

Terre des Hommes
International Federation

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Displaced people in Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, Deir Al-Balah city

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FOREWORD

In 2023, children and young people have faced substantial and growing challenges, and the enforcement of their rights has further declined worldwide. In response, Terre des Hommes intensified its efforts: together with 886 partner organisations, we supported almost 7,000,000 children and young people, their families and communities in 68 countries, through innovative programmes, advocacy and campaigns -and notably by ensuring fruitful collaborative initiatives with children and youth.

Starting with the environmental crisis, 2023 being the hottest year on record, it underscored the urgent need for action to protect the planet for current and future generations and the importance of joining forces with and empowering children and young people in these efforts. Terre des Hommes supported children, their families and communities in countries significantly affected such as Thailand, the Philippines, India, Nepal, Peru and Zimbabwe. We also played a pivotal role in the adoption of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment 26 (GC26), emphasizing children's right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment. We coordinated a process that enabled over 16,000 children from 121 countries to contribute to its development - one of the most inclusive child participation processes in the United Nation's history - and we developed a child-friendly version of GC26 in multiple languages.

Combatting all forms of violence against children and young people, including abuse and exploitation, has also been a priority of the Federation.

In 2023, we delivered innovative programmes to support children involved in forced labour and their families in Asia and Latin America. We also called for legislation to protect children's rights in this regard. And we successfully advocated for a proposed EU regulation to ban products made with forced labour on the EU market, to include legal obligations for economic actors not only to end forced labour including for children, but also to provide remedies for all workers concerned.

Violence against children online increased significantly in 2023. Almost 106 million suspected child sexual abuse images and videos were reported, a significant increase from the previous year, and more than 60% were uploaded to servers in Europe. Terre des Hommes ran projects worldwide to prevent and address online children sexual abuse and exploitation, misinformation and cyberbullying. Together with 50 partner organisations, we also launched a campaign, "[Child Safety On!](#)", to support the adoption of a new EU regulation to prevent and fight child sexual abuse online.

450 million children were also gravely affected by new and protracted armed conflict in 2023. In addition, International Humanitarian Law has often been gravely and repeatedly breached by parties to conflict, violating children's rights, risking their lives, and preventing access to life-saving protection and aid. This has led to unprecedented numbers of children and young people killed, maimed, orphaned and traumatised, particularly in the Occupied Palestinian Territories/Israel.

Terre des Hommes supported emergency responses to several conflicts, including in Gaza, where we redoubled efforts to provide essential assistance to children and young people. We also made urgent calls for International Law to be respected and for the rights of civilians to be upheld and protected. We supported over 14 million children and their families affected by the war in Ukraine - both in the country and in states hosting people forced to flee.

The past decade has seen a growing number of children leaving their homes for a variety of reasons and the number of forcibly displaced has doubled - in 2023, two in five forcibly persons worldwide were children. Yet, despite increasing numbers and protection needs, migration policies have become more restrictive and harmful in 2023, further exacerbating risks.

Terre des Hommes continued to offer direct support to children on the move across the world and we influenced governments to uphold their rights. As Co-Chair of the Initiative for Child Rights in the UN Global Compacts on Migration and for Refugees, we played an active role in the 2023 Global Refugee Forum, developing and coordinating an official multistakeholder pledge on child rights, which led to over 90 commitments for refugee children by governments and other stakeholders.

We successfully advocated for refugee children to be part of the process and the forum itself for the first time.

Ensuring child and youth participation in processes and decisions that affect them was a core part of our advocacy and we welcomed other important milestones in this regard in 2023: we are proud to have supported and contributed to the establishment of the European Union (EU) Child Participation Platform and the EU Youth Dialogue Platform.

Moving forward, Terre des Hommes International Federation commits to pursue and reinforce its action to defend and further advance children and young people's rights and to create a world where every child can thrive and live in safety and with hope.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our partners, supporters, and the resilient children and young people we serve, whose courage, strength and engagement inspire us every day. Together, we will continue to champion their rights and well-being.



Franziska Lauper
Chair



Valérie Ceccherini
Secretary General

INTRODUCTION

About Terre des Hommes

We work to guarantee that every child has a safe and enjoyable childhood, that every young person feels empowered and that every community we work with is engaged. Together with children, we fight to ensure that child rights are respected in full and implemented, leaving no one behind, and we engage to influence political agendas and strategies that affect children and young people.

The Terre des Hommes movement was created in 1960 by Edmond Kaiser. Mr Kaiser was a Swiss-French citizen who was so appalled by the living conditions of children in refugee camps during the 1960 Algerian conflict that he dedicated the rest of his life to helping children. The movement quickly expanded to other countries and in 1966, the Terre des Hommes International Federation was formed.

Find out more about Terre des Hommes [here](#).



Humanitarian projects in Gaza

For every child, a childhood. Every young person empowered. Every community engaged. Our mission is to make our vision a reality.

- Through our 983 projects in 68 countries, we work to protect children from extreme poverty, violence and exploitation.
- We empower children and young people to actively shape the societies they live in and to inspire sustainable systemic change which puts their rights and needs first.
- We involve all the relevant actors for positive results (parents, caregivers, policy makers and private companies).
- When mobilising our partners, expertise and resources, we create environments where children thrive.
- Terre des Hommes is constantly increasing its capacity to protect children and defend their rights everywhere.

Structure

The Terre des Hommes International Federation (TDHIF) is a network of nine organisations with headquarters in Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain and Switzerland (where we have two organisations – Terre des Hommes Switzerland and Terre des Hommes Lausanne). We work in 68 countries and with 886 partners. The Terre des Hommes International Federation is supported by an International Secretariat, with offices in Geneva and Brussels.

