



**RED NOSES**  
**CLOWNDOCTORS**  
International



International

# Annual Report **2021**

RED NOSES International





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The restrictions, lockdowns and challenges brought upon us by the pandemic continued for much of the year 2021. Our resilience and experience gained in the previous year, allowed us to not only continue our work, but also successfully transition to a new normalcy, going back to hospitals, elderly homes, and crisis areas as soon as it was possible.

These past two years revealed not only the importance of mental health for patients and people living in crisis areas, but also the strength and character of our healthcare clowns and international teams. With a great deal of flexibility and creativity we reimagined ourselves and we succeeded to provide psychosocial support for thousands of people in need of joy. As the world recovers, one thing was made clear, and that it is the vital value of laughter in times of hardship.

The challenges and sacrifices that we all experienced, yet again, last year, will lead to the creation of a different world. A world where mental health and human connection are a priority, and we are counting on being main actors in this beautiful transformation of systemic changes.

As this report that you are about to read demonstrates, we never stopped working on our mission and in the further development of our strategic ambitions for 2025. We were able to visit more than 300 thousand children in hospitals and elderly people. Meanwhile, our emergency outreach team continued to work in crisis-hit areas such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece and Ukraine.

Our international teams worked in parallel to match the impact being made in the field by kicking-off our ClowNexus project with laboratories in Hungary and Finland, developing an advocacy strategy and creating a fund to support innovation within the organisation.

In 2021, we continued to be astounded by our donors' generosity, that despite the adversity of the past couple of years, showed an unflinching commitment, and for that we are ever grateful.

We are very proud to present this report which we hope will give you a complete insight into our daily activities and the impactful work we do in more than 11 countries around the world.

*Gjora Seeliger*

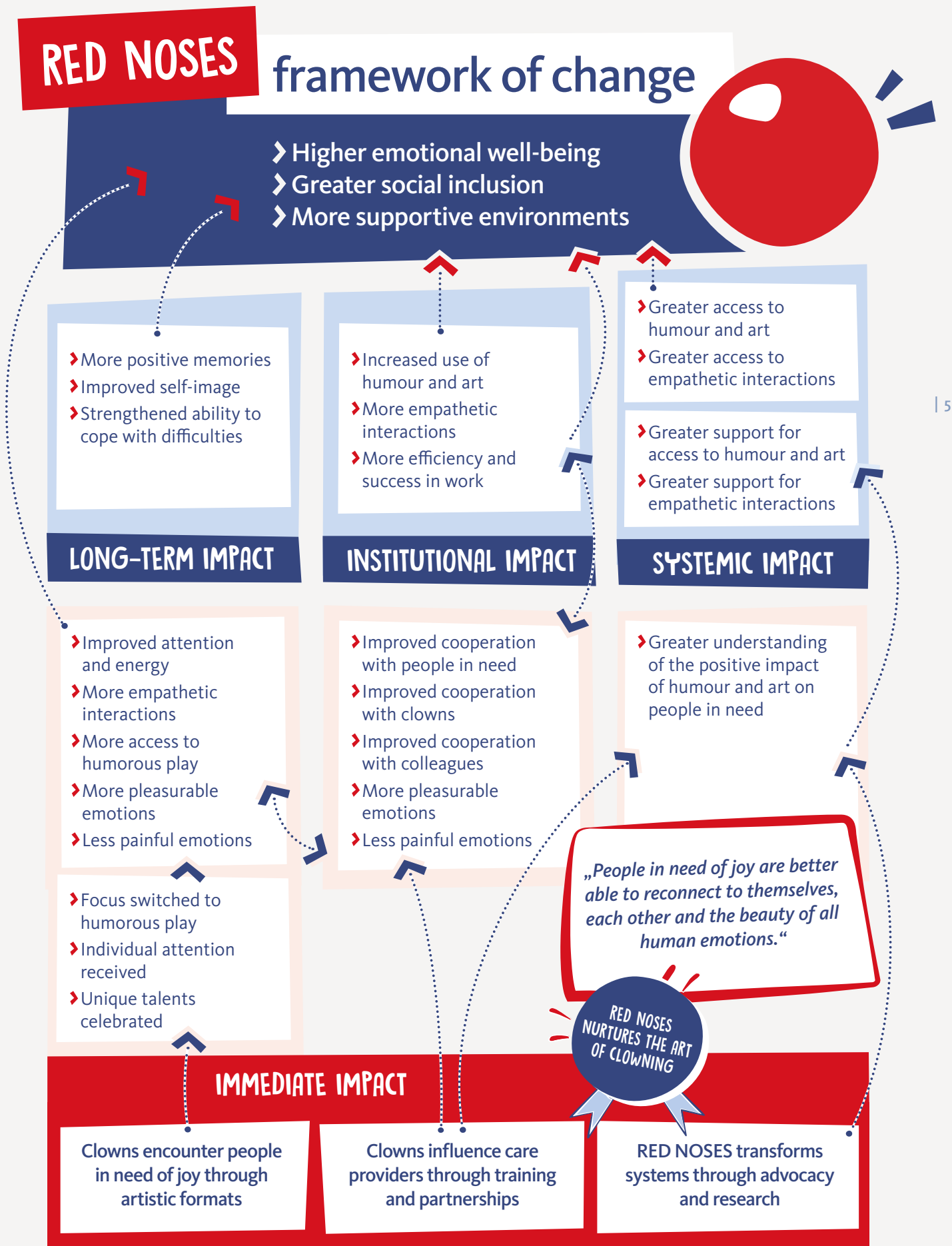
Gjora Seeliger  
Artistic Director and Founder  
RED NOSES Clowndoctors  
International

*Monica Culen*

Monica Culen  
CEO and Founder  
RED NOSES Clowndoctors  
International

*Dr. Franz Haimerl*

Dr. Franz Haimerl  
CFO  
RED NOSES Clowndoctors  
International







## Supporting innovative

**impact**

## Innovation Fund

*The RED NOSES Innovation Fund is an engine to accelerate shared creative forces within the organisation. We consider innovation as the development, testing and implementation of new methods and approaches that contribute to the fulfilment of our strategic goals and mission; higher emotional well-being and a greater social inclusion of vulnerable groups.*



### The concept

Through the fund, 3% of the yearly contributions of RED NOSES Partner Organisations will directly feed back into creating innovation at the local level by financing unique projects that advance our strategic goals.

