

Clowns Without Borders International

Press Kit



GENERAL INFORMATION

Clowns Without Borders was originally the idea of children for children.

The historic initiative of Clowns Without Borders started in 1993 during the conflict in ex-Yugoslavia when Tortell Poltrona, a clown from Spain, was asked by the children at a school in Barcelona to go to the Istrian Peninsula in Croatia to perform for refugee children. The creation of Payasos Sin Fronteras Spain was rapidly followed by the creation of the same type of entities throughout Europe and then the world.

In 2012, Clowns Without Borders International was born.

Clowns Without Borders International is a non-governmental organization gathering national chapters.



15 national independent chapters throughout the world

Australia - Austria - Belgium - Brazil - Canada - Finland
France - Germany - Ireland - South Africa - Spain - Sweden
Switzerland - United Kingdom - United States of America

Clowns Without Borders chapters share a common mission:

To offer joy and laughter to relieve the suffering of all persons, especially children, who live in areas of crisis including refugee camps, conflict zones and territories in situations of emergency. They organize artistic and humanitarian omnibet projects in collaboration with local and international partners, working in more than 40 countries per year.

CWBI aims to facilitate communication and cooperation between Clowns Without Borders national chapters around the world as well as to protect and support the common identity and the quality of the work of existing and future Clowns Without Borders chapters through accountability and governance.

Clowns Without Borders believes that every child, regardless of their situation, should have the right to simply be a child and to have a childhood.

Clowns Without Borders is dedicated to create unique opportunities for children to play, laugh and express themselves. With the arts of clowning and circus we create an environment free of pain and prejudice; through sharing experiences between betrig people, we strive to foster understanding between diverse cultures and ideologies.

CWBI board is composed of representatives from every chapter and the steering committee is elected once a year.

For the year 2017 it was voted as follows:

President : Alexander Strauss (Germany): alex.strauss@clownsohnegrenzen.org

Secretary : Sarah Liane Foster (USA): sarah@clownswithoutborders.org

Treasurer : Annabel Morgan (South Africa): annabel@cwbsa.org

PARTNERSHIPS



To fulfil its goal, CWBI usually work with different partners:

- ♦ **NGOs working on the field** of the countries of intervention: we have a formal partnership with Plan International (MoU signed in 2015 and extended in 2017), and we often work with Doctors Without Borders, Save the Children, Terre des Hommes, Action Contre la Faim, Red Cross...
- ♦ **UN agencies:** we have been a consultative partner of UNESCO since September 2015, and we often work with UNHCR in many refugee camps, as well as with UNICEF and UNRWA.
- ♦ **The academic world:** CWBI is trying to get some academic background for the ideas inherent in the activities implemented. That is why we get in touch with university professors studying clowning, resilience through laughter, etc.

ADVOCACY



We are defending the right for children to be children again, and the right to have a childhood, defined by the article 31.2 of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* enabling the children and their relatives to make use of their right to attend and participate in cultural activities. Indeed, in some regions of the world, cultural life is restrained by the circumstances. The idea is to consider cultural needs as much as basic needs. Giving hope and resilience to people is as important as food and water. We want to be the warrants of those rights and guarantee that people and communities have an access to culture, and can choose the type of cultural activities that are suitable for them.

We want to offer culture, arts, and play when the environment surrounding the children doesn't allow them to be children. In our respect for all the cultures we neither export occidental values nor question the local ones. We manage to defend it while always including our audience's own culture.

We also never cease to bring awareness about unknown situations. Humanitarian situations are often brought to light by NGOs or social workers on the field. The more we partner with them, the more they are willing to ask for our help call in a given country, which reinforces our capacities. A growing part of CWBI's activity is to advocate the ethical principles of its action towards the general public and the media.

INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

« Fostering the diversity of cultural and artistic expressions by supporting the networking and international cooperation between clowns and circus-related artists ».