STRATEGY

Terre des Hommes
International Federation

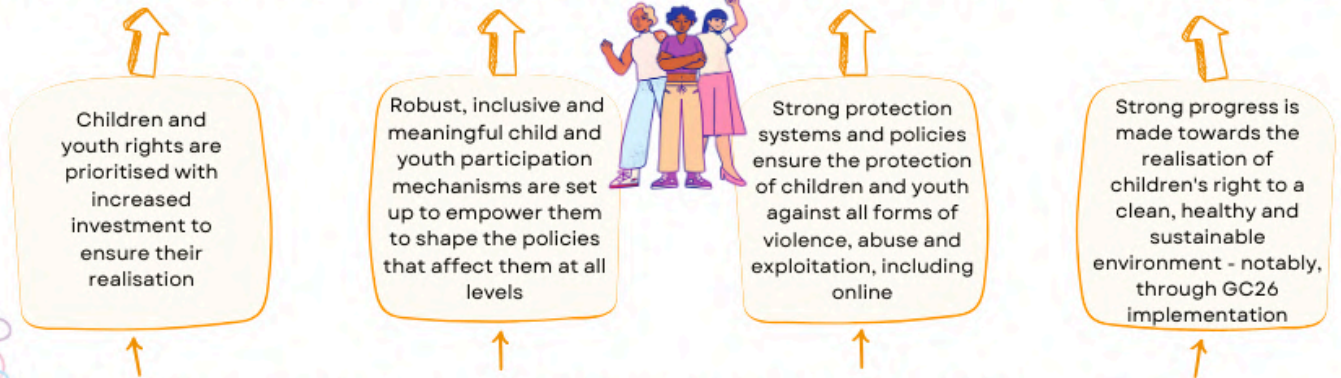
MOVING TOGETHER - WITH AND FOR CHILDREN

With children and young people, we are a global voice, mobilising to address issues they care about and threats to their lives, safety and wellbeing.

OUR
VISION

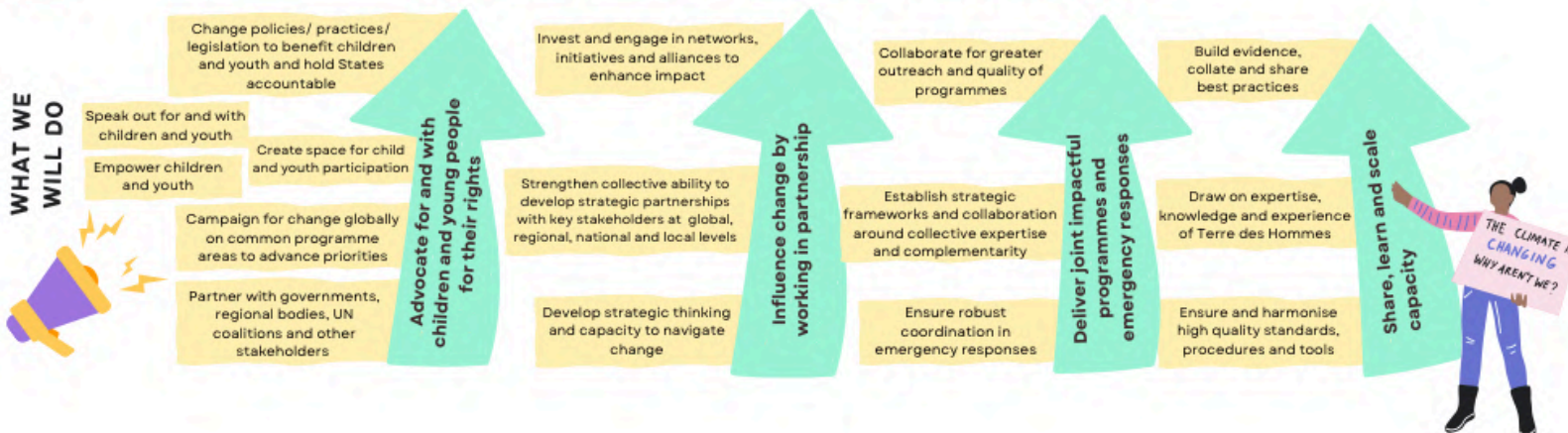

FOR EVERY CHILD, A CHILDHOOD. EVERY YOUNG PERSON EMPOWERED. EVERY COMMUNITY ENGAGED.

CHANGES
WE WANT
BY 2025



WE WILL HARNESS THE STRENGTHS OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH WE SERVE BY EMBRACING THEIR DIVERSITY AND PARTNERING WITH THEM TO INFLUENCE CHANGE.

WHAT WE
WILL DO



COMMITMENTS

Our commitment to safeguarding

TDHIF is deeply committed to preventing harm and protecting children and all vulnerable individuals across all our operations. Our comprehensive Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct (CoC) demonstrate a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, encompassing sexual exploitation, harassment, physical and emotional abuse, and neglect.

The policy and the CoC apply to the International Secretariat and all member organisations must comply with the standards, establishing clear responsibilities. It ensures systematic identification and mitigation of safeguarding risks through comprehensive protocols and mandatory training. Preventive measures include rigorous staff and volunteer screening, mandatory safeguarding training, and systematic risk assessment. Our approach prioritises early identification and proactive management of potential safeguarding challenges.

A confidential reporting channel: concern@terredeshommes.org - enables safe and anonymous reporting of concerns to the Secretariat. In addition all member organisations have their internal reporting channels that must follow the standards set by the Safeguarding policy. We guarantee strict confidentiality, protection from retaliation, and professional investigation of all reported incidents.

Organisational accountability is paramount and the policy and the CoC undergo regular reviews and updates. This ensures our safeguarding approach remains robust, responsive, and aligned with best practices.

Our commitment to sustainability

We are committed to and actively working on reducing our environmental footprint throughout the Terre des Hommes network. For example, we prioritise virtual meetings and electronic communications, organise in-person meetings in locations accessible by train (whenever possible), use recycled materials, recycle waste, and support remote working.

Taking note of the scientific consensus and the urgent call to action, Terre des Hommes Switzerland (Suisse and Schweiz) and Terre des Hommes Lausanne have committed to and are taking action to reduce their emissions by 50% by 2030 by participating in the [Climate Action Accelerator](#).

Find out more about the organisation's mission and efforts [on our website](#).