Last year, the RED NOSES Innovation fund, governed by the RED NOSES fund council, awarded three projects that comply with the following conditions:

- > Be innovative
- > Be beneficial for the whole RED NOSES organisation
- > Be transferrable to other partner organisations, countries and cultures
- > Contribute to our framework goals
- > Directly benefit our work with beneficiaries and/or work with artists
- > Increase the quality of our work
- > Enlarge/expand the knowledge of RED NOSES

## Granted projects

### Clowns on Wheels (LT)

This project, based in Lithuania, is dedicated to expanding the mission of the organisation, while involving seniors living isolated in rural areas of Lithuania.

RED NOSES has a long-lasting experience with elderly people who live in social care institutions but there is an entire community of seniors at home that was not being reached by our work. Thanks to this project, and the collaboration with the organisation Order of Malta, we will be able to bring laughter and joy to this, somewhat forgotten, target group. Order of Malta has volunteers who find lonely elderly people in rural areas and regularly visit them, helping them with basic needs. Our goal will be to accompany their volunteers in the visits to senior citizens and bring them joy while improving their emotional state. With this project, we will make hundreds of regular visits to elderly using a special designed clown van, which will serve as a stage and as a clown's home.

### Red Oasis (CZ, SK, PL)

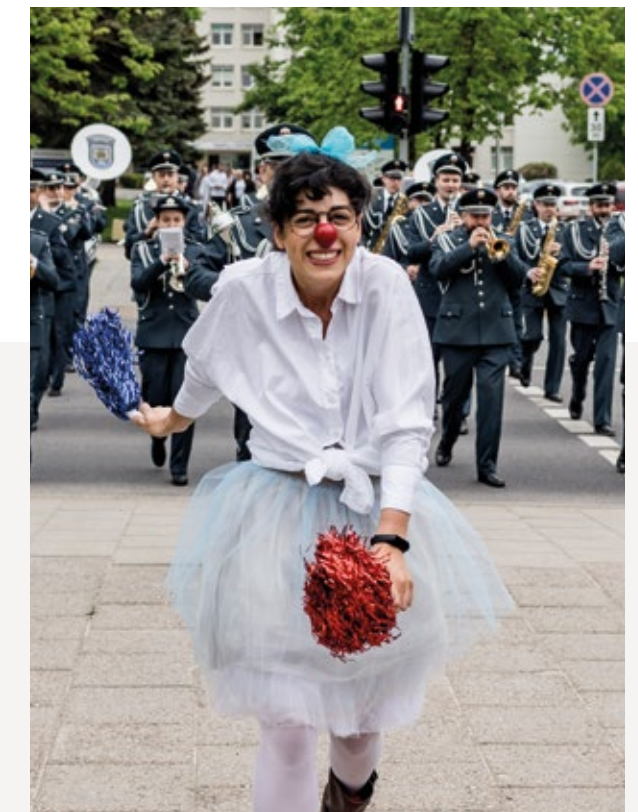
This multi-country project aims to provide healthcare staff with a memorable experience and a surge of positive energy upon their arrival at work. The "Red Oasis" will positively influence their moods and raise their emotional state while providing a safe space for relaxation, creative stimulation, and connection. RED NOSES healthcare clowns will invite the medical staff to enter and walk through the Red Oasis, a half sphere shaped object, where they will discover a beautiful and whimsical space.

Using artwork, lights and sounds, with the combination of live healthcare clown performances, the Red Oasis will provide a surprisingly unexpected space, that will positively contribute to the well-being of the participants and will be transmitted in the way they communicate together and with their patients. This portable entrance will tour in as many institutions and RED NOSES countries as possible to positively impact thousands of healthcare staff.

### Correspondence (DE, CZ)

This project is the result of a beautiful collaboration between our German and Czech partners. The goal is to bring together seniors, clowns and care workers from two different countries to establish a pen friendship between German and Czech seniors. This initiative will be introduced and accompanied by a clown duo, acting as "godparents" for the seniors. Together with a care worker, they will support them in a joyful and empathetic way.

The exchange of letters, photos, songs, videos etc. will build bridges between two lives, two countries and two cultures. The project is meant to fight loneliness, to give seniors' lives more meaning and hopefully to establish a friendship that could culminate in a real-life encounter.





# RED NOSES

## advocacy strategy

### OUR COMMITMENT

The desire to achieve an even more sustainable impact for people in need of joy.



### OUR LEGITIMACY

The decades of experience in connecting with vulnerable people by using humour, laughter and the art of healthcare clowning.



RNI advocates for making the art of healthcare clowning integral and indispensable across health, social care and humanitarian policies and institutional practices. The aim is to create more sustainable changes in the lives of target groups and in institutions and systems to improve emotional well-being, promote social inclusion, and transform challenging environments.

### TARGET GROUPS

People in need of joy in health, social care and humanitarian settings claim their right to art and humour and its benefits.



### INSTITUTIONS

The art of healthcare clowning is an integral part of institutional practice in health, social care and humanitarian settings.



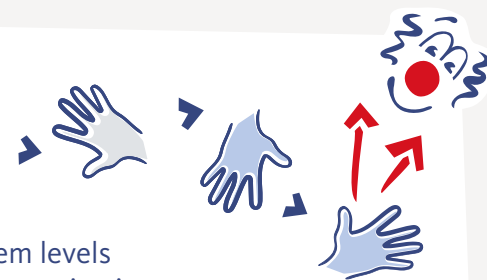
### SYSTEMS

Duty bearers deliver on their policy obligations so that people in vulnerable conditions can claim their right to arts, including the art of healthcare clowning and its benefits on their well-being.



