



# LA MAISON

## TERRE DES HOMMES

La Maison is a medicalised institution for pre- and post-operative care. It contributes to the rescue of sick children transferred to Switzerland for advanced surgery.

Regardless of political, confessional or racial consideration, **the foundation Terre des hommes Valais** aims to rescue children in distress.

The foundation runs autonomously **La Maison** located in Massongex in Valais – Switzerland.

# ACTIVITY REPORT

# 2021



La Maison welcomes sick children, mostly from West Africa, who come to Switzerland for medical care unavailable in their home countries. Once they have recovered, they travel back home.

• ENGAGEMENT

• GOODWILL

• SOLIDARITY

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## INTRODUCTION

***In 2021, La Maison was highly impacted by the successive waves of coronavirus as it was already the case in 2020. The aim here is not to lament the constraints and uncertainties of those days. That would be out of order. What is truly at stake is the health of the children who are in desperate need of urgent medical attention. There lies the real problem.***

***Each year, between 2011 and 2019, 185 children, in average, arrived at La Maison. A child every 2 days.***

***In 2020: 65 arrivals only.***

***In 2021: 105.***

***We were not able to do better.***

***For the children in need of medical care and their families, we hope 2022 will be the year of renewal.***

### La Maison is not a *programme* nor is it a *project*

It is a unique space for life, inhabited by human beings, adults and children, from here and elsewhere in the world. Since December 1969, women and men have been welcoming and caring for children who come from afar, wounded, sick, entrusted by their parents who remain in their home countries.

Throughout all these years, the activity has never ceased. Responsible and engaged people have succeeded one another at La Maison, in the hospitals, in the home countries of the children, with them onboard flights, in the airports... to help save these children.

We are not proud of our activity for the children. It is the duty and responsibility of humankind.

We would feel ashamed if we weren't acting.

### For the past couple of years, the pandemic has made things difficult

The staff in the countries the children are from has worked in even more challenging conditions during the pandemic of coronavirus. The transfers by plane were suspended and, then, very uncertain for a period of time. The operating availabilities were spread out in Switzerland since the intensive care units were congested. The organisation managed to face the challenges and remain active for the transferred children.

### Far away, yet not forgotten

As it is the case with the children and their families who remain close throughout their separation, friends of La Maison, volunteers and donators remained close, thoughtful, helping and comforting even with social distancing and a restricted access here onsite to protect the children from coronavirus. Challenges bring us closer. We sincerely thank each and every person who, in a way or another, has taken and will take these children by the hand on the road to recovery.

### A new momentum in 2022

The American author William Arthur Ward wrote "*The pessimist complains about the wind; the optimist expects it to change; the realist adjusts the sails.*".

We chose to be realists and are fully aware that we will need to adjust the sails at all time.

The ocean will sometimes be calm but it will be tempestuous too. Staying on course will be challenging to bring the passengers and crew to destination.

Terre des hommes Valais is committed to pursuing its mission with heart and bravery, seriousness and professionalism, placing above all the interest of children and their families at the heart of the action.