THEMATIC WORK





MUSA project - Italy

1. ADVANCING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Italy | MUSA: Where Global Citizenship Meets Science and Human Rights | Terre des Hommes Italy

There has been an alarming increase of serious problems among children linked to fragile peer relations, characterised by an increasingly widespread culture of hostility, fear of diversity which results in violence. The dynamics of exclusion and discrimination within multi-ethnic classes often lead to the formation of culturally divisive groups, where children with a migration background are particularly exposed to violence.

In response to these needs, Terre des Hommes Italy conceived the MUSA educational project, closely linked to the museum of the same name inaugurated in 2021 in Milan. The MUSA project represents an innovative and concrete response to the emerging educational and social needs in Italy by providing a scientific avenue to understand the evolution of phenomena such as racism, discrimination, violence and human rights violations.

It showcases who the vulnerable were in history (especially women and children), the conditions they lived in, and why it is crucial to understand the reasons behind certain social and cultural dynamics that can threaten the foundational values of Global Citizenship even today. Through an immersive journey across different historical periods, the historical-archaeological, criminalistic, and humanitarian areas of MUSA give space and voice to the vulnerable, reconstructing their existence

through traces on bodies and acknowledging the dignity they were deprived of due to violence, discrimination, and poverty.

After participating in the training course, Federica, a student from Agnesi High School in Merate, said to the MUSA operators with a particular light in her eyes:

"I want to thank you for the project, especially for the visit to MUSA, which was beautiful! Now I know what I want to study at university: I want to become a forensic doctor!"

MUSA also works on the cognitive and emotional sphere of students to help them acquire a broad and critical view of the socio-cultural dynamics that led to human rights violations. It demonstrates that the most evolutionarily strong communities are more open, multicultural, inclusive, and capable of respecting diversity and protecting the rights of their members. In 2023, the MUSA project engaged with 651 students and 51 teachers.

Created by the Laboratory of Anthropology and Forensic Odontology at the University of Milan, in collaboration with Terre des Hommes, Fondazione Cariplo, and Fondazione Isacchi Samaja, MUSA is the first University Museum of Forensic Anthropological Sciences for Human Rights in Europe. Its goal is to highlight the role of science in protecting Human Rights and promoting the values of Global Citizenship.

Check out this [animated video](#) that explains this project further (in Italian).

2 Bulgaria, Romania, Greece | i-ACCESS MyRights | Terre des Hommes Lausanne

In several European countries such as Bulgaria, Romania and Greece, children and young people face major challenges in accessing justice and seeking redress when they become victims of crime, especially children and youth from marginalised groups.

“Children are not informed where to refer to when they have a problem, whom to talk to, who will believe them. An offense was committed against me and I didn’t know who could help, what to do, or who I needed to talk to,” said a 17-year-old Romanian girl involved in the project.

In many cases, when a child is a victim of a crime, they suffer an additional layer of trauma: not knowing what to do about it. Children carry the stress and fear of what they experience alone, and being unable to seek justice, cannot resolve these issues or recover.

The i-ACCESS MyRights project addresses the lack of access to simplified information for children on their rights in criminal proceedings in Europe. Using artificial intelligence, Terre des Hommes created a tool that could help children navigate complex criminal proceedings and reduce their stress, regardless of gender, social or cultural background.

“I have participated in groups and activities before, but this was the first time that someone asked for my feedback before they created something. Usually, they just present something to us. It made me feel heard.” said a 16-year-old boy from the Democratic Republic of Congo involved in the co-design sessions.

The solution was designed by working closely with children through co-design sessions in Bulgaria, Romania and Greece to meet their real needs. Our teams were able to identify key rights-related issues among children, culminating in the development of a chatbot that addresses the most significant concerns.

The app was first implemented in 2023 focusing on the design and development of the AI chatbot, including identifying ethical, legal and technological issues around the development of such a tool. In addition, it was necessary to understand and tackle the day to day challenges, familiarise children and the Terre des Hommes team with the topic and ensure cross-sectoral coordination on a consortium level and externally.

In 2024, Terre des Hommes will focus on broader awareness raising, communication, testing and iteration to deploy the chatbot in local contexts.

Read more about the i-ACCESS MyRights project [here](#) or [watch this video](#) that describes the project.



i-ACCESS MyRights project launch meeting

2. PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION

A. CHILD LABOUR AND ITS WORST FORMS





India | Empowerment for GOOD | Terre des Hommes Netherlands

The Indian Devadasi system in lower caste communities exploits young girls and women in the name of a harmful tradition. These girls and women are destined to a life of forced sex work. Young girls from the community are isolated, face stigma and drop out of school. Generations of women in the same family undergo these challenges: the daughter of a mother in the Devadasi system often faces the same fate.

Through the GOOD (Getting Out Of Devadasi system) project, Terre des Hommes Netherlands works to change the mindset of the community towards the system, and empower its victims. Children are encouraged to join clubs where they are taught their rights and entitlements. Young girls also undergo life skills training to build their self esteem, confidence and resilience. The children are further facilitated to advocate for their concerns both at the community and the government level. Capacity building of the concerned authorities, media awareness, access to education and vocational training are the other important components of this project.

Amrita is a teenager who belongs to a socio-economically disadvantaged Devadasi community in North Karnataka, India where young girls and women are forced into a life of sex work as part of a societal norm. When her mother contracted HIV, Amrita had to drop out of school as they both immediately had no means of livelihood. Being from an ostracised community only made it worse.

Through Terre des Hommes, she was introduced to a children's club where she realised that her rights as a child were being violated. She, along with other members of the club, raised their voices against injustice meted out to Devadasis. They even helped prevent a child from being forced into sex work. Amrita was also re-admitted to school and enrolled in a vocational training programme. Today, Amrita is a secondary school graduate and is championing the cause of Devadasi girls in her village.

"I now have the confidence which I did not have before. I know that I am just like any other child and have access to the same rights. Our community's children do not deserve to go through exploitation. I will do my best to spread awareness and ensure that my community is protected", said Amrita.

Another major administrative challenge faced was the mandatory requirement for Devadasi children to fill in their father's name in application forms which created barriers for children as many of them don't know their father's identity. This meant that Devadasi children could not go to school. To tackle this, Terre des Hommes organised conversations with the state Minister of Women and Child and Social Welfare Department. This resulted in a government decision to make the father's name optional on school application forms which enabled children to complete school.

