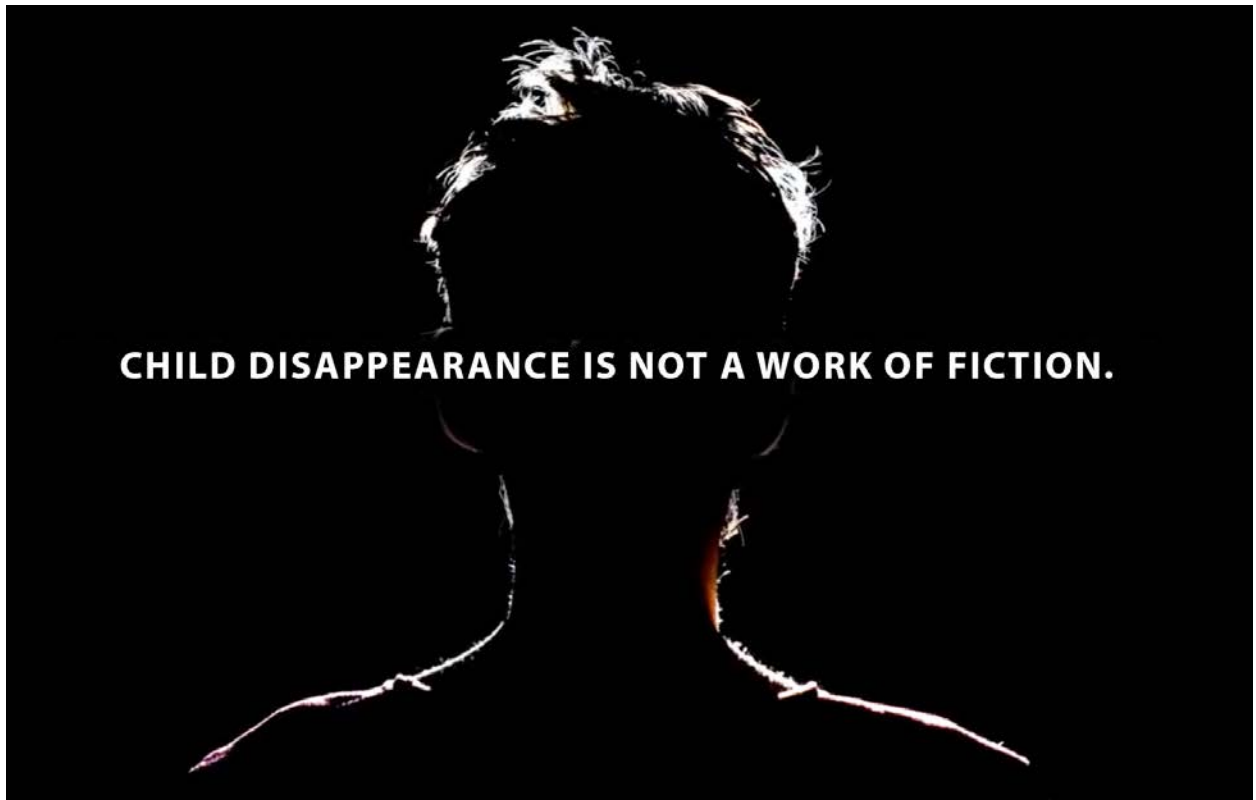


2023 ACTIVITY REPORT



MISSING CHILDREN SWITZERLAND

This document aims to provide an accurate reflection of Missing Children Switzerland's activities in 2023, rooted in an office in Pully for the French-speaking area and in an office in Zurich for the German-speaking area.

This candid approach seeks to offer a clear view of the challenges, successes, and setbacks that marked the year 2023. Therefore, its content remains confidential and cannot be disclosed without the consent of Missing Children Switzerland. This report is intended for current and prospective donors, the foundation's supervisory authority, certain public administrations, and the Board of Trustees of Missing Children Switzerland.

We want to emphasize that without your active participation, this report would be devoid of any accomplishment on our part regarding our duty of unconditional child protection and the implementation of the international convention governing these issues – UNCRC.

