



ANNUAL REPORT 2025





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FOREWORD

The Language We Share

For me, the year began at our in-person annual general assembly in Germany, where member organizations from across the world came together. It is always inspiring to meet, exchange experiences, and learn from one another.

We work in very different ways, in different national contexts and organizational structures, but when we meet through the performing arts, everything becomes simple. There, we speak the same language.

During the meeting, I often thought about previous occasions when we had created performances together in just a single day, despite our different backgrounds and ways of working. At the same time, we are living in a changing world. This has shaped many of our conversations throughout the year: *how do we continue to evolve as an organization in order to reach children in vulnerable situations?*

“There, we speak the same language.”



Throughout the year, I also carried with me a story from a Clowns without Borders project in Tunisia. After a performance at a school in the mountains, a teacher showed the children's work with local plants. The scent of a plant called Cheih brought my clown colleague back to memories of her home in Palestine.



Shortly, nine-year-old Hussam returned with a bundle he had gathered from the mountains. When my clown colleague tried to thank him, he simply replied: “You made us laugh... I brought you the Cheih.”

To me, that captures something essential about our work. It is not only about laughter in the moment, but about connection and humanity.

That is the strength of Clowns Without Borders — our ability to come together, create together, and keep children at the center of everything we do.

“We work in very different ways, in different national contexts and organizational structures, but when we meet through the performing arts, everything becomes simple.”

Anneli De Wahl,
President
Clowns Without Borders International





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ABOUT US

Clowns Without Borders International

Clowns Without Borders International is an independent, non-profit organization and a global network of 13 national chapters across the Americas, Europe, Africa, and Asia. It brings together professional performing artists—clowns, musicians, magicians, dancers, acrobats, puppeteers, and others—who volunteer their skills to bring laughter, connection, and hope to communities affected by crisis, including those living in refugee camps or impacted by conflict, disaster, and states of emergency.

Through performances and workshops, artists create safe and inclusive spaces where communities can gather, reconnect, and experience moments of relief and joy amid challenging circumstances.

International chapters

Clowns Without Borders International chapters are located in Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, and India. The organization is independent and has no affiliations with religious or political entities.

The organization is governed by a board composed of representatives from each national chapter, supported by a steering committee that ensures the organization operates in alignment with its mission and strategic priorities. Clowns Without Borders International meets in person bi-annually for its Annual General Meeting which brings together chapters to strengthen collaboration across the global network.



Clowns Without Borders USA in Brazil, 2025.



Our approach

Theory of change

Clowns Without Borders International work is guided by a clear theory of change: when children and young people are provided with safe, inclusive spaces for play, creative expression, and participation, their psychosocial well-being is strengthened, their confidence and agency increase, and communities become more resilient and cohesive. Laughter and artistic engagement are not ends in themselves, but catalysts for emotional regulation, dialogue, and empowerment.

Through participatory performances and workshops, our artists create spaces where young people are active contributors. The clown figure—empathetic, responsive, and unafraid of failure—models alternative ways of handling conflict, mistakes, and difference. By transforming vulnerability into shared creativity, we foster problem-solving skills, empathy, and collective trust across language, age, and cultural barrier.

Our methodology combines direct psychosocial engagement with capacity-building for local artists and civil society actors, ensuring that creative, rights-based approaches are embedded and sustained within communities beyond our immediate intervention. Our work is grounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly Article 31:

I. States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

II. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.



We view play, laughter, and artistic participation not as secondary luxuries, but as fundamental rights and essential components of healthy development, dignity, and peacebuilding. Our work is integrated with and contributes to the objectives of Agenda 2030, particularly SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

Clowns Without Borders International operates under a formal Ethical Code, adopted in 2017, which ensures that all activities are safe, inclusive, and respectful. It guides artist conduct, safeguards children and communities, and guarantees that our work remains neutral, culturally sensitive, and rights-based.

In line with our 2021 policy on Diversity, Decoloniality, and Inclusion, Clowns Without Borders International is committed to being an inclusive and anti-racist organization. As a European-rooted network frequently working in contexts shaped by colonial histories, we critically examine power dynamics in our partnerships and methodologies. This framework prioritizes collaboration with local actors, supports locally led initiatives, and ensures our work strengthens—not replaces—local cultural ecosystems.



Clowns Without Borders USA in Egypt 2025. Photo by Ahmed Mousa



ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Strengthening our collective impact

From 19–21 May 2025, Clowns Without Borders International convened its bi-annual in-person General Assembly in Munich, Germany. Hosted by the German chapter, the gathering brought together representatives from 13 member chapters—Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, with India on link—to align strategic priorities and strengthen collective impact.

A central component of the Annual General Assembly was the formal Board Meeting, where members reviewed and voted on proposed updates to existing policies, as well as the introduction of new organizational documents. These discussions contribute to ensuring a transparent, informative, and well-functioning governance structure.

The Assembly also provided an opportunity to reflect on the organization's development, including its structure and the growth of collaborative projects across regions. Through a series of workshops, participants engaged in thematic discussions on areas such as organizational development, financial sustainability, and the impact of a shifting global context, including the increasingly restricted space for civil society in certain regions.