### HOW WE DO ADVOCACY

- RNI encourages full participation of target groups
- RNI uses evidence from research and evaluations
- RNI advocates together with partners
- RNI engages with decision makers at institutional and system levels
- RNI engages in advocacy avoiding risks for people and the organization



## Our impact

*"The RED NOSES healthcare clowns have brought so much joy and laughter into the camp in the past weeks. During Circus Smile, I saw children gaining confidence and feeling empowered through the skills they were learning. I got to see kids that have been robbed of their childhood have a chance to just be kids again – they could let go of their worries and fears, and just play. RED NOSES has made a lasting impact on the children of Mavrovouni Camp."*

Laura Rensberger, Education and Activities Coordinator, Eurorelief Lesbos





# RED NOSES



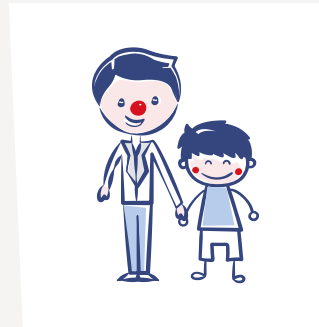
RED NOSES is one of the largest and leading healthcare clown organisations in the world. Founded in Austria in 1994, we are an artistic organisation bringing humour and laughter so that people in need of joy are better able to reconnect to themselves, each other, and the beauty of all human emotions. We see a great need for emotional wellbeing in the times we are living in, and we are on a mission to change that.

Today, RED NOSES consists of 11 RED NOSES organisations in Central- and Eastern Europe and the Middle East. RED NOSES International, based in Vienna, supports as headquarters the activities of the locally led organisations by monitoring their overall impact, developing new programmes, setting up quality standards, facilitating capacity building activities and ensuring the implementation of the organisation's strategic goals.

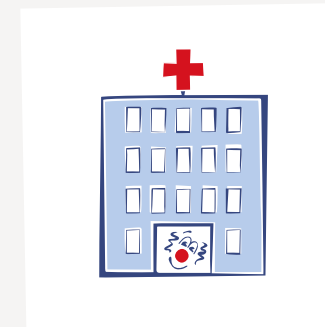
We envision that our major beneficiaries; hospitalised children, senior patients, children with special needs, and people affected by crisis experience an improvement of their overall mental and emotional wellbeing through our artistic and humorous work.

## Facts and figures

RED NOSES evolved into one of the leading groups in the healthcare clown sector, not only by setting benchmarks in both artistic performances and professional structures, but also by reaching the greatest number of beneficiaries. Take a look at the positive impact of our daily work in 11 different countries.



**309,317**  
beneficiaries



**655**  
medical and social  
institutions



**11**  
countries  
of operation



**16,591**  
clown visits



**424**  
professionally  
trained clowns



**25+**  
years of  
expertise



# Our Year

## in pictures

Our professionally trained healthcare clowns, from 11 countries, managed to reach 309,317 children, elderly people and people in crisis areas in the most creative ways, bringing human connection where it is needed the most. Here is a beautiful glance of the highlights of our past year.

### Austria

ROTE NASEN



ROTE NASEN healthcare clowns supported medical staff throughout the COVID-19 vaccination campaign in the Vienna International Centre. With catchy songs, spontaneous dance-routines, and little games they gave children, as well as medical staff, a much-needed space to laugh and relax.

### Croatia

CRVENI NOSOVI



After the devastating earthquake in Sisak-Moslavina County, CRVENI NOSOVI started local Emergency Smile missions where healthcare clowns brought smiles and comfort to children and families who had gone through grief and loss.

### Germany

ROTE NASEN



ROTE NASEN started the HumorAgenda® initiative, where trained healthcare clowns teach sustainable humour strategies to care workers in elderly homes. The first "humour agents" were successfully certified in Frankfurt.

### Czech Republic

ZDRAVOTNÍ KLAUN



In 2021, ZDRAVOTNÍ KLAUN successfully completed the research entitled "To the operating room". Its findings confirmed the positive effects of healthcare clowns' interventions on children undergoing surgery or complex procedures.

### Hungary

PIROS ORR



In 2021, PIROS ORR intensified its cooperation with the medical staff in the Children's heart centre. Thanks to the Intensive Smile programme, medical staff and healthcare clowns are successfully working together during CT examinations.

### Slovakia

ČERVENÝ NOS



ČERVENÝ NOS healthcare clowns were part of the vaccination initiative against COVID-19. The presence of the clowns in vaccination centres was appreciated by visitors and medical staff. Clowns helped reduce stress and improved the overall atmosphere.

### Jordan

RED NOSES Jordan



Towards the end of 2021, and with support of the Ministry of Social Development, RED NOSES Jordan started visiting elderly people, launching in this way their geriatric programme. With this initiative they hope to improve the lives of thousands of senior citizens.

### Lithuania

RAUDONOS NOSYS



The yearly celebration for International Children's Day at the Vilnius children hospital has become a beautiful tradition. With a humorous clown show, and the participation of celebrity guests, RAUDONOS NOSYS brings joy to hundreds of hospitalized children.

### Palestine

RED NOSES Palestine



In 2021, a strategic partnership agreement was conducted between RED NOSES Palestine and the Palestinian Circus School. Within this collaboration, both organisations agreed on finding synergies to fulfil their common goal of spreading joy, laughter, and hope.

### Poland

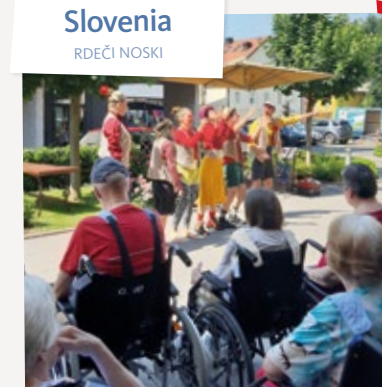
CZERWONE NOSKI



Despite the ongoing restrictions brought by the pandemic, CZERWONE NOSKI healthcare clowns regularly visited children at the cancer clinic Przylądek Nadziei in Wrocław where they were able to connect and bring joy to thousands of oncology patients.

### Slovenia

RDEČI NOSKI



Last year, RDEČI NOSKI multiplied its visits to elderly people. They introduced a new show called La-la-band, where with music and songs the healthcare clowns successfully connected with senior citizens and brought back pleasant memories.