### Foundation Terre des hommes Valais

Michel Mottiez,  
President

Philippe Gex,  
Director

Massongex, April 2022



Three young girls bonding and becoming friends in La Maison

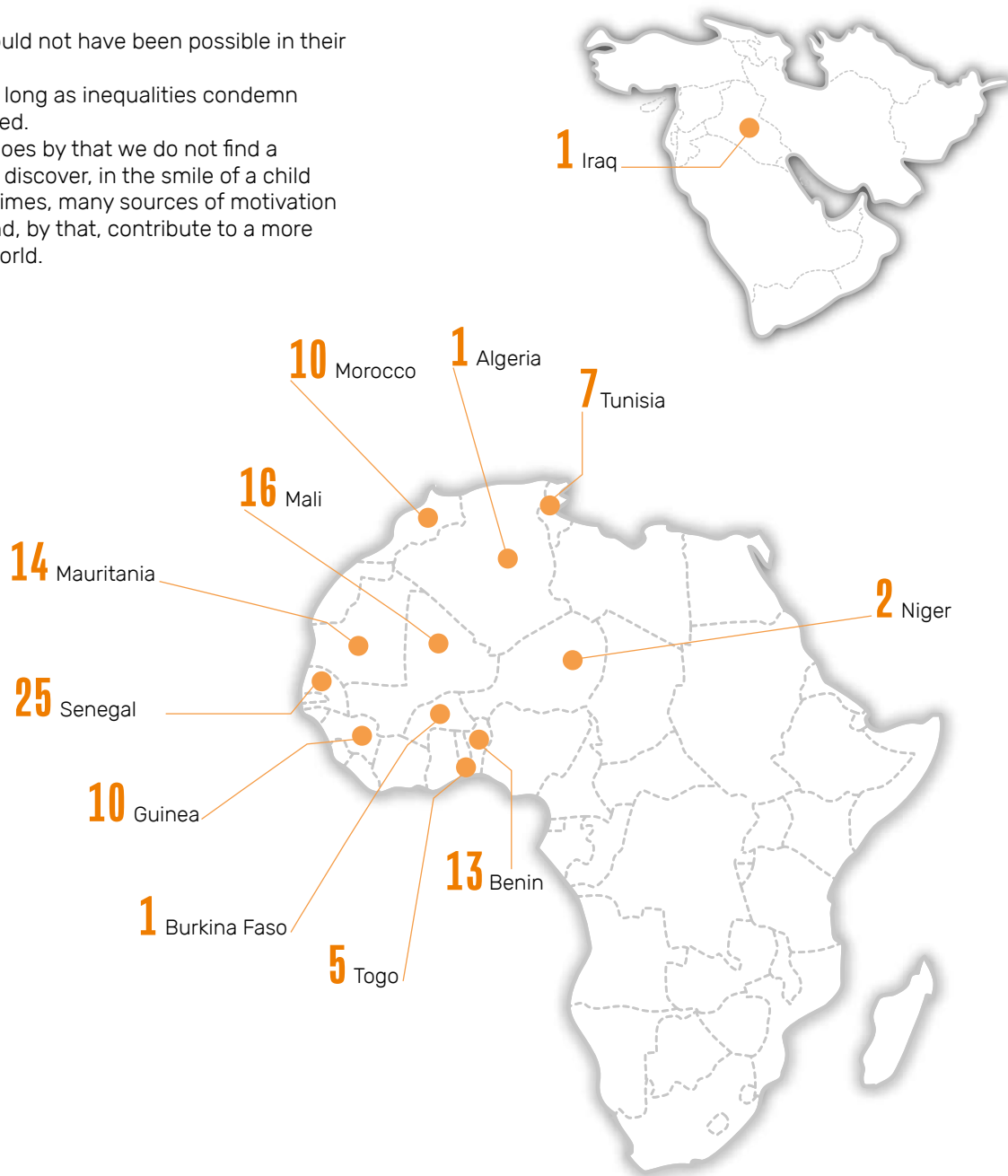
# COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

of the children in 2021



Step by step, La Maison has brought colour back to the life of 105 children from 11 countries

We concretely changed the lives of these children and of their families.  
Saving these children would not have been possible in their countries.  
Our work must last for as long as inequalities condemn children that can be healed.  
At La Maison, not a day goes by that we do not find a reason to have hope and discover, in the smile of a child and in the most difficult times, many sources of motivation to continue our action and, by that, contribute to a more just and more humane world.



## Countries – Cultures – Languages

At La Maison, a few members of the staff are able to speak certain of the languages specific to the countries the children are from.

It is very reassuring for the child.  
It is also very useful when information must be explained or questions answered.

It often happens that other children, who can speak multiple languages, translate the information for the staff. Non-verbal language is also used daily.

