



REPORT ON ACTIVITIES 2019





SUMMARY

2019 was an exceptionally eventful year not only for ClimbAID, but also our second home country Lebanon.

The year's first highlight was our charity event "Klettern statt Krieg" ("Climbing Not War") that attracted more than 200 climbing and non-climbing guests. The inspirational talks and support from the community gave us a vital energy boost for what was to come after.

Only one month later, we fulfilled our dream of a permanent climbing wall in the Beqaa Valley. The ARC aka Standing Rock quickly became the home of a diverse and growing climbing community allowing them to keep training harder and during the winter season.

Meanwhile other projects were cooking in Switzerland. In spring, a new MaXi Family was established in St. Gallen. ClimbAID took over responsibility of a small climbing wall in Zurich's park "Stadionbrache" and renovated it together with the local MaXi Family. At the end of the summer, we brought 22 participants and volunteers

together for a fun and joyful boulder weekend in the scenic Murg Valley.

In Lebanon, after intensive and productive summer months with many beautiful encounters and unforgettable experiences, the project season was coming to an end. Already deeply in the planning process of the 2nd Beqaa Bouldering Competition, the expected unexpected happened:

October 17th, fuelled by a worsening economy and widespread corruption, tumultuous mass protests erupted. These developments added another degree of uncertainty to an already increasingly volatile environment.

Whatever may come, we stay strong and committed to our mission to bring the joy of climbing to our communities in Switzerland and Lebanon.

"Through ClimbAID, I have not only learned to climb, but also how to interact with people from different cultures. By climbing in a group, I became more open and I was able to improve my German quickly. For me ClimbAID is a sports club consisting of friends. We simply have fun, often go out for a drink after the climbing sessions and also cook together from time to time".



Eritrean **Robel Goitom** has lived in Switzerland for four years and has been participating in ClimbAID's MaXiFamily project for two years. The 20-year-old is currently completing an apprenticeship as a carpenter.



LEBANON

Since 2017, ClimbAID has been running a successful sport for development project in Lebanon's Beqaa Valley, from which 400 children and young people from both the local population and the refugee community benefit every year.

The project encompasses a mobile climbing wall (A ROLLING ROCK), outdoor climbing trips in the local area and since 2019 a permanent wall (The ARC aka Standing Rock).

Our activities are designed to foster resilience and a sense of community among children and youth. In this way we make an important contribution to improving their mental health and psychosocial wellbeing.

CONTEXT

With an economic collapse in a country hosting over [1.7 million refugees](#) within a national population of just 4.6 million, Lebanon is facing its greatest crisis since the end of its civil war in 1990.

In ClimbAID's area of operation, the Beqaa Valley, with a population of half a million

people, poverty and child labour are widespread. Syrian and Palestinian refugees make up half the population and only 55% are enrolled in primary and 16% in secondary [school](#).

With economic uncertainty fuelling rising [social tensions](#), ClimbAID's work in Beqaa is more important than ever.

IMPACT

In 238 sessions, with an average of twelve participants each, we reached about 400 children, teenagers and young adults, the majority participating on a weekly basis.

An independent evaluation by Wells-Macapia (Rutgers University, NY) and Simon Rosenbaum (University of New South Wales, Sydney) with participants from the ClimbAID Academy and volunteers found that our project impacts our participants in various areas:

Physical state: Participants discuss increased strength and muscular control and improved breathing techniques; they report feeling better physically, feeling physically more confident, privileging their health more

in everyday life, and increasing other forms of exercise.

Mental state: Participants experience increased physical, emotional, and social self-esteem. Participants feel better able to focus on the present (e.g. ability to shut other thoughts out while climbing, focusing on investing in life in Lebanon rather than only focusing on returning to Syria in the future). Further they report to be better at managing depression, anger, stress, and anxiety and are more adept at practicing patience. They also improve their ability to meet new people of both genders from varied backgrounds which correlates with expanded social networks and increased self-confidence.