The Terre des Hommes team has been successful in improving government relations, specifically with respect to building ties with high-ranking officials. This relationship building has led to a positive and noticeable shift in the response of government authorities as in the case of making the father's name optional. They are more proactive in reporting cases and initiating action against issues faced by children from the Devadasi community.

Thanks to programs like GOOD, children like Amrita have a chance to be independent and happy.

Read more about [Amrita's story here](#).

'[Tales of Girl Power!](#)' is a publication that captures stories about the success and impact of building the resilience of girls in the Devadasi system.

2. PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION

B. CHILD SAFETY ONLINE AND OFFLINE



4 Asia, Latin America | Down to Zero Pushes For the Elimination of Sexual Exploitation of Children | Terre des Hommes Netherlands

Millions of children around the world are sexually exploited, both online and offline. And this number continues to grow yearly. The physical and mental impact of sexual exploitation is great and long-term.

The Step Up the Fight Against Sexual Exploitation of Children (SUFASEC) project led by the Down to Zero Alliance enables children and young people to stand up for their rights, supports communities to become safer and protect their children from sexual exploitation, and helps governments to improve and implement relevant policies, laws and regulations. The Alliance also cooperates with activists, parents, schools, governments, and the private sector, for example in the tourism sector.

Children and young people are the main stakeholders of the programme and are often very active in organising, but need to be more recognised and heard in society.



SUFASEC project activities

“If parents are more aware and talk to their children about the online risks, they will be more prepared to react in such situations.” said a child participant in a focus group in Bulgaria.

Research titled VOICE or “Values, Opinions, and Insights from Children (and their Caregivers) about E-safety” was conducted on behalf of the Alliance to identify the safety needs of and solutions for children online. The research consulted a total of 316 children through focus groups discussions and surveyed 6,618 caregivers from 15 countries.

Early findings of the research led by ECPAT International, Eurochild and Terre des Hommes Netherlands and supported by Terre des Hommes Italy and Terre des Hommes Lausanne were launched in November 2023. One of the insights is that parents and caregivers experience challenges in talking with children about online sexual abuse. The final report will be launched in 2024.

Children and youth were engaged through tailored training and support provided by mentors. The mentors built trust and guided the children to develop tools, collect and analyse data and create a final country-specific baseline product providing a profound idea of the context these children and youth are living in.

For many children, this experience enhanced their self awareness and self esteem, and in particular, how they perceived their own agency, power and influence. The process was very motivating and encouraging and the Alliance is considering further expanding this approach to additional countries for the end-line evaluation.

The Alliance is led by Terre des Hommes Netherlands, Plan International NL, Defence for Children - ECPAT, Free a Girl, Child Rights Coalition Asia and Conexión with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It covers 12 countries including Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines, Thailand, Laos, Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Dominican Republic and Guatemala. Read more about the research and projects [here](#) (in Dutch).

5 Nicaragua | Empowering Youth: Preventing Teenage Pregnancies through Sexual Health | Terre des Hommes Schweiz

Nicaragua records one of the highest rates of teenage pregnancies worldwide, and violence against girls and women is an everyday reality. Through this project, Terre des Hommes Schweiz contributes to the holistic development of youth, strengthens their right to a life free from violence, and supports the practice of safe, self-determined sexuality.

"We need to understand that violence is not good, because it harms both current and future generations."

Idania is a bright 12-year-old girl from the community of San Pedro. Idania, along with her brother and her mother, lives with her grandparents, uncle, and cousins. Her parents have only recently separated, and her relationship with her father is strained, marked by episodes of domestic violence.

In Nicaragua, gender-based violence is deeply rooted due to the prevailing machista culture. Idania often feels unsafe in her community, reports being harassed on the street, and knows several girls who have become pregnant early, either through violence or a lack of knowledge about contraception. Young people lack access to safe information about sexual health and rights. While at home, these topics are often taboo.

In 2022, Terre des Hommes Schweiz, together with the organisation MIRIAM, launched a project to protect young people from teenage pregnancies through sex education and strengthening their awareness of their rights.

"The leaders give me and the other girls the feeling that we are valuable, simply because of who we are. That we have good reasons to be proud of ourselves. Nobody had told me that before," she says.

Idania soon joined the project and felt like she was in good hands. The team paid close attention to her needs and integrated her into several activities.

"I've become much more self-confident and no longer feel ashamed," she says.

Idania is particularly enthusiastic about the communication and radio technology course, where she produces radio programs with other young people on topics such as violence and teenage pregnancies. Her family supports her participation in the project, hopeful that it will lead to a better future.

So far, 22 young people have produced and broadcasted 10 radio programmes on the prevention of teenage pregnancies.

Idania shares what she has learned with her friends:
"I motivate them to fight for what is important to them. That we can achieve our dreams if we focus on them."

Idania herself wants to become a lawyer to help the community, especially women who suffer from violence.

In 2023, this project provided psycho-legal support to 204 young people, strengthened family relations between 103 young people and children as well as 35 family members. Also, 10 leaders spoke publicly about the intolerance of gender-based violence and stressed the importance of preventing teenage pregnancy.

Read more about the project [here](#).



Children using the RoboMitra app

6 India | RoboMitra Sheds Light on Taboos | Terre des Hommes Lausanne

Child sexual abuse remains a harsh reality for millions of children in India, with many cases going unreported due to fear. Children may not fully comprehend the nature of the acts inflicted upon them, and may also face intimidation from their abusers. The resulting trauma can have long-lasting effects on their lives, as they often are not aware of or have access to mental health and psychosocial support services.

To address this issue, the RAKSHA Project has developed the RoboMitra application, which provides safety information to children, helping them reduce the risk of child sexual abuse and seek support if an incident occurs, all while maintaining their anonymity. The application aims to create a safe space for the disclosure of child and youth sexual abuse.

Additionally, the chatbot in RoboMitra supports the mental well-being of adolescents, providing healing services and support.

The app assists adolescents in tracking their menstrual cycle and dispels myths and misconceptions, promoting improved menstrual hygiene.

