



# info

3/2018

## Jubiläum: 20 Jahre NAV

Anniversaire: 20 ans de la NAV  
Anniversary: 20 years NAV

# nav

novartis angestellten verband  
association des employés de novartis  
novartis employees' association





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**Impressum**

**Mitgliedschaften**  
 Angestellte Schweiz  
 arb – Angestelltenvereinigung Region Basel

**Redaktionsteam**  
 Claudio Campestrin, Susanne Hänni, Davide Lauditi,  
 Roland Hirt und Patric Halbeisen

**Kontaktadresse**  
**NAV Novartis Angestellten Verband**  
 Geschäftsstelle  
 Novartis Campus, Forum 1  
 WSJ-200.P.84/Postfach  
 4002 Basel  
 Telefon +41 (0)61 697 39 00  
 E-Mail nav.nav(at)novartis.com

Sämtliche Artikel finden Sie auch unter: [www.nav.ch](http://www.nav.ch)

*info* erscheint vierteljährlich  
 Laufende Nr.: 83/2018  
 Auflage: 2700 Expl.

**Redaktionsschluss info 4/2018**  
 14. November 2018

**Übersetzungen**  
 Inter-Translations SA, Bern  
 CLS Communication AG, Basel

**Titelbild «Collage aus vergangenen info-Ausgaben»**  
 cdesign, Reinach

**Grafik/Satz**  
 cdesign, Reinach

**Druck**  
 Runser Druck & Satz AG, Basel

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The NAV has now been in existence for 20 years – it represents a small anniversary that allows us to take a look back. Despite every reason for expressing satisfaction, it should certainly not give us cause to rest on our laurels. The Board is well aware of the continuing present-day challenges as well as the inevitability of challenges in the future. As we have done in the past, we will work to overcome such challenges so that every employee will be able to benefit to the maximum possible extent.

The first part of this issue of *info* is devoted to our anniversary and consequently to the social partnership with Novartis and in general. If we take a look at the events described in the column written by Roger Thiriet, the positive developments brought about by this social partnership and our current position can only be viewed as being unbelievable. It is something that we would like to draw everyone's attention to and also keep foremost in our minds as we go about our present-day and future tasks.

Of no lesser importance is the Novartis Euroforum, the European Works Council within Novartis. The two newly elected representatives of Novartis Switzerland, Andrea Fedriga and Ralf Endress, will give us their first insights into this. Further reports will certainly follow.

Another part of the social partnership concerns the Novartis Pension Fund: here, it gives us great pleasure to welcome Henry Wiersing, a specialist in sustainable investments, as an author to our *info* magazine. As you read this article, you will probably be able to gain a good insight into how complex this subject is and how professionally it is implemented at Novartis – under the management of the Board of Trustees and, as such, also of the representatives you voted for who sit on the Board of Trustees.

To help lighten up our magazine and fulfil our perpetual aspiration of offering you – our cherished readers – added value as well as moments of relaxation, this issue also contains articles penned by three guest authors who report on their passions. Allow yourself be tempted by "Sustainable enjoyment," "Well-being" and "How you can feel at home anywhere in the world."

We hope to have succeeded in thwarting any onset of the summer slump and hope that you will truly enjoy reading this edition of *info*.

Should you have any questions or wish to have additional information, I and we, the entire Board, naturally remain at your disposal.

*In this spirit, your NAV President –  
Claudio Campestrin*



# 20 years of social partnership

**Celebrating an anniversary is always a reason to reflect on the past. One of the very first in-house associations, the "Geigy Branch of the Association of Chemical Industry Employees", was founded almost 100 years ago. This association is no longer in existence and was probably absorbed in the various mergers that eventually led to the NAV. You will be surprised how up-to-date their thinking was back then and how relevant their ideas still are today.**



**Claudio Campestrin**  
NAV president

**T**he Novartis Employee Association (NAV) has now been in existence for 20 years. That is a great milestone that we should use as an opportunity to look back. How did the in-house associations come about?

## 1919

The founding of the "Geigy Branch of the Association of Chemical Industry Employees" in 1919, just after the end of the First World War, is well documented. At that time the main purpose seems to have been – quote: "... to be better positioned to respond to the *situation brought about by an imminent strike*," i.e. the aforementioned branch was founded to prevent a strike. The aim and purpose at the time was already to *safeguard the interests of all employees*.

The phrasing seems humorous from today's viewpoint and so we present it here. A quote from the minutes of the founding meeting: "They expressed their happiness that, after such a long period of division among the employees, it would finally be possible to contribute something to the plant that would be to the benefit of all."

Today it seems almost unbelievable that the *founding meeting took place in the Restaurant zum neuen Warteck. It began at 6.10 a.m. and ended at 7.35 a.m.*

The minutes of the meeting are not clear on the point, but it seems that they decided to join the Workers' Union "under false premises." What we do know, however, is that the branch, founded only in April 1919, broke away from the main association in September 1919 and founded the completely independent Association of Employees of J. R. Geigy A.-G.

## 1929: 10th anniversary of the Association of Employees of J. R. Geigy A.-G.

Quote: "The following lines shall provide the dear reader with a brief description of how the Association of Employees came into being and its activities over the past ten years." These are

the opening words of a typed document, with no title or specified purpose, which was probably written to commemorate the 10th anniversary.

Certain concepts expressed in the document stand out and are worthy of being restated: Quote: "Thanks to the concessions granted by our *dear employer* and the efforts of the membership, a great deal of work has already been done..."

The association consisted of 121 persons including the "pensioned-off members."

### **The following quotes also seem remarkable:**

"Right from the outset, of great importance for the weal and woe of the association was – and this remains the case today – *the rejection in principle of joining a workers' organization. The employee, who materially benefits from his or her employment and entitlement to a pension, must dutifully and reasonably protect the interests of the company and may not join trade unions or party organizations whose objectives conflict with the interests of the company.*"

It continues: "Entering into a discussion of all the individual negotiations on pension issues, overtime arrangements, vacation arrangements, etc., conducted with our esteemed senior management, always on an *amicable basis*, would be excessive. As far as business interests permitted, our suggestions and wishes were taken into account in a manner worthy of gratitude."

Lectures conducted by experts in the field were also organized in those days to – quote: "promote the intellectual interests of the members and deepen their general knowledge." Special mention should be made of the two lectures given by Hans R. Geigy on the topics "Japan: the country and its people" and "China: the country and its people."

## 1944: The Second World War left its mark

The anniversary publication to mark the 25th anniversary of the Geigy Employee Association bears witness to how profound and grave this war must have been:

The introduction notes (quote): "When some determined men founded our present association in the turmoil of the post-war period following the first global conflict, they could hardly have known that they had created such a valuable foundation for cooperation between the employees and the management for those that followed them."

"We owe our current success first and foremost to the almost *seamless alliance of all the employees at the Basel and Schweizerhalle plants* and secondly to the understanding that management has shown toward our wishes in recent years."