We sincerely thank you for the time you will dedicate to read this report. For any questions or comments, feel free to contact us at the following address: contact@missingchildren.ch

Lucie Zimmitti
Director

THE HIGHLIGHTS

The Annual Report 2023 provides an insightful overview of the accomplishments and challenges faced by Missing Children Switzerland. We take you through the dynamic evolution of our emergency team, shedding light on the commitment that shapes our daily impact on families. The communication section also outlines our efforts to increase public awareness and understanding of issues related to missing minors.

This report also reveals the innovative strategy we deployed in the fundraising/ lobbying domain, emphasizing lessons learned over the past year and the successes we obtained. Special attention is given to the evolution of the phenomenon of missing minors in Switzerland, as reflected in our emergency hotline figures.

We also share the highlights of our recognition by authorities, illustrating the value of our partnership with institutions to enhance the effectiveness of our interventions. Finally, the report provides an overview of current and future projects that guide our vision to ensure the protection of the youth, underscoring our ongoing commitment to excellence in our mission Switzerland.

We invite you to dive into this past year achievements, while doing so, please keep in mind that 9 individuals only – totaling only 2.6 FTE (full time employment) – have been mobilized day and night to ensure the safety and well-being of children in the context of missing minors across Switzerland.



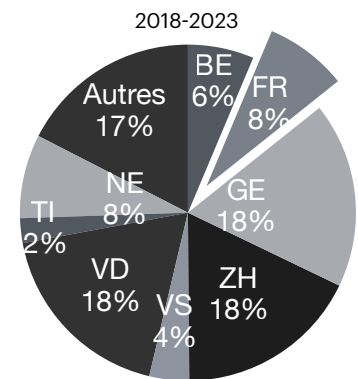
OUR FIRST RESPONDER EMERGENCY TEAM IN 2023

The 116 000 team has strengthened its ranks by hiring a coordinator to oversee the counselors on the emergency hotline. We are confident that the Belgian expert who happens to have led a team of 55 emergency professionals at 116 000 in Brussels, will ensure the development of our emergency service in Switzerland.

At the same time, we are aware of the challenges the emergency team faces and enthusiastically welcome two new counselors into our fold – a professionally trained police officer to handle the Tessin region and the French-speaking areas, and a psychologist covering the Swiss German and Romandie regions.

Our team of volunteers, directly linked with the on-duty counselors, is now complete with four members, representing a significant improvement compared to 2022. Each volunteer handles the initial phone calls for seven consecutive days per month, 24/24.

HOTLINE STATISTICS Over the past 5 years, a total of 1680 individuals have received assistance through our 116 000 emergency service. **In 2023, among 66 active situations** (as of December 29, 2023), **26.4% originated from Geneva's canton, 32.1% from Zurich, 5.5% from Fribourg and 38% from other Swiss cantons.** This represents a **24,44% increase in 2023 compare to the previous year.** To provide context, there was a 10.09% increase in 2022, a 12% increase in 2021, and a substantial 56% increase in 2020.



OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND MANAGEMENT

The diversity and professionalism of the Board of Trustees remain a crucial pillar that influences an organization's ability to make informed decisions and guide it toward a promising future. The Board of Trustees is committed to expand and seek more diversity in the skills of its members. With this in mind, it elects a new honorary member for her brilliant expertise and commitment that will enrich the governance of the board. We welcome Mrs. Barbara Ludwig!

The management of Missing Children Switzerland has once again demonstrated remarkable efficiency and unwavering determination in the face of challenges encountered over the past year. In a context of planned projects with an innovative approach, it has successfully navigated and guided the team through complex situations, ensuring the continuity of the 24/7 emergency hotline and the success of day-today operations.



SYNERGY WITH NIGHT CORRESPONDENTS – GE + VD

To contribute more effectively to the search and support of missing children, we have initiated a new collaboration with The Night Correspondents, a key public player in the field.

A liaison function between field actors

Assistance on site By guiding vulnerable children met on the street to appropriate services, these actors contribute to strengthening social fabric. Runaways and their parents are now directed to our emergency unit to address the root of the problem – thus preventing further runaway incidents.

