



# Annual Report 2021

**C**lowns **W**ithout **B**orders **I**nternational

Published by Clowns Without Borders International  
Plaça Margarida Xirgu  
08004 – Barcelona, Spain

Contact: [cwbi.contact@gmail.com](mailto:cwbi.contact@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.cwb-international.org](http://www.cwb-international.org)

© Clowns Without Borders International (CWBI), May 2022  
Cover photograph: © PSF Spain - Lebanon - 2021

# FOREWORD

After three years of preparation, during which ethical, artistic and legal foundations were discussed, the time had come in June 2012 : Clowns Without Borders International was founded in Rouen, France.

At that time, I was lucky enough to meet these enthusiastic people and to hear about the idea of an international association of clowns without borders for the first time. What I did not know yet was that I would be able to make my own contribution to the development of the organisation some years later.

In the opening speech of the founding meeting, interim president Pelle Hanaeus spoke of a historic moment of founding the organisation as a peaceful place where we could meet again and again. He also mentioned that he was not sure where this initiative would lead, but at least it was born in a context of confidence of being able to do something good.

Today, ten years later, we can acknowledge that we have succeeded, not only in scaling up our own partner organisations in a sustainable way but also implementing an ever increasing number of projects for our target groups. Yet there were years in which we were able to draw from our full resources, but also those that were challenging for ourselves. Indeed, the last two years of the Covid pandemic have also challenged us to find new ways of living up to our mission and aspirations and to develop further and partly reinvent ourselves as an organisation.

Not only our partner associations had to prove their flexibility and creativity to be active for our target groups locally and digitally despite the constraints of the pandemic. We, as the International network of Clowns Without Borders, have also been encouraged to use the time to put our governance to the test and move towards becoming a more inclusive organisation.

Most of what we were able to achieve was achieved on a voluntary basis, using trust, patience, a willingness to learn, joy and friendship. We can be justifiably proud of this, as well as of the fact that in the last 30 years (since the foundation of Payasos sin Fronteras Spain) we have succeeded in anchoring the value of artistic work in a humanitarian context in the consciousness of millions of people worldwide.

Ending with Pelle's words from ten years ago, even before we talked about an organisation, we helped each other. I'm sure Clowns Without Borders will still be doing this in 10 years and beyond. Continuing to do so, we will remain role models for children.

**Alexander Strauss,**  
*President of Clowns Without  
Borders International*



# CONTENT

Foreword



**1**

## ACTIVITIES IN 2021

2021 Timeline

CWBI chapters activities

Joint projects

## WHO WE ARE

Mission

Beneficiaries

History

Steering committee

**2**



**3**

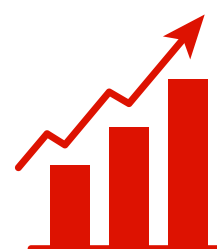
## TOWARD A MORE INCLUSIVE ORGANISATION



**4**

## FINANCIAL REPORT

Thanks





# 2021 TIMELINE



**FEBRUARY**

**Board Meeting**

**FEBRUARY**

**Collective statement about activities during COVID-19**

**MARCH**

**Diversity, Inclusion & Decoloniality Policy Release**

**MAY**

**General Assembly online**

**SEPTEMBER**

**1st Online Workshop  
Policy Implementation**

**OCTOBER**

**Board Meeting**

**NOVEMBER**

**Welcome Loan, our new team member !**

**DECEMBER**

**Board Meeting**

*To be continued...*

# CWBI CHAPTERS ACTIVITIES IN 2021



**71**  
projects



**41**  
countries



**8**  
joint-projects



**950**  
shows



**110 000 +**  
children and adults  
attending shows



**1 600 +**  
workshops



**22 000 +**  
children and adults  
participating in  
workshops



## CWBI SINCE 2012

**14 CHAPTERS**

Chapters' offices

**10**  
YEARS

**126**  
COUNTRIES

**10 000+**  
SHOWS

**6 000+**  
WORKSHOPS

**2,6+ M**  
BENEFICIARIES

*Happy Birthday CWBI !*

## Shows and workshops for children affected by the flood in Germany - CWB Germany

A team of 4 artists, who had prepared a show for Nepal since a long time before the Corona-pandemic, was able to spontaneously react to the flood in July 2021 in the Northwest of Germany. Invited by the KJA (Katholische Jugendagentur), the team performed 7 shows for about 480 spectators. The audiences for the shows were the local children in schools. After the shows, the children could join small workshops with the artists, respecting the current corona-rules. In the end, there was a wonderful family celebration in a forest nearby.



