has found a room in a flatshare with students.

Since he met Laura and Marie, Amin is “radiant”, according to his educator. Their support has a positive and tangible effect on the young asylum seeker. Laura and Marie speak of mutual enrichment, as they also receive a lot from Amin.

Only recently, Amin's has learnt that asylum application was rejected. All the skills of our organization are now called for, as our legal service has taken on the case and appealed this decision.

\* fictitious names

## A Catalogue of Good Practices for UMs Care

In line with the CDAS recommendations, the good practices catalogue contains a compilation of promising projects, services and initiatives that promote individualized care for UMs. It is meant as a contribution to the harmonization of care standards for UMs across Swiss cantons, taking a child rights-based approach.

Catalogue available on [www.ssi-suisse.org](http://www.ssi-suisse.org) (in French and German only)

As in this mentorship, ISS Switzerland helps the integration of UMs through the project "An extra place at your table", by creating a link with the population living in Switzerland.





Young girls running a workshop on migration during the International Day of the African Child, organized within the WAN project.

# Joint Efforts for Children on the Move in West Africa

ISS West Africa (ISS-WA), in close cooperation with ISS Switzerland, has been working to strengthen the West Africa Network for the Protection of Children (WAN), which is active in 16 countries in the region. In 2017, several changes were made with regard to partners and strategies in order to enhance effectiveness in the future. ISS-WA has also opened an office in Dakar.

Furthermore, a framework agreement was concluded between the regional authority (the ECOWAS<sup>1</sup> Commission), ISS Switzerland and ISS-WA to formalize their cooperation and improve the protection of child rights in the region, especially for children on the move.

In October 2017, in Niamey, the ministers responsible for the protection of children across the 15 ECOWAS member states adopted the “ECOWAS Strategic Framework for Strengthening National Child Protection Systems to Prevent and Respond to Violence, Abuse and Exploitation against Children in West Africa”. The document calls on member states to implement concrete measures to improve the protection of children, including children on the move, in the region. This breakthrough was made possible through the work of the Regional Child Protection Working Group (RCPWG), of which ISS-WA and ISS Switzerland are members.

In future, WAN plans to work on inter-regional mobility and to cooperate with the Maghreb, where many young West African migrants find themselves in difficult situations. An initial cooperation was established in Morocco and Tunisia in order to develop durable solutions for migrant children registered in these countries, many of whom come from West Africa.

## The Initiative on Child Rights in the Global Compacts

In collaboration with its General Secretariat, ISS Switzerland is part of the Initiative on Child Rights in the Global Compacts<sup>2</sup>. The initiative follows the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2016 and aims at ensuring internationally the protection and exercise of the rights of children who are on the move or concerned by migration.

ISS has been involved in the drafting of the recommendations for protecting, promoting and implementing the human rights of children on the move in the proposed Global Compacts.

The hope is that, during the adoption of the Global Compact on refugees and the Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, states commit to concrete measures to protect migrant children, regardless of their status.

The Global Programme Migration and Development (GPMd) of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the European Union have provided financial support for WAN for eight years.

<sup>1</sup> Economic Community of West African States

<sup>2</sup> Multi-agency initiative [www.childrenonthemove.org](http://www.childrenonthemove.org)



**14**

trainings

**256**

professionals  
receiving a  
training on  
Child Welfare

**9**

work missions  
for supervision

**1,475**

children  
cared for

# Migrant Support Services

To handle the inflow of people fleeing conflict and persecution in different countries around the world, ISS Switzerland directly offers support for children, men and women through a series of services and projects.

## Providing Legal Support to Migrants

ISS Switzerland delivers expertise in the field of asylum and immigration law and deals with issues such as family reunification, asylum procedures, residence permits, recognition of status of statelessness or naturalization applications. On behalf of the Child Protection Service, ISS Switzerland also provides legal assistance to all undocumented minors living in the Canton of Geneva.

# 132

cases concerning  
unaccompanied minors

In 2017, ISS Switzerland, through its lawyer, has obtained a Federal Supreme Court judgment whereby the retainer fee is waived in the case of judicial proceedings lodged by unaccompanied minors (UMs). The practice prevailing until then was found to be an inadmissible restriction on access to justice for persons in a situation of heightened vulnerability. *Landmark judgment of 16 October 2017 (12T\_2/2016)*

## Helping Syrian Children in Lebanon be Children Again

Nearly one million Syrian refugees are registered in different reception camps in Lebanon. The estimated 300,000 children among them are particularly vulnerable, as they were taken out of school and often suffer from post-traumatic stress.