Non public dissemination of a missing child notice Their ability to intervene is a significant advantage when risk assessment indicates an evident danger to a runaway. This is particularly crucial in situations of suicidal risk, where public dissemination could add stress to the situation but it is urgent to locate a runaway to provide support.

A first meeting with the head of the Lausanne branch took place at our premises on November 8, 2023. To define a procedural and ethical framework for collaboration, a second meeting is scheduled for January 2024.

On December 8, 2023, the heads of the Department of Social Cohesion and Solidarity of the City of Geneva, namely Ms. Stéphanie Pedat and Ms. Isabelle Widmer, also endorsed the proposal for closer collaboration with Geneva's Night Correspondents and improved the visibility of the 116 000 emergency in schools. In summary, these actions further strengthen our collective capacity to respond effectively in cases of runaway minors.

RAISE AWARENESS & SECURE FUNDS

Innovating alongside public actors is a key element in addressing a significant part of our societal challenge. The proximity between residents and their city council or municipality can promote better responsiveness from elected officials in dealing with issues related to distress among young people. Runaways and parental abductions are often the consequence of inadequately addressed family problems upstream. To address this issue, Missing Children Switzerland has initiated the implementation of a strategic plan that targets three main objectives within cities and municipalities.

1. Make the 116 000 emergency service more visible and accessible to the all.
2. Provide information to youth leaders, animators, volunteers, and youth activity supervisors who work in and around municipal activities. Share didactic materials on 'best practices' covering preventive measures and emergency actions in case a child goes missing during activities such as summer camps, for example.
3. Set up an annual membership fee for public bodies. This program has started in September 2023 in the French-speaking area of Switzerland.

Impactful initiatives and future public funding prospects

In pursuit of the goal to enhance accessibility to our emergency service, we know that approximately 10% of the 650 municipalities we contacted in September displayed our poster on the 116 000 emergency service through public displays or local media, thereby amplifying its social impact on affected families. This initiative will become an annual recurrence, extending to German-speaking Switzerland and the Swiss Ticino from 2024 onward. While monetary contributions are currently modest, we acknowledge that this first step is necessary to establish these new partnerships. As of December 29th, an amount of 7,350 CHF has been gathered to support the 116 000 emergency initiatives in Romandie. We anticipate that the resonance from our collaborative efforts with cities and municipalities will bolster the success of future subsidy requests from cantonal and federal authorities.

ESTABLISHING MORE OFFICIALLY - 2024 MOTION

A motion has been presented for the consideration of Valérie Piller Carrard, Member of Parliament in 2023. This motion is grounded in our duty to offer a 24/7 emergency service free of charge to all residents of Switzerland, so far without any public subsidy. **Despite the fact that the 116 000 emergency service is issued and overseen by OFCOM*, this public office doesn't provide a formal "mandate" in the administrative sense.** The Federal Council will be asked to take a stance on its active participatory function to fulfil Switzerland's national and international obligations in child protection – in accordance with the UNCRC – as well as the prevention and handling of parental abductions following the strategy outlined by the Council of Europe (of which Switzerland is a member). The objective of the motion – subject to approval from both chambers – is to officially recognize the mandate entrusted to Missing Children Switzerland. In 2024, a key focus is to establish contact with a newly elected member of parliament to support us in this motion submission.

The Council of Europe's Strategy for Children's Rights 2022-2027 expressed that:

'These strategies constitute a framework and a tool aimed at producing concrete results,' ... 'Progress in eliminating violence against children that also leads to child disappearance faces challenges such as insufficient investment in prevention, deficiencies in national policies, lack of detailed data and research, inadequate mechanisms for identifying and addressing abuse, and limited opportunities for timely assistance from service providers. Additionally, there is a need for enhanced interdisciplinary collaboration and active participation of children in shaping and delivering services.'

It also outlines six strategic objectives that combines ongoing priority areas with new actions to address emerging concerns through joint innovation. Over the next six years, it aims to guide 46 Member States toward achieving strategic objectives focused on protecting and promoting children's rights.