“Menstruation is one of those issues about which we do not get proper information from any reliable source,” said 16-year-old Geeta, who belongs to a minoritised community in West Bengal, India. Geeta was involved in the development of the RoboMitra app.

It also facilitates the sharing of details about mental health specialists or therapists, allowing children to access specialised mental health support services. Being involved in the process has also changed Geeta’s thinking about her future.

“Although there is a practice in our community of marrying off girls at a young age, I want to continue my higher studies. After using the RoboMitra App, I understand that girls should not be married at a young age. I want to pursue my career as a nurse.”

Through the project, 966 children and members of their communities were supported. 66% of the children were girls. Geeta had been involved from the very initial stage of the RoboMitra app development process and is an active user among 279 other trial users in Berhampore, India.

Download the [app here](#).

3. CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO A CLEAN, HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT



7 South Africa | Green Start-Ups Create Jobs | Terre des Hommes Germany

Diepsloot is a densely populated suburb in the north of Johannesburg. More than 300,000 people live here and youth unemployment is over 50 percent. Terre des Hommes' project helps young people to set up their own businesses with organic farming.

"I can't wait for someone to offer me a job."

Debra has vision, determination and the will to succeed: **"I have to use my opportunities and create one for myself."**

Because the young single mother was unable to find a job despite her degrees in computer science and agriculture, she applied for a program run by Terre des Hommes' partner organisation Afrika Tikkun. At the Tikkun center in Diepsloot, Debra not only learns how to prepare a bed, plant, water and fight pests, but also how to run a farm.

Debra is one of 60 young people between 18 and 25 years old, who were given the opportunity to start their own agribusinesses. The agricultural and business management training lasts one year. At the end of the course, those who wish to can farm on a 300 square meter plot of land of their own and apply what they have learned.

The Tikkun center in Diepsloot also includes a nursery, where the young farmers buy seeds and plants, and a packing house, where the distribution of products is organised. The start-ups also continue to receive marketing support.

She is optimistic:

"If I start with one hectare of land and slowly increase it, I can achieve a lot," she says. "And with a job, I can help a lot of people."

The products produced through the program are already known for their organic quality and are increasingly appreciated in Diepsloot and the surrounding area. This is because fresh and healthy food is in short supply in the urban environment. Debra wants to set up her own business, supply people with high-quality food and create jobs - in line with Afrika Tikkun's goals.

Learn more about the programmes run in Africa [here](#) (in German).



Debra wants to set up her own agribusiness

8 Cambodia | Clean Water and Non-Violent Education | Terre des Hommes Germany

In the province of Kampot in Cambodia, around 120 kilometers southwest of Phnom Penh, there is a lack of almost everything - including drinking water and sanitary facilities. The poor hygienic conditions often make children and adults ill and endanger their safety.

Terre des Hommes' project partner COCD (Cambodian Organisation for Children and Development) has started to drill wells in 45 villages, build toilets and is helping people collect rainwater in large tanks.

Chim, who is nine years old, is happy: he no longer has to carry water for his family from the pond far outside the village. He also no longer has to worry about drowning like a boy from his neighborhood. And he now has more time to go to school and play.

Neighbor Morm Thorn is also happy: she was able to build a toilet with a small loan and technical assistance.

"Before, we had to go into the forest outside the village to relieve ourselves. We were very afraid of snakes. And we were afraid of being watched. I was particularly worried about my daughters." she says.

COCD trains local water management groups to maintain the wells, build toilet blocks and make joint democratic decisions. The women are particularly committed: 800 of them have organised themselves, save small amounts together and grant loans. Not just for building latrines, but also for growing vegetables or raising chickens. The first groups are already marketing their products together.

Life is getting a little easier in the villages and COCD is using the initial success to achieve the second important goal: violence in the families must be stopped. At the start of the project, 70 percent of adults and children thought that physical violence was a good educational method. Now only 12 percent still think so. In workshops, parents and teachers learned about children's rights and discussed how they can live together in everyday life without violence.

Children and young people themselves are making a significant contribution to the change in opinion: they are involved in 20 clubs and campaigns for non-violent conflict resolution at home, at school and in the villages.

Learn more about the projects run in Cambodia [here](#) (in German).



Children have access to clean water through the programme

4. CHILDREN ON THE MOVE

Promoting the Mental Health of Refugee and Migrant Children - Italy



9 Italy | Promoting the Mental Health of Refugee and Migrant Children | Terre des Hommes Italy

Approximately 17,862 of the unaccompanied children from a migration background who arrived in Italy in 2023 were adolescent boys, who were forced to undertake an extremely dangerous journey to escape conflict, discrimination, climate change and misery.

Exposed to violence and threats at all stages of their migration journey, upon arrival in Italy, they are confronted with a reception and protection system that is often unable to offer adequate support for their well-being.

The "Adolescent Toolkit for Expression and Innovation" developed by UNICEF provides support for children and youth in this system. The toolkit is a resource package that includes tools, activities and materials, useful for structuring interventions for girls and boys, adolescents and young people, aimed at bringing about positive change through the development of "life skills" that are useful for dealing with problems and situations encountered in everyday life.

Terre des Hommes Italy was asked to test the toolkit with migrant and refugees adolescents for the first time in Italy and provide feedback to UNICEF for adaptations needed within this specific context. In 2023, Terre des Hommes teams in Italy operating in 39 reception facilities in Milan, Genoa and the province of Ragusa, relied on the toolkit to carry out group meetings, with an inclusive approach that focused on art, creativity, innovation and stimulating connection in the group and with the host community.

In addition to improving group dynamics, the activities aim to enhance the skills and strengths of each boy and to bring out vulnerabilities that require specialised individual care.

When Terre des Hommes' team first met Yacoub in a community for unaccompanied migrant children and youth in Milan, he was 17 years old but looked older. He had come to Italy from Egypt to find work and did not understand why he had to stay in a host community, when he had always managed on his own, since starting to work when he was eight years old.

His family's needs also weighed on him, that of earning as much as possible to repay the debts incurred for the trip and to ensure a comfortable life for his family who were left behind. A burden that was too heavy for a young boy like Yacoub, who later admitted that he never had a real childhood.