Values: Participating in ClimbAID's activities also increase their motivation to protect the environment. Meeting people from different countries positively shapes their attitude towards cultural diversity (wanting to learn about people's cultures and languages, and appreciating people's perspectives across cultural divides) and challenges local gender stereotypes.

The evaluation by Wells and Rosenbaum is submitted for publication in peer-reviewed academic journals.

HIGHLIGHTS

A STANDING ROCK

Every November when the season came to an end, we realized a permanent climbing wall would be key for the young climbing community to independently grow and evolve. Something that is there when we are not. Something that stays.



After 1 ½ years of planning and building our new climbing wall in May, "The ARC" aka "Standing Rock" at our partner Arcenciel's centre in Taanayel quickly became the home to a growing climbing community in the Beqaa.

LEBANESE BOULDERING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Lebanese, Syrian, Christian, Muslim, men and women. Climbers from all over Lebanon travelled to Beirut to participate in the 1st Lebanese Bouldering Championships. Straight from the Beqaa: 7 of ClimbAID's strongest climbers competed.



Despite very limited training opportunities during the winter season, hot temperatures and fasting, our team's performance and positive vibes were incredible. We all enjoyed the creative boulder problems and peaceful atmosphere. Ahmad Laddaa even made it into the finals and ultimately achieved 4th place.

CLIMBAID ACADEMY

The formation of the ClimbAID Academy was an important milestone towards independence for our projects in Lebanon. In these sessions, participants learn everything that is necessary to take over the project within the coming years.



Apart from teaching climbing and learning about the basics of our project, we also introduced weekly English lessons.

GIRLS WHO CLIMB

We introduced a dedicated weekly women and girls-only session to boost female participation in our climbing sessions.



CLEAN-UP AND BOULDERING ACTION

The team has been scouting for new boulders in Central Beqaa to give the participants from the ClimbAID Academy a taste of bouldering on real rock.



Exploring these sites brings our participants closer to nature and shows them the importance of taking care of our environment: Not only do they climb the rocks, they also volunteer to clean up trash and litter in the whole surrounding area.

2nd BEQAA BOULDERING COMPETITION

The season of ClimbAID ended with a show of drive, team spirit, passion, and pure love for climbing: the 2nd Beqaa Bouldering Competition. Despite the protests and rainy weather, the competition organised by ClimbAID at the new climbing wall "The ARC" attracted more than 40 motivated climbers. For the participants the championships were

a great chance to exchange experiences and to prove their training progress.



One of the highlights of this year's competition was the visit of the two professional climbers Katherine Choong and Mathilde Becerra. They not only supported the team setting the routes for the competition but also provided the participants with climbing tips. The interaction of the young climbing community with professional climbers shows once again how universal the language of climbing and how unifying this sport is.

PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

Over the last 3 years, ClimbAID has built a strong network of local partners. Our permanent climbing facility in Taanayel was built in partnership with Arcenciel. In 2019, we have become an integral part of Beyond Association's back-to-school programme for children affected by child labour and started collaborating with the Lebanese Nasser Sports Club based in Bar Elias. Also, we continued to work with Sonbola as part of their summer school program as well as AL Caravan and Crossing Lines.



CLIMBERS UNITE!

25 people from 12 countries decided to share their passion for climbing and spent at least one month with us on our project in the Beqaa Valley:

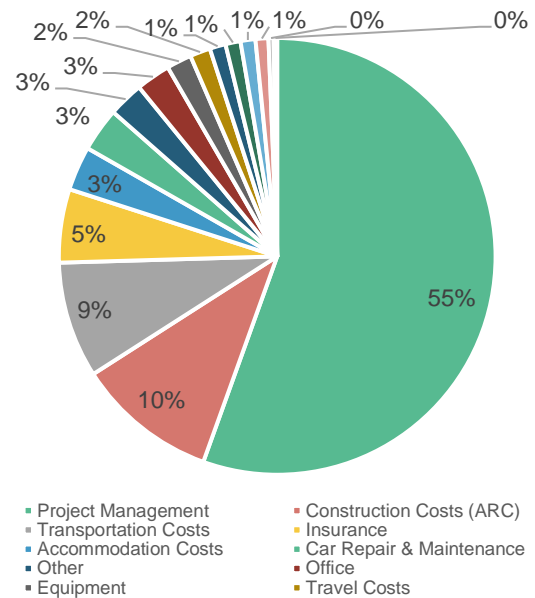
Anna Maddalena Jannibelli (CH), Camille Roy-Tremblay (CA), Claire Fuzet (FR), Clara Milla (AT), Coline Gonzales (FR), DenizKöylüoğlu (SE), Dimitri Van Vossel (BE), Ethan Ciolkevich (US), Gian Marco Hutter (CH), Gilles Sainte-Marie (LB), Jacquelin Hahn (US), Jameson Schultz (US), Joseph Dodd (UK), Joseph Evans (UK), Lena Morawietz (DE), Line Firmin (FR), Lisa Städtler (DE), Marlène Machemy (FR), Marta Igual-Morales (ES), Nina Dabboussi (FR), Robert Frédéric Spoerri (CH), Sascha Tagliaferri (IT), Swena Zheng (AU), Talal Siksek (PK), Yumi Adachi (CH).


You kept the ROCK rolling!

FINANCIALS

The project expenditures amounted to CHF 58'832.43 in 2019.

The 55% personnel costs are substantially higher than 2018 since the organisation's founder is receiving a salary since July 2019, allowing him to devote himself to the project full-time (50% of the total salary for 2019 are being attributed to projects in Lebanon). The second highest cost factor is ClimbAID's share for the construction costs of the ARC. In third place comes transportation, including various car repairs, substitute car rentals and gasoline.





Bahaa Al Naasan, 19 years old, from Syria, started climbing with ClimbAID in Lebanon about 2 years ago. He's a member of the ClimbAID Academy, participates in our English course and frequently helps out as a volunteer for sessions with younger participants. Besides being an avid climber, he's working as car mechanic.

"Climbing is a new phenomenon in our community that ClimbAID introduced. With ClimbAID, I learned everything about climbing, and I learned that it's a sport that needs patience. You need to rely on your mind, on your concentration and on your body.

What helps me improve my climbing is having supporting friends, having a good health, and being at ease with myself. Ever since I started climbing, my nerves got stronger, and my body got better. When I train, I blow off steam.

With the help of the volunteers at ClimbAID, I learned some English, I learned to give and take, and I learned the importance of meeting new people.

Climbing outdoors taught me to protect the environment, and to love nature. In the outdoors, there's more freedom, the routes are not set and ready, so you need to look more after yourself."



SWITZERLAND

The MaXiFamily is a network of about 100 volunteers and 7 climbing gyms in Switzerland that brings refugees and the local climbing community together.

Participants can exercise and work off their energy in a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere, extend their social network, and practice their freshly acquired German language skills.

Since 2016, the family has been growing steadily and some of our participants became a fix part of the local climbing communities.

CONTEXT

The [Swiss State Secretariat for Migration](#) reported 126'358 asylum seekers and recognised refugees by the end of 2019 (2018: 123'379) and the historically low number of 14'269 new applications for asylum (2018: 15'255).

However, this decrease in numbers is not due to an improvement in the security situation and human rights in the world. Rather, it reflects the EU's isolationist policy, which is designed to keep the arrival of new refugees in Europe in check, and can be

explained by Switzerland's rigorous application of the [Dublin agreements](#).

In March 2019, the new asylum regime became effective with the explicit claim to be equally fast and fair. From this date, asylum application procedures have been accelerated and take place decentralised in six asylum regions. Asylum seekers receive free counselling and legal representation in the new procedures.

According to the [Swiss Refugee Council](#) observations, the experience of the first year shows that the implementation is unbalanced. The focus of the authorities is on efficiency and acceleration - at the expense of fairness and quality of the procedures.