ISS Switzerland cooperates with the International Federation of Educative Communities (FICE) and two local partners (himaya and Mousawat) by providing support for the set up of recreational areas for Syrian child refugees. These “safeparks” provide a framework for social activities and play, providing a space where they can truly be children again.

In 2017, the project has grown in scale with the establishment of 10 new safeparks in 10 regions across the country (Akkar, Tripoli, Ajaltoun, Dhour el Choueir, Chiyah, Aley, Zahle, Younine, Tyr, Saïda) to assist an ever-growing number of children.

# 200

active animators

# 10

new safeparks set up

# 3,000

children using the facilities every week



Through the safe parks project in Lebanon, ISS Switzerland offers leisure and social care to Syrian refugee children. Before being refugees, they are children.

## Being Successful in the Country of Origin

The association “Reintegration in the Country of Origin” helps migrants wishing to return voluntarily resettle in their country of origin. It supports candidates carry out a professional project and/or training that can guarantee good economic prospects on return. The programme was set up 13 years ago. It has facilitated the implementation of 458 projects for the direct benefit of 1.040 returnees in 71 countries around the world. One of the main achievement in 2017 was the assessment of the project along with its approach, as well as a field visit to Albania to evaluate projects carried out under the programme.

## Livestock Farming in Bucharest

Mr. and Mrs. T. (aged 32 and 22) are Roma and live in Switzerland under very precarious conditions. Their level of education is very low. They seize the opportunity provided by the “Reintegration” initiative to present a business project in the Alba district, northern Bucharest, which is the couple’s place of origin. After the candidates’ abilities and motivation are assessed by the Program Manager, today they run a livestock farm that provides them with a sustainable future in their country of origin.

[reintegrationproject.ch](http://reintegrationproject.ch)

# 67

individual projects were launched in 2017 supporting financially 81 adults and 33 children in 22 countries.

## Accompanying Migrants Subject to the Dublin Regulation

On behalf of the Canton of Vaud, ISS Switzerland accompanies persons having received a decision of transfer to another European country under the Dublin III Regulation. ISS provides the best possible advice to those persons prior to departure and oversees reception conditions in the country of return.

## Ousmane stays off the street by joining a host family

Ousmane\* fled his country for political reasons and arrived in Switzerland by plane. He filed an asylum application in Switzerland and then received a “Dublin decision”: French authorities issued his visa, that country is therefore responsible for examining his application.

After looking into the situation of persons subject to the Dublin Regulation in France, it must be concluded that Ousmane, as a single non-vulnerable man, would not have been eligible for immediate assistance and would have ended up in the street. After conducting some research, ISS identified a network of volunteer host families that took care of Ousmane while waiting access to official asylum seeker housing. These took six months to come through.

Without ISS intervention, Ousmane would have spent half a year in a highly vulnerable situation: in the street, with odd nights spent in a homeless shelter.

\* fictitious name

# 8,370

persons subject to such decisions in Switzerland

# 60

beneficiaries

# 8

accompanied returns

# 11

countries involved

# Sharing our Expertise

Through its extensive network and its employees, ISS Switzerland puts its expertise in the area of child protection and transnational social work at the service of other countries where these activities are not as well developed as they are in Switzerland.

In this context, we are involved in organizing training, developing methodological tools and setting up local structures.

# 9

on-site missions

# 30

interventions at expert conferences

# 36

trainings held

# 25

project owners receive support from Bledinvest

# 40

young Tunisians have gained work experience in Switzerland under the "exchange of Young Professionals" Agreement

## Helping Tunisians in Switzerland Participate in the Development of Their Country of Origin

The CTRS (Tunisian Diaspora in Switzerland for Development) project helps promote the Tunisian diaspora's involvement in Tunisia's socio-economic development.

In 2017, the CTRS project has implemented a range of activities:

### Promotion of Bledinvest, a special support mechanism for Tunisian entrepreneurs in Switzerland

Some 20 project owners currently receive support; and five of them have already launched projects in Tunisia.