Nevertheless, critical opinions were also documented – quote: "We express the hope that the negotiating delegation will not be regarded as something that is necessary only due to the circumstances in which we presently find ourselves. Even in the post-war period of peacetime, such an institution will and must be act as a benefit for the entire Geigy family. While *material concerns* must currently *take precedence* due to the nature of

the times we are living through, we should not overlook the fact that *problems of a social and spiritual nature* are still in need of solutions. ... The one good thing that this grim war has imposed on us is the feeling of solidarity and this is something we want to carry over into better times. For where the heart speaks to the heart, a pleasant atmosphere will always prevail *over all differences of class or social status*, an atmosphere in which a just solution can be found for all problems."

The document concludes with the following remark: "N.B. The anniversary celebration planned for October 7, 1944, had to be postponed indefinitely in view of the extensive absences due to military service. Let us hope that it will soon be possible to celebrate our anniversary in a more peaceful time." Unfortunately it is not stated whether the celebration eventually took place.

### 1969 – 50 years of the Employee Association

The only document that reports on this anniversary is a detailed article in the *Basler Nachrichten* (No. 478 of November 14, 1969). The following findings from this period are worthy of mention:

Quote: "*J. R. Geigy AG's in-house association is the second-oldest in Switzerland, after that of Sulzer in Winterthur, and the second-largest after that of BBC (Brown Boveri & Co, now ABB) in Baden. The 50th anniversary was celebrated with a due sense of pride on Thursday. Among the guests welcomed by President Willy Ramstein in the chamber of the town hall were, in particular, cantonal councilor Dr. Edmund Wyss, delegations of the local in-house associations of Ciba, Roche and Sandoz, representatives of the company's executive committee and the Workers' Committee.*"

It is also stated that this in-house association alone had 2,700 members and that it was acknowledged as a negotiating partner. It is also given due praise – quote: "... on the other hand, this form of organization expresses the feeling of connection that the employees have to the company. It is crucial that management attaches the same importance to its problems and wishes as it would with an external negotiating partner. *This will to cooperate is clearly expressed in the Declaration of Principles signed in 1967.* ... The In-House Association provided important services in the cultural field and also devoted particular efforts to ensuring that those *joining the company* found a new spiritual home. ... Finally, the speaker turned to the tasks facing the company in the future. The cooperation process in the chemical industry poses new problems and the In-House Association must continue to focus its efforts on addressing questions of general importance for all employees. W. Ramstein pointed to a collective responsibility that every employee must fulfill at his or her place of work. This is also what lies behind the desire for a *fair and objective qualifications system.*"

Cantonal councilor Wyss criticized this view – quote: "... He thanked the in-house association for its contribution to improving conditions and the emergence of a modern partnership. He then turned to expressing his disapproval of a certain tendency that the in-house associations had of talking about the trade unions in a sense that was not entirely free of disqualification. We must be aware that finding solutions to the challenges facing a modern industrialized country is completely unthinkable without trade unions. Dr. Wyss then pointed out the dangers of



a large chemical company becoming a "home" that has greater significance to the employee or worker than the community. In this area in particular, he called upon the In-House Associations to act positively. They should do their utmost, he said, to ensure that employees feel that *the municipality and the canton are also their real home* and to make them interested in our public issues."

On behalf of the *Board of Directors and the Management*, Dr. Ernst Kober congratulated the in-house association – quote: "... This has, beyond all doubt, proven its value many times over and has become an integral component of the company's structure. Collaboration is not intended to gloss over *conflicts of interest*, but rather to give objective form to problems." Dr. Kober mentioned as examples – quote: "... fruitful collaboration such as the reorganization of the pension funds, employee ownership and the R1000 residential construction project near Rheinfelden."

After the speeches, a celebration befitting the importance of the event was held in the Zoological Garden's restaurant.

### 1996: the creation of the NAV at Ciba

On May 9, 1996, the Novartis Employee Association was formed at Ciba from the merger of the three previous associations "Academic Community, the In-house Association, and the HTL Association."

Some of the members of its Executive Committee are well-known to this day: *Kathrin Amacker* as President, *Alex Gasser* as Co-President, *Felix A. Jenny* as authorized signatory and *Gilbert Fahrni* as secretary/administrator.

There are unfortunately no documents to attest to the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the first Association of Employees of J. R. Geigy A.-G. But the foundation of NAV at Ciba laid the foundation for the (overall) NAV.

Alex Gasser, former president of the NAV, gives the best account of its history:

"... Novartis needed a functioning social partnership right away, which meant that new regulations had to be drawn up for Novartis. The committee of seven was composed of one representative from each of the In-House Association, the Academics' Association and the Works Council (GAV) of Sandoz, and the Employees' Representation, the In-House Association, the Academics' Association and the Works Council (GAV) of Ciba.

It was quite a struggle and many sound achievements had to be jettisoned along the way. The new social partner eventually ordered that the Ciba arrangements be introduced across the company. This also included the election procedures for employee representatives. At Sandoz, there were three presidents: the In-House Association, the Academics' Association and the Works

Council acted as employee representatives; whereas at Ciba, the representatives were elected. This was the case for the chairmanship as well as the employee representatives. It became an extremely intensive election campaign in which it was important to ensure that the voices of those from Sandoz were not lost in the sheer numbers of those from Ciba and to win back the chairmanship from the GBI representatives. We were successful in getting Kathrin Amacker as chair, and the Sandoz representatives – together with their Ciba colleagues – achieved very good results.”

Before the merger to form Novartis:

#### Internal professional associations of Ciba-Geigy and Sandoz

##### Ciba-Geigy In-House Association (HVC)

- Academic Community (AGCG)

- Association of HTL graduates (HTLCG)

##### Sandoz HVS In-House Association HVS

Comm./Tech. Employees   Laboratory workers   Master craftspeople   Foremen

##### Sandoz academic association ASA

Representative Councils. This in itself is a fundamental difference to the past.

Yes, because history repeats itself in that there are recurring topics (pension fund, qualification system, expats and their integration, etc.) that were and remain of enormous importance both in the past and today. Ensuring that the pension fund is maintained as securely as possible while simultaneously introducing innovations probably represents the most fundamental security requirement, both for the actively insured members and, of course, for our retirees in particular.

However, the qualification system and the integration of expats have remained no less important and topical.

Yes, history repeats itself, because there was plenty to negotiate with the company in the past, and that remains the case today. Yes, because there have always been possible conflicts of interest.

The NAV is, however, committed to the principle of being a tough but fair and solutions-oriented negotiating partner.

Ultimately, it is probably also because the NAV continues to be accepted as a social partner within the company.

#### 1998: Merger of the Novartis Employee Association

A further quote from Alex Gassers' review:

“... Only then was the NAV established; in the first two years of Novartis' existence, the individual employee representation associations remained autonomous. The merger took a lot of hard work. CIBA demanded the presidency, while Sandoz resisted, but the balance of power was on the CIBA side. Finally, they reached a sensible compromise: Kathrin Amacker became the first NAV president, but only until she was elected as chair of the Employees' Representation. Alex Gasser then assumed the presidency of the NAV.