In general, participation in daily life and leisure activities are rare and unaffordable for most asylum seekers. Initiatives like ours provide crucial opportunities to connect with Swiss society.

IMPACT

In 2019, the MaXiFamily continued to grow and we started the seventh MaXi Family at the climbing gym "[Die Kletterhalle](#)" in St. Gallen.

In terms of numbers, we had about 300 sessions with an average of six participants and between two and three volunteers per session. This was possible only with the incredible support of 89 actively engaged volunteers.

HIGHLIGHTS

CHARITY EVENT AT KAUFLEUTEN

On 21 March, the sold-out charity event of ClimbAID took place in Zurich. The event, titled "[Climbing Not War - Sport doesn't know borders](#)" lured more than 200 people into the Klubsaal of Kaufleuten. The evening was a great success, garnering support for ClimbAID and celebrating the beauty of climbing and the unity of the climbing community.



The founder, Beat Baggenstos, presented the projects of ClimbAID. Professional climber Nasim Eshqi from Iran described the beautiful climbing areas of her country and how the climbing community became her gateway to the world. Simon Rosenbaum, sports therapist from Australia, talked about the positive effects of climbing on mental health and personality development. Alpinist and photographer Robert Bösch spoke about the development of outdoor photography and showed how alpine action shots are created. The evening was moderated by the Himalayan chronicler, Billi Bierling.

DER WÜRFEL (“THE CUBE”)

In spring 2019, ClimbAID took over a small public climbing wall in the temporary park "[Stadionbrache](#)" in Zurich.



Volunteers and participants of the local MaXiFamily renewed and enlarged the landing zone, repainted the wall and got some big funky volumes on it. A small change, with a big impact. The cube quickly became a popular spot for the local climbing community once again.

MAXIFAMILY WEEKEND

Ever since our MaXiFamily Project spread across different Swiss cities, we have felt the desire to bring everyone together and connect with each other as one big ClimbAID family. This late summer we finally did so: 22 people from 4 cities and 5 nations came together for a weekend full of fun and boulders in the Murg Valley.



THE MAXI FAMILIES

MAXIGALLUS (ST. GALLEN)

After months of committed preparation by Kartin Steinbach Tarnutzer and with the help of [Integra Language School](#) of the [Solidarity Net Eastern Switzerland](#), a new ClimbAID Family emerged in St. Gallen: MaxiGallus.



From the kick-off event with more than 20 participants within the following months a dedicated group of about 6 climbers evolved that now climbs every Wednesday at [Kletterzentrum St. Gallen](#). At the moment, 8 volunteers alternate in coaching the training. Beyond that, Karin is engaged in maintaining the contacts to local refugee aid organisations and officials.

If you want to read more about the making of MaxiGallus read this [nice article](#) (in German) that has been published in the Mountain Yearbook of the alpine clubs of Germany, Austria and South Tyrol.

MAXIMINIMUM (ZURICH)

2019 was an exciting year for the maxiMiNimum team. Throughout the entire year we hosted two weekly sessions with about 5 participants and at least two volunteers participating in each of the sessions. Many of our frequent participants have greatly improved their climbing skills within the year, which we could successfully demonstrate at Zurich's Bouldering Championships.



Our sessions were mainly hosted at our partner gym [Minimum](#) but during the warmer season we were glad to move our sessions to the cube in the park "Stadionbrache". Our team put great efforts into the renovation of the bouldering wall, which is now open to the

public and is a great spot for after work sessions with subsequent barbecues in the surrounding garden.

MAXICITY (KRIENS)

Our MaXiFamily home at [Cityboulder](#) bouldering gym thrived in 2019 and kept attracting participants from all over the canton of Lucerne.



The regular bouldering sessions in Kriens are described by the participants as a mixture of friendly people, strict strength training, mutual trust, exciting bouldering problems and a lot of fun.

The rope climbing in the [Pilatus Indoor](#) climbing gym and the subsequent barbecue was a highlight of the year, with a typical feature of MaxiCity becoming visible: The combination of sport, culinary delights and community.