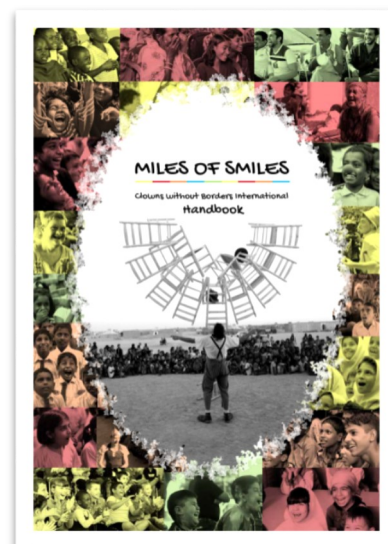


♦ International symposium « How do we bring joy in crisis areas? »

CWBI organized an international symposium took place in Schwangau (Germany) the 21st of May 2017. It has gathered 30 persons, members of Clowns Without Borders International but also researchers working on clowns traditions around the world. Several panel discussions were organized about artistic references, education tools, security, evaluation and chapters' structuration (administration, communication, funding). During the symposium, a film producer realized short interviews of CWBI's members: stories from the field and quick questions that raise elements of discussions.

♦ Good practices Handbook « Miles of Smiles »

The handbook is a capitalization of knowledge from CWBI chapters. It contains education tools, artistic references, security rules, an evaluation protocol, and elements of reflection about artistic performances and humanitarian situations. The main objectives are to have a publication documenting CWBI ways of working with people in crisis area, including pictures and videos from field projects and to standardized the project procedure in order to react quickly and efficiently in case of crisis.



Discover the [Handbook](#) on our website.

♦ Creation of an E-Library « Clown Cloud »

The E-Library is an online resource centre that enhances the visibility of the clown universe around the world and promotes living arts as a tool for peace and resilience in situations of humanitarian crisis.



<http://www.theclowncloud.org/>

The transmedia platform has three main objectives:

1. To acknowledge the existence of the figure of the clown as an immaterial patrimony worldwide.
2. To provide online resources for artists and groups of artists starting to work. For example, CWB work with artists in Haiti, Rwanda, and many other countries, who are asking for help to find references and improve their artistic skills.
3. To promote the use of living arts as bringing a unique added-value to humanitarians and communities affected by emergency situations.

JOINT PROJECTS

The aim of CWBI is to encourage artistic collaborations between its national chapters, a lot of shows have been created for joint projects. CWBI favors those initiatives because having artists joining from different nationalities and cultures enriches the project.

In 2017, 8 joint projects were led by CWB chapters.

PSF Brazil, CWB South Africa, CWB Sweden and CWB USA joined for a project in South Sudan (April 1st to 19th)

The ongoing civil war in South Sudan has left thousands of families without homes and hope. Many children have witnessed alarming levels of violence and experienced trauma that is very distressing and heartbreaking. The war has stripped them of their fundamental children's rights – to laugh, to play, to dream, and most of all, to be safe. VISTAS aims to increase capacity to manage conflict and tensions, promote a more informed community, and engage communities in trauma awareness to lay a foundation for healing and reconciliation. We are honored to be partnering with such an organization! We visited camps in Bentiu, Malakal, and Juba to perform for internally displaced children as well as to provide training to local facilitators and youth on how to integrate arts-based approaches with ongoing services and engagement in communities.



EMBLEMATIC PROJECTS



Clowns Without Borders Australia

Rwanda , April 30th to May 14th

Rwanda is home to hundreds of thousands refugees, some from the genocide in 1994, others from Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Uganda and South Sudan. Clowns without Borders Australia collaborated with CUG Sweden which has been working in Rwanda since 2009 with the local acrobatic group Gisenyi acrobats.

On this years tour we performed for 10400 people to the large refugee camps around Rwanda .