The first *info* newsletter issued by the newly founded Novartis Employees' Association, NAV, bore the title LA FIDUCIA (trust).

Confidence in the new Group Executive Committee was sorely needed in the months that followed, as a new memorandum of understanding had to be agreed with the company. Although we were not really breaking new ground, the company wanted to curb the NAV's sociopolitical influence. Representatives of the company had blocked our homepage on the intranet. A brief “presidential” conversation with Daniel Vasella resulted in the blockade being lifted within a few hours.

The NAV has become highly competent in all matters pertaining to the social partnership – for example, the pension fund, where we provided the vice chairmanship in the form of Kathrin Amacker...

It will come as no surprise that we were also subjected to very critical opinions on the part of the employees. It was not always easy to explain the importance of the NAV to people. A colleague once told me: “I'm not sure you have that much influence over management, but I'd hate to think what things would be like if it weren't for you.”

#### Is history repeating itself?

In my opinion, yes and no. No, because there has never been talk of drawing up social plans before. Novartis has now already negotiated and agreed two Social Plans with the Employee



Image on front of the first, common edition of the *info* magazine of the joint NAV



History also continues to repeat itself in the form of the fundamental difference between the in-house associations and the trade unions. The latter are politically active, whereas the in-house associations aren't. It is good that the discussions today are less characterized by class or social differences, if at all.

I will now conclude this extensive historical flashback by citing the words of the 1919 actuary (Hans Bitterli): "They expressed their happiness ... that it would finally be possible to contribute something to the plant that would be to the benefit of all." I am pleased to confirm that the NAV was and will remain committed to the benefit of all employees.

I would now like to pass you over to Roland Hirt in the next article, a colleague on the Management Board, who is responsible for services and employee representatives for associates covered by individual employment contracts (EAV).

As a last thought, my eye was drawn to a quote by Friedrich Dürrenmatt, which I would like to take this opportunity to repeat to you as food for thought: "Ideology is order at the expense of thought."

The NAV has always been free from ideological, religious or party-political tendencies and patterns of thought and will remain so in future: it exists purely for the benefit of all employees.

# Our social partnership

The Novartis Employee Association (NAV) has now been in existence for 20 years and looks back on a long-standing social partnership with our employer, as well as with various external associations. Compared with other personnel associations throughout Switzerland, the NAV can point to a sound, balanced social partnership cooperation with Novartis, albeit one which nonetheless took hard work to achieve.



**Roland Hirt**

EAV employee representative

The merger of Ciba's in-house employee organizations, chaired by Kathrin Amacker, and Sandoz's in-house employee organizations, under the leadership of Alex Gasser, on June 9, 1998, laid the foundation for the Novartis Employee Association. The baton was initially picked up by Ms. Amacker, followed by Mr. Alex Gasser, whose task at the time was to bring the NAV and the former employee associations of various stripes together as a new, unified organization. The leadership of these two individuals established a path that has continued to benefit the NAV and its members and indeed the entire Novartis workforce in various ways. A variety of milestones were set both during this period and after Alex Gasser handed over the baton to Henriette Brunner in 2006. Among other things, we succeeded in building up a competent delegation for the social partnership and the pension fund, which enabled us to ensure that the members of the Novartis Employee Association would continue to receive sound, technically competent advice and support at all times.

Logically, employers and employees in a social partnership represent opposing interests on many issues. But, at the same time, they also share a common objective: namely that the company is and remains economically competitive, stable and successful. The basis for a successful company is, however, the employees. What would a company be without good, motivated and interested employees? And what would become of the individual employee if the company could no longer function efficiently and were no longer capable of success?

*The NAV Executive Board and the presidency maintain a constant focus on a variety of tasks, e.g.:*

## Internal affairs

- Strategic and operational management of the association
- Positioning the association
- Identifying and preparing candidates for the Employee Representative Council and/or Board of Trustees of the Pension Fund and supporting them during the election process
- Managing the offices
- Budget responsibility

- Presiding over board meetings and workshops
- Leading and organizing the Annual General Meeting
- Overseeing the publication of *info* (four-times yearly association newsletter)
- Maintaining its own web page
- Concluding contracts for services that benefit the members of the association

## Social partnership issues

- Leading negotiations with social partners where necessary (e.g. agreement in principle), initiating special projects or intervening with the Executive Committee where necessary
- Project management
- Responsibility for internal and external communication (members and media)
- Drawing up and giving presentations (e.g. Executive Committee, other Novartis sites in Switzerland)
- Advising members (services and pension fund)
- Maintaining contact and collaboration with other employee organizations
- Member of the Board of Employees Switzerland, i.e. strategic management of the association (umbrella association that functions at national level, with almost 20,000 members in Switzerland).
- Member of Employees Switzerland's chemical/pharmaceutical industry conference (AV Syngenta, AV Lonza, AV Clariant, AV Huntsman, Siegfried, etc.)

The NAV continues to be confronted by other – unfortunately unavoidable – major challenges, such as restructuring and reorganization measures. However, it has become evident that while the appointment of members of the Executive Committee to the Employee Representative Council for employees with individual employment contracts (EAV) and those covered by the collective bargaining agreement (GAV) was in some cases unable to totally prevent the layoffs that accompanied them, it was able to significantly cushion them in some areas. While the social plan was less than one A4 page in length in the early 2000s, it has expanded over the course of time into a 20-page document whose content is largely the work of the elected employee representatives of the Novartis Employee Association.

A good social partnership requires a strong employee association and competent employee representatives, who represent employee concerns professionally to the Executive Board. Employee representatives often also require persistence, negotiating skills and determination to be successful. Tough but fair is



always our motto. The NAV supports interested employees who want to get involved in the social partnership and provides them with targeted training, for example in negotiating skills (negotiating social plans, salary negotiations, etc.), as well as in areas such as pension funds, soft skills and all other topics that are of importance to a good employee representative and member of the Board of Trustees. The NAV Executive Committee is constantly upgrading its skills in order to be able to provide competent representation across the entire spectrum of sociopolitical issues.

It is supported in this by the umbrella organization Employees Switzerland, which has around 60 member organizations from the chemical, pharmaceutical, engineering and electrical industries, making it the largest employee association in Switzerland. The chemical/pharmaceutical industry conference, which includes an exchange of interests between the board members of different in-house associations from companies in Northwest Switzerland, is also very important for the NAV as a benchmark. Membership of the Employees' Association, Basel region (ARB), means that the NAV also has three representatives in the industrial court of arbitration in Basel.

### **Basis of the social partnership at Novartis**

The Novartis Employee Association (NAV) has concluded a memorandum of understanding with Novartis, which forms the basis of the social partnership for employees with an individual employment contract.