# FROM TODDLERS TO ADULTS

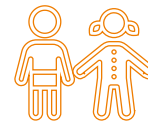


**46** girls

*Fatoumata, Nada, Zeinabou, Marina, Khadija, Issra, Maimouna, Khady, Floriane, Mariame, Rania, Hawa, Fatoumata, Nafissatou, Sarra, Fanta, Nogaye, Sahila, Houlye, Aïcha, Dorcas, Dona, Awa Kara, Kadidia, Mariem, Zainab, Imane, Zzahra, Elaf, Khadidiatou, Fama, Hidayatou, Diama, Pibole, Kadidiatou, Nahe, Rama, Islem, Akolomè, Farmata, Djibry, Mouna, Awa, Dignité, Miracle, Fatou Bintou, Seynabou.*

## Children, teenagers, adults

The illness can appear early on or later in life. Most importantly, it can be identified at birth or sometimes much later. Access to healthcare is very insufficient and expensive in many countries. The consequences are dramatic.



**8 YEARS OLD**  
average age

Age	1 to 5	6 to 10	11 to 15	16 to 20	20+
Number of children	<b>54</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>



**59** boys

*Emmanuel, Hamidou, Aboubacar, Souleymane, Ibrahima, Mohamadou, Sedrijro, Pape Ousmane, Nizar, Ibrahima, Djibril, Sid Ahmed, Abdoul, Serigne, Malick, Hereba, Boune Nasr, Mody, Christian, Soklou, Yehdih, Cherif, Adem, Djallal-Deen, Koniba, Mohamed, Alassane, Sékou, Amadou, Kossi Amen, Ichiaka, Ange, Adam, Yaya, Rayen, Ali, Mouhamadou, Yassine, Malick, Louka, Abdoulaye, Lamine, Yakhya, Mouhamed, François, Sèye, Michel, Saliou, Chafik, Souleymane.*

*"La Maison is a very unique place, it's a big family. What is extraordinary here is that we are with children who aren't the same age and come from different cultures. We are all united for the same cause: helping children in need. We really are one big family."*

Melody Methot, specialized educator  
at La Maison



## MEDICAL PARTNERS

Medical facilities for treatment of the 105 children arrived in 2021

### La Maison at the heart of a network of medical partners

The transfer of children staying at La Maison requires a complex network of advanced skills. La Maison is a part of the network, essential and connected to all the partners, engaged and essential too.

Let us remind that the children are identified and transferred to Switzerland by the foundation Tdh in Lausanne and the foundation Sentinelles, both partners of Terre des hommes Valais.

### CHUV and HUG – Historical partners at the heart of the action

Since over 60 years, the children undergo surgery in the university hospitals in Geneva (HUG) and Lausanne (CHUV).

The university hospitals do not invoice the medical care of the children.

### Many medical partners

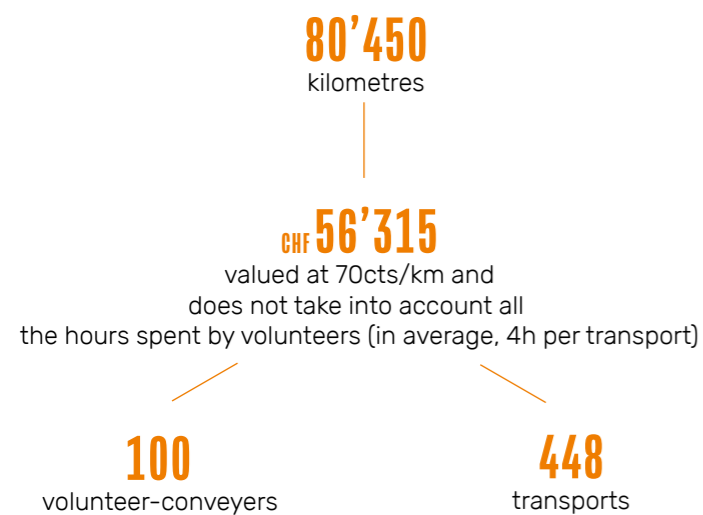
Upon their arrival in Switzerland, the children undergo a first check at the infirmary of Geneva-airport. They are then admitted for an initial health check in one of the university hospitals or the hospital for children in Lausanne, the hospital in Nyon, or the hospital Riviera-Chablais in Rennaz. The children also receive medical care, in certain situations, at the Clinique Cecil in Lausanne or at the ophthalmic hospital Jules-Gonin in Lausanne.