MAXIPLUS (WINTERTHUR)

2019 was a busy year for MaxiPlus at [6a plus](#) climbing gym in Winterthur! We're currently running two sessions a week and they couldn't be more different: Thursday evenings we're bouldering with a small, but very stable and super strong group. Some of them get up routes that our most experienced volunteers struggle on - we're learning a lot!

On Sunday afternoons we're bouldering with about 8 residents of the [Federal Asylum Centre in Embrach](#). The Embrach group has a high turnover rate with newbies coming almost every time. And the fact that half of the group are kids led us to come up with new games and other ways to capture their interest. It's a fun challenge for all of us!



Last but not least we wanted to encourage more girl power in our sessions. Therefore we collaborated with the [Jugendrotkreuz Zürich](#) and their program “women4women” and organised two sessions for women only. Both times have shown to be valuable experiences for the women involved, as well as our volunteers.

MAXILINTH (NÄFELS)

MaxiLinth has grown stronger and bigger over the last year. We can still welcome some of our very first participants in the weekly sessions. A second group from the [asylum centre in Amden](#) also joins the team for our climbing sessions in the [GLKB boulder gym](#) regularly.



The two supervisors who accompany the group of around eight participants are also passionate boulderers, which always leads to a motivated atmosphere during our sessions. There are some regular participants in this group as well as some new faces almost every week. So, the newbies always find a handful of old-established boulderers to teach them.

The regular participants have become strong boulderers through regular training but also through the advice and tips from the volunteers. Sometimes it even becomes difficult for the volunteers to keep up with

them, but thankfully other boulderers started to join in with teaching and bouldering together from time to time, encouraging a unique social mix.

MAXIBLOC (BERN)

MaxiBloc at [O'BLOC](#) climbing gym had a year with ups and downs. The first months saw sessions with only a few participants. Between March and June, we then didn't have any sessions all together. Then in summer, we stepped up efforts to motivate new participants. These efforts bore fruits.



During the summer often families with little children attended our sessions. Thanks to the co-opera project by the [Schweizerische Arbeiterhilfswerk](#), we could organise the week-long morning sessions for a second time in September. To make the sessions more attractive we also changed the time from Saturday mornings to Friday evenings. Since then, we again hold regular sessions with a small but highly motivated group of young boulderers!

PARTNER GYMS

Over the last 4 years, ClimbAID has built a strong network of seven climbing gyms.



CLIMBERS UNITE!

89 people volunteered with ClimbAID in Switzerland throughout 2019:

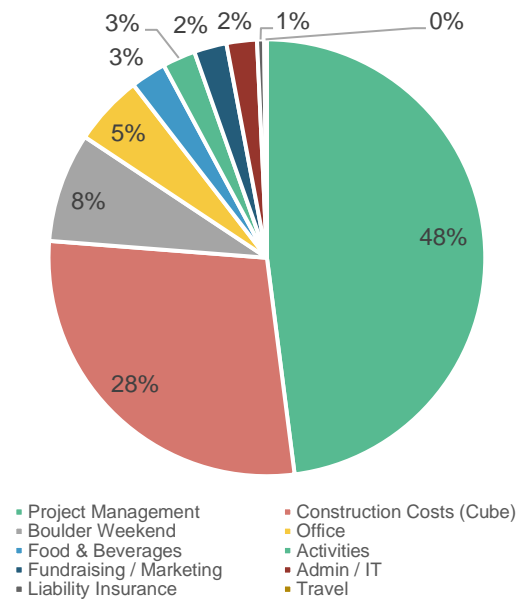
Adriana Berwert, Aliakbar Soleimani, Alice Küng, Alice Martin, Aman Debesay, Anita Kolettu, Anita Landolt, Anita Obendrauf, Arian Bastani, Armin Pfister, Baran Özgül, Beat Baggenstos, Beatrice Oberli, Carla De Poupplana, Charizze Wenig, Christian Auer, Christian Rueger, Christian Weh, Damian Berwert, David Bürgisser, Dominique Glaus, Elena Leuzinger, Franca Schmid, Gian-Reto Valentin, Gilles Felber, Gina Stüssi, Giuli und Mattheus, Giuliana Carello, Hansjörg Temperli, Isabelle Schultheiss, Jaan Lustenberger, Jasmin Schläpfer, Jelena Dukic, Joane Steiner, Jonas Kohler, Jonathan Summerfield, Karin Bachmann, Karin Steinbach Tarnutzer, Katharina Buchtler, Kathrin Aeberhard, Kim Bodmer, Krystle Giddey, Krystle Jane Giddey, Laura Lurati, Lea Gutschner, Livia Hochstrasser, Manu Köpfli, Manuel Köpfli, Manuel Wirth, Marc Dollmann, Margrit John, Martina Zahno, Mateus Marty, Matthias Zimmermann, Michel Wegener, Miriam Kofel, Mirjam Baumann, Nadine Gierak, Nathalie Flückiger, Nathalie Ronchis, Nathalie Triches, Noel Laurent, Oronzo Castelluzzo, Pablo Gabriel, Pascal Bärtschi, Pascal Würsch, Patrick Kämpfer, Philipp Wallimann, Rahel Kuonen, Rahel Schäfer, Rebecca Boesiger, Rebecca Würsch, Regula Senn, Reto Kaufmann, Richard Schmassmann, Roberto Pisano, Roland Eisenring, Sandro Gygli, Sarah Germann, Sergio Gemperle, Sonja Landolt, Stefan Schulze, Tamara Strasser, Thomas Stadelmann, Ursin Duss, Valentin Nussli, Vera Mühlebach, Vivane Lutz, Vladek Zumr, Yumi Adachi.

Thank you for your dedication and hard work that keeps our projects running!

PROJECT COSTS

Total expenditures for 2019 was CHF 14'392.99.

Project management is the biggest cost contributor since the organisation's founder is receiving a salary since July 2019, allowing him to devote himself to the project full-time (25% of the total salary for 2019 are being attributed to projects in Switzerland). The second biggest portion covered construction costs for the cube. In third place are the expenses for the boulder weekend.



"Climbing strengthens not only my body but also my soul. When I have climbed a particularly difficult route, I have the feeling that I can also accomplish a lot outside the climbing gym.

What does climbing with ClimbaID teach me? Always keep trying and never give up. ClimbaID has become like a real family for me, where people cheer each other up and stick together."



The 22-year-old Afghan **Abdul Uryakhel** has lived in Switzerland since 2016 and has been climbing with ClimbaID for two years. In August 2020 he will start an apprenticeship as an automobile assistant in Lucerne.

ORGANISATION

From an organisational perspective, 2019 was a successful year in many different aspects.

EMPLOYMENT OF BEAT BAGGENSTOS

The establishment of an independent board paved the way for the employment of ClimbAID's founder Beat Baggenstos as managing director of the organisation from September 2019.

TRANSA ON BOARD

We feel very privileged to have found a strong and committed new partner in Transa that wholly supports our mission and shares our community values.



Not only is Transa supporting us financially, but we are also organising joint inclusive climbing activities during the summer months. Welcome on board!

NEW AMBASSADORS

We are very proud and happy that both the Swiss climber Katherine Choong and French climber Mathilde Becerra joined our ambassador team after their visit to our project in Lebanon.

Welcome to the ClimbAID family!

FINANCIALS

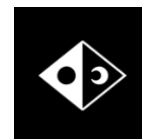
Compared to the years before, 2019 started with a comfortable financial cushion. Due to successful fundraising (CHF 89'960.91) and the late employment of Beat Baggenstos as managing director, ClimbAID closed the year with a small profit (CHF 4'678.45).

This was only possible due to the generosity of our many supporters, donor and partners

♥.

PARTNERS 2019

Thank you for supporting our project with funds, equipment and services. You keep us going!



