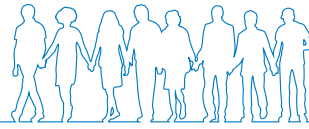


nav novartis angestellten verband
novartis employees association



Do good and talk
about it!



Save The Date: NAV General Meeting 2026

Esteemed member

We kindly ask you to already mark the date of the
28th NAV General Meeting 2026.

Tuesday, 28 April 2026

The invitation will reach you promptly in the new year.

We are looking forward to your participation!

With best wishes for a happy
and fulfilling new year.

Your NAV board





Contents

Publications details

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INSIGHTS is published twice a year

Current no.: 99/2025 | Print run: 3,000 copies

Editorial deadline INSIGHTS 1/2026

10 April 2026

Translations

Inter-Translations SA, Bern

Pictures

adobe.stock.com

Design

cdesign, Reinach

Print

Druckerei Dietrich AG, Basel

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All articles can also be found at www.nav.ch

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Editorial



Dear member

“Do good and talk about it!”

Difficult times show what a community is all about: standing up for each other, accepting responsibility and giving hope. This is exactly what happens every day – including in our company. Teams around the world are involved in programs that strengthen resilience, support people in need and provide access to good

health. Colleagues volunteer their time, expertise and passion. Our company promotes this commitment through targeted partnerships that have an impact. How much is actually achieved often remains hidden. Good deeds deserve to be publicized because they inspire, create trust and encourage imitation. Despite a world with a lot of negativity, we can still act positively. Talking about it is not self-praise but an act of hope that strengthens balance and counteracts the negative.

In this edition, DR LUTZ HEGEMANN recounts how our tradition in the field of Global Health has become a commitment – from pioneering achievements through to today’s initiatives against neglected diseases.

ISABEL DALLI talks about our partnership with the Swiss Red Cross and how philanthropy changes lives.

ESTELLE ROTH shows how volunteering not only strengthens society, but also people and organizations, and why 2026 will bring new momentum as the UN Year of Volunteers.

NADINE SCHECKER talks about trust and humanity in everyday working life.

CORINNA GRÜNIG introduces the ALU Foundation (unemployment benefits) which provides support in times of financial need.

HANS-JÖRG RUDIN, a former Novartis employee, has a lot to say about “saving food” with compassion. Since the spring of 2018, he has been in charge of the TISCHLEIN DECK DICH drop-off point at the Offene Kirche Elisabethen in Basel.

Finally, ALAIN GRIMM takes us on a journey through Basel’s arts patronage that weaves a path between restraint and impact.

Do good and talk about it. Because good things thrive when they are shared, and bear fruit when they are made visible.

We hope you will enjoy reading this issue and find it inspiring, and wish you a healthy and optimistic new year.

Sincerely,
Andrea Fedriga-Haegeli & Davide Lauditi
Co-Chairs NAV

Tradition and commitment in Global Health

It has been around 80 years since our predecessor companies took their first steps in the field of global health. Today, we can not only boast of having numerous successful health programs, but also one of the industry's largest development pipelines in the field of neglected diseases which can help to completely eliminate diseases such as malaria.



Lutz Hegemann

President Global Health and Swiss Country Affairs

When Rudolf Geigy set off for Tanzania in 1957 to research diseases such as malaria, he not only laid the foundations for the first field laboratory of the Swiss Tropical Institute which he had founded around 15 years earlier. He also created the basis for a medical training center that still trains around 100 urgently needed local health professionals every year.

The enormous personal and scientific commitment of Geigy, who was also a member of the Board of Directors of J. R. Geigy and Ciba-Geigy from 1923 to 1973, exerted an early influence on company development in matters of social responsibility. Shortly after the Second World War, the management had already been looking at how the company could strengthen local and international communities – including in the field of healthcare.

Thanks to Geigy's influence, the Geigy Foundation was established in the 1930s. This was followed in the 1960s by the establishment of the Basel Foundation for the Promotion of Developing Countries which formulated its own Africa policy in the 1970s and later also extended this to other developing regions. In 1996, after Novartis was founded, these activities were initially transferred to the Novartis Foundation for Sustainable Development and later increasingly advanced by the company itself.

From these beginnings, which were still strongly rooted in a philanthropic mindset, Novartis has continuously expanded its activities over the past three decades, gradually moving away from philanthropy – primarily through strong partnership networks – and charted its own course. The malaria initiative, launched in 2001, was a major step forward in this respect.

At that time, more than one million people died of malaria every year. We knew that charitable donations alone would hardly make a difference in alleviating the suffering of people in need. Unlike previous programs aimed at bolstering health systems and widening access to medicines, Novartis therefore made the malaria



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drug Artemether-Lumefantrine available at cost price for the most part.

In addition to this sustainable pricing model, the initiative also relied on the potency of partnerships with public health experts such as the World Health Organization (WHO). Despite initial doubts, the initiative was a tremendous success. Since 2001, we have been able to provide over one billion treatments, including around 500 million specifically for young children. Our contribution has played a significant role in reducing deaths.

The positive development of our commitment to combating malaria is still having an impact on our work to-

day. When it comes to providing medicines for malaria and other neglected diseases on an ongoing basis, we can measure our objectives against the benefits we have been able to create for the public health system, while striving to break even financially in order to fund our projects sustainably and reach as many people as possible.

What's more, we have structured our business in Sub-Saharan Africa in such a way that we assess our decisions by way of long-term effects, and not short-term profit. In addition – and this is the crucial point for me personally – we continue to work on innovative access models in order to reach as many patients as possible with our medicines. In my view, ensuring access to innovative drugs requires the very same creativity that their research and development necessitates.