### Support for capacity-building initiatives by associations

Some 10 associations were provided training on communication and fundraising.

### Involving the diaspora in the transfer of know-how

A skills forum held for Tunisians in Switzerland provided an opportunity to assess the professional expertise available in the diaspora and create a pool of skills.

### Promotion of the Agreement between Switzerland and Tunisia for the exchange of young professionals

Some 40 young Tunisian professionals have received further training in Swiss companies and participated in the CTRS project's socio-cultural support programme.

[ctrs.ch](http://ctrs.ch)



# A Global Network of Partners

ISS Switzerland is the Swiss member of International Social Service, a network that operates in 120 countries around the world.

The ISS network is essential to the success of our missions. It facilitates joint, swift and coordinated action on behalf of children and families when several countries are involved.

Our network operates on the principles of solidarity and reciprocity. Any member country can use the services of a partner abroad free of charge.

This international presence also has the advantage of ensuring that all interventions take account of social, economic, legal and political challenges in the countries concerned.

## Participation in the Special Commission on the Hague Conventions of 1980 and 1996

The seventh meeting of the Special Commission on the Practical Operation of the 1980 Hague Child Abduction Convention and the 1996 Hague Child Protection Convention took place in October 2017.

An international ISS delegation composed of members from the United States, Germany and Switzerland participated in the meeting. The discussions revolved around implementation of the 1980 and 1996 conventions and specific issues such as international child abduction, transnational family mediation, recognition and enforcement of agreements in family matters, family relocation, rights of custody and visits.

In parallel, ISS also engaged in discussions with judges, experts, central government bodies and members of the Permanent Bureau of the Hague Conference. ISS will continue to advocate for reforming the abduction Convention implementation, so that in future the negotiated approach is used more frequently and in the best interest of the child.

## Publication of an International Practical Guide for Unaccompanied Minors (UMs) Care

At the initiative of ISS Switzerland and the Secretary General, the network members have worked together to present, in the form of a practical guide for professionals, the reference framework used by ISS when providing care for UMs around the world.

Based on the specific experience of ISS with handling transnational cases worldwide, this handbook is a practical tool for professionals working with children to ensure personalized support from the moment of first contact with the child until an appropriate durable solution is found.

The handbook also helps protect, through advocacy, the rights of the child during all stages of care. It is also a first step towards adoption of relevant international procedures.

Member of



International  
Social Service

# Financial Results

Our sources of funding have increased by over CHF 1.1 million compared to 2016 to reach an overall CHF 6.089 million. This proves how ISS is dynamic both in Switzerland and abroad.

For our partnership with ISS-West Africa, we have secured a three-year funding from the EU, complementary to the SDC contribution for our activities on behalf of migrant children in West Africa. Moreover, private donations have made possible to build a village in Burkina Faso, specifically designed for vulnerable young mothers, and train them to several professions.

Following the migration crisis, ISS Switzerland has taken up its responsibility as a civil society member to help the integration of unaccompanied minors (UMs) in our country. The amount of CHF 246'989, taken on our own funds, has financed activities on this matter. This investment has placed ISS at the core of the Swiss and international context as a developer of professional tools, as for instance the international guidebook of the ISS network on migrant children.

The financial year 2017 ends with a loss of CHF 138'213, which has been absorbed by our own funds and does not affect our capacity to carry on our mission.

Independent auditors certify that our annual accounts give a true and fair view of the ISS Switzerland financial assets, situation and results, and that they are in conformity with the ZEWO quality label.