It is therefore understandable that at first he had a wary attitude and did not want to participate in group activities. But with some patience, the Terre des Hommes team managed to involve him, and help him to engage with other children. In this protected context, he was able to be a child like any other, with fears and dreams of his own. Yacoub dreams of returning to Egypt, marrying his fiancée and bringing her to Europe to live together happily.

After listening carefully to the other people in his group, it was also discovered that Yacoub was partially deaf, something he himself was not aware of. This had probably contributed to his isolation from others, and he was referred to undergo specialist examinations to improve his disability.

The activities reached a total of 477 adolescents, including 421 boys and 56 girls. 70% of adolescents were between 15 and 17 years of age and 20% were young adults. The majority of adolescents were Egyptian, followed by Tunisian and Bangladeshi.

Learn more about similar programmes [here](#) (in Italian).

5. CHILDREN AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Save My Planet, Save My Rights project - India



10 Switzerland | “Save My Planet, Save My Rights”: Children Unite for a Sustainable Future | Terre des Hommes Suisse

In 2023, for “International Environment Day” on June 5th, Terre des Hommes Suisse launched the “Save my planet, Save my rights” campaign, bringing together hundreds of children and young people worldwide to campaign for environmental protection. This initiative highlighted children and young people's growing concern for their future in the face of environmental challenges and their determination to do everything to secure the future they deserve.

The campaign mobilised children and young people through various activities: awareness raising workshops, discussions and debates, creation of vegetable gardens, street parades to convey messages, waste collection, and even workshops in the Amazon to raise awareness about the fragility of nature.

These experiences allowed children and young people to concretely understand environmental issues and develop a sense of belonging to a global movement.

While these children and young people did not live in the same country, speak the same language, or share the same culture, the goal was for everyone participating to realise that they share the same planet and must find solutions to the challenges it faces.

Children and young people's testimonies reflect certain concerns about the future, but also their determination. Rinku, for example, a young child rights activist in India, expresses this anxiety:

“Due to pollution, the Earth's global temperature is rising. But it's also the sun that's causing more and more damage to our skin. Our generation will be so affected that we won't be able to leave our homes anymore.”

Or Camila, 11, in Peru:

“We went to see how the river was doing and we saw a lot of pollution. I would like to make the planet cleaner, tidier, and have less pollution and contamination.”

This desire for concrete change illustrates children and young people's commitment to a healthier environment.

By empowering children and young people to be agents of change, Terre des Hommes Suisse is investing in the development of future engaged leaders. This campaign illustrates the organisation's approach, placing children's rights and participation at the heart of its actions for a more sustainable and equitable world.

Watch [this video](#) (in French and English) with more testimonies from the children and young people involved in the campaign.

Learn more about the [campaign here](#).



Save my planet activities in Mali

11 Germany | Young Activist Academy 2023: Empowering Youth to Claim their Rights | Terre des Hommes Germany

In 2023, the inaugural Young Activist Academy (YAA) brought together 15 young activists from diverse backgrounds across Germany. Hosted by Terre des Hommes and Gripswerke, this initiative focused on youth who have faced discrimination and are passionately involved in social movements. Among them were young refugees, street-connected youth, young Roma, care leavers, and LGBTIQ+ youth activists. Their mission: to learn, share, and advocate for their rights using cutting-edge tools and creative strategies.

Throughout the year, these young activists met on weekends, forging strong bonds and exploring innovative ways to advocate for social change, with workshops covering topics like press work, action art, and the use of artificial intelligence in activism. Central to their learning was an intersectional approach, recognising the inter-connectedness of their struggles—whether for housing, non-discrimination, or equality—and finding ways to support one another.

One of the standout sessions focused on harnessing the power of artificial intelligence. The participants learned how AI could amplify their voices and extend their reach. From data analysis to creating compelling narratives, AI provided them with new tools to fight for social justice. This innovative approach not only equipped them with practical skills but also opened their eyes to the endless possibilities AI could offer in their activism.

Beyond the workshops, individual activists received support through the “MegaFonds”. This fund allowed them to request resources for their own projects and campaigns. This financial backing was crucial in turning their ideas into tangible actions, furthering their impact in their respective communities.

The year-long program culminated in a closing event in December 2023. Here, the young activists showcased the results of their workshops and individual projects. This event was not just a celebration of their achievements but also a platform to share their stories with a wider audience, attracting the attention of the press and inspiring others to join their cause.

“I've spoken to journalists about our campaigns before. But during the interview training at the Young Activist Academy, I learnt how to convey our message better and more consciously,”
Farah*, participant of the YAA 2023.

Journalists are drawn to compelling narratives that highlight personal journeys, challenges, and triumphs. By training young activists in storytelling and media engagement, the program ensures that their voices are heard far and wide.

The Young Activist Academy is more than a training program—it's a movement. It equips young people with the tools, knowledge, and support they need to advocate for social change. By focusing on AI, action art, and storytelling, it empowers a new generation of activists to fight for justice in innovative and impactful ways.

Learn more about [YAA here](#) (in German).



Young Activist Academy workshop

ADVOCACY AND CAMPAIGNS

These are the key joint advocacy efforts and campaigns implemented by TDHIF in 2023:

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child - General Comment No. 26

TDHIF played a pivotal role in the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child - General Comment No. 26 (GC26), emphasising children's right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, by facilitating children's participation and creating a [child-friendly version](#) of the comment for accessibility. Over 16,000 children from 121 countries were invited to contribute to its development, through an 18-month global consultation process co-created with 12 child advisors and experts.

Child Rights in the Global Compacts for Migration and on Refugees

In 2023, the TDHIF as co-chair of the Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compacts for Migration and on Refugees, supported its implementation, helping to secure pledges for child rights and enabling meaningful child participation at the Global Refugee Forum (GRF).

The Initiative consulted with children in several countries and presented the children's manifesto at the Global Refugee Forum. The Initiative-led multi-stakeholder child rights pledge gained traction from over 100 stakeholders, including several member states.

Child Safety Online

As part of the [Child Safety On! coalition](#), TDHIF launched the ["Every Second Counts"](#) campaign on

International Children's Day and the United Nations Global Day of Parents.

