

# Annual Report 2023

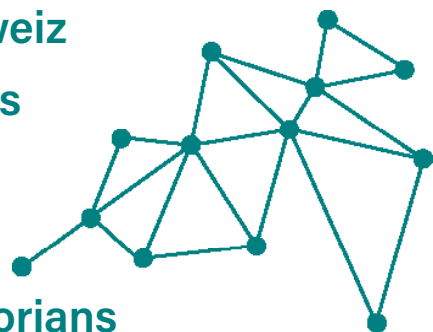
Historikerinnennetzwerk Schweiz

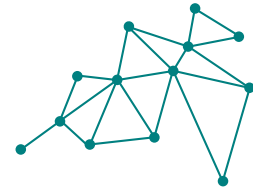
Réseau suisse des historiennes

Rete svizzera delle storiche

Rait svizra d'istoricras

Swiss Network of Female Historians





# Swiss Network of Female Historians Annual Report 2023

The Board, February 2024

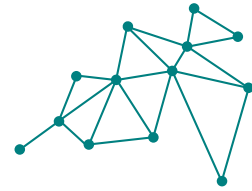
## Co-Presidents' Greetings and Review of the Year

The network has continued to grow in 2023 – a great pleasure for us! We now have around 200 members and always enjoy the opportunity to come together with you at our events, to take your projects and those of the working groups forward or to have informal discussions.

We kicked off 2023 with plenty of momentum and once more the network organised numerous events throughout the year. In spring, we hosted three events, including a well-attended virtual round table with three newly appointed female history professors in Switzerland as well as a convivial General Assembly online, at which Stephanie Deig, board member of SWIP – Society for Women in Philosophy Switzerland, spoke to us about her association's experiences in building women's networks.

The online round table format has proved very popular, as it offers the opportunity to discuss a wide range of topics with historians from all over Switzerland in an unconstrained setting. After four years and in „post-Covid“ times, we have found that other events such as the aperitifs or workshops are not always sufficiently popular, which has led to cancellations or postponements. Network aperitifs continue to be organised autonomously in Lausanne, which makes us very happy! The underlying aim of the network is for members to build connections with each other locally and informally, so we welcome this initiative.

We have retained the working rhythm established in the previous year within our board, which includes regular online meetings as well as two face-to-face meetings per year with a view to enhancing our ability to work together and get to know each other. We continued the tradition of an annual board retreat that we started last year and convened again in the beautiful Chesa Orta in Bergün in May 2023. The retreat is an important space for us to take time to reflect together on the network's medium-term outlook. At this year's board retreat, we took stock of the several years of experience in organizing events. In the initial phase after the network relaunch in spring 2021, our events were crucial for us to get to know everyone in the network better and to make the Network of Female Historians more known to the public.



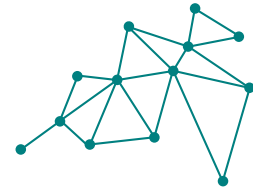
In 2023, we recognized that we had reached a new phase that required us to focus more on the „behind the scenes“ work of the association. This entailed drafting up internal and external „fact sheets“ for a range of our activities so as to prevent, for example, a board member’s knowledge from being lost when they leave the association. Furthermore, starting in summer 2023, we ran several parallel outreach campaigns to recruit new members and benefactors to the network.

Keeping the future of the board in mind, we launched an additional appeal in summer 2023 to recruit new faces and minds for the board, and we reached out directly to many potential candidates for the board. This not only led to many stimulating conversations with members about the future of the network, but also resulted in us welcoming several new members to our working groups and the board. We are delighted (and relieved) that not one but several historians will be standing for election to the board at the 2024 General Assembly. We are dependent on such new members for the survival and evolution of the Network of Female Historians.

In addition, as decided at the 2023 General Assembly, we have been working with a web agency to develop an internal networking platform - a major project that we expect to complete in 2024. This platform will allow our members to access a member directory and connect with other female\* historians for collaborations. This will be an important addition to our existing newsletters, which are already available to share information within the Network.

A Network like ours depends on lots of dedicated people, and so we are delighted to have many active members in our working groups. You can read more about the activities of these working groups below. From the launch of our podcast and the revival of our blog to our events and our communications crew, there’s something for everyone and we always welcome new ideas with open arms!