Thank you to all these partners for their support and skills !



## TRANSPORTS

of the children welcomed at La Maison



### The volunteer conveyor : first in line on the road to recovery for the children

The volunteer conveyor accompanies and drives a child or a small group of children to medical appointments or for a surgery with his own car and to his own expense. His role is essential. He offers a good quality service for free.

The destination: a hospital, a medical practice, dental or ophthalmic for instance, and, of course, Geneva airport.

We wholeheartedly thank all these extremely generous volunteers.



# PATHOLOGIES

of the 105 children welcomed in La Maison in 2021



## La Maison: a medicalised home for children

Usually, forty to fifty children stay simultaneously at La Maison, sometimes even more. Those young patients have come a long way and are preparing themselves for a vital surgery or are recovering.

## Rebirth – Coming back to life

For those 105 children, there were no possibilities to be healed in the countries. If it had been possible, they would not have travelled to Switzerland. We can call this an “emergency programme”. Some believe the children should be healed at home near their families. We believe so too. Multiple organisations work towards preventing illnesses and development onsite. At La Maison, we continue the work to save these children with the hope that, someday, we are no longer needed.

*“The heart rate of each child is checked daily at the infirmary. The slightest irregularity can be the sign of a complication.”*

Carlos Gutierrez,  
manager of the infirmary sector at La Maison



## The 105 children welcomed in La Maison in 2021 suffered from:



### Heart diseases

96

Heart diseases include all heart ailments and can appear before or after birth.



### Caustic oesophageal stricture

2

A caustic oesophageal stricture is caused by accidentally drinking liquid (similar to water) or solid (similar to candies or sugar) caustic soda. The intake causes tongue, throat, larynx, oesophagus and stomach burns. Because of this, children cannot swallow and suffer from fever and pains.



### Noma

4

Noma is an infectious disease that starts from the buccal mucosa and leads to a degradation of the tissues in the middle or on one side of the face. It can cause death of the affected children.



### Malformation

1

Urinary, ano-rectal and bladder exstrophy malformations represent a whole range of serious congenital disorders.



### Orthopaedics

2

Orthopaedics treat disorders, injuries and deformities of the musculoskeletal system of the child, whether they are congenital or acquired.



## FLUCTUATION

of the number of children at La Maison in 2021

Every week, children leave their families to come for medical care at La Maison. Every week, children return home healed. Every day of the week, children leave for medical appointments or for surgeries in Geneva and Lausanne.

The number of children constantly fluctuates.