© CLOG - N.U.Zeyfang - Germany 2021

## Adapting to the pandemic context

*“ Digital shows will never fully be able to replace meeting the audience in person. No matter how creative and capable our artists might be, some of the interpersonal aspects are lost when we meet through a screen. As such, now that we can finally meet in person again, face to face activities is what we will focus on. However, if we ever face a time or situation again that prohibits us to meet in person, we know that digital shows are a good option and something we are able to offer with high quality indeed. ”*

**Mays Sylwan**

Programme manager - Deputy Secretary General - CWB Sweden



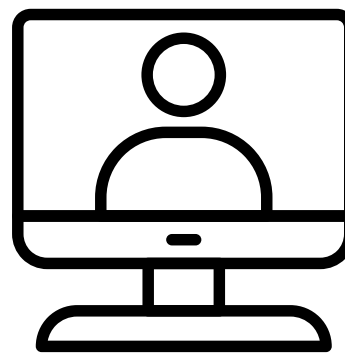
## Ripples of laughter in Ireland

Ripples of Laughter is a project led by CWB Ireland. The target group are youths and adults from 12 to 21 years old, of mixed nationality, who are seeking asylum and have been living in Ireland for between 0 and 7 years within the Direct Provision system.

These young people have had to leave their home countries and start again in Ireland, adapting to a new culture with little state support. Many live in a single room containing their entire family, and have little personal space. Additionally there are no cooking facilities in many of these centres and so the young peoples' development of independence from their parents is stunted.

CWB Ireland delivered classes in theatre and circus skills. Workshops such as these can offer serious life skills such as learning how to collaborate, co-operate and mentor; mastering anxiety to perform confidently; how to communicate and problem solve; to accept feedback; to not fear failure while learning; to grow in self-discipline and more.

These are all skills that ultimately lead to positive physical, cognitive, and social growth which is the most valuable gift we can offer young people as they transition into adulthood.



## Laughter for life : an online show in Sweden

Working digitally with shows required a new way of thinking and some creativity in order to create a connection with children in the audience.

The artists performed from their homes which made the shows feel more sincere in a way. They worked close to the camera and incorporated a lot of elements with direct communication and contact to the children. The children were also actively involved in the shows and activities by for example making sounds with casseroles from their own kitchen, blowing on balloons through the screen and in other ways helping the artists throughout the shows.

These digital activities have been a part of a larger, more extensive project which has focused on strengthening self-esteem with newly arrived children and increasing their participation in after-school and leisure activities. Through the digital activities alone, 23 children joined in three different shows.



## Online training for Plan International Staff CWB Sweden with collaboration of CWB South Africa

The aim of this training has been to strengthen Plan International's local staff and volunteers and make them feel confident in using creativity and play as an integral part of their daily work with children and adolescents.

This is an additional way of spreading joy, laughter and relief to children which of course is an aim in and of itself. Instead of doing it with artists, we do it through staff who meet these children and adolescents in different programs.

In addition, the training also builds on the staff's competences on how to create a safe space and an atmosphere that is inclusive and allows children to express themselves in.

In this sense the training is a way to strengthen and inspire both Plan staff as well as children and adolescents. In some trainings, the facilitators from Clowns Without Borders have been together on one side of the screen and all the training participants have been together on the other side. Although, the reality of covid has pushed everybody to

be flexible and in some sessions, everybody has been in a space on their own and connected from their own device.

The whole project is built around the idea of creating a ripple effect. CWB Sweden's team meet staff and volunteers which in turn can share their experiences and knowledge to their colleagues and continue to meet children and adolescents living in difficult situations.

### Social and Emotional Learning - CWB South Africa

The aim of the project was to develop a manual for teachers where South African social and learning curriculum can be presented creatively during class. Modules were developed combining role plays, group and individual activities as well as home activities. The aim was to utilise drama and theatre to align social and emotional learning for 10-12 year old students and core concepts from the parenting programme.



## Joint projects

The aim of CWBI is to facilitate collaboration and communication between its national chapters, and a lot of shows have been created through joint projects. CWBI favours these initiatives because having artists joining from different nationalities and cultures enriches the projects. In 2021, 8 joint projects were led by CWB chapters.

### El pájaro migratorio CWB France-CWB Germany in Ecuador

From September 22 to October 6, 2021, at the invitation of the Alliance française de Quito and Casa Humboldt, CWB France and CWB Germany implemented their first project in Ecuador. This project was carried out in partnership with artists from Humor Y Vida collective. After identifying the needs in terms of skill transmission, CWB France artists, specialists in the construction of giant puppets, created a giant bird with the artists of Humor y Vida.



The title of the show, "El pájaro migratorio" (The migratory bird) aimed at symbolising the fact that migration is a universal movement that has always existed in the history of humanity. The objective of the project was to bring together people from two communities that are often in tension: people in exile (mainly Venezuelans) and Ecuadorians in a precarious situation with whom they share living spaces, residing in the same neighbourhoods of the capital.