These strategic pillars will help us to further strengthen our efforts in the field of Global Health – especially for our research pipeline, in which we have invested almost 500 million US dollars over the last five years.

However, we continue to remain active in other areas of therapy. For example, we are working on several projects in Africa to alleviate the suffering of patients with sickle cell disease. We are also developing new therapies for Chagas disease, leishmaniasis and dengue fever which are widespread in many developing countries; these are now undergoing testing in clinical trials.

Although we continue to drive innovation and develop new ideas for improving access to medicines, traditional donation schemes – such as those we have been involved in for cancer and leprosy for many years – remain important.

In collaboration with the World Health Organization, we have successfully provided leprosy patients with medication since the turn of the millennium, donated as part of a multi-drug therapy program. We are also making progress in the field of cancer. We have been working closely with the Max Foundation since 2000 and have been able to provide over 100,000 people with access to vital cancer drugs.

Collectively, these efforts have helped us to climb to first place in the important Access to Medicine Index. This result is the outcome of years of work. We are immensely proud of this, but it also spurs us on to continue our research efforts and develop innovative access projects. For us, the long tradition of our social commitment not only allows us to look back with satisfaction, but also defines an obligation to continue along this path.

This remains more important today than ever before. Since the USA and other industrialized countries have withdrawn from numerous international aid projects, the continuation of many programs is no longer guaranteed. Experts already fear that the withdrawal of the USA will lead to millions of deaths – an untenable situation. We will do everything in our power not to jeopardize the progress that has been made to date. That would be a tragedy. The approach of ongoing financing, which we have been pursuing for a long time, is therefore of particular importance.

Ifakara, for example, shows what Novartis and its predecessor companies have achieved and what is at stake. Thanks to the malaria initiative and other proactive programs, there has been a significant decline in this disease in the

region over the last ten years. Ifakara actually means “place of death”, as the region used to be heavily infested with *Anopheles* mosquitoes. Today, thanks to advances in malaria control, it is hardly possible to conduct clinical trials in this region, since the disease has now become so rare.

This is not only a tremendous achievement but also a motivational case in point – and a reminder that we all need a long-term perspective if we really wish to bring about lasting change on the ground and help as many patients as possible. Given our achievements to date and the continued support of our entire management team, I am confident that, together with our partners, we shall be able to make further progress and contribute to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Novartis can not only look back on its long tradition in Global Health. As a healthcare company, we also feel obliged to continue this tradition. In Global Health, we have created an organizational unit that has the necessary resources, the knowledge and a purposeful strategy to bring about enduring positive change and, even in the most remote parts of the world, so help millions of patients to live better and longer lives.



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Novartis and the Swiss Red Cross – Partnership supporting Health and Resilience

Novartis is committed to donations and philanthropy with the aim of bringing about lasting change.



Isabel Dalli
Global Head Philanthropy and Donations

As a globally active company headquartered in Switzerland, we take responsibility – not only through innovative therapies but also through targeted partnerships that strengthen health and resilience worldwide.

For this edition of the NAV's Insights magazine, which has the theme "Do good and talk about it," I have decided

to highlight one of these partnerships in particular: our cooperation with the Swiss Red Cross (SRC). Both organizations are an excellent fit – we are both based in Switzerland, are active worldwide and, as participants in the healthcare sector, share the values of supporting people in need and promoting health. It is precisely this shared identity and international focus that makes the partnership so special and effective. As the Global Head of Philanthropy and Donations at Novartis, it is a personal priority for me to work with committed colleagues and strong partners to help ensure that health, resilience and humanity don't simply remain as buzzwords, but can actually be experienced in practice.

Since 2013, Novartis and the SRC have been linked by a partnership that encompasses much more than traditional donations. With a recently extended strategic cooperation agreement covering the years 2025 to 2027, both organizations are setting an example for sustainable commitment and social responsibility. Our partnership



is based on shared values: the aims of promoting health, strengthening resilience and supporting people in need. Projects are selected and then implemented according to need and in close coordination with the SRC's experts. In taking this approach, we are ensuring that our contributions go where they will have the greatest impact.

Strategic partnership with clear objectives

Our collaboration with the SRC is designed to deliver long-term impact and open, continuous exchanges. The focus is on the shared objective of strengthening health and resilience – and maximizing the impact of our projects through regular discussions and joint communication.



Project portfolio: Global Health and Resilience

1. “chili” – Violence prevention in Swiss schools

The “chili” program promotes nonviolent conflict resolution and strengthens the social skills of children and young people. In 2024, around 6,400 pupils and 1,000 teachers took part in workshops and training courses. The project was even exported to Ethiopia, where Red Cross trainers trained local colleagues in conflict prevention approaches. The innovative Virtual Reality (VR) initiative from Ticino also complements the chili program and brings cyberbullying and conflicts to life for students. Novartis supports the chili program and, via this avenue, the company makes an important contribution to promoting the mental health and social development of young people.





2. “Resiliencia Solubre” – Disaster prevention and health promotion in Honduras

In the south of Honduras, over 8,000 people in twelve communities are reaping the benefits of building up their resilience to natural disasters and health risks. In 2024, local emergency committees and health clubs were strengthened, sustainable agriculture was promoted and health funds were set up to support families in need. Cooperation with local authorities and the promotion of sustainable structures was paramount and foremost in this project. Novartis is helping to ensure that these measures will have a long-term impact and help make communities much more resilient.

3. Community resilience in Togo

The resilience project in Togo directly reaches around 90,000 people in 125 village communities. The focus here has been on promoting health-conscious behavior, access to clean water and sanitary infrastructures and strengthening disaster preparedness and prevention. Mothers’ clubs, water committees and community-based emergency committees are in the process of being set up and trained. The project is being implemented by the Togolese Red Cross in close cooperation with local authorities and the SRC.