Number of sick days at La Maison\*

Average number of children at La Maison

2021	Average on ten years
9'828	13'628
27	37

\*a sick day is accounted as a day spent at La Maison by a child



## ATTENDANCE

at La Maison in 2021

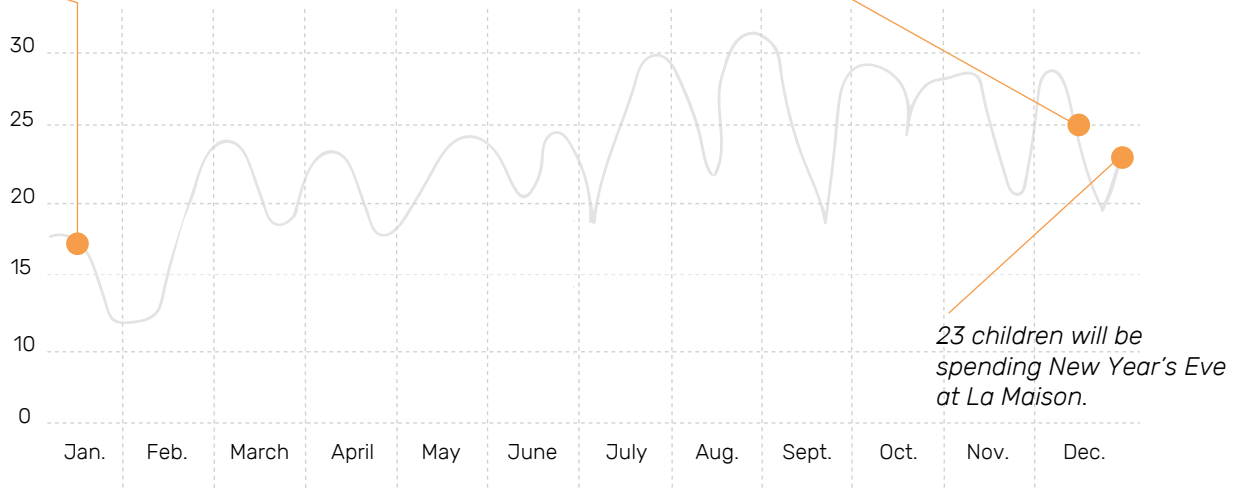


13<sup>th</sup> of January, Fatoumata is the 1st child to be transferred at La Maison in 2021. She joins the 17 children already present who arrived in 2020.



17<sup>th</sup> of December, Seynabou is the last to arrive. She will be spending Christmas at La Maison alongside the staff and 25 other children.

The numbers give information on the attendance of children at La Maison.



The real value remains in every life we save together.

### **Taking care of these children is not a choice. It is our duty.**

"One day, in Benin, I spoke to a mother whose child had returned to the country a few months before after undergoing a heart surgery in Switzerland. It was an extraordinary moment with her boy. Her gratitude was expressed with much serenity and kindness. Suddenly she asked: "Why have you saved my son? We don't even know one another and you are miles away." I simply spoke of a human duty and thanked her for her trust. I explained we were many to share the same values and her son, like my own children, had a right to be medically cared for."

Philippe Gex, director of La Maison



# EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

of the children welcomed at la maison



## A school with two classes and multiple levels

The right to education is a fundamental human right. La Maison guarantees this right to the children welcomed in Massongex. La Maison offers a very good quality education and teaching for each child. It contributes to reducing the inequalities these children suffer from. The school allows children to keep up with their education during their stay in Switzerland. The staff teaches in different language which is especially important for children who stay in La Maison for long periods of time.

Investing in the school of La Maison is, of course, very useful to the children, but it is also costly. The annual fee to run the school (approximately CHF 80'000.-) is calculated on the basis of the salary expenses of the educating staff in charge of teaching.



## A workshop space for children's early learnings

The kindergarten of La Maison is a unique space that allows children to discover and open up to the world that surrounds them. In this space, children are exposed and encouraged to discover and learn in entertaining ways. For a young child in La Maison, this particular space enables him to discover, explore, experiment, build, play and open up to others through pedagogical activities imagined by the professional educating team of La Maison.

## Sewing classes

On a weekly basis, two volunteers host workshops for the teenagers welcomed in La Maison to help them make sewing creations.

The sewing workshop is also a way to learn the basics of a work which may become their future source of income once they return to their home country. Some teenagers even return home with a sewing machine to help them pursue their professional training.





## NUMBER OF TRANSFERS

of the 105 children arrived in La Maison

### La Maison, a unique space for life

Every year, 85% of the children welcomed in La Maison come to Switzerland for the first time and about 15% of the children (sometimes adults) return in need of check-ups, medical care or another surgery. As soon as a child has received medical attention, he will be medically followed throughout his entire life. It is not an active medical assistance for life; as that is not realistic or necessary. However, the child's parents – or himself, once he is adult – can reach out to Terre des hommes and receive medical support in the country or be transferred via the organisation if there is no other alternative.

The arrival of each child in La Maison is the beginning of a story bound to last for a long time.