© CWB Germany and CWB France- Ecuador - 2021



## More Happiness Mozambique

### CWB UK-CWB Sweden

More Happiness Mozambique shared the power of play with 3,297 children and young people. With help from CWB Sweden, CWB UK developed the capacity of 34 staff and volunteers in the Sofala Province of Mozambique. The programme supported the use of games, stories and songs to help strengthen children's awareness of Menstrual Health Management (MHM). The activities put children at the centre of the MHM sessions and to invited them to think about themselves, their bodies and menstruation in positive ways.



© CWB Sweden and CWB UK- Mozambique - 2021

## **Infinitas Peripécias : an audiovisual webserie**

### **CWB Brazil-CWB USA**

"Boundless Adventures" is a web series inspired by ancient American myths and legends. It will be distributed throughout the Americas, in countries such as Colombia, Mexico, the United States and Brazil, in an attempt to encourage children experiencing migration to recover their self-esteem, and to deal with their emotions and daily challenges.

Children experiencing migration need support to achieve more autonomy and maintain their mental and emotional health. In the "Infinitas Peripécias" web series, this support comes in the form of short, comic stories. The cast includes Brazilian, Argentine, Venezuelan, and North American artists. The stories do not rely on speech, so they can be understood by speakers of any language without the need for translation. The "Infinitas Peripécias" web series uses the language of clowning to share playful resources and methodologies adopted in humanitarian emergency contexts around the world. These methodologies captivate children and inspire them to process their emotions and the challenges faced in the migration process.

In addition to the videos, an Spectacular Almanac will be made available for free, specially formulated to develop children's creativity and knowledge about the American continent.

**Nova série dos Palhaços Sem Fronteiras busca conexão entre povos da América em situação de migração**

agosto 30, 2021





# WHO WE ARE

Clowns Without Borders International (CWBI) aims to facilitate communication and cooperation between Clowns Without Borders 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.

CWBI is legally based in Spain and composed of 14 operational chapters throughout the world: *Australia, Switzerland, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Spain, Sweden, South Africa, United Kingdom, USA*. These national chapters organise artistic and humanitarian projects in collaboration with local and international partners, working in more than 40 countries per year. Professional artists volunteer their time to perform, lead workshops and share laughter with children and their communities.

## Mission

CWBI 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.

## Beneficiaries in 2021

- Children affected by natural disaster
- Children living in the street or in prison
- Children and adults seeking asylum

- Internal displaced people affected by war, political or economical situation
- Indigineous community
- Marginalized girls affected by sex work

## History

Clowns Without Borders International began in Spain in 1993 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 children in Barcelona raised the funds to send Tortell to Croatia after refugees in the Istrian Peninsula wrote to them: "You know what we miss most? We miss laughter, having fun, and enjoying ourselves."

On that first project Tortell performed for 4.000 Children in Croatian refugee camps. It was the beginning of "Payasos Sin Fronteras" (Clowns Without Borders Spain).

Now, 30 years later, the Clowns Without Borders International Federation is made up of 14 Clowns Without Borders national chapter organisations. Professional circus and street performers, clowns, actors, magicians and musicians offer their skills on a voluntary basis to bring laughter, dreams and poetry to communities in areas of crisis around the world.

All CWB chapters share the same objective: to improve the emotional wellbeing of communities, especially children, in areas of crisis through performances and other artistic interventions.

## CWBI Steering committee



### **PRESIDENT**

**Alexander Strauss - CWB Germany**  
[alex.strauss@clownsohnegrenzen.org](mailto:alex.strauss@clownsohnegrenzen.org)



### **TREASURER**

**Anneli De Wahl - CWB Sweden**  
[anneli.dewahl@gmail.com](mailto:anneli.dewahl@gmail.com)



### **SECRETARY**

**Arthur Toyoshima - CWB Brazil**  
[tutoyoshima@gmail.com](mailto:tutoyoshima@gmail.com)

In 2021, CWBI had one employee, Claire ROZIER based in France as an international coordinator. The team also welcomed Loan COSTIL working as a civic service position for 8 months starting in November 2021, supporting the coordination of CWBI.

Board meetings take place online three times per year, gathering representatives from all CWB chapters. Annually, CWBI coordinates the in-person General Assembly, which due to the pandemic, took place online for the second consecutive year.

# TOWARD A MORE INCLUSIVE ORGANISATION

*The diversity working group created in 2018 was focused on decoloniality and inclusion in the collaboration between chapters. As a humanitarian organisation, CWBI is engaged with diverse individuals, communities, organisations and other bodies around the world. In doing so, we need to have a **strong commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion** and ask how we collaborate in a way that supports mutuality and trust. In 2019 the organisation decided to make a statement of solidarity with the BLM movement and in order to ground the antiracism statement, create an accountable diversity policy with an action plan. The Covid pandemic also meant that there is an opportunity to review the way in which we work and collaborate with artists and stakeholders in the beneficiary countries. As the discussion around BLM and local collaborations unfolded, there was a growing urgency to review policies on representativity in our own body of artists and stakeholders.*

## Challenges and opportunities

In 2021 the main three outcomes were the creation of :

- a consistent and committed diversity steering group consisting of representatives of Sweden, Brazil, South-Africa and UK
- a statement of solidarity with the BLM movement
- the CWBi diversity policy. The policy was built from the bottom-up, from all the commonly agreed actions between chapters and voted for unanimously.