4. Primary healthcare camps in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh

Here, the SRC, together with the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, provides mobile health services for particularly vulnerable groups in one of the world’s largest refugee camps – home to around

1.1 million refugees. Four primary healthcare centers care for around 220,000 patients every year – more than half of whom are women and children. In addition to providing basic care, the centers also offer specialized services such as ophthalmology and nutrition. After a fire in March 2023, the provision of services was adapted flexibly and in line with demand. Novartis supports the continuation and further development of healthcare services.





Shared commitment for sustainable impact

The partnership between Novartis and the SRC represents much more than simply financial support: it thrives on mutual trust, shared values and the objective of achieving an enduring impact. Transparent communication and regular dialogue are just as important as the specific promotion of projects that provide concrete help to people in need. Novartis has been a partner of the SRC for disaster relief for many years: as from this year, we will be supporting the SRC's disaster fund every year so that help can be provided quickly and without any red tape in the event of a disaster. In addition, Novartis employees also have the opportunity to become involved in projects directly through so-called corporate volunteering.

Trust, responsibility and a future

All collaboration is clearly regulated by contract and is based on transparency, confidentiality and a commitment to social responsibility. A partnership based on trust has come to fruition over the years; this partnership is being developed continuously and is regarded as a model for strategic philanthropy.

Novartis and the Swiss Red Cross: working together for a better future – locally and globally.

Doing good and doing well. And do (not) talk about it

Community Partnership is now a daily occurrence. Some employees believe we have taken something away from them. Previously, we focused on one day, “Partnership Day,” but now it is a daily commitment, and employees decide for themselves when, where, and how they want to get involved.



Estelle Roth
**Global Head Giving,
Matching & Volunteering**

As Global Head Giving, Matching & Volunteering (GMV) at Novartis, Estelle Roth has been at the forefront of transforming how employees connect with communities and contribute to societal impact. With a background rooted in purpose-driven leadership and a passion for inclusive growth, Estelle has led the evolution of the GMV program since 2015 into a globally integrated accelerator that empowers employees to act on their values – every day.

In this interview, Estelle shares insights into the

GMV program’s strategic direction, the neuroscience of doing good, the evolution toward long-term, responsible and sustainable partnerships and program offerings around giving and volunteering, with an outlook into 2026, the United Nations International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development.

TO THE INTERVIEW

Estelle, can you give us an overview of the Giving, Matching & Volunteering program and its evolution?

ESTELLE ROTH: Absolutely. The GMV program empowers our people to contribute meaningfully to society’s biggest challenges through three pillars: employee giving with corporate matching, community initiatives, and skills-based volunteering. It’s a year-round, needs-driven model aligned with our social impact and sustainability goals.

We’ve evolved beyond traditional philanthropy to a more inclusive, responsive approach – whether through financial donations, in-kind support, or volunteering skills across functions. Our platform connects employees with vetted nonprofit partners globally, making engagement seamless and secure.

We’ve also introduced a streamlined partner toolkit that lets employees propose and onboard new nonprofits using a risk-based evaluation.





This ensures partnerships are not only compliant but also impactful – treating nonprofit collaboration with the same rigor as strategic business alliances.

What's the business value of a program like this?

At Novartis, we see GMV not just as a societal benefit but as a driver of employee well-being and growth. Many programs still focus on metrics like counting hours or number of donations, but we aim for transformation: experiences that build purpose, empathy, and resilience.

100% of our skills-based volunteers report their work as meaningful and fulfilling. These projects, like mentoring refugees or designing an analytics tool to digitize medical leprosy records, develop critical skills such as agility, inclusive leadership, and navigating complexity. Volunteering is often the most overlooked skill on a resume.

Neuroscience shows that volunteering benefits the brain by offering novel, challenging experiences that satisfy core psychological needs. It creates a positive feedback loop of connection and meaning. That's why we design experiences to be not just generous. This is the central point of doing good: it does good for the individual, for the nonprofit partner, for society and for us as an organization. Transformative interventions call for a shift in perception, serving the business and embedding business imperatives into the program strategy.



There has been a critical conversation around the phrase “Giving Back.” What is your take?

I appreciate the critique. I share the critique. “Giving Back” implies that something was taken, which can unintentionally reinforce power imbalances. This also applies to a North-South model or voluntourism. Social change is not a project one group carries out for another. It's a shared journey. Experts in our space are shifting this language and mindset. We talk about “partnering with purpose,” not charity. It's about co-creating solutions with communities. That's why our GMV program is partner-led and needs-driven. We don't decide what's best for others. We listen, learn, and act together.

The GMV program and your team have been recognized externally about such approach, correct?

Honestly, awards make me a bit uncomfortable. I'm not someone who seeks the spotlight. I see them more as motivation and a responsibility to keep going. In 2023, our team was nominated by a United Nations agency and received the Corporate Social Impact Team of the Year Award from ACCP, representing a community of 250 member corporations and over 2000 professionals across 20 industries, recognizing our holistic response to the global refugee crisis. It wasn't just about donations. We committed to hiring, upskilling displaced talents, mentoring

When we come
together as one
we multiply our impact.

go/give

LGBTQI refugees, supporting refugee entrepreneurs, helped refugee women integrate across eleven countries and even built a housing tool for displaced colleagues. It was the recognition of a large cross-functional Novartis team effort that demonstrated the power of purpose-driven collaboration.