## Our contribution

### to the world today

#### Children

No matter how good the medical care is, emotional needs and personal interaction are sometimes coming up short in everyday hospital routine. Most children struggle to deal with the aseptic and unfriendly hospital environment. The pain, monotony and separation from their families and homes, associated with medical treatments may lead to severe stress, which can have long-term effects on a child's physical and mental health. For children, hospital stays, surgeries and examinations are associated with fear, insecurity, and boredom.



#### Regular Bedside Visits

RED NOSES healthcare clowns enable the child to be a creative partner in play experience and engages them in a pleasurable interaction. In this way, the children are able to reconnect with pleasant emotions and the healthcare environment becomes a more supportive place where their feelings are respected, and potentially traumatic situations can be reduced.

RED NOSES clowns give comfort and hope whilst bringing a new zest for life. As soon as RED NOSES clowns appear in the paediatric ward, the air fills with joy and the children become children again, carefree and happy.



#### Intensive Smile

This format aims at deepening our work in the healthcare sector and contributes to a more supportive environment, by being where the pressure is the highest. The goal of these visits is to assist the little patients before and during treatments and surgeries to better cope with complex procedures. To achieve an optimal impact, the clown is informed in advance about the steps of the medical treatment and can react as a team with the doctor. Parents and medical staff equally benefit from healthcare clown interventions as the visits lighten the mood, provide relief from the anxious situations and make it easier for medical staff to work with the children.

#### Circus Patientus

This format is a workshop that runs for up to a week and ends with a final performance. It is focused on children who have been detached from their natural environment for a long time due to a long-term health condition or disability. With this format the clowns teach the children circus skills like juggling with scarves, plate twirling, acrobatics, ribbon choreography and magic tricks. The purpose of this workshop is to remind them of happier times, bring them hope and awaken an interest in artistic activities by encouraging an active approach to life and an overall desire for self-realisation.



#### Coma and Rehabilitation

RED NOSES clowns also visit children in coma and rehabilitation wards. In these sensitive settings, healthcare clowns provide an important and powerful stimulus, not only for comatose children, but also for those who have come out of a coma, or an accident, and gone into rehabilitation. Even if it seems that the children do not notice or respond to anything, there is ample evidence that shows that healthcare clowns contribute greatly to the waking up process with their sensitive, poetic and musical visits. They are valuable companions, especially when the little ones gradually regain consciousness and must undergo painful treatments.



#### Caravan Orchestra

Our children with disabilities programme, is a tailor-made musical theatre, specially conceived and dedicated to the needs of children with multiple disabilities. With a subtle approach, clowns interact with children, giving them space to comprehend and express their feelings in their own time and in their own way. It is a musical story in which three healthcare clowns search for new musicians for their orchestra, finding them in rehabilitation institutions. With this approach, we give children with specific needs the possibility to experience cultural and artistic activities specially designed for them.



# Elderly

*RED NOSES elderly programme wishes to contribute to the development of compassionate, respectful and person-centred care, as we understand the need to provide the highest standards of healthcare and wellbeing at all ages. Through humour, the healthcare clown conveys respect for human dignity and for the personal history of the other. Our personalised programmes for elderly people, aim to acknowledge them as valuable members of society who deserve to receive empathetic attention and a space for self-expression.*

Elderly people who live in a facility for inpatient long-term care usually experience a disconnection from the outside world and have little to look forward to. A feeling of hopelessness and the loss of the previous social role can be challenging for the elderly living in care facilities. In addition, they often suffer from the restriction of their mobility and their ability to remember or communicate. The remaining skills and special talents often have no place in the overloaded life of a nursing station and are therefore little or not encouraged at all. The deficit orientation and the associated daily experiences of residents in care facilities make everyday

life seem monotonous, intensifying depressive moods. In engaging elderly people in a range of artistic activities, clowns help uncover long-forgotten abilities and create a sense of agency and belonging.

Healthcare clowns meet the senior citizens individually at their bedside, with respect and empathy, integrating their personal history and activating all their senses. That means singing songs together, recalling familiar smells, sharing recipes, connecting with memories from their “golden years” or dancing to a song they like. These visits increase their wish to actively participate in life.



## Variété

To motivate the participation of senior citizens in artistic activities and help them regain enthusiasm, we developed a format that seeks to tackle the biggest challenges of the elderly people such as reduced mobility and social isolation.

This format consists of a three to five days' workshop adapted to the individual skills and capacities of the participants. The clowns help the seniors to rediscover lost artistic talents or help them learn new ones, like tricks, magic, dance and acrobatics. Participants get the chance to develop a small “circus act” that they will perform at the end of the workshop for their family and caregivers.

RED NOSES Variété provides a space for recognition and appreciation of this, often disregarded, people. The successful performance and the applause of the public and peers fill the participants with pride and strengthen their self-confidence.

Some of the stage numbers require physical movement; therefore, the RED NOSES Variété also offers a health promoting effect.

In this format, RED NOSES healthcare clowns are colleagues and partners of the people in need of care. Together, as a team, they present the act in front of an audience (residents, relatives, medical staff), and the clowns step back, to take on the role of assistants to the stars of the show.







## Our Emergency Response Programme

*People affected by crisis and/or facing acute emergencies require special care. Too often, this people receive the immediate aid to survive, but frequently their emotional and mental well-being is overlooked. At RED NOSES, we envision that feelings like joy, optimism and happiness are in the spotlight of humanitarian aid and crisis relief work; not only for the people affected by it but also for the staff working in such challenging circumstances. We are convinced that the power of humour and laughter, despite adversity, makes people more resilient. Therefore, RED NOSES also brings the gift of laughter and human connection to places of acute hardship.*



### Emergency Smile

RED NOSES international developed an emergency response programme called Emergency Smile, allowing us to reach beyond the borders of our 11 partner's countries to provide joy and stress relief to people affected by crisis and natural disasters. This programme, established in 2013, sends specially trained healthcare clowns into areas of crisis in cooperation with international aid organisations. The tailor-made Emergency Smile activities provide a sense of normality in abnormal situations through humour and self-expression, which can help alleviate fear and distress and thus promote well-being.

We reconnect these people with joyful emotions in order to rekindle hope, transform their focus by concentrating on positive aspects of life, and show that life still has happiness in store for them. By engaging the beneficiaries in active, playful interactions, we create a supportive environments and long-lasting memories of joy, that are a source of hope and optimism.