This report identifies specific gaps that demand coordinated actions from both public and private stakeholders. The 116 000 emergency service has been effectively addressing these interconnected gaps for over a decade. Let's rightfully acknowledge it for what it is: a mandate! [Read the full document: Strategy CoE-ENG](#)

*Federal Office of Communications.

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIP: GENEVA AIRPORT POLICE'S DEDICATION TO PROTECTING CHILDREN

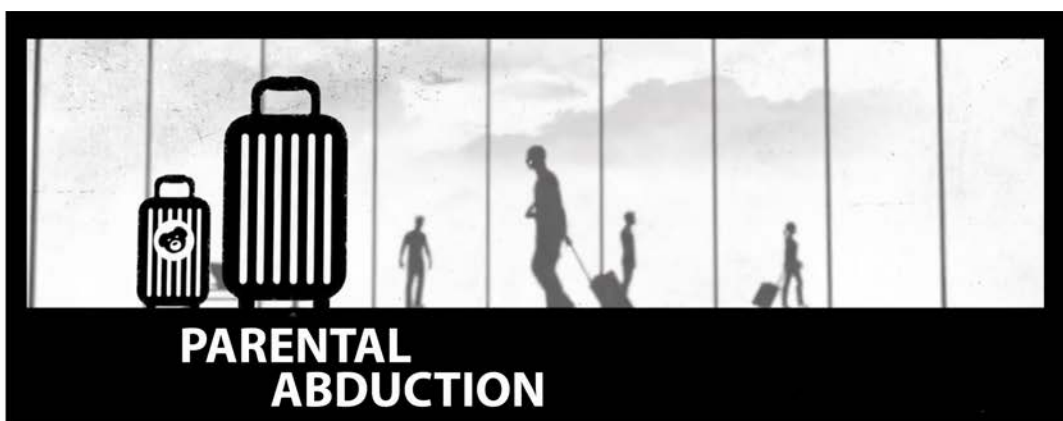
The meeting with Major Christophe Baier, commander of Geneva Airport's international police, has not only resulted in fruitful discussions but has also paved the way for a new collaboration. A follow-up presentation is scheduled in March 2024 to raise awareness across the heads of international police sections. To tackle the issue related to parental abduction, it is important for us to have direct access to the police in charge of security at border checkpoints. Our next move involves strengthening the connection and replicating this collaboration with the Zurich Airport police.

FRIBOURG POLICE LEADS THE WAY

A big congratulations to the Fribourg Police, who this year has adopted our procedure in an exemplary manner. They now refer every disappearance to us, ensuring a more comprehensive support for children and their families when it happens in Fribourg canton.

ENGAGEMENT SESSION WITH POLICE TRAINEES

At the meeting on November 3, 2023, Colonel Alain Bergonzoli, the director of the Savatan Academy, emphasized the importance of raising awareness among the police to better support families in cases of child disappearances. This initial discussion highlighted the pivotal role of the 116 000 emergency service alongside law enforcement. The inaugural workshop at Savatan Police School is scheduled for May 2024. It aims to foster an early collaborative partnership between the police and the 116 000 emergency team, ultimately enhancing efforts in child protection.



BREAKING BARRIERS FOR THE DEAF COMMUNITY

This year marks another significant step forward in our commitment to inclusivity. Because one of our volunteer has dedicated her entire career to children with hearing impairment, she brings invaluable skills not only as a sign language expert but to raise awareness within our team. Now, in Switzerland, there are about 10,000 profoundly deaf individuals, and around 600,000 individuals with hearing impairments. Together, we are initiating a pre-project phase to enhance the 116 000 hotline accessibility. As we commence this journey, we are actively seeking funding to bring this vision to fruition.