Approximately 8,000 employees at Novartis in the Basel/Rhine Valley area have an individual employment contract (non-man-

agement) and are therefore represented by an elected Employee Representative Council (PV-A), e.g. regarding salary negotiations, restructuring, function evaluations, etc. These employee representatives are elected every four years and are members either of the Novartis Employee Association (NAV) or UniaPlus, an in-house grouping with its roots in the trade union Unia.

Approximately 1,800 employees in the Basel/Rhine Valley area are subject to the collective bargaining agreement and are represented by a different elected Employee Representative Council (PV-GAV) on the aforementioned issues. Following the most recent elections, the NAV also makes up the majority of the social partners in this area.

In addition, the NAV has established various services covering other areas of social partnership that are also much used by the members. Did you know, for example, that as a NAV member you are automatically covered by legal protection insurance for everything to do with employment law via the umbrella organization Employees Switzerland? You can also access legal advice from the Basel Employees' Association (ARB) free of charge, as well as discounts for general types of insurance and other services (e.g. mobility).

Furthermore, the elected employee representatives carry out co-determination, co-decision-making and negotiations under the social partnership. However, this only applies to employees at EASY levels 1–10. Management employees have no right to internal representation by the employee councils.

Nonetheless, thanks to the memorandum of understanding with Novartis, the NAV has a right of intervention and representation for all of its members (including management), irrespective of their contract.

The Novartis Employee Association tends to play more of a back seat role, but has 12 of the 13 employee representatives for employees with individual contracts and is therefore the strongest representative of the 8,000 employees at Novartis Basel/Rhine Valley. The NAV is not afraid to tackle unpleasant issues and also adopts a clear position on relevant matters. It has also had studies carried out on the "well-being of employees in major pharmaceutical companies" and "benefits and risks of performance-based remuneration." It also does not shy away from speaking directly to Novartis management in person when necessary.

The NAV members of the Board of Trustees of the Novartis Pension Fund also put all their efforts into standing up for employees and for a sustainable, stable and sound pension fund. The NAV does not view Novartis as an adversary and enemy, but rather as a partner in discussions and negotiations, and our aim is to be involved in events that relate to employee policies and achieve lasting improvements for employees. It is a matter of their representation in the social partnership; it is about strong codetermination by the Employee Representative Council for the benefit of employees. Being able to count on employees' support is very important to the NAV, as only with your backing is it possible for the Employee Representative Council and the association to work together to advocate rights and improvements to the company for the benefit of employees. The larger an association, the greater its impact.

The NAV wishes to remain a competent social partner for the company in the future.



# Members advertise for members

Our campaign continues. Many participants have already won an attractive prize. By recruiting just one new member you too will take part in the next prize draw.

**Annual subscription: Fr. 130.–**



## Joining NAV

I would like to join NAV

I would like to play an active role in NAV

Mr.  Mrs.

Personnel No.

Date of birth

Surname

First name

Site

Tel. No.

Home address

Post code/Place

Management

IEA

CBA

### I was recruited by

Surname

First name

Site

Tel. No.

Please fill out the application, sign and send to the NAV office, WSJ-200.P.84 (Forum 1)

# NAV and Employees Switzerland: a strong relationship

We are celebrating two anniversaries in 2018: 20 years of the Novartis Employees' Association (NAV) and 100 years of Employees Switzerland. This year also marks a new year of exchanges between the NAV and its umbrella association.



Virginie Jaquet

**O**M 208 is the code for the Novartis Employees' Association (NAV) in the Employees Switzerland database. But the NAV is far more to Employees Switzerland than just two letters and a number. The

NAV is its largest member organization. With some 2,000 members, the NAV makes a considerable financial contribution to its umbrella association – but that's not all. There is a strong relationship between the two associations based on a common commitment.

## The NAV: an important partner for Employees Switzerland

Employees Switzerland and the NAV pursue the same objectives. While the NAV implements these in one of the largest internationally successful Swiss companies, Employees Switzerland does so in numerous Swiss firms. One of these objectives is to promote a constructive social partnership by encouraging dialogue between employer and employees. A further shared objective is strengthening the participation rights of employees. And just like Employees Switzerland, the NAV favors practical, long-term solutions to ideological ones.

The strong relationship between the NAV and Employees Switzerland is also reflected in the NAV's commitment to the strategic development of Employees Switzerland, and more specifically in the NAV's Chairman, Claudio Campestrin, being a member of its Board of Directors. Alongside other Board members, his experience and knowledge of current employee needs help make Employees Switzerland a forward-looking association. Henriette Brunner, his predecessor, contributed in much the same way. This seat on its Board enables Employees Switzerland to get feedback directly from employees in their environment and thus better represent their interests.



## Professional support from Employees Switzerland

However, the relationship between the NAV and Employees Switzerland would not be so strong if it were not based on give and take. Thanks to its pool of legal experts specializing in employment and social insurance law, Employees Switzerland offers support and professional advice to NAV members, for example when they face professional difficulties. In addition, it supports the members of the NAV by offering them a wide range of continuing education courses, enabling them to develop a variety of skills. Employees Switzerland also strengthens the position of employees via the platform by stating its position in favor of balanced political solutions and defending employees' interests in the public and political spheres.

To conclude, the umbrella association also makes a significant contribution to the NAV by providing a network of employee associations and employees. As Hans Furer, former Secretary of Employee Policy at Employees Switzerland wrote in the edition marking the tenth anniversary of the NAV in 2008: "Survival requires relationships, a network – as in any family or in Novartis as a company." An employee association like the NAV requires dialogue and collaboration with other partners such as Employees Switzerland.

As an umbrella association, Employees Switzerland wants to continue to offer this network as well as its expertise to the Novartis Employees' Association – and its 60 other employee associations – for many years to come. The future also has many challenges in store. And together, through their strong partnership, the NAV and Employees Switzerland will be able to tackle these head-on.

We hope we will be able to celebrate our 150th anniversary together with the NAV in 2068. The Employees Switzerland team wishes you a happy anniversary.

# From underclass to social partners

**“The daily working time is 12 hours”, stated an 1890 set of work regulations from Basel. At the same time, the canton of Glarus was taking the first steps toward a social partnership as we would come to understand it. It took longer in the city of Basel, where chemical workers were still referred to as an “underclass” during the Second World War.**

**N**eed to visit your doctor during working hours? No problem! A morning off to attend your daughter’s civil wedding? Paid leave! A day off for an interview at a new workplace? Sure! For fifty years now, the law has obliged Swiss employers not only to make such concessions to their employees, but also to offer the many other benefits that constitute a well-balanced social partnership: every employee is now legally entitled to vacations and days off, sick pay, maternity and paternity leave, and much more besides. Many also benefit from paid time off for training and further education or participating in cultural, sporting, trade union and social events, voluntarily granted to them by their employer.