1<sup>st</sup> stay

**89**

children

Number of stays	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>
Number of children	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

## LENGTH OF THE CHILDREN'S STAYS

of the 100 children who left La Maison in 2021



**382** days  
Longest stay

**4** days  
Shortest stay

**83** days  
Average length of stay,  
all pathologies involved

**76** days  
Average length of stay for children  
with heart malformations

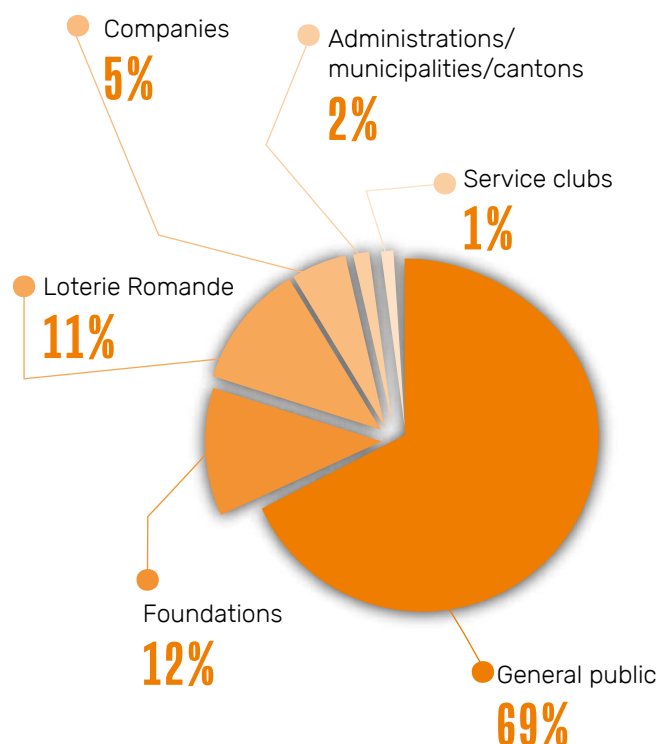
**189** days  
Average length of stay  
for children with other pathologies

*Yawo arrived at La Maison on February 21st 2020. He was suffering from a severe caustic oesophageal stricture. The pandemic and the complexity of his medical treatment kept him away from his family for over a year. He returned healed in his country in March 2021.*



# SOURCES OF FUNDING

of La Maison in 2021



## A VITAL SUPPORT

La Maison is not subsidised. The 2022 budget is estimated at 3.4 million Swiss Francs. Donations are the only source of funding allowing to pursue this mission.

*It is not yet possible to answer financial questions in this first part of the activity report. It will be completed in June as soon as the books are established, submitted to the Board of Trustees and verified by the Foundations Surveillance Authority of the Canton of Wallis.*

## SHARING

Fundraising events and actions for La Maison



A little girl from Morocco playing with water

### Some fundraising events to collect funds for La Maison in 2021:

- **Music to heal the hearts**  
A concert of classical music organised by the Soroptimist of Wallis Service Club in September 2021  
Net result: CHF 66'000.-
- **Sports to help the children**  
Auction sale to the employees of the UEFA  
Net result: CHF 14'715.-
- **A drop in an ocean of solidarity**  
During the second trimester of 2021, the visitors of the Bains de Lavey were invited to make a donation when buying their tickets to the thermal baths.  
Net result: CHF 8'800.-
- **Open-air cinema in the gardens of La Maison**  
Organised by the municipality of Massongex, many families came to watch an animated movie outdoors.  
Net result: CHF 5'500.-

# THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

of the foundation Terre des hommes Valais



**MICHEL MOTTIEZ**

President

(also member of the Board of Trustees of the foundation Tdh in Lausanne)



**ANDRÉ MORAND**

Vice-president



**D<sup>r</sup> DENIS CHEVALLEY**

Referring doctor of La Maison



**AMANDA COTTER**

Member



**ROBERT CLERC**

Member



**ARMAND FAVRE**

Member

The Board of Trustees of the Foundation Terre des hommes Valais is currently made up of 6 members registered in the Commercial Register (CR).