The biggest upcoming project is without a doubt the Unconference, which we have been planning since 2022. The Working Group formed to organize it was particularly active and creative last year! It is now official: this „inverted conference“ will take place on June 7 and 8, 2024 at the PROGR in Bern. Invitations will be sent out at the beginning of 2024 with the number of participants limited for logistical reasons. We can’t wait to hear the ideas of all the participants and look forward to design a program together with you. The aim of this event in particular is to stimulate new debates and collaborations in the Swiss historian community that transcend the usual boundaries and hierarchies. One thing is clear: the Unconference is just the beginning!



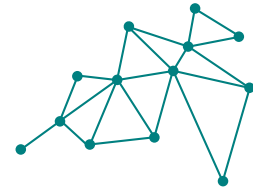
Our term as co-presidents of the Network of Female Historians will come to an end with the General Assembly in March 2024. For the consolidation of the board and a sustainable continuity of network activities, it was important that the two of us were able to be present and act as a central network node without any major interruptions over the past two years. We are proud of everything that the board and the network members have achieved and contributed to the development of the Network of Female Historians in these two years. Both of us have derived great joy and energy from this collective drive, and both Zoé and Claire will remain members of the board.

At the same time, we firmly believe that an association like the Network of Female Historians only remains interesting and attractive as long as new people can bring in their ideas and perspectives and steer the network into previously uncharted waters.

We are excited for all that is to come and are grateful for all that has been.

Claire Louise Blaser & Zoé Kergomard

Co-Presidents



## Board of the Swiss Network of Female Historians 2023

Antonia Bertschinger  
Claire Louise Blaser  
Anna de Quervain  
Zora Melina Heimlicher  
Tamara Widmer  
Angela Wittwer  
Zoé Kergomard

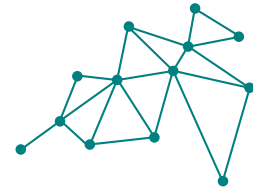
### Collaborators of the Board

Monika Gisler  
Valerie Muhmenthaler  
Anke Schindler  
Leandra Sommaruga  
Rahel Urech  
Salome Walz

## Network Meetups

Since the founding of the Network of Female Historians, network meetings or network aperitifs have offered a low-threshold opportunity for female\* historians from different professional fields to get to know each other, to connect and to exchange ideas. Given the lower number of registrations and scarce resources, the board decided not to organize network meetings on a central level in 2023. We did, however, open an in-person board meeting with apéro to all members. Network members from French-speaking Switzerland were also able to hold two decentralized aperitifs in Lausanne thanks to their active collaboration. We are sticking to this strategy for the time being and would like to thank all members in advance for organizing local network aperitifs and thus keeping up the tradition of these meetings.

20.06.2023 Lausanne: Apéritif in La Bavaria  
21.06.2023 Olten: Open board meeting followed by dinner at Magazin  
14.11.2023 Lausanne: Apéritif at La Bavaria



## Review | Preview of the Events Working Group

Since mid-2021, the Events Working Group has been conceptualising and implementing ideas for virtual round tables. In 2023, we organised three of them:

“Drei Geschichtswissenschaftlerinnen im Dialog über Geschlechtergerechtigkeit in der akademischen Welt” on March 3, 2023 (online) with Silvia Berger Ziauddin, Debjani Bhattacharyya, Britta-Marie Schenk and Isabelle Schürch (moderator)

“(Un)equal voices in higher education” on March 29, 2023 (online) with Kellie Gonçalves and Zoé Kergomard (moderator)

“Frauenstadtrundgänge: Geschichte(n) und Perspektiven” on December 18, 2023 (online) with Joana Burkart, Helen Girardier, Eva Kleisli and Zoé Kergomard (moderator)

More round tables are in the works for 2024 and we are always happy to receive suggestions.

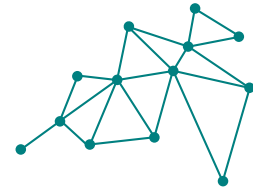
Members: Zoé Kergomard, Nadia Pettannice, Rahel Urech, Salome Walz, Angela Wittwer

## Review | Preview of the Workshops Working Group

Two workshops were planned for 2023: a blog workshop and one on “Inclusive discussion culture in historical science”. Both had to be postponed because there were too few registrations.

