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Media release: Change in leadership at Women's Hope International

Following several years of service, Gerhard Bärtschi is stepping down from his position as CEO at Women's Hope International. Bärtschi played a crucial role in the professionalisation of the young organisation. A proven and experienced professional, Valentina Maggiulli will be the new head of Women's Hope International effective 1st October 2019.

Gerhard Bärtschi's tenure at Women's Hope International spanned a total of six and a half years. The organisation grew substantially under his leadership, both with respect to donation growth as well as project load. The number of staff also increased from two (equivalent to 150% full-time posts) to seven employees (equivalent to 450% full-time posts). The Management Board thanks him for his service and great dedication.

Gerhard Bärtschi is leaving the organisation at his own request. Bärtschi intends to satisfy a long-held desire to once again work in the field before his retirement. He will begin his next role in Afghanistan with another organisation in early November 2019.

Women's Hope International is pleased that the CEO position has been filled by a woman. Valentina Maggiulli brings with her a great deal of experience in the areas of international cooperation and gender issues, thus making her an excellent fit for the organisation. Since May 2015 she has served as Programme Leader for the Middle East at the cfd Christlicher Friedensdienst (The feminist Peace Organisation). Over the last 15 years, she has been active in cooperative development projects abroad (Nepal, Israel/Palestine) and in Switzerland. Her work focused on gender equality, governance and strengthening civil societies. Over a period of seven years, Maggiulli lived and worked in Jerusalem, Ramallah and the Gaza Strip. She studied law at the University of Zurich and also holds an MBA degree from the University of Roehampton in London, in addition to completing further education in gender issues at the University of Bern.

We view this change in personnel as an excellent opportunity to continue fulfilling our mission with renewed vigour. Women's Hope International will continue to do everything we can to ensure that women and girls around the world can live healthy and self-determined lives.

Women's Hope International is a Swiss organisation dedicated to improving the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women in Africa and Asia. We are committed to ensuring that all women and girls have access to health care and professional support, particularly during pregnancy and childbirth.

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