A picture at the end of a workshop at the Annual General Assembly 2025.



Global Perspectives and Future Growth

The Assembly maintained a strong outward-looking perspective on the broader humanitarian landscape. Louise Frisk, former President of Clowns Without Borders Sweden and, at the time, Nordic Director at AMREF Health Africa, joined as a guest speaker. She shared insights on current shifts affecting non-governmental organizations and humanitarian aid, prompting reflection on how these developments influence both operational approaches and the communities served.

As the assembly concluded, chapters returned to their local context with renewed energy and shared insights from the meeting.



A group picture from the Annual General Assembly 2025.



KEY INITIATIVES

Throughout 2025, Clowns Without Borders International continued to strengthen its organizational capacity through targeted initiatives focused on governance, financial model, and internal collaboration. These efforts aim to ensure a sustainable and well-coordinated foundation for the organization's global work.

Partnerships

During the autumn, Clowns Without Borders International partnered with the university-based consulting organization 180 Degrees Consulting Copenhagen for a three-month pro bono collaboration.

180 Degrees Consulting supports non-governmental organizations in addressing strategic, financial, administrative, and organizational development challenges. Through this collaboration, NGOs benefit from tailored support, while students gain hands-on experience and practical management skills.

A team of five students worked closely with Clowns Without Borders International to strengthen data collection processes, enhance the visibility of the organization's work, and foster greater collaboration and knowledge sharing across chapters.

The collaboration resulted in a comprehensive set of recommendations addressing these areas, which will be shared and worked through with member organizations in 2026.



From left, Anete Krumina, Gabriella Yu, Yana Shepetko, Nahin Alif and Zacharia A. Chheiber.



Financial system development

During the year, significant efforts were made to strengthen the organization's financial structure. The budget has been further developed to ensure greater coherence, enabling clearer analysis and improved comparison across financial years. This work supports increased transparency and provides a stronger foundation for strategic decision-making and long-term sustainability.

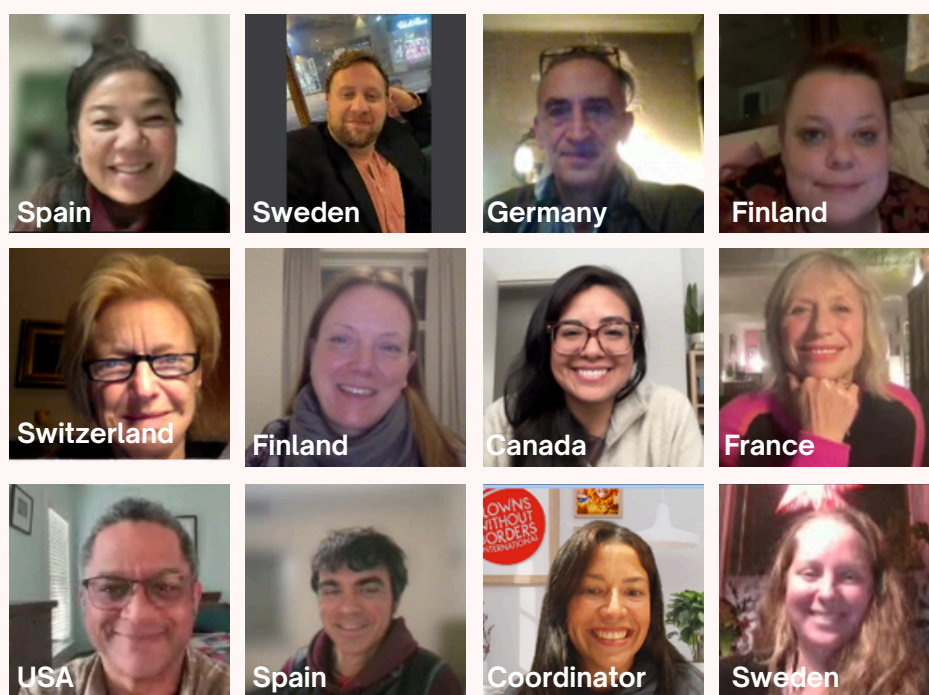
New chapter process

Clowns Without Borders International creates working groups with participants from all chapters who volunteer to work on a subject that have been chosen to be developed by the organizations board. In 2025, a working group have met four times throughout the year to further develop the formal process for new organizations applying to become Clowns Without Borders members.

This resulted in a finalized process along with a visual roadmap which outlines the full new chapter process, including requirements, timelines, support and practical steps for applying for a membership. The objective is to ensure a transparent, structured and fair process for future growth.

Strategy and Organizational Development

The organization's three-year strategy ends in 2027 (2024–2027) and have therefore been revisited during the organizations regular board meetings, ensuring continuous evaluation of progress and adapting to changing circumstances.



Picture from the Clowns Without Borders International's board meeting, 11 December 2025.