These people have regular contact with management, and in a more informal way, with the staff. They are profoundly invested and identify to the mission and the Charter.

The members of the Board are volunteers and receive no financial compensation. They are regularly asked to contribute to specific matters in addition to the inherent activities of all Boards of Trustees.

*"As a volunteer, I support La Maison. I know that my engagement makes a difference in the lives of these children."*

Robert Clerc, member of the Board of Trustees of the foundation Terre des hommes Valais

## HISTORY

1963	Creation of the foundation Terre des hommes Valais
1969	Purchase, renovation and opening of La Maison
1970	Inauguration of La Maison
1975	Inauguration of the 2 pavillons. Aim: increase the accommodation capacity of children
2010	Renovation of La Maison and construction of a new infirmary
2016	Construction and opening of the new school
2020	50 years of La Maison, a difficult jubilee
2021	La Maison has welcomed over 9000 children



# STAFF STRUCTURE

of La Maison



La Maison is a medicalised home for children open 24/7, 365 days a year.

The mission of La Maison consists of:

- Providing qualitative pre and post-surgery medical care
- Insuring an educational environment for the children

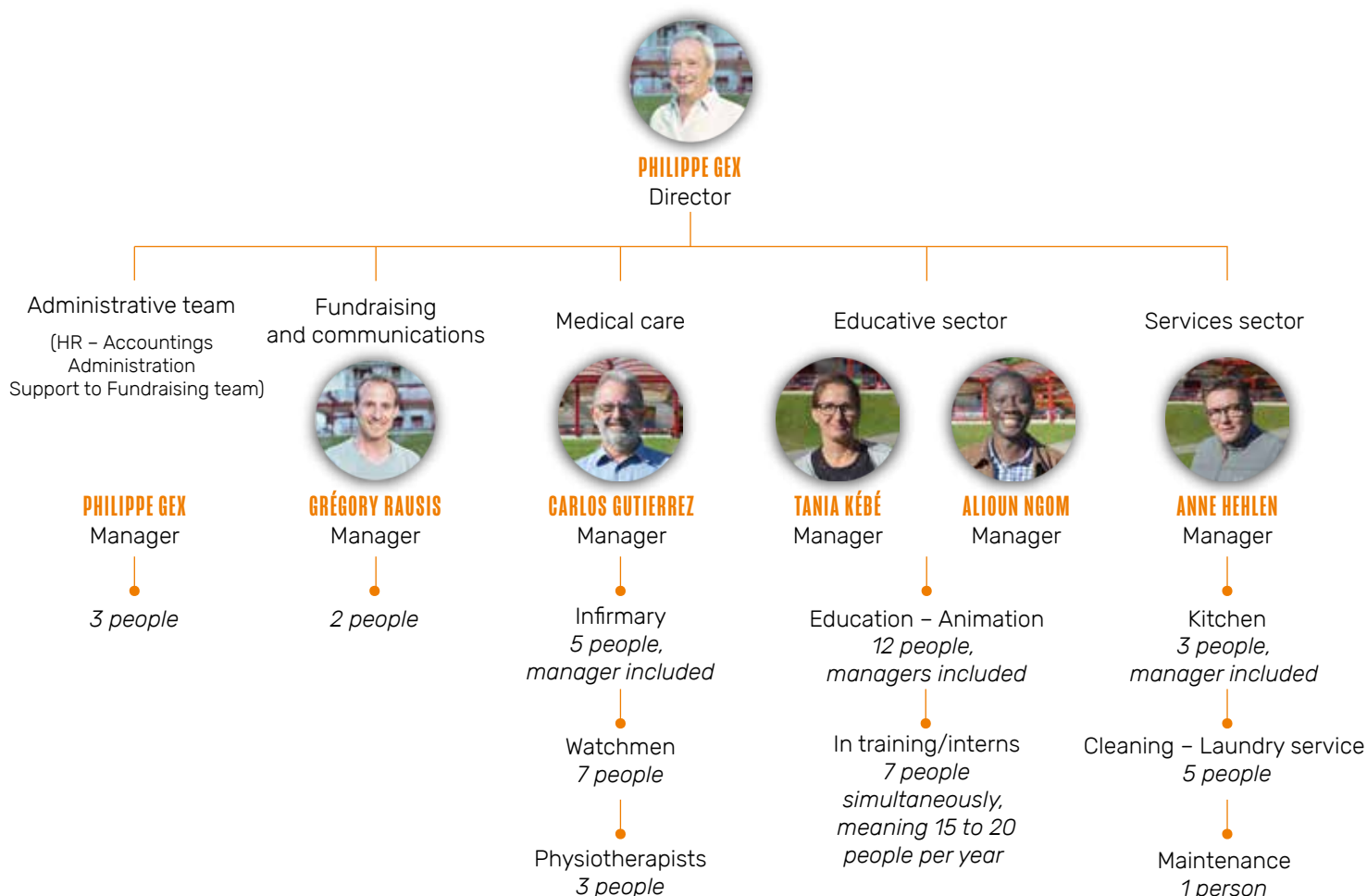
Whilst paying attention to:

- The quality of the infrastructure
- The respect of children's rights and protecting their private life
- The development and maintain of a responsible human resources policy

In order to fulfil its mission, La Maison is structured in different sectors managed by experimented and involved people. Those qualities can be used to describe the whole staff of La Maison.

La Maison trains in the education field. 6 to 7 interns are simultaneously covered for during practical training periods for a minimum of 4 months. This represents 15 to 20 interns every year, followed by the educative team, mainly by staff eligible for training.

The Board of Trustees and management like to point out the quality of the staff, as well as the profound identification to the mission of La Maison and the faithfulness to the organisation.



Number of fixed term employees (without interns): 43 people

Equivalence in full time positions: 32.4 positions



## THANKS

### The omnipresent trust at the heart of the action

- Of the parents who entrust us with their child.
- Of the child we carry in our arms.
- Of the volunteers who offer their time.
- Of the staff invested daily.
- Of the donors who, with their financial support, save lives.
- Of the highly competent, attentive and available medical teams.

We only list the entities having expressly asked to be so:

- Our generous donors in Wallis in Switzerland and abroad.
- The organisers of events for La Maison.
- The small and medium companies in Wallis and in Switzerland.
- Many foundations in Switzerland and abroad.
- The foundation "Plein Vent" Emile, Marthe and Charlotte E. Rüphi.
- The foundation Mammina.
- The somewhat 500 extraordinary volunteers who take part in many actions for La Maison.
- More than 100 volunteer-conveyers who drive the children to the different medical consultation locations and the airport.
- The foundation Tdh in Lausanne and the foundation Sentinelles in Prilly who entrust us with the children.
- The "godfathers and godmothers", volunteer visitors, who surround the hospitalised children.
- Anyone who has not identified in the above and has, with us, helped to save lives and change the world.



### THANK YOU

- For your generosity
- For your trust
- For your encouragements
- For your donations
- For your offered services
- For your granted reductions

### THANK YOU

for sharing with us this mission.

*"We witness a lot of changes before and after the surgery. Especially with children who have severe heart malformations. They often struggle to move or walk around when they arrive, they tend to run out of breath very quickly and sometimes aren't able to walk at all. After the surgery, they are full of energy, it's amazing. I remember a little girl named Nadia who was 3 years old. One day, after her surgery, we were walking towards the Kindergarten and she suddenly started running. At the same time, she burst out laughing! It was as if she'd realised for the very first time of her life that she was able to do that. It was a magical moment."*

Leila Fai, specialized educator at La Maison





*The children of La Maison enjoy a day out near Massongex*



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The online version of the 2021 activity report



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La Maison de Terre des hommes



La Maison de Terre des hommes