CWB Australia, CUG Sweden, Rwanda, © Thomas Olsson, 2017



<http://www.clownswithoutborders.com.au/contact/>



<http://www.clownswithoutborders.com.au/>

Clowns Ohne Grenzen Österreich-Austria Italy, August 28th to September 9th

Our local organizer, Alessandra D`Abate has prepared a tour program so that we can play in 11 different locations in Sicily: a prison, followed by various public or religious institutions for young adult refugees, homes for children and young people fleeing or orphaned, a home for the elderly, in which political refugees with physical disabilities were also housed, public places of support for integration, a church, the oncology department of a hospital and a former monastery, which served as a meeting place and shelter.



Clog Austria, Italy, © Clog Austria, 2017



Clowns Sans Frontières Belgique

Clowns Zonder Grenzen België

Afghanistan, March 14th to April 7th



CLOWNS MAGICIENS SANS FRONTIÈRES
La rive est la plus courte distance entre deux personnes

Ka-Boum is the name of the show that took three artists from CSF/CZG Belgium to Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, in March 2017. This mission was organized in partnership with Médecins sans Frontières, the NGO Aschiana and the social circus school Mini Mobile Circus for Children. The project's audience was mainly working children (about 70 per cent of Afghan children), schoolchildren and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). It is important to cross borders with countries such as Afghanistan, which are considered as "red zones" where people have been living in a state of war for more than 30 years, but where there is a lot of work to be done.

It's a country where CWB hasn't been in 12 years, and the needs are huge!



CSF/CZG Belgium, Afghanistan, © CSF/CZG Belgium, 2017



info.cmsf@gmail.com



<http://www.cmsf.be/>

Palhaços Sem Fronteiras Brasil

"Ocupa o Riso", Brazil 2017

The most important project that we carried out was the annual project "Ocupa o Riso". We did a presentation in São Paulo once a month, for refugee populations in Brazil, for populations living in conflict areas and occupied areas, and for populations with drugs problems.

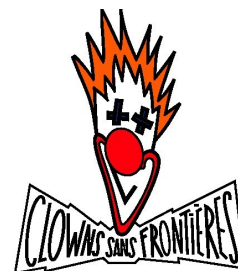


PSF Brazil, Brazil, © Ricardo Avellar, 2017



Clowns Sans Frontières Canada

Haiti, August 4th to September 2nd



Clowns Sans Frontières Canada achieved its fourth year of artistic co-creation followed by tours with the CIRQUE LOCAL troupe that it accompanies in order to perpetuate the action for vulnerable children in Haiti. A cohort of artists has performed in the capital of Haiti. This brand new show on circus, storytelling and clown poetics focuses on the fight against bullying and highlights the know-how of local partners.



CSF Canada, Haiti, © Katel Le Fustec, 2017



contact@clownssansfrontieres.ca



<http://www.clownssansfrontieres.ca/>

Klovnit Ilman Rajoja-Finland

Finland, Helsinki, February 2nd to September 9th

Clowns Without Borders Finland has led several clown cafes with workshops activities in the city of Helsinki and its surroundings during 2017 for around 300 refugees.



KIR Finland, Finland, Drawing from Primary school 3C, Kaisaniemi





Clowns Sans Frontières France

Thailand and Myanmar with Karen minority

For nine years Clowns Sans Frontières France has implemented artistic projects in Myanmar and Thailand with vulnerable communities such as Karen minority.

From this experience on the field and after having carried out assessments near the boundary between those two countries, CSF-France decided in 2016 to set up a cross-country programme among the Karen community, largely affected by forced displacements.

Nowadays, around 100 000 Karen refugees still remain in Thailand into informal settlement and few thousands are still considered as internal displaced people onto the Myanmar's side. In closely link with local artists and its field partners, as monastic schools and burmese administration, CSF-F set up two missions in 2017; one in January in Tak et Mae Hong Son regions in Thailand and one in December in the Kayin and the Mon States in Myanmar. Thus, more than 5 900 have been reached and CSF-France managed to train and to sustain 4 Burmese artists, and the success of this year augurs well for the upcoming year.