Last year, I was honored with the BUFFY Award for bold leadership, innovation and courage, dedicated to my ten years of social impact work. It was surreal. I was jet-lagged, listening to the speech, thinking “I want to be like that person,” until I realized they were highlighting our program impact metrics. These awards aren’t just accolades; they reflect the dedication and compassion of everyone involved. The real reward is seeing our people step up and make a difference. That’s my biggest reward and why I come to work every day.

You’ve mentioned that “Community Partnership is now every day.” What does that mean in practice?

This is one of the most exciting shifts we’ve made. And one of the difficult ones as some may think we have taken something away. Community partnership used to be centered around

a single day of service. Now, it’s a continuous commitment, every day. Our employees decide when, where, and how they engage – whether it’s mentoring youth, supporting minority groups, or contributing to local health initiatives.

This does not happen one-off. This does not happen on a single day. If we are true to be partner-led and needs-driven, showing up and showing off just once a year is far away from honoring long-term, responsible partnership and commitment to society. Our people can now act locally, regularly, while being part of a global movement. It’s about embedding purpose into everyday work.

One of the prominent initiatives for our employees in Switzerland comes from the Swiss Red Cross. Can you tell us more about it?

We work with many nonprofit partners in Switzerland. Beyond donations, we’ve built a more holistic collaboration, also with the Swiss Red Cross. For eight years, volunteers have organized 2x Christmas, collecting gifts for vulnerable families, even in affluent areas like Switzerland. Others support logistics of this initiative at SRC headquarters. We also host Mapathons, where volunteers trace satellite imagery to map underserved regions (e.g., roads, hospitals, buildings), critical for disaster response and immediate humanitarian aid on the ground. Google maps has only covered portions of the globe. So



a two-hour mapping session, a small act, can save lives. These efforts go beyond giving; they're about solidarity, dignity, and strengthening our partners' missions. A reminder that volunteering isn't just a corporate initiative. It is a deeply human one.

Do you happen to be your own program client, walking the talk?

It started early – at age ten, I volunteered through my school to teach German and Math to children from displaced families. That experience stayed with me. Since 2017, I've served as Vice-President of BASAID, a Swiss nonprofit founded by Novartis employees after the Ciba-Geigy and Sandoz merger. It's 100% volunteer-led, and we focus on health, education, water and sanitation, as well as agriculture in underserved communities. Part of Novartis history, we'll also celebrate 30 years in 2026. And yes, we're always looking for volunteers.

Speaking about 2026 – what are you up to?

We're expanding giving opportunities by increasing matching ratios, raising individual contribution caps, and integrating the Spark recognition program – allowing employees to now converting points into donations in times of crisis or during catastrophes. We're also spotlighting flagship initiatives like the refugee program, led by a team member who was once a refugee herself.

At the same time, we're deepening partnerships with civil society organizations, aligning efforts with our therapeutic areas and local needs. Stay tuned – it's an exciting (r)evolution.

What else does 2026 hold for GMV, especially with the United Nations declaring it the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development?

2026 is a milestone year. The UN's designation of the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development (IVY 2026) is a global call to recognize volunteers as change-makers who accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals. For us, it's a chance to amplify our impact – scaling cross-border, virtual,



and skills-based pro bono opportunities making sure we determine the most impactful activities and focus on those that create sustainable change to ensure a better future.

We're seeing incredible engagement. Many opportunities fill within 24 hours. But we need more. We're calling on employees to help us source new projects and pathways for learning and growth. A great GMV platform is only as strong as the opportunities it offers. At the same time, we know that nonprofit organizations are at resources shortages more than ever and need support. We open these sourcing dialogues in a trusted, respectful, and active listening form.

Our vision goes beyond participation. We aim to deepen engagement that fosters empathy, resilience, and servant leadership, building a culture where every employee feels empowered to make a difference, and every action contributes to a more inclusive future for the generations to come.

Closing thoughts

Under Estelle Roth's leadership, the GMV program has become more than a corporate initiative – it's a movement. By embedding purpose into everyday actions and fostering global-local connections, Novartis is redefining what it means to engage with society. As we approach 2026, the momentum is clear: employee generosity and volunteering on company time is not just a way to feel good – it's a way where we raise standards what companies invest in society, connecting our people's purpose with the company's purpose, not just one day. Every day.

More than just a number

What has always mattered most to me are the people.



Nadine Schecker
NAV member

I joined the NAV ten years ago, not because I needed it in that moment, but because I sensed I might one day.

I was in a management role, where the assumption often is that you don't need employee representation. But over time, I came to see just how valuable it is to have a neutral, trusted sparring partner by your side – someone who sees

you as a person, not a case number.

Throughout my career in global health, I've worked across regions and sectors to design programs rooted in equity, access, and collaboration. What has always mattered most to me are the people – the relationships that carry us through complexity, the trust built over time.

And yet, even in a company with a strong purpose like Novartis, there are moments when you're not engaging with people, but with the system. Processes take over. Distance sets in. You become a ticket in a queue handled somewhere far away, without the familiarity or continuity you once knew.

It's in those moments that the NAV makes a real difference.

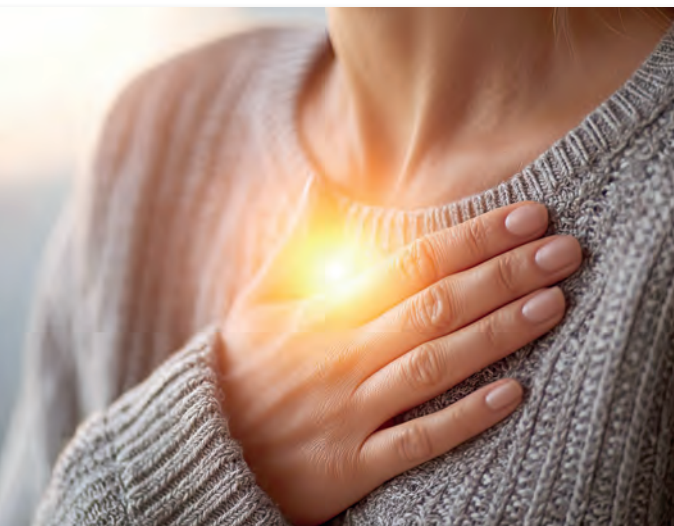
Whether I was navigating sensitive leadership questions or – more recently – facing the emotions and formalities of leaving the company after 25 years, the NAV offered something I deeply valued: stability, clarity, and care.