PUBLISHING INFORMATION

Text by Beat Baggenstos, Giulia Adagazza, Karin Steinbach Tarnutzer, Jonas Kohler, Kathrin Aeberhard, Kim Bodmer, Joane Steiner and Sergio Germpeler.

Editing by Joseph Evans, Tyler Myers, Anita Kolett and Lucas Beck and Markus Sollner.

Photo credit in order of appearance: Jameson Schultz, Adib Chowdhury, Jonathan Summerfield, Unknown, Nina Dabboussi, Beat Baggenstos, Jameson Schultz, Unknown, 3 x Jameson Schultz, Beat Baggenstos, Vladek Zurr, Katharina Hornschuch, Beat Baggenstos, Karin Steinbach, 5 x Unknown, Jonathan Summerfield.

Contact: ClimbAID, Neugasse 85, 8005 Zurich, Switzerland, info@climbaid.org

FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2019

ASSETS	31.12.19	31.12.18	%
Current assets	77'730.35	54'316.84	43.11%
Cash and cash equivalents	75'803.55	54'120.13	40.07%
Accounts receivable	1'805.09	75.00	2306.79%
Trade goods	121.71	121.71	0.00%
Fixed assets	7'332.34	10'998.52	-33.33%
Intangible assets*	7'332.34	10'998.52	-33.33%
Total Assets	85'062.69	65'315.36	30.23%

LIABILITIES	31.12.19	31.12.18	%
Short-term outside capital	-20'856.64	-5'787.76	-260.36%
Liabilities (Vendors)	-2'227.39	0	-100.00%
Other current liabilities	-4'961.82	0	-100.00%
Accruals and short-term provisions	-13'667.43	-5'787.76	-136.14%
Long-term outside capital	0.00	0.00	0.00%
Organisational Capital	-64'206.05	-59'527.61	-7.86%
Total Liabilities	-85'062.69	-65'315.37	-30.23%

* In 2018, ClimbAID donated its mobile climbing wall "THE ROCK" to the Lebanese non-profit Arcenciel which registered it in their name. ClimbAID retains a usage right and the right to take the vehicle back into its property at any time. One fifth of the acquisition value is depreciated annually.

INCOME	31.12.2019	31.12.2018	%
Donations and Membership Fees	85'819.09	92'919.27	-8%
Trading revenues	375.00	250.00	50%
Events	3'764.96	2'130.00	77%
Exchange rate differences	1.86	53.15	-97%
Total Income	89'960.91	95'352.42	-6%

COSTS	31.12.2019	31.12.2018	%
Project costs	-47'739.59	-40'947.74	17%
Costs of trade articles	-461.00	-406.47	13%
Events	-	-2'035.46	-100%
Total effort	-48'200.59	-43'389.67	11%

Personnel costs	31.12.2019	31.12.2018	%
Salaries	-23'550.89	-	-100%
Social security	-2'765.13	-	-100%
Other personnel expenses	-293.75	-695.38	-58%
Total Personnel Costs	-26'609.77	-695.38	3727%

Expenses, depreciations and financial result	31.12.2019	31.12.2018	%
Office Rent	-3'000.00	-2'750.00	9%
Liability Insurance	-303.10	-295.90	2%
Administrative and IT expenses	-1'288.56	-2'131.30	-40%
Fundraising- und Marketing Costs	-1'881.22	-1'619.06	16%
Depreciation and cumulative value adjustment of fixed asset items	-3'666.18	-3'666.18	0%
Bank Charges	-272.43	-449.00	-39%
Currency Losses	-60.61	-	-100%
Total expenses, depreciation and financial result	-10'472.10	-10'911.44	4%

Operating Result	4'678.45	40'355.93	88%
------------------	----------	-----------	-----

Appropriation of the profit	31.12.2019	31.12.2018	%
Profit/Loss carried forward	-4'678.45	-40'355.93	-88%

Profit / Loss	-	-	0%
---------------	---	---	----