## The Bible as recommended reading matter

Our forefathers could only dream of such social partnership benefits. When the tobacco merchant Max Oettinger opened his cigar shop on the Eisengasse in Basel in 1890, the founder of today’s Oettinger Davidoff AG issued a set of work regulations. These contained directives such as “the working day is twelve hours long,” “employees who engage in political activities shall be dismissed without notice” and “an employee must not make mistakes; those who do so shall be dismissed.” The regulations recommended reading the Bible, while female employees were

advised to lead “a pious lifestyle.” The reference stating that “sick employees shall not receive a wage,” but shall instead “owe thanks to the one who gives them bread because he is the one feeding them,” reflects the prevalent attitudes of that era among old-school employers.

## Fridolin brings progress

It may come as something of a surprise that the first traces of a social partnership as we now understand it in Switzerland weren’t found in the cities of the day, but in the now rather rural canton of Glarus. With the arrival of mechanical spinning and weaving in the mid-19th century, the “Zigerschlitz” region not only became one of the first industrial areas in Switzerland, but



Roger Thiriet is a journalist and author who lives in Basel. In his column he reflects the way the topic of the magazine relates specifically to his home city.

also a pioneer of workers’ rights. As early as 1864, the cantonal authorities enacted a progressive factory law, appointing the doctor Fridolin Schuler to ensure its observance. Dr Schuler gained a profound insight into the workers’ living conditions and diets, the sanitary conditions in the factories, and the health hazards of certain work processes and chemicals such as lead and phosphorus. He also concerned himself with accident prevention, health, accident and liability insurance, and related occupational safety issues.

## Involvement in the implementation of “standard working hours”

With the experience he gained from this role under his belt, Schuler became a sought-after expert when the first federal factory law of 1877 was drafted. It successfully implemented a reduction in child labor, the protection of women in general and mothers who had recently given birth in particular, and what became known as the “standard working day” of eleven hours for all employees. In 1878 he was elected federal factory inspector for the cantons of Eastern Switzerland. He and his inspectors ensured that the factories complied with the prescribed working hours and that the factories met the safety, ventilation and cleanliness requirements. Success was quick to follow.





Schuler's and his inspectors' implementation and inspection measures played a bigger part in ensuring worker protection in Switzerland and standardizing the competitive conditions of companies than the law. Along with many other institutions and organizations, the University of Basel honored him by awarding him an honorary doctorate in 1885 for his

pioneering contribution to the long struggle to turn the original slavlike conditions into today's social partnership.

### From underclass to collective bargaining partners

As the aforementioned Oettinger company's working regulations show, in the metropolitan center of Basel it took longer for the relationship between employers and employees to develop into a social partnership as we now understand it. The industrial disputes and strikes which this column reminded us of in the last *nav info* played a major part in this struggle (*nav info* 2/18; "The long journey to social partnership"). Working families endured hardship as recently as the Second World War (1939–1945), including in the chemical industry, whose workforce was described as an "underclass." Following the end of the war, the pressure exerted by the trade unions became overwhelming, resulting in the entry into force of Basler Chemie's first collective labor agreement, bringing about an improvement in the lives of many employees. The minimum hourly wages were set at CHF 1.50 for men and 95 centimes for women. The contract also regulated working hours (48 hours), holiday entitlements (2–18 days) and social security issues. In return, the employees and their representatives made a commitment to maintaining peaceful industrial relations, i.e. to renouncing strikes. The new contract partnership brought advantages for both sides: It guaranteed employees recognition as partners with guaranteed rights, while companies were ensured planning certainty and continuity.

For decades, the collective agreements at Basler Chemie, the printing industry and Swissair were considered to be the best contracts and showcase agreements for a functioning social partnership.

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BRIEF REPORT ON THE NOVARTIS EUROFORUM ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2018

## Novartis Euroforum – or NEF for short

**Andrea Fedriga and Ralf Endres**  
Employee representatives and NEF  
delegates Switzerland



**T**he NEF is composed of employee representatives from all the Novartis sites in Europe and pursues the following objectives:

- To establish a direct dialog between the Novartis Executive Committee and the employees of the European member states.
- To give employee representatives the opportunity to express their opinions and views on cross-border issues that affect the interests of employees to the Novartis Executive Committee.

- To give the Novartis Executive Committee the opportunity to explain its business strategies and answer the employee representatives' questions in person.

The 22nd Novartis Euroforum Annual Meeting took place in Prague on July 3–5, 2018.

The newly elected NEF delegates Davide Lauditi, Ralf Endres, Giovanna Bongo and Andrea Fedriga traveled to Prague to represent Switzerland.

Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic, welcomed us with bright sunshine and captivated the participants with its imposing scenery. The streets of this historic city are lined with buildings from the Middle Ages right through to the present day. It is a multicultural, vibrant city with over 1.2 million inhabitants and the river Vltava flowing through its center. The name "Prague" probably originates from the high fords (which in Czech are called 'praha') in the river Vltava. Prague is also known as the "golden city," for which there are various explanations; one of these is that Emperor Charles IV had the towers of Prague Castle gilded, while another is

that Rudolf II supported several alchemists in their quest for gold.

We members of the Swiss delegation were very impressed by this colorful city and certainly intend to return to Prague one day in a private capacity.

On the morning of the first day we had the opportunity to meet the delegates of the various European sites and were given an in-depth introduction to our responsibilities as NEF delegates. The afternoon was entirely devoted to a guided tour of the NGSC – Novartis Global Service Center – in Prague. The NBS departments – Finance, Human Resources, Purchasing, IT – showed us their respective departments and provided us with a good overview of the various services they provide.

The rest of the afternoon was devoted to identifying topics and preparing questions. We used the time to identify country-specific and/or cross-border questions that the NEF delegates could put to the Executive Committee.

On the third day, the NEF delegates were given the opportunity to ask their questions or arrange meetings at the end. This year's NEF was attended by a large number of Executive Committee members, which gives a clear indication of the importance attached to this body.

The Novartis Euroforum takes place once a year. We can't wait to find out where it will take us next year and what interesting discussions we will have.

# Sustainable investment practices of the Novartis Pension Fund

**The financial stability of companies is increasingly being influenced by their sustainable approach to environmental and social issues. The Novartis Pension Fund will consult sustainability ratings to not undertake investments in companies whose sustainability profiles indicate serious shortcomings. In addition, investments are deliberately made in “green bonds” that help to finance the development of ecologically sustainable projects.**



**Henry Wiersing**  
Senior Portfolio Manager  
Novartis Group Treasury

Corporate behavior in relation to environmental, social and governance risks plays an increasingly important role in the selection of financial investments for the Novartis Pension Fund. A key reason for this are the growing financial risks for companies that still maintain unsustainable production practices or whose products contribute to an unsustainable lifestyle. One recent example of this is the violation of exhaust emissions regulations in the automotive industry which has resulted in costly recalls and can lead to heavy fines.

The extent to which companies and entire industries are endangered by environmental risks and how they limit and control these risks is assessed by specialized consulting firms. This risk rating is based on a simple warning scheme, the so-called sustainability ratings. The ratings issued by MSCI ESG Research, which range from the highest AAA rating across seven grades to the lowest CCC rating (similar to a credit risk rating) are of particular importance for the Novartis Pension Fund. They are the result of a comprehensive analysis of environmental risks, but also of related aspects such as the company's stance on societal interests and the quality of its corporate governance.