## Our missions in 2021

Last year, RED NOSES International was finally able to go back to the field. Our teams on the ground, engaging once again in person with our target groups, experienced first-hand the impact of the prolonged lockdowns and other restrictions. The access to primary services such as health- and mental care was limited to the minimum. The freedom of movement of these groups was even more restricted than before the pandemic and took a toll on their general wellbeing.

Another consequence was the impact on children. Their education, and other child-friendly activities, was often paused for extended periods of time, resulting in an educational gap that will most certainly have lasting effects. Being able to reconnect again with these target groups and help them improve their overall mental health was our priority and our privilege.

### In 2021 we were able to conduct four live missions:

#### Greek Islands: Lesbos & Samos

- › **Beneficiaries:** approx. 1200 children & adults
- › **Locations:** Temporary Reception Centres, SOS Children's Villages' day-care facility, MSF clinic
- › **Partners:** Doctors Without Borders, Refugees 4 Refugees, SOS Children's Village, Still I Rise



#### Ukraine

- › **Beneficiaries:** approx. 100 children & 50 adults
- › **Locations:** Tuberculosis centres, orphanages, and community centres near the conflict zone
- › **Partners:** Red Cross, SOS Children's Villages



#### Bosnia and Herzegovina

- › **Beneficiaries:** 1141 children and 213 adults
- › **Locations:** Schools, centre for children with disabilities and temporary reception centres
- › **Partners:** Save the Children and World Vision





## Working with unaccompanied minors

*In 2021, we put a focus on working with unaccompanied minors (UAMs), namely children who have been separated from their caregivers and require special attention and care. Being in constant process of resettlement, having language barriers and lack of understanding of the asylum processes makes them a particularly vulnerable subgroup of refugees. For these reasons we started working closer with other organisations on the ground to not only meet their basic needs but also support their emotional and mental wellbeing.*

Unaccompanied minors are often housed in separate areas or reception centres which gave us the possibility of creating safe spaces to develop our Circus Smile programme.

The skills and knowledge of RED NOSES healthcare clowns are directed to engage the unaccompanied children in circus skills activities. By learning new skills and gaining confidence to perform in front of friends and caregivers, children feel empowered, and relationships are strengthened.

Throughout the process, they are reassured that mistakes are to be welcomed and celebrated as a natural part of the learning process supporting them in developing persistence and increasing self-confidence. UAMs are faced with many difficult situations during their journey, from rejects of asylum applications to violent push backs at the borders to Europe, which often-times result in

little hope for the future. By learning simple circus skills with the clowns, they experience a feeling of achievement and control over their own situation.

Circus Smile activities are adapted to the age of the children we work with. For example, older children will be taught juggling skills with one or two juggling balls, while younger ones will experience juggling using brightly coloured scarves that will hang in the air for a longer time.

The sustainability of our work is an important element for us. Whenever possible, children and caregivers are shown how to make their own juggling balls using easily available items such as rice and balloons. Involvement of caregivers and other professional figures is encouraged, both to build a different kind of connection with the children and to acquire practical skills and knowledge on how to bring joy in their everyday lives once the clowns are gone.



## Serving the entire community

*Community building and empowerment are some of the collateral outcomes of our Emergency Smile programme. This is achieved by bringing people together through humour and self-expression under the guidance of our professional healthcare clowns. Our missions have proved to be highly effective in positively impacting the atmosphere of the camps, as well as the mood of all residents. They have inspired reflexion about conflict resolution and stress management, as well as provided examples on how to collaborate with others in the frame of a diverse society.*

With every Emergency Smile mission, we hope to include every camp resident, care-taker, family member and aid worker. Our Circus Smile programme was adapted to accommodate the diverse needs of all the different groups we work with. Most of the time, the contribution of people from the community is essential to make our work possible, for instance when language barriers need to be broken and we require translation on the spot.

Usually, on the last day of the mission, the camp residents are invited to see the final show. With leaflets and clowns' parades throughout the camp, they receive a warm invitation to participate in our final activity. The preparation, implementation and active reception of the final show also engages different actors of the community, having a significant impact in the mobilisation of the camps' residents and the humanitarian aid workers. Our healthcare clowns are not intended to be the stars of the show, but rather support the performance.

Camp residents from different nationalities and cultures alongside international and local humanitarian workers share a safe space, sometimes for the first time, where humour and self-expression bring them together.

The development of the Final Performance acts as a platform to impulse empowerment processes across key multipliers of the community as well as a space for the community to celebrate themselves being together.







**Joining forces**

**for a greater impact**

### Supporting Doctors Without Borders (MSF) in their vaccination efforts

One of the tasks of our healthcare clowns during the mission in Lesvos was to support the nurses in the MSF clinic in Lesvos where refugee children can get their vaccination and check-ups. One clown would be accompanying the medical practitioner, making the vaccination smoother, while the others would be in the waiting room lightening the mood and making the kids laugh while waiting to get vaccinated.

“The clowns assisted me at the clinic as I vaccinated children from Moria 2.o. They distracted each kid in a gentle and playful way, so I could focus more on my work. I noticed that the kids were much calmer and relaxed during the vaccination itself. It seems that the kids felt less pain as their arm muscles were relaxed. The work of the clowns was very helpful” - Carola Liebe-Harkort, nurse at the MSF clinic in Lesvos.



## Partnerships and cooperations

*Working with other organisations and support systems in the field is central to the success of our missions. We see ourselves as a link in a chain of efforts to support the wellbeing of children and youth experiencing crisis. The development of partnerships is an opportunity to reinforce the impact, ensure continuity of the work and maintain the connection, which makes our interventions more sustainable and integrated in time.*

The knowledge of local partners, of the context and the beneficiaries allows us to maximise the impact of our activities by helping us to integrate faster into the community, and more in depth than we would be otherwise able to.

The humanitarian crisis, where often our Emergency Smile missions take place, are complex in geographical location as well as political instability. RED NOSES always partners with other organisations already on the ground so that safety and security of our teams on a mission can be ensured.

Furthermore, while bringing laughter and joy to those in need, we aim for effective coordination and synergy with other actors, so as not to clash with pre-existing essential activities, such as education or healthcare.