Marc Evéquoz  
Financial Manager

## Balance Sheet as of December 31<sup>st</sup>

	2017	2016
<b>Assets</b>	CHF	CHF
Cash	927,388	1,966,970
Trade Accounts	265,477	200,990
Non-invoiced Services	485,014	379,859
Prepaid Expenses / Accrued Income	116,083	38,420
Fixed Assets	35,505	62,147
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>1,829,467</b>	<b>2,648,386</b>
<b>Liabilities, Funds and Capital</b>		
Trade Payables and Other		
Short Term Liabilities	360,628	187,191
Accrued Expenses / Deferred Income	65,000	119,506
Restricted Programme Funds	1,227,878	2,027,514
<b>Foundation Equity</b>		
Social Capital	50,000	50,000
Unrestricted Capital	125,961	264,174
<b>Total Foundation Equity</b>	<b>175,961</b>	<b>314,174</b>
<b>Total Liabilities, Funds and Capital</b>	<b>1,829,467</b>	<b>2,648,385</b>

## Operating Profit & Loss Account as of December 31<sup>st</sup>

Operating Income	2017 CHF	2016 CHF
<b>Contributions from Public Institutions for the Transnational Services</b>		
OFAS	301,500	210,000
FDFA	15,000	15,000
Canton of Geneva	331,114	337,906
City of Geneva	34,460	39,572
Other Cantons / Municipalities	565,162	513,250
	<b>1,247,238</b>	<b>1,115,728</b>
<b>Donations</b>		
<i>Loterie Romande</i>	-	18,176
Other Private Grantors	107,306	145,075
	<b>107,306</b>	<b>163,251</b>
<b>Other Income</b>		
Services Invoicing and Other Collections	193,977	206,477
Expertises and Project Management	632,370	473,009
Personnel Cost Reimbursement	176,829	367,693
Other Income	33,367	6,362
	<b>1,036,542</b>	<b>1,053,540</b>
<b>Total Operating Income</b>	<b>2,391,084</b>	<b>2,332,520</b>
<b>Contributions from Public Institutions for Projects</b>		
SDC (GPMD)	1,453,974	1,250,000
OFAS	110,000	135,000
Canton of Geneva	5,000	5,000
City of Geneva	5,000	8,940
Other Cantons / Municipalities	199,513	160,667
EuropeAid - European Commission	670,058	192,788
	<b>2,443,545</b>	<b>1,752,396</b>
<b>Donations for Projects</b>		
<i>Loterie romande</i>	50,000	100,000
Other Private Donators	1,195,166	743,075
	<b>1,245,166</b>	<b>843,075</b>
Other Income for Projects	9,606	42,625
<b>Total Operating Income for Projects</b>	<b>3,698,317</b>	<b>2,638,096</b>
<b>Total Operating Income</b>	<b>6,089,401</b>	<b>4,970,615</b>
<b>Operating Expenses</b>		
Personnel Costs	1,618,435	1,805,947
Operating Expenditures	934,960	520,978
Implementation Costs for Projects	4,272,205	2,799,130
	<b>6,825,599</b>	<b>5,126,055</b>
<b>Result before Change in Funds</b>	<b>-712,102</b>	<b>-155,440</b>
Withdrawal free capital for UMs development costs	246,989	-
Withdrawal from Restricted Funds	326,900	161,034
<b>ANNUAL RESULT</b>	<b>-138,213</b>	<b>5,594</b>

## Agregated Operating Income and Implementation Costs of Projects as of December 31<sup>st</sup>

Projects	Reintegration	Africa EuropeAid	Africa WAN	Africa SDC	Scholarships for UMs
<b>Operating Income</b>					
Contributions from Public Institutions	-	650,886	-	1,253,974	-
Donations	302,100	-	311,900	-	105,000
Other Income	1,628	-	34	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>303,728</b>	<b>650,886</b>	<b>311,934</b>	<b>1,253,974</b>	<b>105,000</b>
<b>Implementation Costs for Projects</b>	<b>331,992</b>	<b>556,946</b>	<b>362,662</b>	<b>1,434,638</b>	<b>157,055</b>
<b>Annual Result</b>	<b>-28,264</b>	<b>93,940</b>	<b>-50,728</b>	<b>-180,664</b>	<b>-52,055</b>
<b>Total Restricted Funds as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017</b>	<b>222,384</b>	<b>-25,119</b>	<b>125,433</b>	<b>51,781</b>	<b>162,011</b>
<b>Total Restricted Funds as of December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017</b>	<b>194,120</b>	<b>68,821</b>	<b>74,705</b>	<b>-128,883</b>	<b>109,956</b>