Companies with low sustainability ratings in sectors that are particularly problematic from an ecological standpoint (i.e. the energy sector, utilities, raw material extraction and industrial production) are, in principle, avoided by the Novartis Pension Fund. In the event of a relevant downgrade of an existing investment, the respective equity or bond would need to be sold.

A second element of this sustainable investment policy is active financial participation in corporate activities aimed at reducing all kinds of environmental pollution (i.e. reducing energy consumption, water consumption, waste volumes, etc.). To this end, a concerted effort is made to invest in so-called 'green bonds' that are used to finance the ecological restructuring of

our economy. These bonds carry a specific project commitment that is documented transparently for the investor. Green bonds were launched by public lenders in 2007; in the meantime, companies and banks are also making increasing use of this type of borrowing.

A further look into environmental concerns is made by reviewing the climate compatibility of directly-held shares and bonds by subjecting these to extensive tests (such as the 2017 Climate Compatibility Pilot Test conducted by the Federal Office for the Environment). Such tests determine whether the companies listed on the investment portfolio are complying with the “climate budget,” and have the ultimate goal of seeing the Paris Climate Agreement being implemented to limit the global temperature increase to 2° Celsius.

Sustainable management includes social issues as well as environmental issues. The pension fund will not invest in companies that manufacture or trade in defense equipment as their core business. It also shuns the tobacco industry whose business model is diametrically opposed to Novartis' focus on health. Similarly, companies that repeatedly commit violations of human rights or maintain extensive business relationships with totalitarian regimes are also disqualified.

Sustainability aspects will continue to gain importance for the investments made by the Novartis Pension Fund. The specialist investment team in the Novartis Finance Department keeps in close contact with the Board of Trustees and the management of the pension fund to continually develop the sustainability profile of its investments. Signing up to the United Nations' Principles for Responsible Investment (UN PRI), which is due to take place this year, will allow this investment policy focus to also be communicated clearly to the outside world. In our view, a solid investment return that will ensure the solvency of the pension fund can only be achieved in the long term if the financial risks stemming from unsustainable activities are consistently limited.

# What makes us happy?

## Well-being – a subject for our times

**Mara Lascar**  
Guest author

### Well-being – hard to define

**W**ell-being is an all-embracing biological-psychological social construct that is not easy to define or measure. In 2011, Martin Seligman published his book "Flourish," in which he presented his new and dynamic concept of well-being and broadened the theory that characterizes well-being purely as "happiness." In his opinion, well-being is multidimensional and should have both hedonistic and eudaimonic aspects.

Gallup researchers have carried out a comprehensive global survey in more than 150 countries and analyzed the well-being of over 98% of the world's population. They divided well-being into 5 areas: physical, emotional, social, financial and professional. While 66% of people felt happy in at least one area, only 7% felt happy in all five areas. If we have problems in just one area – as most of us do – that is enough to cause noticeable unease in our general well-being such that it affects our daily life. Only when we feel happy and satisfied in all 5 areas can we develop our full potential.

### A very current issue, not least in the workplace

More and more companies are becoming aware of their responsibilities and beginning to understand that they need to make a contribution to people's health and well-being – both physical and mental – in the workplace. Every organization

needs a clearly discernible health culture, in order to cut costs, increase productivity and create a working environment in which its employees can flourish. Corporate well-being programs are no longer a trendy fad but a "must-have" if companies are to remain up-to-date and competitive. They are a major and essential part of corporate health management (CHM).

### Why am I in the corporate well-being business?

I have been interested in the subject of well-being for years. After working for various international companies for 15 years, I have seen for myself what the research studies prove: happy and healthy people are more productive, more committed and more successful. Very many employees never smile at work. Employees who are not happy or healthy have difficulty concentrating and accomplishing a task, so it makes sense for their employer to help them. That is what motivated me to set up in business in this field. I want to make a difference and do something for the good of other people.

### A different approach to CHM!

What I would like is for companies to approach the complex issue of "Corporate Health Management" in an innovative, modern and professional way – and for us all to regard health as a "state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely as the absence of disease or infirmity." That is how the WHO defined health in 1946. Well-being programs should be proactive and help employees to achieve their full potential on all levels: physical, mental, social, intellectual and spiritual.

### What do employees want?

What I personally find really interesting is that employers do not necessarily know what their employees actually want. In Switzerland, a good pay packet comes only 6th on the list of priorities for employees when they are looking for a new job. Employees also show commitment by being emotionally involved, having an emotional bond with a brand or with the corporate identity of the company. For a committed employee, the company becomes part of them, an important part of their life. Two surveys by AON and Gallup identified some of the criteria for making employees feel involved. Above all, employees want more recognition for their work, more time for their hobbies (even in the workplace), opportunities for personal development, team spirit within the company or their department, breaks and time out from work, time for their family and friends, the chance to learn something new and – very importantly – to have the feeling that their managers really care about their well-being.

We, as specialists in well-being, carry out frequent surveys and are constantly expanding our portfolio of services in the light of current trends and the requests and inquiries that we



Mara Lascar is a trained journalist and businesswoman. She has worked as a presenter and newsreader in her home city of Bucharest. She has over 15 years of international experience in sales, marketing and key account management. She has worked for various international companies in the fields of finance, medicine/pharma and advertising and knows all about the challenges of the corporate working environment from her own experience. She is now a certified specialist in corporate well-being and the Managing Director and founder of Joy Corporate GmbH in Basel.

Joy Corporate GmbH | Thiersteinallee 17 | 4053 Basel  
+41 (0)765604155 | info(at)joycorporate.ch

receive. It is very interesting to note that the same requests crop up again and again.

### **Downtime is essential**

However much fun your work is, you still need breaks from it. Occasionally being able to think about something else is important for recharging your batteries and clearing your head. Simply not thinking about work for a few minutes or even an hour is very beneficial. No one can concentrate on one thing for 8 hours. If people work for a long time without a break, the quality of their work suffers. But what should we be doing during these microbreaks? What is the best way of boosting concentration and well-being?

### **Hobbies in the workplace?**

We have probably all found ourselves doodling flowers or stick people on a piece of paper while we are on the phone or attending a talk. That is not necessarily a sign of boredom but, rather, it stimulates our memory and increases our concentration. The doodling boosts the blood supply to the brain. The blood flow – and therefore the supply of nutrients – is increased particularly to those parts of the brain that are important for absorbing and processing information. So doodling improves attentiveness and concentration.

Companies organize any number of courses on communication, healthy eating, emotional intelligence and conflict management. We offer those, too. But what improves well-being and productivity the most are courses about hobbies.

Numerous studies have shown that actively engaging in creativity strengthens the functional connections in the brain's default mode network. That increases psychological resilience and a subjective sense of well-being.