# One mission, one vision, one strategy

Each year, our 11 partner organisations and our international emergency teams, work untiringly to spread humour and laughter to people in much need of joy. Each country contributes to push forward our strong common vision and our impactful work from the most precarious places on earth to the clinic down the road.

Here is how, one smile at a time, we are improving the lives of thousands of people around the world.

## Our reach

### in numbers

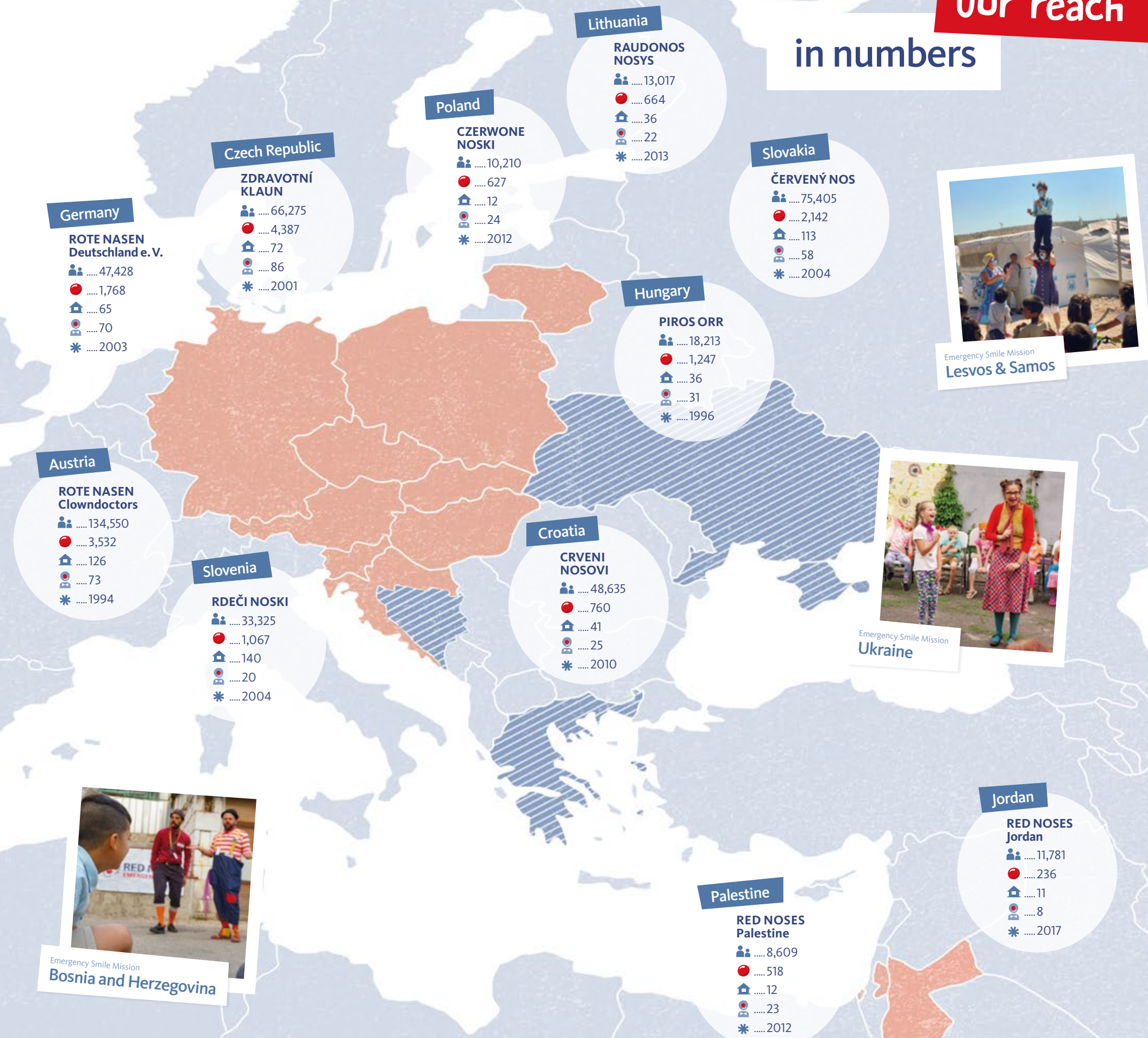
-  RED NOSES Partner Organisations 2021
-  Emergency Smile missions in 2021
-  ..... Number of patients
-  ..... Number of clown visits
-  ..... Social and medical facilities
-  ..... Number of clowns
-  ..... Established



Emergency Smile Mission  
Greece Mainland



Emergency Smile Mission  
Bosnia and Herzegovina



Emergency Smile Mission  
Lesvos & Samos



Emergency Smile Mission  
Ukraine





## Capacity building and training

*Regular training is an essential part of our professional healthcare clown's work. As we operate in sensitive environments and with vulnerable groups, the artists have to bring a set of skills that combine both artistic talents and empathetic approaches.*

*In order for the artists to develop the necessary expertise, RED NOSES provides comprehensive training that not only includes artistic development, but also disciplines from other sectors that are interconnected with our work in the hospitals and crisis areas.*

### Fostering know-how exchange

The international School of Humour (ISH) in the RED NOSES' headquarters in Vienna offers our healthcare clowns from 11 different countries a unique opportunity to meet and create a common "clown language" that is used by all the clowns throughout our organisation.

With the implementation of a solid curriculum, RED NOSES seeks to remain in the vanguard of artistic quality, providing the best possible training and education for its artists. By creating a uniform process of certification for healthcare clowns across borders, an educational foundation has been established that enables the artists to work in the sensitive healthcare environment with the highest artistic standards.

### Artistic criteria

RED NOSES aims to be a leading authority in the healthcare clowning sector; therefore, we strive to create the best possible structures for our healthcare clowns to do their work in the highest quality. In 2021, a selected group of experts, including artistic and managing directors from different partner organisations, defined a unified set of artistic criteria, approved by the artistic directors.

With this tool, we seek, among other things, to support the transfer of knowledge within the entire organisation, build the bases to develop a coaching system, facilitate peer learning, establish a tool for auditions, set a structure for clown's self-evaluation and standardise our common understanding of quality.