Projects	UMs	CTRS Tunisia	Canton of Vaud Project	Safeparks
<b>Operating Income</b>				
Contributions from Public Institutions	139,173	200,000	199,512	-
Donations	407,925	1,441	-	116,800
Other Income	7,940	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>555,038</b>	<b>201,441</b>	<b>199,512</b>	<b>116,800</b>
<b>Implementation Costs for Projects</b>	<b>774,727</b>	<b>279,596</b>	<b>275,084</b>	<b>99,504</b>
<b>Annual Result</b>	<b>-219,689</b>	<b>-78,155</b>	<b>-75,572</b>	<b>17,296</b>
<b>ISS participation to the project development</b>	<b>246,989</b>			
<b>Total Restricted Funds as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017</b>	<b>-27,300</b>	<b>370,503</b>	<b>75,572</b>	<b>188,908</b>
<b>Total Restricted Funds as of December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>292,348</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>206,204</b>

The summary of the financial statements 2017 presented in the Annual Report is part of the Audit Report issued by BDO, Geneva.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Swiss GAAP in particular FER 21, the label ZEWO and the Swiss legislation.

The Audit Report may be asked upon request in writing to [info@ssi-suisse.org](mailto:info@ssi-suisse.org).

# The ISS Team

ISS Switzerland can rely on an interdisciplinary highly-skilled and committed team<sup>1</sup> which works closely together in two different places (Geneva and Zurich). Its expertise covers a wide range of fields including social work, law, development, migration and mediation.

## Management

Olivier Geissler  
Director

## Communication and private fundraising

Orianne Couturier  
Communication Manager

Rolf Widmer  
Private fundraising

## Finance

Marc Evéquo  
Financial Manager

Pierre-Alain Kummer  
Accounting Officer

## Administration

Michèle Demierre  
Executive Assistant,  
human resources

Gabriela Desseigne  
Project Officer, Translator

Shaheeda Dollie  
Secretary, Receptionist

Teodoro Pugliese  
Administrative Assistant  
(ZH)

Paul Stalder  
Administrative Assistant

Stéphanie Weinberger  
Administrative Assistant

## Transnational Services

Stephan Auerbach  
Head of department  
in Latin Switzerland

Chiara Baggi  
Social Caseworker

Nadine Biefer  
Lawyer, Mediator (ZH)

Talita Bonfils  
Lawyer (ZH)

Michael Erdin  
Social Caseworker (ZH)

Cristina Frank  
Lawyer, Mediator (ZH)

Isabelle Lammerant  
International Adoption  
Consultant

Albert Mukwiye  
Social Caseworker

Leila Raïs  
Social Caseworker

Emilia Richard  
Lawyer

Annick Lara Stooss\*  
Social Caseworker and  
local Coordinator (ZH)

Joyce Tschopp  
Social Worker

## Migrant Support Services

Ramla Allani  
Migration and development  
Officer, *CTRS* project

Jean-Louis Berardi  
Lawyer

Isabella Celli  
Migration Officer

Michèle Demierre  
Program Manager,  
*Reintegration in the  
Country of Origin*

Marie Emery  
Project Assistant, *Safeparks*

Valerio Prato  
Migration Officer

## Unaccompanied minors

Elodie Antony  
Program Officer in  
Latin Switzerland

Lauren Barras  
Coordinator ADEM

Jenny Bolliger\*  
Project Officer (ZH)

Christoph Braunschweig  
Social Worker

Roberta Cecchetti  
Children's Rights Officer

Martino Guzzardo  
Project Officer

Alicia Haldemann  
Project Officer

Patricia Koch  
Program Officer in German  
Switzerland (ZH)

Mégane Lederey  
Project Officer

Barbara Noske-Aseev  
Project Officer (ZH)

Simone Renner  
Department Coordinator

Selina Rietmann\*  
Project Officer (ZH)

Georgiana Ursprung  
Project Officer (ZH)

## Interns

Margrit Barbosa Schwob  
Minkailou Barry

Jonas Demmerle (ZH)

Diane Grinling

Laura Montarolo

Martina Peter (ZH)

Christelle Richner

Filipe Rodrigues Marques

Morgan Sacchi

## Board of Foundation

Rolf Widmer\*\*

President and former Director – ISS  
Switzerland  
Operation Manager – Tipiti  
President – FICE Suisse

Philippe Aegerter

Former Financial Director – City of Geneva

Regine Aepli

Former Member of Parliament (Zurich)