CSF France, Thailand, © Thomas Louapre, January 2017



contact@clowns-france.org



<http://www.clowns-sans-frontieres-france.org/>

Clowns Ohne Grenzen Deutschland e.V

Passing on the knowledge and capacities, Iraq and Nepal



CLOWNS OHNE GRENZEN
Deutschland e.V.

In addition to the regular projects
Clowns Without Borders Germany has led projects
for the development of passing on the knowledge and capacities of
clowns- and circusarts (up to the extend of a trauma recovery programm)
to children, local artists and caretakers by teaching the skills and creating shows,
which the local children and artists performed for their communities.
This was done in India, Nepal, Iraq and in refugee places inside Germany.



CloG Germany, Iraq, © Katharina Ebel, June 2017



CloG Germany, Nepal, © Anita Bertolami, February and March 2017



info@clownsohnegrenzen.org



<http://clownsohnegrenzen.org/>



Clowns Without Borders Ireland

Greece with KIR— Finland, September 3rd to 11th 2017

The tour to Greece as it was a very successful collaboration with the Finnish branch, KIR-Finland.

There was great artist skill exchange on the tour and a wonderfully professional and supportive approach from all the four artists involved. This resulted in a very rich offering to the children in various camps in Greece and to the NGO's we partnered with: Lighthouse Relief and Helping Hands International.



CWB Ireland, KIR Finland, Greece, © Lighthouse Relief , 2017



info@cwbiireland.com



<http://www.cwbiireland.com/>

Clowns Without Borders South Africa

Playtime antics, Johannesburg, August 7th to 16th



This is the fourth performance of Playtime Antics in collaboration with FTH:K. A Non-verbal show aimed at performing at Deaf and Hearing schools in South Africa, by an integrated Deaf and hearing team.

This show takes a look into the first school day of 3 very different School children. Penelop is a feisty, A-grade pupil, with a tendency to get over anxious. Zucchini is our regular nerd trying to fit in and keep everyone happy. Barbecue is our bully with a soft side. We follow the 3 characters from their morning routines at home, to maths class, to art class and the much awaited break time. Through the use of mime, magic and juggling, we watch how the three relate to each other and try to govern power through play. The show is very entertaining; as children are able to relate to 'themselves' on stage and also for teachers to have the opportunity to laugh at the politics of their learners. With strong themes of friendship, peer pressure and bullying also at play, teachers have viewed the production as a very educational tool for their learners.

"Our learners and staff have enjoyed a lot. The performance was very educational to us all. Please come again next-time." - Educator at Ekurhuleni School for the Deaf

"It doesn't mean that you're deaf, you can't do anything. What we saw today is even very educational play. That we who can hear can't even do. Interesting, we wish them a very good future. Thanks to what they did." - Foster parent at Sunlight Safe House



CWB South Africa, South Africa, © CWB SA, 2017



info@cwbsa.org



<http://cwbsa.org/>

Payasos Sin Fronteras-Spain

Lebanon , September and December

Most of the kids affected by war and its inherent violence are suffering post traumatic stress in different levels. Payasos sin Fronteras, together with Crisis Center of Barcelona; a resource centre dedicated to the care provision, training and research for critical situations based in the Faculty of Psychology at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, is working in Bekaa Valley (Lebanon) with syrian refugees mixing his main tool for reinforcing resilience of kids based on clown and circus shows, with Teaching Recovery Techniques methodology with the intention to reduce the stress symptomatology on children refugee. Both activities are recognised on their positive impact amongst kids and joined together we try to increase the benefits and create new synergies. Since summer 2017 we sent 3 tours and psychologists specialized on training teachers for giving together to the kids and their families tools for reducing the post traumatic stress in a sustainable and autonomous way.