The same person stood by my side throughout the exit process, helping ensure the transition was handled fairly and with dignity. That consistency meant everything.

The NAV doesn't try to replace the company. It complements it. It brings perspective, humanity, and dialogue into situations where those can feel out of reach.

And it reminds us that no matter our function or title, we all deserve to be treated with respect.

Looking back, joining the NAV was one of the best professional decisions I made. And I'm grateful – for the guidance, the integrity, and most of all, the people behind it.





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☐ CHF 99.– Retirees Plus including labor law and social security legal protection*

☐ CHF 59.– Retirees including labor law and social security legal protection

☐ CHF 39.– Retirees without labor law and social security legal protection

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Help with financial hardship

The ALU Foundation – support, when it matters most.



Corinna Grünig
Head Employee Relations Switzerland

What is the ALU Foundation?

The Unemployment Benefits Foundation of the Basel Chemical Industry Unemployment Insurance Fund – in short: ALU Foundation – was founded in 1978. It was formed as a joint initiative by Ciba-Geigy, Sandoz and Chemische Fabrik Schweizerhall. Today, it is supported by Novartis AG, BASF AG and Brenntag Schweizerhall AG. Its objective: to support people who are experiencing significant financial hardship due to their professional situation – whether due to unemployment, retraining or other stressful circumstances.

Who can receive support?

The foundation is aimed at permanent employees as well as former and retired employees of its participating companies. People who have moved to other parts of the company as part of a restructuring process are also eligible to apply – for a limited time – for support in financial emergencies. Any assistance is provided on a discretionary basis and is guided by the principles of subsidiarity, uniqueness and sustainability. This means: the foundation will help where other means are ineffective, and it does so with the aim of facilitating long-term improvement.

About the author

Corinna Grünig has been Head of Social Partnership at Novartis since 2016 and is President of the ALU Foundation (the Unemployment Benefits Foundation of the Basel Chemical Industry Unemployment Insurance Fund). She also serves as a judge on the Basel-Stadt Industrial Tribunal and sits on the Equal Representation Committee for Collective Employment Contracts (GAV) covering the service region of Basel. She is an attorney-at-law and a mother of two adult children.

In which cases will the foundation help?

The ALU Foundation provides support in the event of imminent or existing full or partial unemployment. Retraining and professional development that opens up new career prospects can also be funded if no other support is available. The foundation will also help permanent employees

of foundation companies in cases of economic hardship – such as unexpected burdens or existential challenges. Each application is examined individually, with due respect for the personal circumstances of the applicant.



How does an application work?

In many cases, contact is made via the HR department, or the social services or employee associations of member companies. An application should be made in writing and contain a justification, a description of the financial situation as well as any supporting documents. The foundation committee examines all applications carefully and usually makes a decision using the so-called round robin resolution process: efficiently, discreetly and with sound judgement.

More than just individual assistance

The ALU Foundation is not only committed to helping individuals. Specifically, it also supports projects that prevent unemployment and help reintegrate people into the labor market. In this way, it makes an important contribution to social stability and shows that help can also be effective when provided structurally.

Who are the people behind the foundation?

The organization of the foundation is clearly structured: the Governing Board, which is made up of equal numbers of employer and employee representatives, meets twice a year. A smaller committee is responsible for day-to-day business, supported by the foundation’s secretarial office. This lean structure ensures that help arrives quickly and specifically where it is most needed.

A sign of lived responsibility

The ALU Foundation is an example of how companies can take responsibility beyond the employment relationship. It offers not only financial support, but also prospects and hope. At a time when many people are confronted with uncertainty, it remains a dependable partner – discreet, capable and compassionate.



A brief overview of the history of TISCHLEIN DECK DICH

The focus of the 2/2025 edition of INSIGHTS is: “Do good and talk about it!” I’d like to introduce you to the TISCHLEIN DECK DICH organization, which is certainly doing some good things.



Hans-Jörg Rudin
Head of distribution at the Offene Kirche Elisabethen

Most people are familiar with the fairy tale by the brothers Grimm, “Tischlein deck dich, Goldesel und Knüppel aus dem Sack” (The Wishing-Table, the Gold-Ass, and the Cudgel in the Sack). However, probably less well-known is the organization called TISCHLEIN DECK DICH – Switzerland’s first food-saving charity.

A quick overview of the history of TISCHLEIN DECK DICH

The organization was founded in 1999 with the aim of distributing surplus food to people affected by poverty instead of it being destroyed. Back then, the term “food waste” was completely unknown. In 2002, the organization evolved into the TISCHLEIN DECK DICH charity, and to this day it is funded entirely by donations and is non-denominational and politically neutral.

Every day for over 25 years now, the TISCHLEIN DECK DICH organization has been rescuing food from going to waste and distributing it to people affected by poverty. TISCHLEIN DECK DICH’s food-saving operation is supported

by many product donors (farmers, retailers and the food processing industry). In our 25th anniversary year, 2024, we were able to give away 8,530 tons of saved food, at over 160 distribution points in Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein.