However the preparations were not for nothing: the workshop on discussion culture will be held in April 2024 with the new title “Geschichtswissenschaft - Raum für Dialog?!”. Meanwhile, the blog working group is holding smaller online events meant to support potential authors of new blog posts. Moreover, taking inspiration from the idea of a blog/writing workshop, a group has formed at the University of Zurich which now organises writing workshops on a regular basis.

Members: Zoé Kergomard, Antonia Bertschinger



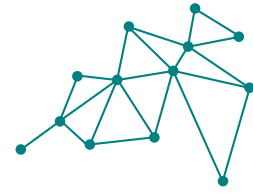
## Review | Preview of the Unconference Working Group

Inspired by the success of the erstwhile “Schweizerische HistorikerInnentagungen” we founded a new working group at the end of 2022. Its goal is to organise an “Unconference” in summer 2024. This unconference is our first large national event. We hope to create a space for discussion among female\* historians that is more open and democratic than traditional conferences, and to facilitate exchanges between historians who wouldn't otherwise meet – across hierarchies, age and professional groups.

Our call for new working group members got so many responses that the Unconference working group grew to be our largest working group within a year. Thanks to the great efforts and commitment of network members, the Unconference working group was able to set ambitious goals. We are especially encouraged by the fact that the history platform infoclio.ch and the Gosteli foundation (parent organisation of the Archive of the Swiss women's movement in Worblaufen) have come forward as partner organisations for the Unconference, thus also strengthening the cooperation between our network and these organisations.

For more than a year, we have been industriously working on the conception, planning and organisation of the first “Historians' Unconference” and are happy that our plans are coming to fruition! In spring, we decided on the “PROGR” in Bern as our venue and 7th and 8th June 2024 as our date. The working group has created subgroups for fundraising, organisation, outreach/communication and programme. Our fundraising in the second half of 2023 was so successful that our finance goal was almost reached by the end of 2023. In spring 2024, we plan to launch a separate microsite for the Unconference with the official invitation and registration form. We are looking forward to 2024 and the upcoming Historians' Unconference!

Members: Fabienne Amlinger, Claire Louise Blaser, Claire-Lise Debluë, Eliot Gisel, Zora Heimlicher, Zoé Kergomard, Eliane Kurmann, Lucia Leoni, Dominique Lysser, Valerie Muhmenthaler, Rahel Urech



## Review | Preview of the Podcast Working Group

The podcast working group was set up by interested members of the network and the board. The goal was to develop a podcast providing a platform to female\* historians from and in Switzerland to showcase their research, their work and their concerns. The podcast has been born under the name "[Café des Historiennes](#)", while its first season is called "Unterforscht/A explorer". This first season was produced throughout 2022 and 2023, starting with the conception of the series and the topic of the first season in autumn 2022, followed by conducting interviews in winter and spring, post production in summer 2023 and publication and communication in November/December 2023. The production of this first season has taken a long time, and we were repeatedly forced to delay the publication of the first couple of episodes. In spite or maybe because of all these delays and obstacles we are proud of the result: the "Café des Historiennes" is live and available on the usual podcast platforms as well as Youtube. In the first two episodes, our guests open new perspectives on history and talk about their unconventional research approaches:

Episode 1: [Politique, sexualité et religion avec Aline Johner](#) (french)

Episode 2: [Intellektualität als Arbeit mit Monika Wulz](#) (german)

The first two episodes have so far been accessed around 140 times. More episodes for 2024 are in the works.

Members: Claire Louise Blaser, Nathalie Dahn-Singh, Lou-Salomé Heer, Tamara Widmer, Angela Wittwer

## Review | Preview of the Blog Working Group

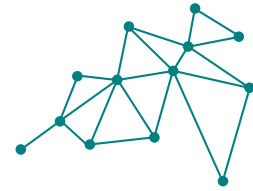
Our blog is an open space for female\* historians, for exchanging research results and work experience as well as advocating for their concerns and interests. It is an easy-access publication platform for texts that wouldn't find a space in regular scientific publications. Since January 2023, the blog working group has supported the creation of two articles, both of which are published:

[Zoé Kergomard, 19. Januar 2023, \(Re-\)prendre le pouvoir sur les outils numériques](#)

[Yvonne Fuchs, 23. April 2023, transcriptiones – die Onlineplattform für Transkriptionen](#)

Due to some changes in the group, we have reflected on the development of the blog and launched a call for new members. We proposed ideas for formats in hopes of inspiring new writing – for example about sources, a proposal from our group member Silvia Stamm.