CHAPTER ACTIVITIES IN 2025



87
projects



44
countries



18
joint-projects



4330
shows



134 928
children and adults
attending shows



1399
workshops



17790
children and adults
participating in
workshops



COUNTRIES VISITED IN 2025



North & Central America

Canada
Costa Rica
El Salvador
Guatemala
Mexico
USA

Europe

Albania
Armenia
Belgium
France
Germany
Romania
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
UK
Ukraine

South America

Brazil
Colombia

Africa

Benin
Congo
Egypt
Ethiopia
Madagascar
Morocco
Rwanda
Senegal
South Sudan
Tanzania
Tunisia
Uganda
Zimbabwe

Middle East

Jordan
Lebanon
Palestine
Syria
Türkiye
Yemen

Asia

Bangladesh
Cambodia
China
India
Myanmar
Philippines



GOVERNANCE

Clowns Without Borders International has 13 member chapters. Each chapter appoints a representative to participate in the organization's board meetings, which are held four times annually.

The Steering Committee consists of a President, two Vice Presidents, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. The steering committee is elected annually during the General Assembly.

The organization maintained 13 chapters throughout 2025. The organizational administration and coordination was carried out by Clowns Without Borders part time employee, Valentina Bravo Jara.

Steering committee 2025



PRESIDENT

Anneli De Wahl
Clowns Without Borders Sweden



SECRETARY

Meredith Gordon
Clowns Without Borders USA



TREASURER

Samantha Holdsworth
Clowns Without Borders UK



VICE PRESIDENT

Marik Wagner
Clowns Without Borders France



VICE PRESIDENT

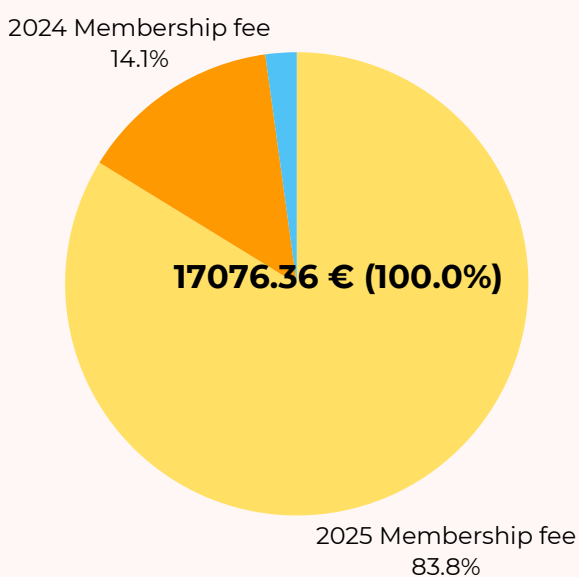
Susie Wimmer
Clowns Without Borders Germany





FINANCIAL REPORT

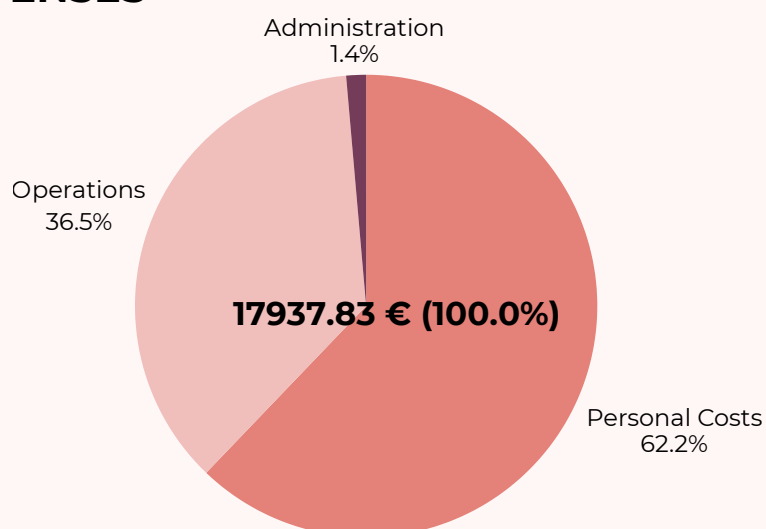
INCOME



Total Income: 17076.36 €

- 2025 Membership fees
- 2024 Membership fees
- Donations

EXPENSES



Total Income: 17937.83 €

- Personnel costs
- Operations
- Administration

Total expenditure exceeded income by €861.47 during 2025, resulting in a small reduction in reserves.



FINANCIAL REPORT

Net movement of funds

(Income-Expenses)

TOTAL FUNDS AT 01 Jan 2025: 13305.93

TOTAL FUNDS AT 31 Dec 2025: 12067.43

Balance Sheet as of 31 Dec 2025:

Assets: Amount

Cash in bank: € 12067.43 (Paypal and Credit Mutuel)

Outstanding income (Debtors): € 2 400*

Other assets: € 0

Total Assets

Liabilities:

Outstanding expenses (Creditors): € 0

Other liabilities: € 0

Net Assets

**The outstanding income (debtors) of € 2 400* is late membership fees including € 1100 and €1300.*





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