OFFICIAL STATISTICS ON PARENTAL ABDUCTION

The Central Authority for International Child Abduction, affiliated with the Federal Office of Justice (FOJ), handled 120 new cases last year. It provides advice to individuals and authorities, both in Switzerland and abroad, on preventive and protective measures. Approximately 80% of the new cases involve child abductions, while around 20% concern the exercise of parents visitation rights. The average age of the children impacted is approximately seven and a half years. Additionally, around thirty cases not covered by the Hague Convention are taken care of by the Department of Foreign Affairs. We cannot estimate how many cases of parental abduction are unofficially ongoing, but some parents won't take the chance to waive their parental rights in fear of losing the fragile long-distance relationship with their children.

EXPERT STATUS - FEDERAL OFFICE OF JUSTICE (FOJ)

The Federal Office of Justice has officially recognized our emergency service, 116 000, as an expert entity in the field. This acknowledgment reflects our continuous progress, commitment to efficiency, and dedication to resolving cases of parental abductions in collaboration with this public entity. It demonstrates mutual added value and establishes a genuine relationship of trust in just 5 years.



SUCCESS STORY

Juliette*, 16 months old, and her half-sister Anaïs*, 9 years old, were abducted by their father on August 11, 2023, taking them to Brazil. The father and the mothers of Juliette and Anaïs* are of Swiss origin.

The police opened an investigation into this double disappearance, and our emergency unit was contacted by Lisa*, Juliette's* mother, on August 15, 2023. At the request of the police, we did not publish a public missing persons notice.

In the initial days, we received three concerning testimonies from a retired schoolteacher and two individuals in the father's circle. Recognizing the gravity of these testimonies and the potential danger to the children, we decided to appoint an external consultant to act on-site in Brazil.

Our consultant established contact with various stakeholders on-site, including the Brazilian organization for victim assistance, "Mães Da Sé," the child protection department of Santa Catarina, and a lawyer specialized in international abductions affiliated with the Swiss embassy. She also mobilized her personal contacts, such as an honorary consul and a high-ranking official from the Brazilian federal police, who were briefed on the concerning testimonies we had received. Ensuring the well-being of Juliette's mother, who had traveled to Brazil, also became a priority.

Simultaneously, in Switzerland, a prosecutor, the responsible person from the Federal Office of Justice (FOJ), the Swiss federal police, and police investigators collaborated to locate the children and initiate the necessary legal procedures.

Our emergency coordinator acted as a liaison between the police and the FOJ, guaranteeing that both mothers could reach him at any time, whether in Switzerland or Brazil.

The Brazilian federal police located Juliette and Anaïs on September 12, 2023. Juliette's mother promptly took custody of the children, and our contact, the honorary consul, accommodated them in his home to ensure their safety during the administrative phase of their return.

Our team dedicated 76.5 hours over a month to contribute to the positive resolution of this double parental abduction. This success underscores our ability to navigate complex challenges and truly highlights the power of collaboration between public and private actors in the field.

Congratulations to all involved!

TEAM TRAINING AND AWARENESS PRESENTATIONS

- 08.02 Webinar - Countering online child sexual exploitation and abuse - MCE
- 20.03 Webinar - Ending Child Sexual Abuse Online - MCE
- 23.05 Webinar - Domestic Abuse: Intervening Early to Reduce Harm and Maximising Support and Protection for Victims.
- 28.06 Webinar - Improving accessibility webinar: VISUAL, the new helpline for deaf children and adults in Spain - MCE
- 02.10 Séminaire de formation Pully - 3x2 jours - Protocole d'urgence 116 000
- 02.10 Echange des bonnes pratiques - Police cantonale Fribourg
- 03.11 Involving Children in Advocacy: an interactive handbook for hotlines, helplines, and professionals - MCE
- 09.11 Colloque du Réseau suisse des droits de l'enfant, Droits de l'enfant et plaintes individuelles : opportunités et limites
- 14.11 eLearning on Demand multilingual curriculum Agents of Change to combat Child Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, & Trafficking - MCE
- 15.11 Webinar - Understanding and Responding to Children who Run Away from Home and Institutions - Child Focus
- 16.11 Policy Symposium - MCE
- 23.11 Séminaire - Kiwanis International - Plaidoyer en faveur de la mission 116 000
- 28.11 Webinar - Tackling Domestic Abuse: Tackling the Perpetrators & Ensuring Better Protection & Support for Survivors - Public policy Exchange
- 30.11 Conference / Paris - Missing children across Europe for a better cooperation between countries and 116 000 hotlines - Enfants disparus + MCE
- 05.12 Webinar - all agencies and how to collaboratively work towards a better approach by Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) - ICMEC -
- 06.12 Webinar - Early identifiers of child trafficking for hotline operators and prof. - MCE -
- 12.12 Webinar - How we can better support and protect them from harm when they go missing. - MCE -
- 15.12 MCE ACADEMY - Missing unaccompanied minors and legal obligations of states