We offer courses in dancing, painting, origami and playing classical music, and seminars on art history – in the workplace.

Dance, for example, is one of the best preventive ways of maintaining mobility, coordination, spatial orientation and memory. Dancing encourages social communication and, above all, is a lot of fun. It rescues people from depression and boosts self-awareness. Dance is also a very effective exercise for the mind, because moving around boosts cognitive skills, as well: participants have to remember the sequences of steps and the way the dance progresses. The physical exercise makes people more creative and able to formulate and express their feelings, values, ideas and impulses and show appreciation for nature, music and poetry.

Music is also important. Playing an instrument is an excellent antidote to the stresses of your everyday life. It boosts emotional and cognitive skills, increases coordination and concentration and simply makes us happy! The right and left sides of the brain work better together and it is a very good way of defusing aggression.

### **Art history or philosophy workshops in the workplace?**

Learning makes people happy. And happy people are physically and mentally healthier, more successful at work, more creative, popular and sociable, less prone to addictions, and they live longer. Once you have understood that learning and happiness are very closely connected in our minds, you realize that you



can keep on experiencing happiness throughout your life. In fact, you find some of the answers to the question of happiness exactly where you would least expect: by learning! And what could be better or more interesting than learning about the history of art?

Or did you know that philosophizing is beneficial for every one of us in coping with ethical and existential challenges, finding meaning and our place in the world and developing as a person?

Philosophy can help us to solve actual problems and conduct intercultural debates. To introduce people to the art of independent and productive reflection, we offer philosophy workshops for employees. We focus on fundamental issues to which, despite their importance, we often pay too little attention in our everyday lives.

### **The process of finding yourself – a time for tranquility**

Employees spend more than half their waking hours at work. Then, in addition, they use a computer for almost 2 hours a day outside of work. A third of employees also work at the weekends.

Well-being programs in the workplace help us to find ourselves. That can be an “enlightening” experience. Such activities enhance well-being and are incredibly effective tools for improving mental health – a key factor for productivity in the workplace. They also stimulate people’s appetite for hobbies.

Being happy is important for our health: long-term studies of healthy people show that happy participants have a higher life expectancy than unhappy ones. The effect on life expectancy is similar to that of smoking or not smoking (Veenhoven, 2007).

### **Physical health is just as important**

People generally want to have a life that is free from worry, and to be able to enjoy it to the full. So preventing disease might sound like a good thing, so long as you can continue to indulge in your various vices, large or small. But zest for life really begins with health, and we must never forget that.

Your lifestyle is particularly important! One focal point in the strategy is prevention: your own individual behavior affects whether these diseases occur and how they progress. The risk factors listed by the experts include tobacco consumption, excessive alcohol consumption, inadequate exercise, an unbalanced diet and being overweight.

According to the World Health Organization, the WHO, about half of all diseases can be prevented or at least delayed by leading a healthy lifestyle. To reduce the risk of succumbing to disease, we should all analyze our own lifestyle honestly and objectively and change it if necessary. That is why promoting good health at work is so important nowadays!



Active prevention in the workplace can really help, but the measures will only be well received if they are accompanied by communication campaigns.

Corporate wellness takes a lot of time! It means nothing less than changing the entire organization, and change never happens at the press of a button.

### **What makes us happy?**

Most people have probably asked themselves this at some time or other. However, to find an answer we first need to go back to the definition. When we talk about happiness, we often mean this: feeling good about ourselves, having as many positive emotions and as few negative ones as possible and being satisfied with our own lives. That corresponds to the definition of hedonistic well-being. We can experience it by treating ourselves to something, for example enjoying a nice meal. However, experiencing pleasure and fun does not necessarily mean that someone's mental health is good, and that is why researchers are increasingly also looking at eudaimonia.

Eudaimonic well-being is sometimes described as mental well-being and, according to Ryff (1989), is made up of self-acceptance, personal development, relationships with others, autonomy, coping with everyday life and having objectives in life.

Eudaimonic behavior includes, among other things, getting involved. We so often forget that helping other people makes us happy. This has even been proven scientifically. Joy Corporate is happy to support social responsibility projects, because we are convinced that helping in society makes people happier. After all, that is how every one of us can make the world a little bit better.

# Sustainable enjoyment

**Every food item has its story – one that can be fascinating, or even off-putting. The nature of the stories that relate to our food also stem from the interest that we have in our diet. The journey from being a consumer to becoming a connoisseur is not at all arduous and is even fun!**

**Michael Mildner**

Guest author and honey gourmet

In his free time, the author takes a keen interest in the cultural and nutritional history of the Alpine region generally, as well as in the diversity and quality of honey in particular.

**E**xciting foods? Do they even exist? Without a doubt! Every market and every food court will have products and dishes that hold the potential to fascinate us. And those who are familiar with the story behind these offerings will be in a position to enjoy everything with far greater insight.

Today, ever more people want to know where the food that ends up on their plate comes from. And that's a good thing. The number of recurring food scandals have made consumers very wary, or at least a good proportion of them. They wish to have access to truthful information about where, how and by whom food products have been manufactured and processed.

Apart from its production, food transportation is also an important topic. In supermarkets, row upon row of shelves are stacked with cheap offers of organic products sourced from distant continents. The degree of "organic" integrity remaining in such products – after they have been transported thousands of kilometers – is certainly a question that begs to be considered.

It is also worth reflecting on whether we truly always need to go with the latest food trend – a possibly exotic miracle granule from the other end of the world? The fruits and vegetables from the garden around the corner would make for a very interesting alternative.

Did you know, for example, that domestic linseed contains comparable amounts of omega-3 fatty acids and significantly

**Note:** Readers who are interested in further pursuing the subject of bees and honey are welcome to contact the author, Michael Mildner, at [info@swissalpinehoney.com](mailto:info@swissalpinehoney.com) or via [www.swissalpinehoney.com](http://www.swissalpinehoney.com) (English) and [www.alpuris.com](http://www.alpuris.com) (German).



more vitamin E than Mexican chia seeds? That fact that linseed is cheaper and that its transport produces far less CO<sub>2</sub> further heightens the enjoyment of this food. The levels of nutrients found in seabuckthorn, blueberries, cherries and blackberries are comparable to those in South American açai berries, to cite just a few examples.

## From consumer to responsible connoisseur

Anyone interested in delving into the history of local delicacies will find the classic Swiss book "Das kulinarische Erbe der Alpen" (The culinary heritage of the Alps) by Dominik Flammer, a source well worth reading. But beware, his enthusiasm can be contagious. And then there are the ancient, time-honored methods of getting information that are entirely unreliant on Google: simple, one-to-one chats with producers and specialist vendors, a visit to a farm or even a hike in the pristine natural splendor of the Alps.

The more we learn about the things we rely on to live, the more fascinating they become. And this information then also enables us to use such products with a far greater awareness. Unrefined sugar, for example, can in many cases be replaced with native honey which also contains proteins, enzymes, minerals, amino acids and vitamins.