PSF Spain, Lebanon, © PSF Spain, September 2017



Clowner Utan Gränser-Sweden

South Sudan, April 24th to May 13th



2017 Clowns Without Borders Sweden continued our work in South Sudan, a country horribly affected by violence and armed conflicts where over 2 million people today are displaced from their homes. Children grow up in fear, risking being recruited to armed groups and are exposed to violence and sexual assaults. In a crisis this big the need for psychosocial support and hope big – therefore Clowns Without Borders work is well needed.

During many years Clowns Without Borders Sweden has developed a project for the refugee camps in South Sudan that in first hand target youths, a group that often is forgotten and in the danger zone for violence. Our artists educate the youths through creative workshops filled with games, storytelling and circus. The kids who goes the training becomes ambassadors and brings their new knowledge home to families and friends. In that way we create positive effects in a environment affected by instability.

During an evaluation one of the participant said:
"After the circus training I don't hit my sister when I get home"

A quote that shows the long term impact of Clowns Without Borders work and how it reduces violence and contributes to peace.



CUG Sweden, South Sudan, © Alex Hinchcliffe, 2017



info@skratt.nu



<https://skratt.nu/>



Clowns Sans Frontières-Clowns Ohne Grenzen

Clown Senza Frontiere-Switzerland

Switzerland, January 8th to May 31st

Switzerland is by tradition a country of solidarity. During the past years many refugee centers have been created to alleviate the enormous crisis originated by the armed conflicts in the Middle East and the constant flow of migrants coming from African countries. We consider that Thinking Globally and Acting Locally is one of our core values, and that's why we are putting together a program to work alongside refugee centers across Switzerland.

Clowns Without Borders Switzerland has had a pilot program in the Ticino area in partnership with the Refugee Center of Losone. It is the tip of an Iceberg called GRÜEZI and its our national program for refugees living in Switzerland. We aim to get funding for implementing a broader spectrum in 2018.



CSF/Clog Switzerland, Switzerland, © CWB Switzerland, 2017



contact.cwbch@gmail.com



<http://clownswithoutborders.ch/>

Clowns Without Borders United Kingdom

Serbia, February 20th to 27th



The team flew into Belgrade and then travelled from there via car to various Asylum and Reception centres as well as a "pop-up camp" in Belgrade near the train station. Serbia is a key waypoint on two major refugee/migration routes across Eastern Europe with displaced people arriving every day. CWB UK was the first chapter to visit Serbia in relation to the refugee and migrant crisis. All of the performances and workshop were extremely well received. One of the workers at the Presevo Asylum Centre described the excitement of the children at the arrival of the clowns as similar to "Beatle-mania"!

One of the most powerful shows was at the "pop up camp" at Belgrade Train station, the audience was mostly made up of young men, however, because there is so little activity happening there at all, no distractions, no visitors - basically nothing, they were delighted by the entertainment.

"They (the refugees) are living in this terrible place but they were all smiling and laughing when they saw the show. They liked it so much they came to the asylum centre afterwards to see the show again! I think this was because it was so out of the ordinary and out of their daily routine. Many of the young men have lived in the train-station for months and months without any light-relief and so much negativity". – Volunteer



CWB UK, Serbia, © Sarah Hickson, 2017



<http://clownswithoutborders.org.uk/contact/>

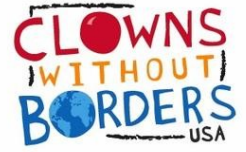


<http://clownswithoutborders.org.uk/>

Clowns Without Borders United States of America

Collaboration with local artists, Lebanon and Turkey

CWB USA collaborates with artists in the field,
to encourage and strengthen the artistic life
in the areas of intervention.



In 2017, CWB USA had two main collaborations: **in Turkey** (July 23 to August 1) with Turkish artistic group led by Guray Dincol and **in Lebanon** (October 17 to November 1) partnering with Clown Me In, a Lebanese clown troupe.



CWB USA, Turkey, © CWB USA, July 2017



CWB USA, Lebanon, © CWB USA, October 2017



info@clownswithoutborders.org



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