TISCHLEIN DECK DICH’s head office is in Winterthur. In addition to 33 full-time staff, over 100 people work for TISCHLEIN DECK DICH on work integration schemes or as part of their civilian service, along with around 4,500 volunteers. The latter, of course, work for free, and some of them have been doing so for many years. The organization currently operates seven logistics platforms in Switzerland (Winterthur, Baar, Cadenazzo, Chur, Grenchen, Penthalaz and Staufien). The food that has been donated is collected



at these logistics centers, sorted, stored, prepared and then delivered by refrigerated truck to regional distribution points.

TISCHLEIN DECK DICH in Basel

TISCHLEIN DECK DICH runs four distribution points in the city of Basel, at the following churches: the Offene Kirche Elisabethen (OKE), Matthäuskirche, Zwinglihaus and Thomaskirche. The distribution point at the OKE was the first in Basel to open, on November 12, 2004.

When I retired after working at Novartis for over 40 years, I asked myself: “What now?”

I had various hobbies (photography, looking after my collection of succulents, hiking and keeping fit), but there was still something missing. I wanted to do something for the community. Should I spend more time helping to maintain nature conservation areas, as I had done in the past? Then a colleague invited me to sign up for TISCHLEIN DECK DICH. After going along for a few taster sessions, I realized that it suited me and made perfect sense! It was clear to me that, by working for this organization, I could kill two birds with one stone: save food from being destroyed and also help people who were struggling or going through a hard time. I have always enjoyed working in and with teams, and, in addition, I came into close contact with customers when I worked for many years as a Senior Auditor in quality control – so I was used to that. I’ve been a member of the organization since January 2016, and in charge of the OKE distribution point since spring 2017.

For over 20 years now, the doors of the OKE have been open every Tuesday morning so that food can be distributed by our team of, currently, 18 volunteers to families and individuals affected by poverty. In our anniversary year of 2024 we operated on 52 (!) days to serve a total of around 3,500 customers, thereby providing rescued and donated food to nearly 12,000 people.



A typical Tuesday morning at the OKE

After paying an early-morning visit to Jetzer's bakery to collect yesterday's bread, I open up the church just before 7 a.m. and the team and I start to prepare the food for distribution. Sometimes we also collect bread and baked goods from Sutter Begg's (the Güterstrasse branch) and from the Mock bakery on the Schneidergasse. On good days (for us), we are given 40–55 kg of top-quality baked products from the day before. As soon as the TISCHLEIN DECK DICH refrigerated truck arrives with the food that has been assigned to us, the trolleys have to be wheeled into the church and unloaded. In order to maintain the cold chain, the chilled and frozen produce has to be checked first ("use by" dates), then counted, divided into portions and put in cool boxes. At the same time, salad, vegetables and fruit are being laid out on other tables. They are prepared and sorted, and the drinks and dried goods are also checked (condition and date).

What kinds of food are we given?

The logistics platform which supplies us, Staufen, delivers about 630 kg of food (the maximum permitted load!). Staufen was chosen deliberately because the Coop has a distribution center in nearby Schafisheim. Every day, between six and ten tons of fruit and vegetables are collected from this distribution cen-



ter and taken to Staufen for sorting and preparing. Then, whenever possible, they are delivered to the regional distribution points on the same day. The platform opened in 2023 and has plenty of storage space and refrigeration facilities. In Staufen it's again mainly volunteers who work in two shifts daily to process the enormous quantities of food.

Stefan, Sigrid and Jakob Fuchs run a market stall on the Market Square (selling fruit from the Tüllinger region, Weil-Haltingen). On Tuesdays, the Fuchs family

bring us apples and other seasonal fruit (100–200 kg). We are also given fresh produce by the Schweizer Tafel (Swiss Food Bank) (approx. 50 kg). Along with the baked goods that we collect, this means we have about 800 to 900 kg of food to distribute every Tuesday. Several times a year, Marti's chicken farm in Allschwil donates 300 eggs, making a welcome addition to our range.

Most of the donated food comes from warehouse stock which is nearing its "use by" date. In the case of fruit and vegetables, the reason is often that there is a surplus, or that they don't meet the visual quality criteria (too small, too big, too bendy, too straight, scabs). Fruit which is already perfectly ripe or even slightly overripe is, luckily, not disposed of, but donated to us for distribution.

Who can obtain food from us?

People affected by poverty can contact one of around 1,200 social support centers (e.g., social services offices, churches, foundations, charities) and apply for a customer card for TISCHLEIN DECK DICH. Expert advisers will check out their financial and domestic situation, and then the support center can issue a TISCHLEIN DECK DICH customer card from its quota. The card is issued online and is valid for one year. It allows the holder to obtain food (once a week) from a specified distribution point. A regional coordinating office oversees the issuing of the cards to ensure that no one can obtain two cards. The customer card also enables the holder to go to a Caritas market where everyday items can be purchased at discounted prices.

Most of our customers qualify for the card because their pensions are too small, or they are suffering from a chronic disease and/or trauma. Single parents, large families, the working poor, refugees and people whose education and language skills are too poor for them to hold down a job are also often affected by poverty.

Even while we are still busy getting ready, the first customers are arriving in the church, and they wait until we call for them. Actually they are supposed to arrive at intervals through the morning, but, for most of them, going to the OKE on a Tuesday is also a chance to meet people – it's a place for sharing experiences and getting information and support. We start handing out food at





9.30 a.m. My assistant checks every customer's card and stamps it to say they have been given food. That means the card can't be used again at a different distribution point. Receiving food costs a symbolic 1 Swiss franc. That makes people affected by poverty our customers! We serve them from each table – what they are given, and how much, depends on the size of the family.