MEDIA COVERAGE

May 25: International Missing Children's Day Campaign

November 5: [RTS "VACARME"](#) podcast series on disappearances in Switzerland

November 30: A4 posters sent to 650 cities and municipalities for display

All year: 26 posts on child disappearance on social media

FINANCES AND FUNDING 2023-2024

The 2023 budget has been adhered to, and the financial situation is sound. In order to meet the budget, the projected 2023 budget was revised downward, prompting the decision to forgo hiring a person at 50% to assist the management in project handling. **As of writing this report (as of 29.12.23), the available resources allow the operational unit to function until early March 2024, which is approximately 16.67% of the total budget in the current team configuration.**

In 2023, the emergency hotline operated continuously thanks to the financial contributions from the Philanthropic Sandoz Family Foundation, Provicim Foundation, André & Cyprien Foundation, individual donations, and donors who prefer not to be mentioned. Following the mailing sent to approximately 650 French-speaking communes in September 2023, Missing Children Switzerland received 22 unique donations totaling a sum of 7,350 CHF. Kiwanis and Lions Club together made a contribution of 8,000 CHF. Many thanks to them for their support!

TO SECURE FUNDING, THE FOLLOWING IS ONGOING OR PLANNED:

1. Membership fee requests - second mailing to Romand communes.
2. Ongoing requests to private institutions : Favorable notice of a 100,000 CHF from Sandoz Family Foundation - June 2024. New request for a follow-up grant with two institutions for 70,000 CHF (wishes to remain anonymous, Jan. 2024) and with the André & Cyprien Foundation for 40,000 CHF, submitted in November 2023. Ongoing new request for 30,000 CHF 2024-2025 to Ernst Göhner foundation. Unspecified amount to: Kinderstiftung, Victorinox, Ricola, Swiss Life, Vontobel bank.
3. Membership fee requests in relation to the prevention/awareness program for residents in the city of Zurich. Launched in the 1st semester 2024.
4. Membership fee requests to communes. Deployment of the prevention/awareness project throughout the Swiss German-speaking region in the 2nd semester 2024.
5. Subsidy request to the Federal Office of Social Insurance (OFAS) in the 3rd quarter 2024 (if obtained, effective in 2025).
6. A fundraising action is planned for International Missing Children's Day on May 25th.

Please remember that the introduction of a membership fee system serves as an important groundwork with two primary goals. The first goal is to secure funding by creating a sustainable financial model that is expected to pay off over time. The second goal aims to increase visibility, making the free emergency service more accessible to families when faced with the disappearance of a child.

The Missing Children Foundation extends warm thanks to all donors for their trust, expertise, loyalty, and pleasant collaboration that has made a difference in our daily lives and those of many families in Switzerland.



Banque Cantonale Vaudoise, Place St-François 14, CH-1002 Lausanne,
IBAN: CH15 0076 7000 S528 3948 0 BIC: BCVLCH2LXXX clearing: 767

BANK DETAILS

Missing Children Switzerland Banque Cantonale Vaudoise,
Place St-François 14, CH-1002 Lausanne - switzerland

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Récépissé

Compte / Payable à
CH15 0076 7000 S528 3948 0
MISSING CHILDREN SWITZ.
CHEMIN DES RAMIERS 22
1009 PULLY

Payable par (nom/adresse)

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Monnaie Montant ┌
CHF └

Point de dépôt

Section paiement



Monnaie Montant
CHF ┌

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CH15 0076 7000 S528 3948 0
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