We successfully organised two online meetings for interested members (8 November 2023 and 24 January 2024) to propose and discuss new blog post ideas. We will continue to work on establishing a community of editors and authors for the blog. We are always happy to hear about new ideas, so feel free to contact us!

Members: Antonia Bertschinger, Aurore Müller, Silvia Stamm, Zoé Kergomard

Former members who have left the working group in 2022 – with many thanks for their contribution: Tiziana Bonetti, Nathalie Grunder

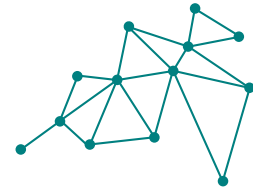
## Review | Preview of the Communication Working Group

The Communication working group was formed at the board's retreat in May 2023, as a merger between the former Social Media working group, the person responsible for our outreach/networking campaigns and the person responsible for our member e-mails. The goal was to bundle our efforts and streamline the coordination of communication tasks. More urgently, the Social Media working group had shrunk to one member and was in need of reinforcement. In our planning for 2023, the board therefore also had to take into account that our resources for the communication of network events or publications are currently limited. In addition, we had to discuss which platforms are right for us. We have revived our LinkedIn, while Twitter/X is becoming ever less appropriate for our communication. While the internal e-mails with news, information and events for our members are working well and hopefully bringing added value to our members, our Social Media channels have slowed down due to a lack of personal resources, after two active years in 2021 and 2022.

We hope to reinvigorate the Communication working group with new people and ideas in 2024, in order to increase our visibility and to provide our publications and activities with the public reach they merit.

Members: Zora Heimlicher, Tamara Widmer, Angela Wittwer

Former members who have left the working group in 2022 – with many thanks for their contribution: Claire Louise Blaser



## Outreach Campaign

In order to grow the network even further, we launched several Outreach campaigns in 2023. The campaign to acquire new sponsoring members is already completed, another campaign for acquiring new regular members will be concluded in 2024. For this campaign, we have collected many addresses of institutions, associations and places which we will approach with printed material or on digital channels. The printed flyers and e-mails are ready and will be sent out in spring 2024.

## Website

The website has had no major changes – with one big exception: the long awaited tool for our members' internal networking was developed and tested by the weloveyou web agency. (It will go live in spring 2024.) We have also changed our webhosting to weloveyou so that now everything can be managed at the same place.

## Translations

All year, our translators have made it possible that the network can communicate in up to five languages:

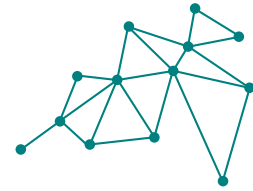
Cinzia Caspar (Romansh)

Izel Demirbas (French)

Lucia Leoni (Italian, English)

Anne-Valérie Zuber (French)

A great thank you to all of them!



## Financial Situation and concluding remarks from the network's office

At the 2023 AGM, our members agreed to invest a major part of our funds in the members' area on the website. With this decision, the financial milestones for 2023 were already set. Our networking tool, which allows members to search for and find historians\* according to their expertise, is a great added value.

In addition there was another great change: in summer 2023, I took over the office from Anna de Quervain. I wish to thank her again for her great work in the name of all (board) members of the Network of Female Historians.

We now have about 200 active members. This provides our project with a stable financial basis. We hope to gain many more historians\* for our mission in 2024. Thanks to our administration software Webling and the improved interface with our website, the administration of our constantly rising number of members now runs mostly automatically.

Due to the large investment in 2023, our funds are low at the moment of writing. In 2024, we will focus on acquiring enough funds to be able to launch new and larger projects. If you have good ideas for fundraising, we are happy to hear them!

Part of this endeavour will be raising the membership fees on which we will decide at the 2024 AGM. The fast growth of our network also increases the administrative work, so it would be very helpful if we could pay someone for the office work at least in part.

To conclude I would like to thank you all very warmly: for your engagement, your curiosity, the skills and knowledge you are contributing and your time.

Zora Melina Heimlicher