I would love to have more food to give away, but I'm satisfied if all our customers go home with some good produce. Thanks to us, the strain on their household budget is slightly reduced.

As I mentioned, the food is handed out in the nave of the church. Many tourists visit the OKE, and most visitors are surprised to see our market stalls and naturally want to find out more about this "special event in the church." This leads to many interesting and sometimes moving encounters, and we're also able to publicize TISCHLEIN DECK DICH in Basel. Occasionally we have to disappoint visitors because we can't serve them – even if they pay. People often praise and thank us for our commitment to those affected by poverty and to the fight against food waste. Some visitors take photos to show people in their own countries, perhaps with the idea of setting up a similar organization there. A few encounters stick in my mind.

For example, I was explaining what we do to a couple from the Netherlands. Suddenly, the lady began to cry and hurried out of the church. When her husband also abruptly said goodbye and left the church, I wondered what I could have done wrong. Shortly after, the woman came back (still crying), hugged me, stammered out some words of thanks and pressed 100 euros into my hand. She said that unfortunately that was all the cash that she had with her, but I was to use it to buy food for our customers. I would have liked to invite this couple to come for a coffee, but they had to go to the station. Unfortunately, I never found

out the reason for her outburst of emotion. Perhaps she had herself once been dependent on the kind of help we offer.

A second encounter that I'll always remember was with an older couple from the local area. When I had finished explaining why we were giving away this food, and for whom, the man – looking at our customers – said: "But they all look very well fed and they're decently dressed, too!" I was shocked and stopped myself from saying what was on the tip of my tongue. I explained to them that people affected by poverty in Switzerland rarely go hungry and so would not look emaciated. Poverty in Switzerland is not as obvious as that, but manifests itself mainly in poor nutrition, social isolation and health problems (such as stress). Many of our customers eat mainly bread, rice and pasta, relatively cheap and filling food. They only eat vegetables, meat and fruit occasionally and, if they do, they often go without it themselves, in order to feed their children. Thanks to the TISCHLEIN DECK DICH customer card, they can obtain vegetables, salad, fruit, dairy produce etc. from us. This enriches their basic diets. Living in poverty often leads to social isolation. We can also help a bit with that. People can socialize with others here, without being obliged to consume anything. Here's one example of social isolation that I'd like to mention: we were once given some cakes by a wholesaler. When I gave one of these cakes to a customer, she said: "Hans-Jörg, you have made me very happy with this cake, because it's my birthday today. Now I can invite my friend for coffee, because today I have something to offer her." Many people don't want visitors to come to their home because they are ashamed not to be able to offer them anything. It upsets me most when children are not allowed to bring their friends home for that reason, or to have a birthday party or go to someone else's. I think that in Switzerland, a rich country, children should not have to suffer because their parents are affected by poverty. That's why the team is always collecting up toys for our younger customers!

For people and the environment

Poverty in Switzerland is not easy to spot! We all need to open our eyes and ears to become aware of it! And there's something else that affects us all: about a third of all food is still being wasted between the producer and the consumer. The federal government's action plan against food waste is intended to reduce avoidable food waste by half by 2030, compared with 2017. This is in line with goal 12.3 in the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.¹

We all can and must play our part in reducing this percentage. We at TISCHLEIN DECK DICH will continue to be committed to fighting food waste in the future, while at the same time doing good with the food that we rescue. We need to do both – more than ever!

If you would like to find out more about TISCHLEIN DECK DICH, here is the link to our website: **www.tischlein.ch**

To contact me, please send an email to either [info\(at\)tischlein.ch](mailto:info(at)tischlein.ch) or info@oke-bs.ch, asking for the email to be forwarded to me. Thank you!

I am grateful to the Novartis Employees Association for giving me the opportunity to tell you about the TISCHLEIN DECK DICH organization.

¹ Federal Office for the Environment (BAFU) – Food Waste

Do good and talk about it?

You've probably heard of the saying "It is more blessed to give than to receive." The statement comes from the Acts of the Apostles and is intended to teach us that giving makes us joyful. And in humanistic Basel a great deal was and still is given away, because without arts patronage, Basel would not be the great cultural city that it is known to be, at least nationally. Consequently, there must be a lot of self-satisfied and joyous folk living in Basel – those who have given and those who have received gifts.



Alain Grimm

Cultural Manager Basel

But is this even discussed in Basel? In the city where there are more foundations and philanthropist than Porsches and Ferraris. Admittedly, the comparison with expensive luxury cars is somewhat sensationalist, because as everyone knows, people in Basel don't talk about money. Especially not if you belong to the Basler Daig, Basel's old upper class. At most, it is the nouveau riche who talk about money, as they are not yet accustomed to having it. At the very least, the city on the bend of the Rhine likes to practice a distinguished restraint. Because in Basel, it is understood that: «Me git, aber me sait nyt!» (One gives, but doesn't speak about it). It's the very reason we don't wish to mention any families by name here who are patrons of the arts in Basel, nor do we wish to list all of the 850 (!) charitable foundations that exist in Basel. We would have most certainly also overlooked a few of them. But let's take a closer look at this sense of reticence in Basel, and ask ourselves where this urge to simply give away money and indulge in philanthropy comes from in the first place?