### Humour Workshops

RED NOSES is using an integrated and sustainable approach that not only focuses on children and elderly people, but also seeks to support medical staff and aid workers in their daily work.

Humour has the potential to create a powerful emotional connection between people, enhancing and stimulating social interactions. It also plays a vital role in reducing stress and anxiety, and in fostering a better working environment. By offering tailor-made workshops and sharing knowledge on how humour works, professionals in the field can find new ways of connecting with beneficiaries, especially in very stressful and tense situations.

With this approach, we seek to make our impact sustainable in time, allowing medical personnel and aid workers to draw from our expertise and use the newly acquired tools to improve their own psychosocial well-being and resilience in the face of a very stressful and demanding work environment.





# CLOWNING CONNECTS US

Arts

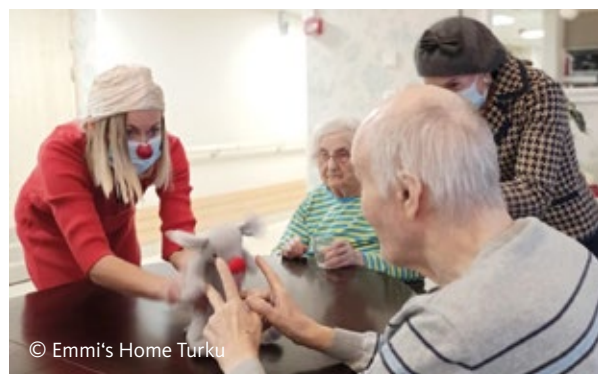
for inclusion

*Full access to arts and participation in cultural life is a right of every one of us. Too often, people with special needs face barriers to enjoy an active cultural life, may this be due to physical barriers to participate in mainstream cultural activities or a lack of tailor-made approaches that consider their needs, talents and wishes. Participatory performances offer the audiences possibilities for creative self-expression, which in turn has a positive effect on their life-quality, well-being, and mental health. Additionally, artistic activities can support the connection between vulnerable groups and their environments, such as family members and carers.*

## Clowning Connects Us: Kick-off meeting

With our project, “ClownNexus” we want to improve access to interactive artistic performances and contribute to the social inclusion of children and teenagers with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), as well as people with dementia. The structures and artistic vision of “ClownNexus” are designed to connect audiences, family members, carers, and artists through the creative process.

The kick-off meeting of ClownNexus was hosted in August 2021 in Vienna. The event brought together 45 cultural managers, artists, and social experts from seven member states to connect over the project's topic of co-creating new artistic formats for and with our two main target groups. We discovered new links between our organisations and artistic approaches, exchanged about experiences with the project's beneficiaries and most importantly, we built a solid basis for the common work we will be doing in the next three years.



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**At the end of this first encounter it was interesting to observe that:**

- Healthcare clowns across Europe have the same questions and speak the same artistic language
- As an organisation, we are dealing with the same issues and can support and learn from each other, f.e. concerning questions such as how to best evaluate our programmes, how to co-create with vulnerable target groups, and how to deal with the restrictions to our work during the times of a global pandemic.

## ClownNexus Research Laboratories

“ClownNexus” aims to build the capacity and expertise of the participating partners to collaborate internationally, explore new methods of artistic co-creation and expand the knowledge on how to creatively measure and learn about the impact of our work. The results from the project will create more awareness for the value of arts for wellbeing and social inclusion for its two main target groups. To go deeper into the subject and to develop new ways of working and learning from each other, several research laboratories will be organised in the years to come. In 2021, the first two artistic laboratories took place in Finland and Hungary.

### Laboratory in Finland

The very first artistic laboratory of ClownNexus project with healthcare clowns from six European countries was held in Nuukio, Finland. The goal was to initiate the development of participatory clowning approaches for children with autism spectrum disorder.

In particular, the week included team building with new colleagues, international exchange of experiences, artistic exploration of the senses and lectures with experts from the Autism Society of Finland.

*Clowning Connects Us is being implemented by RED NOSES and seven other international partners from the healthcare clowning field between 2020 and 2023. As a European cooperation project, the action is co-funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union and supported by the Austrian Ministry for Arts, Culture, Civil Service and Sport.*



Co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union



Federal Ministry Republic of Austria Arts, Culture, Civil Service and Sport



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### Laboratory in Hungary

The second research laboratory gathered healthcare clowns from the participant countries in Sarlóspuszta, Hungary. The focus of this meeting was to learn more about people with dementia and how to better connect with them. The healthcare clowns shared their experiences on working in elderly homes and collected a deeper understanding of each other's work. They got inspired by the learnings of others and built up a professional team that will co-create new tools and ways of engaging with this specific target group.

Throughout the lectures, workshops and discussions, the participants started a long-term common journey towards improving the wellbeing of people with dementia.







## Assessing and improving

RED NOSES embraces the value of learning and evaluation as a path to achieving better results and a greater impact. Our evaluation strategy prioritizes instant integration of learnings and utilisation of results. Different participatory developmental evaluation processes are implemented to constantly feed the actions of our programmes, by informing decision-makers, facilitating collective and individual reflection, identifying areas of improvement, and building capacity, which results in a highly professional orientation towards excellence.

## Partnerships Evaluation

In order to bring the full benefits of humour and empathetic interactions to the hospital environment, as well as to meet the RED NOSES goal of deepening and integrating its work in hospitals, a strategic approach to hospital partnerships was needed. By reflecting on how to build and deepen healthcare partnerships, this evaluation seeks to advance the RED NOSES ambition of establishing an integrated and indispensable role for healthcare clowns.

The RED NOSES Healthcare Programme Evaluation aimed to generate learning on how to strengthen healthcare clowning partnerships across the RED NOSES network in 11 countries in Europe and the Middle East.

The evaluation examines how RED NOSES offices in different countries have developed and sustained relationships with healthcare institutions, as well as how these partnerships are perceived by hospital staff and leadership.

Based on the research conducted for this evaluation, a Partnership Compass was developed to provide a shared language and common understanding of what makes healthcare partnerships successful. This tool is intended to support programme staff in assessing and strengthening partnerships over time.