This sweet gold is produced in a bee colony in one of the most fascinating, egalitarian and productive workshops ever to exist. Such workshops also package the honey in wax in a totally eco-friendly manner. This honey is ready for enjoyment without needing any further treatment – the flavor being a natural reflection of the landscape in which the bees collected their nectar or honeydew. Describing all of the other things that this unique community produces apart from honey would go far beyond the scope of this article.

## So close, so good

Bees and honey are just another example of how fascinating nature and sustainably produced foods can be. It is also quite unnecessary to eat ever more exotic foods in order to find pleasure. Wonderful foods are frequently so close that we hardly notice them.

The discovery of these obvious local delights is an exciting task. Not by way of the marketing hysteria generated by some wholesalers, but through personal discoveries and experiences. Those who dedicate themselves to this topic will get to know and understand our country and its people much better and will be well on the way to becoming informed and responsible connoisseurs – it's a path that brings many rewarding surprises and encounters with it!





GUEST CONTRIBUTION

# The art of feeling at home anywhere in the world

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## Simone Aïda Baur

Interior Designer, Blogger & Founder  
Global Inspirations Design  
Guest author

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### My bedroom and wanderlust

Even as a child, I loved to redesign my bedroom and rearrange my furniture. At the same time, it seems that I was born with a wanderlust since I loved playing with my illuminated globe for hours on end, turning it with my eyes closed, to then choose my desired destination at random and trying to imagine what it may look like there.

### Thanks to Tom Cruise

At the age of 17, I travelled to the United States for a year as an exchange student. I returned to Switzerland to finish my A-levels in languages, after which there was no going back – the travel bug had unquestionably gotten the better of me. At the tender age of 20, the movie “Cocktail”, starring Tom Cruise in the lead

role, inspired me to seek a job in Jamaica. Since I had already gained fluency in 4 languages by then, loved meeting different people and had a keen interest in other cultures, a career in the hotel industry seemed like an obvious choice for me.

### A career filled with passion and enthusiasm

After spending 2 years in Jamaica, I decided to study at the Swiss School of Management and Tourism in the canton of Valais. Already during my internship I was drawn back to the Caribbean, but this time I chose the Dominican Republic because I wanted to learn Spanish. Equipped with a tertiary qualification, 5 languages (these have now grown to 6) and work experience as a hotel receptionist, a tour guide and also in entertainment, I then went on to pursue a career in sales, working my way up to Director of Sales Europe for Rosewood Hotels & Resorts, a luxury hotel group.

Thanks to my career in the hotel industry, I also had the opportunity to visit numerous hotels, mostly in the luxury segment, and realised that I was particu-

larly interested in their design aspects. I started to photograph and analyse their design down to the smallest detail. It soon became clear to me that my heart was filled not only with a passion for distant countries and cultures, but also a passion for interior design. I realised I didn't just want to enjoy beautiful spaces, but actually create them.

### Modern contemporary with a touch of nostalgia

In the meantime I have lived in 7 countries on 3 continents and have moved 25 times. Each time, I could hardly wait to set up and design my new home, even if I only planned to stay for a short time (in most cases I ended up staying longer anyhow). Whether I was living in the Caribbean, Dubai or London, I spent every free minute of my time in furniture and interior design stores and studied the decorating style of my host country at the time. In spite of usually starting from scratch to the most part, some items and pieces of furniture got to travel the world with me. My dominating style has always been modern contemporary, but I would inte-

grate the style of my respective host country as well as my favourite pieces of furniture and memorabilia from around the world. I describe this style as “Modern contemporary with a touch of nostalgia”. Over time, I came to realise how important one’s home really is. In particular when you live in a foreign country and everything, sometimes even the language, is new, it was always extremely important for me to have my personal sanctuary. A place where I was surrounded by some familiar items and where I could simply be myself and re-charge my batteries.

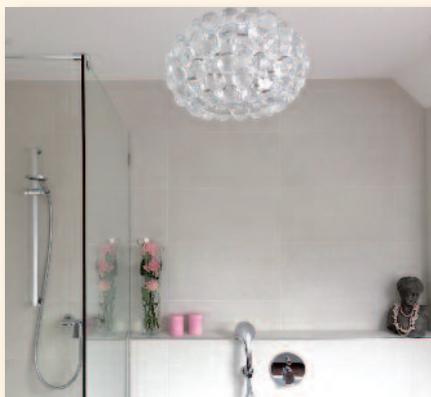
### Interior Design studies and my first project under palm trees

This insight, together with my many inspirations from around the globe, led me to pursue a second career in interior design. Living in the British Virgin Islands from 2009 – 2010 with my then partner as his trailing “spouse”, afforded me the opportunity to study interior design at the KLC School of Design in London (distance learning). During my time on the island, I was also able to design and work on my first project. A 3-bedroom villa with an office, a living room, a dining room, 3 bathrooms and a kitchen, for which I even won a design award. Needless to say, winning the award really motivated me and confirmed that I was on the right path.

### Taking the leap into self-employment

After my return to Switzerland and after working nearly 2 years at the renowned

furniture manufacturer Vitra, I decided to take the leap and founded my own company Global Inspirations Design. I have



now been working as an independent interior designer since May 2014. I mainly help expats to design their home to suit their lifestyle and needs and in a way that it tells their story, so that they can feel settled in Switzerland as quickly as possible. My many inspirations from around the globe, as well as my regular visits to design fairs in Milan, Paris and London, inspire me to develop unique design concepts for my clients and source beautiful items from all over.

### How does Global Inspirations Design work

I can help with new builds, renovations and the redesign of just one single room or an entire house. Most of my clients have (for the time being) settled in Switzerland and purchased a home. However, I also

advise many clients who are renting a home and wish to furnish it to meet their needs. Sometimes all it needs are a few simple tweaks to create an entirely new ambiance. Color accents, for example, can be introduced with decorative cushions and accessories, or simply rearranging some pieces of furniture can have a great impact on the overall look and feel of a space.

Most collaborations begin with a brief complimentary phone consultation, followed by an interior design coaching session. Before the coaching session, clients will need to complete a self-assessment form and return this to me together with photos and floor plans, to enable me to prepare accordingly. Some clients will then take the decision to implement the ideas and do the work themselves, others will avail themselves of my support right down to the last detail.

I work all over Switzerland and also internationally, but mainly look after clients in my hometown of Basel and in the Zurich region, where I now reside.

In addition, I regularly organise interior design workshops in Basel and Zurich that give participants the opportunity to learn more about colours, styles and materials and how to combine them successfully. Equipped with a mood board, they will then be able to implement their own concept.

I also write an award-winning blog about interior design and do what I enjoy most – report on the beautiful hotels that I visit.

Does your flat or house truly feel like a home you look forward coming home to, or do you have the feeling that it could be improved?

More information at [www.globalinspirationsdesign.com](http://www.globalinspirationsdesign.com) and in my newsletter.