When we talk about Basel as being a city of culture, we must certainly single out the purchase of the Amerbach Cabinet in 1661 by the city of Basel as a foundational act underpinning this benevolent sentiment. These treasures dating from the 15th and 16th centuries were handed over to the university estate and are considered the oldest public art collection in the world. The presence of humanist-minded residents as well as travelers from whose benevolence the city has benefited, as well as the fact that Basel has fortunately been spared major disasters and wars is probably to thank for why a pronounced commitment to the common good and a predisposition towards research and culture has been able to establish itself in Basel continuously since the 16th century. A prominent example of this is the GGG Basel (Gesellschaft für das Gute und Gemeinnützige Basel / Society for the Good and Common Benefit); it was founded by Isaak Iselin in 1777 and is still entirely committed to education, culture and

social welfare in keeping with the enlightened spirit of its founding era. Almost a hundred years later, the Christoph Merian Foundation (CMS) is established; its founders, Christoph and Margaretha Merian, set out in their will of 1857 their wishes to “alleviate hardship and misfortune” and “promote the welfare of the people”. Operating as an important and key foundation today, the CMS is still committed to the common good in society in a variety of ways. These are all altruistically motivated reasons that find expression across a wealth of foundations and in the actions of private individuals in Basel, but are in no way limited to the aforementioned founders.

But what, once again, are the underlying reasons for giving money away? The prevailing mood and the demands of humanist scholars are likely to have persuaded the city to purchase the Amerbach Cabinet in 1661. Enlightenment ideas and thinking motivated Isaak Iselin, who was progressive for his time, to found the GGG Basel. And, on top of this, a deep religious belief, which returns us to the statement from the Acts of the Apostles at the beginning of this article, coupled with a conviction of social responsibility, drove Christoph and Margaretha Merian in their actions. But does this also apply to all the other foundations and patrons of the arts in the Basel region? A keen awareness that wealth goes hand in hand with a sense of responsibility for the common good developed among Basel's upper middle classes over the course of the 19th century. A mixture of pietism, conservatism and humanist influences is likely

Donation history Schauspielhaus: “Ladies First” – a group of women who wished to remain anonymous raised around CHF 20 million from private sources in the late 1990s, enabling Basel to build the new “Schauspielhaus” as part of a public-private partnership. The canton contributed around CHF 11 million and the land.



© Pino Covino



Margaretha Merian-Burckhardt (* 8 September 1806 to † 3 May 1886)
Christoph Merian (* 22 January 1800 to † 22 August 1858)

to have produced what we would today describe as Basel's characteristic mind-set. Pietism was a particularly strong movement in Basel and was characterized by religious devotion, restraint and a conservative, bourgeois Basel society. After the separation of the cantons in 1833 (resulting in the two new cantons of Basel-Stadt and Basel-Landschaft), the city lacked money. During the course of the separation, powers and organizational structures were also renegotiated. In its capacity as a private benefactor to universities, theaters and the arts, the godly city of Basel assumes a function with political character and importance. And this present-day characteristic uniqueness of Basel will have developed in the 19th century – somewhere between the identity crisis of a devout upper class under pressure from the liberal political movements within the still young Swiss Confederation, and the defense of its own positions of power. It has become part of the city's identity and a guiding principle for its middle-class families. It may be viewed critically and questioned, but Basel's culture and predisposition towards the greater good would not be where they are today without this generous private commitment. But what about Basel's carnival? It reinforces the image of a wealthy Basel by incorporating this narrative, its themes and of course Basel's satirical "Schnitzelbank" rhyming verses. Frequently and willingly as the antithesis to the lavishness and ostentatious wealth of other large cities.. However, I've been told that behind the barred oaken doors of the city's baroque residences, even the upper middle classes in Basel are quite fond of getting carried away occasionally, replete with unending streams of champagne. It's just that we don't wish to brag about it!

Incidentally, the title of this article – "Do good and talk about it" – is a quote ("Tue Gutes und sprich darüber") from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe – clearly not a Basler!

Contest

**The lucky winners of issue 1/2025
“We reap what we sow!” were:**

Achim Schlapbach, Basel
Antonella Serman, Basel
Charisios Tsiairis, Birsfelden

After having read our magazine, we invite you to answer the following three competition questions.

We have also designed our competition to reflect this edition's theme of “Do good and talk about it.” Three entries will be drawn from the correct entries received for which donations of CHF 100 each will be made to a humanitarian organization (NGO).



You can choose from the following three categories:

- ☐ Health promotion for children
- ☐ Disaster relief
- ☐ Promoting access to healthcare

Please firstly select one of these categories. With a bit of luck, you could be one of the lucky donors. The association will make a donation of CHF 100 to a chosen institution on your behalf.

We look forward to your participation!

Contest questions

Submission deadline: 31 January 2026

First name

Name

Home address

Zip/city

1. What key change does Estelle Roth describe in community engagement?

- ☐ A one-off annual campaign day as the main format
- ☐ Community partnership is now needs-focused and partner-led every day
- ☐ Financial donations only, without any skills-based volunteering

2. What focus is foremost in the strategic partnership between Novartis and the Swiss Red Cross for 2025–2027?

- ☐ An increase in the number of one-off donations without any project coordination
- ☐ Strengthening health and resilience through needs-based projects in close coordination with SRC experts
- ☐ A focus on internal employee events without any external impact

3. Who is eligible to receive support from the ALU Foundation?

- ☐ External applicants only who have no links to the companies participating in the foundation
- ☐ Permanent, former and retired employees of the companies participating in the foundation, as well as temporarily restructured employees
- ☐ Only full-time students with no work experience



Send your answers by post to: NAV Office, Contest, Novartis Campus, Forum 1, WSJ-200.P.84 / P.O. Box, 4002 Basel or scan and send to [nav.nav\(at\)novartis.com](mailto:nav.nav(at)novartis.com)

All members of the Novartis Employees Association NAV are eligible to participate (except members of the NAV board). The winners will be notified in writing. There will be no correspondence regarding the contest. Prizes will not be paid out in cash. There is no legal recourse.



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