The survey targeted all healthcare staff in wards and asked about respondents' experience with clowning. Some revealing findings from the evaluation were:

- The pandemic has raised awareness about the mental health needs of children, offering an opportunity to advocate for their rights to human connection and joy.
- The global healthcare community has a growing appreciation for holistic and integrative care, and the need to address mental health and well-being.
- The evaluation participants saw opportunities to maximize the benefits of healthcare clowning through shifts toward more acute and stressful circumstances, such as Intensive Smile, working in humanitarian contexts, and expanding work with adults and the elderly.

## Children with disabilities programme evaluation

In 2021, RED NOSES carried out the first international evaluation on its “children with disabilities programme” (CwD). The evaluation aimed to present an accurate and nuanced picture of the needs and opportunities faced by children with disabilities, examine the impact of the programme and serve as a baseline for future developments of the programme.

The evaluation can reliably speak to short-term impacts of the programme:

- Educators note improvements in participating children's communication skills, interest and ability to open up and share, react to emotions, play and replicate humorous/clowning performances.
- Thanks to CwD, children accumulate positive memories and a sense of well-being and self-worth.
- CwD contributes to a sense of belonging in children's groups – they root for each other, show empathy with one another not only during but in class activities after the show.

- Though not a target group of CwD, adults have benefited from the performance in its original or adapted forms. Educators are as emotionally touched by CwD as they are inspired to apply some of its elements in their everyday work with children.
- Educators note gaining new learnings about the children they work with courtesy of CwD. Children often surprise them with their reactions, they learn of new channels to reach the children they work with, share a new appreciation for the capacities children have and feel motivated to reach them in different ways.
- As is the case for specific groups experiencing CwD, educators note impacts on team-building and shared excitement on the educator workforce and even the whole school community.



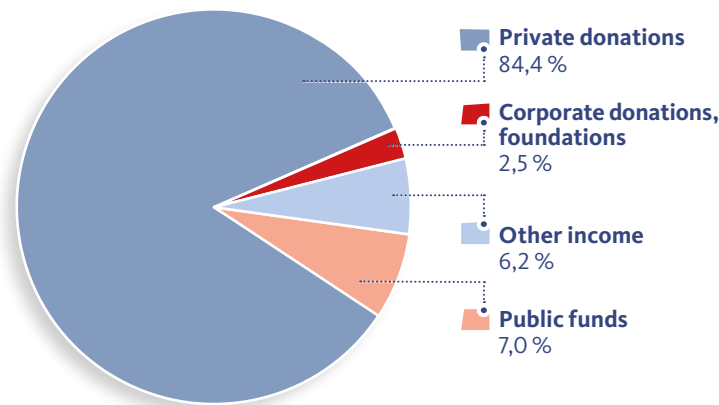


RED NOSES is an international non-governmental organisation working locally in 11 countries. In our overall strategic ambition, strong financial stability is a key element, as it defines our objective of working in a sustainable manner and having a long-term impact on our beneficiaries.

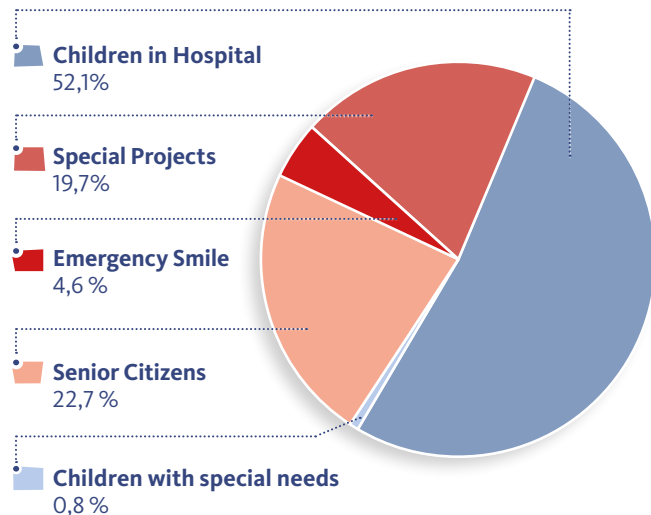
The following page provides an overview of our sources of income internationally and our programme expenses for 2021. RED NOSES programmes all run on a regular basis during the year. This requires steady and sustainable sources of income. To finance their respective programmes, all our organisations raise their own funds locally. Independent and reputable national auditors according to internationally accepted accounting standards audit their financial reports annually. The percentages shown below are based on the collectively generated revenue streams from all our local partner organisations as well as from the headquarters of RED NOSES International.

## Our Sources of Funding

RED NOSES' income of more than 27 million Euro relies heavily on private donations to guarantee our independence and strengthen the organisation's connection with the public. In 2021, private donations amounted to 84,4% of the total RED NOSES income.



In the effort to strengthen our financial co-operations with other foundations and international organisations that share our values and goals, we envision reaching an even greater number of beneficiaries in the future.



## Distribution of costs on programme level

Since our founding in 1994, children in hospitals have always been the core focus of our work, resulting in the fact that 52,1% of our expenses are dedicated solely to activities concentrating on this target group. The second major expenditure of 2021 was on the senior citizens programme, with 22,7% of our activities dedicated to improving the quality of life for senior citizens in geriatric wards and care facilities. We have been increasingly working with people in crisis areas and implementing additional emergency missions every year. In 2021, our Emergency Smile missions were allowed to resume, and the programme benefitted from 4,6% of our total expenses.

## Managing Board of Foundation:

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RED NOSES is an artistic organisation bringing humour and laughter to people in need of joy.

For 25 years, RED NOSES has been making a difference for patients, families and medical staff in countless health and care facilities in Europe and beyond.

RED NOSES International (RNI) empowers vulnerable audiences, such as children in hospitals, people in geriatric centres, patients in rehabilitation centres, youth with mental and multiple disabilities, refugees and other displaced persons.

The figure of the clown is extremely human and touches individuals deeply by bringing them relief and hope in moments where they cannot connect to their positive emotions.

RNI is based in Vienna, Austria, and is the headquarters for the largest clown doctor group in the world.

[www.rednoses.eu](http://www.rednoses.eu)



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