François Binder\*\*

Former senior Manager – SDC

Daniel Burnat

Former UMs tutor – Geneva

Marie-Gabrielle Cajoly\*\*

Communication, CSR, philanthropy expert

Raphaël Comte

Former Member of Parliament (Neuchâtel)

Valérie De Graffenried

Journalist at *Le Temps*

Margrith Hanselmann\*\*

Former CDAS general secretary

Maria Anna Hutter

Former General Secretary of the Geneva  
Canton Parliament

Blaise-Alain Krebs

Former Director of “Jeanne Antide” shelter

Muriel Langenberger Graf\*\*

Head of programs Europe – Member  
of Senior Management, Jacobs Foundation,  
Zürich

Roland Losey

Head of unit, Marketing Commission  
& Collection Services, Banque Pictet et Cie

Heinrich Nufer

Child psychologist

Paul Peter\*\*

Former senior Manager – SDC

Stefan Rissi

Director, JTI Foundation

Georges Schürch\*\*

Former General Director of the secondary  
school department – DIP Geneva

Michel Thentz

Former Member of Canton Jura Government

Jean Zermatten

Former President of UN Child's Rights  
Committee  
Former Director of Children's Rights  
Institute (IDE)

Ariane Guisan

Secretary (non-member of the Board)

<sup>1</sup> Individuals who worked for ISS  
Switzerland for more than 3 months  
in 2017

\* Maternity leave replacement

\*\* Executive committee members

## Volunteer Work

In 2017, ISS called upon a network of volunteers to perform several tasks: an overall 1017 hours have been done on a voluntary basis.



### Administrativ Volunteers

Agnès Michelet  
Maria Paz  
Ewa Bernat

### Translation Volunteers

Anne Beguin  
Beatrice Joho  
Tamara Kuzmanovic  
Martina Lapper  
Cristina Leon Vallina  
Joan Maria Monclus  
Carina Ratcu  
Walter Rosselli



ISS Switzerland is ZEW O certified. The ZEW O seal is a guarantee for donors that their donations will be used economically, effectively and for the designated purpose.

## Financial Support

### Cantons

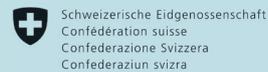
Appenzell Outer-Rhodes, Appenzell Inner Rhodes, Basel City, Basel-Country, Berne, Fribourg, Geneva, Glarus, Graubünden, Jura, Lucerne, Neuchâtel, Nidwalden, Obwalden, Schaffhausen, Schwyz, Solothurn, St-Gallen, Ticino, Thurgau, Uri, Vaud, Valais, Zurich.

### Municipalities

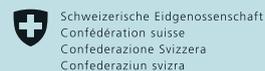
Aarau (AG), Azmoos (SG), Baar (ZG), Birr (AG), Birmensdorf (ZH), Blenio (TI), Bonvillars (VD), Brügg (BE), Castaneda (GR), Comano (TI), Corcelles-près-Payerne (VD), Dardagny (GE), Delémont (JU), Dietlikon (ZH), Dürnten (ZH), Düringen (FR), Erlach (BE), Grancia (TI), Grand-Lancy (GE), Grenchen (SO), Gsteig (BE), Hünenberg (ZG), Hombrechtikon (ZH), Ittigen (BE), Interlaken (BE), Kilchberg (ZH), Klosters (GR), Laconnex (GE), Lutry (VD), Lufingen (ZH), Lyss (BE), Maienfeld (GR), Mervelier (JU), Meyrin (GE), Monthey (VS), Neunkirch (SH), Oberwil (BL), Oberägeri (ZG), Orbe (VD), Pfeffingen (BL), Poschiavo (GR), Schlieren (ZH), Solothurn (SO), Unterägeri (ZG), Unterseen (BE), Versoix (GE), Villars-sur-Glâne (FR), Worb (BE), Zollikofen (BE), Zug (ZG).

### Private Donors and Foundations

#### With the support of



Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC



Eidgenössisches Departement des Innern EDI  
Bundesamt für Sozialversicherungen BSV



Through mediation, ISS  
Switzerland helps  
restoring family links  
across the borders,  
particularly in situations  
of international child  
abduction.



## Imprint

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