The main challenge was the different levels of diversity between chapters. In terms of antiracism, inclusion, decoloniality and diversity policies, chapters were differing, so that it proved challenging to find a common ground for necessary actions. The most beneficial outcomes was the fact that we could learn from one another and adopt the best practices of the chapters that were more advanced in antiracist actions and diversity implementation.

## Perspectives

We have a diversity working group with representatives from each chapter member. We plan to meet at least 3 times a year. We share challenges, exchange ideas and workshop solutions for diversity, decoloniality and inclusion. The main aim of the meetings is to offer a space and support for each chapter to implement the actions in the policy. Each meeting, we aim at addressing an area where diversity needs to grow : in the artistic work, recruitment and decision making. As we meet and the group becomes more cohesive, we aim at having stronger actions and continuity..

**Halima Habil,**  
*Representative of the  
Diversity, Decoloniality &  
Inclusion steering group  
and member of CWB UK*

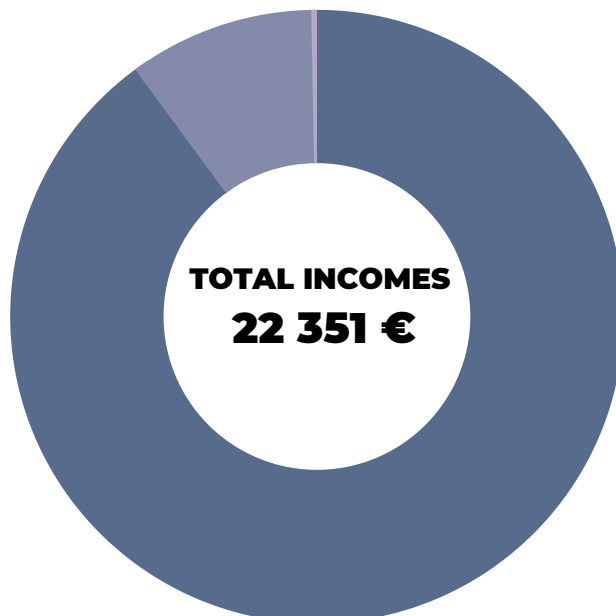


[To learn more about CWBI Diversity, decoloniality and Inclusion Policy.](#)

# FINANCIAL REPORT

## INCOMES

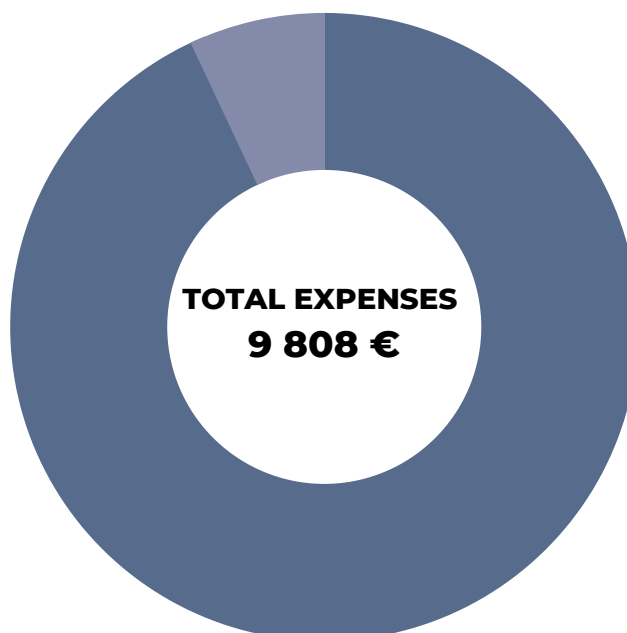
Chapter's fees 9.8% 0.3% Donations



89.9% Reserve

## EXPENSES

7% IT & resources development



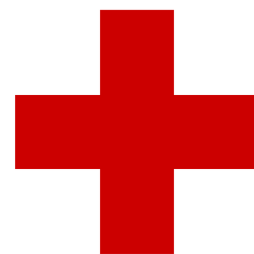
93% Coordination

**Balance between incomes and expenses : 12 542€**



# THANKS!

In 2021, CWB chapters have worked with several partners including :



**RED CROSS**



**Clowns Without Borders International**

**Plaça Margarida Xirgu**

**08004 – Barcelona, Spain**

**[cwbi.contact@gmail.com](mailto:cwbi.contact@gmail.com)**



**Follow us !**