This campaign brought together survivors, guardians and supporters who called on European citizens and governments to support the EU proposed regulation on child sexual abuse online.

The "Darkness Follows" campaign, which included an online petition, and the "Cleaning the Internet" march to the European Parliament, called on policy makers to 'clean up the internet' from sexual predators and protect children online.

TDHIF also joined the European Cooperation for Science and Technology network's ["Boosting Societal Adaptation and Mental Health in a Rapidly Digitalizing Post-Pandemic Europe"](#) research programme, focusing on preventing and reducing the harmful risks of digitalisation on children's mental health.

TDHIF influenced global digital policies by contributing to the UN Global Digital Compact and advocating for child safety in the EU Artificial Intelligence Act.

Children and Youth Participation

TDHIF enabled children and youth's voices to be heard in key international fora, such as the UN Human Rights Council, preparatory sessions to the UN Summit of the Future, the Africa Children's Summit, the European Humanitarian Forum and others.

The collaboration with Child Rights Connect resulted in a historic achievement: one of the panels at the UN Human Rights Council's Annual Day on the Rights of the Child was composed entirely of children and youth, underscoring the importance and the viability of child participation in global discussions.

KEY JOINT INITIATIVES

Joining Forces – For All Children



In 2017, Terre des Hommes International Federation joined forces with five leading child-focused agencies namely ChildFund Alliance, Plan International, Save the Children International, SOS Children's Villages International, and World Vision International to establish the Joining Forces (JF) alliance.

This coalition aims to accelerate progress in securing children's rights and ending violence against them, guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Together, JF members pilot and scale innovative approaches across more than 25 countries.

Throughout 2023, TDHIF remained actively engaged within JF, at all levels, including in its advocacy and programme work. For example, a high level event on child participation and a meeting with key UN official was jointly organised on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly and SDGs summit, in New York in September. Another event was co-organised at the European Humanitarian Forum where children and young people presented their recommendations on the hunger crisis to policy-makers and donors.

Additionally, TDHIF has been instrumental in the development of the JF Call to Action focused on mainstreaming meaningful child participation.

Other key initiatives included participation in significant JF projects: Joining Forces for Africa (JOFA) project on child protection amidst COVID-19 in Uganda, Mali, Kenya, Senegal, and Ethiopia; and a project to combat child labour in Mali, Burkina Faso, Madagascar and Malawi.

Through these efforts, TDHIF and Joining Forces continue to champion children's rights and drive impactful change globally.

Initiatives for Child Rights in the Global Compacts



In 2023, TDHIF, as co-chair of the Initiatives for Child Rights in the Global Compacts, played a pivotal role in advocating for child rights at the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) in Geneva. Our focus was twofold: to influence government pledges and to ensure meaningful child participation throughout the GRF process.

The Initiative organised strategic workshops and developed tools to push for the Refugee Compact to be implemented for children.

Additionally, it led on the development and coordination of a multi-stakeholder pledge on child rights, with commitments made from over a hundred stakeholders, including governments like Colombia, Greece, and Norway. Child sensitive pledging guidelines were also created and promoted.

The Initiative successfully advocated for children to be part of the GRF 2023 and supported children's participation in-person and through consultations. It was the first time that refugee children participated in the GRF. 434 refugee children from 11 countries were consulted by the Initiative and we collated and shared their recommendations in "Our Call For Answers: Children's manifesto to the GRF 2023".

We also organised a successful High Level Parallel Event on Child Rights at the GRF, fostering dialogue between children and decision-makers.

FACTS AND FIGURES



6,800,756

Estimated number of direct beneficiaries

2998

Number of volunteers

983

Number of projects

483

Number of employees
in head offices

207

Number of employees
in regional offices

256,762

Number of members
and supporters

254,156,138

Estimated number of indirect beneficiaries

€ 226,667,032

Global Income

886

Number of partner
organisations

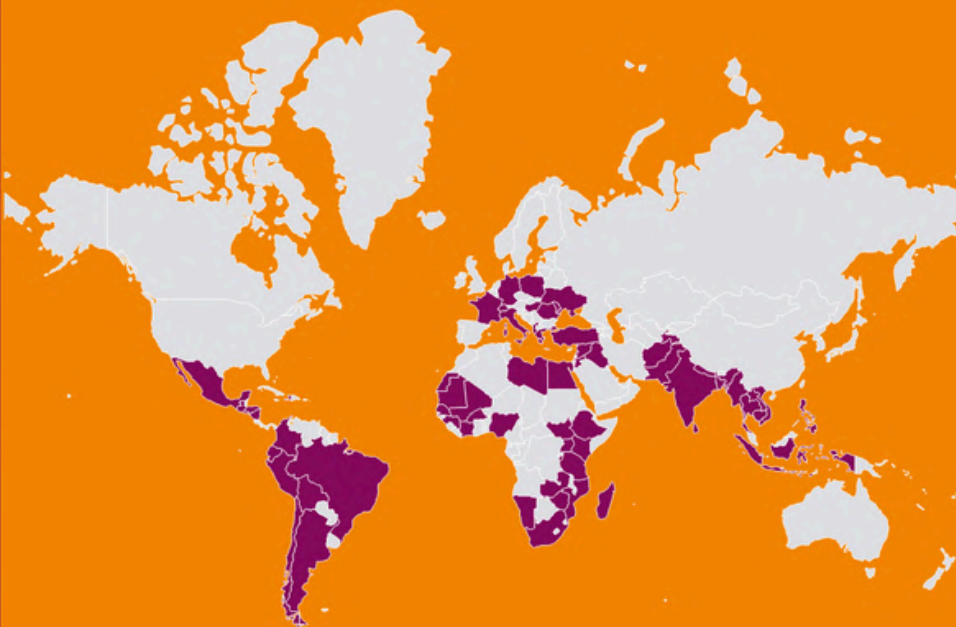
MEMBERS

The Terre des Hommes International Federation is composed of 9 member organisations:

- [Terre des Hommes Denmark](#)
- [Terre des Hommes France](#)
- [Terre des Hommes Germany](#)
- [Terre des Hommes Italy](#)
- [Terre des Hommes Luxembourg](#)
- [Terre des Hommes Netherlands](#)
- [Terre des Hommes Spain](#)
- [Terre des Hommes Lausanne](#)
- [Terre des Hommes Switzerland](#)

Below is a map of the 68 countries worldwide where TDHIF's members ran 933 projects in 2023:

- | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1. Afghanistan | 27. Iraq | 52. Romania |
| 2. Albania | 28. Italy | 53. Senegal |
| 3. Argentina | 29. Ivory Coast | 54. South Africa |
| 4. Bangladesh | 30. Jordan | 55. South Sudan |
| 5. Bolivia | 31. Kenya | 56. Sri Lanka |
| 6. Brazil | 32. Kosovo | 57. Switzerland |
| 7. Burkina Faso | 33. Laos | 58. Syria |
| 8. Burundi | 34. Lebanon | 59. Tajikistan |
| 9. Cambodia | 35. Libya | 60. Tanzania |
| 10. Chile | 36. Madagascar | 61. Thailand |
| 11. Colombia | 37. Mali | 62. Turkey |
| 12. Ecuador | 38. Mauritania | 63. Uganda |
| 13. Egypt | 39. Mexico | 64. Ukraine |
| 14. El Salvador | 40. Moldova | 65. Vietnam |
| 15. Ethiopia | 41. Mozambique | 66. Western Sahara |
| 16. France | 42. Myanmar | 67. Zambia |
| 17. Germany | 43. Namibia | 68. Zimbabwe |
| 18. Grand Canary | 44. Nepal | |
| 19. Greece | 45. Nicaragua | |
| 20. Guatemala | 46. Nigeria | |
| 21. Guinea | 47. Pakistan | |
| 22. Haiti | 48. Palestine | |
| 23. Honduras | 49. Peru | |
| 24. Hungary | 50. Philippines | |
| 25. India | 51. Poland | |
| 26. Indonesia | | |



68

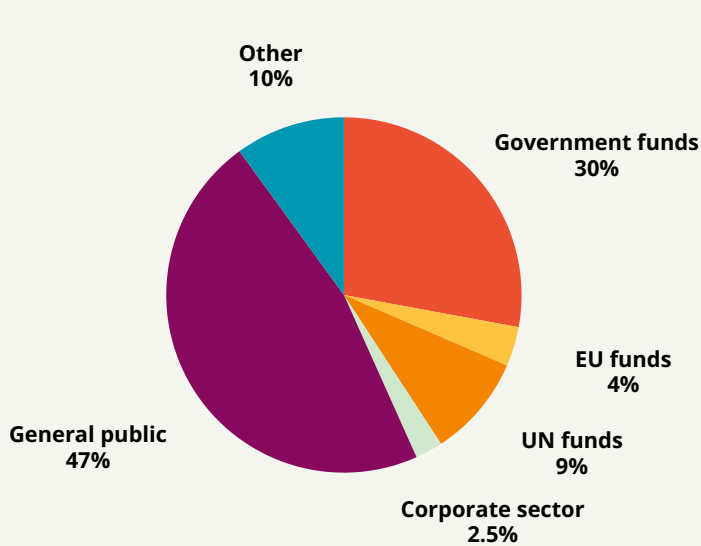
Terre des Hommes

983 Projects in 68 countries

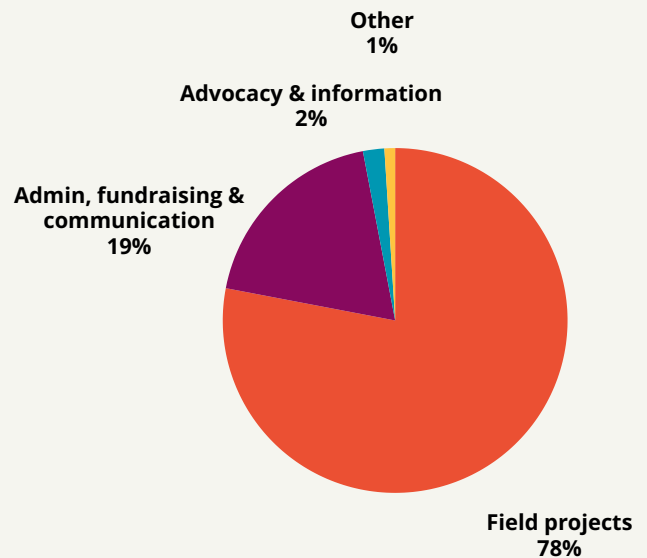
FINANCIALS 2023

TERRE DES HOMMES INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION

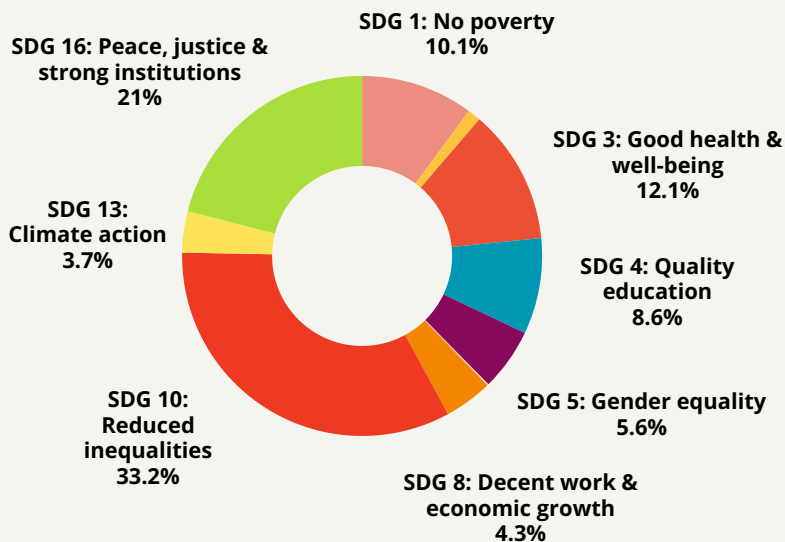
1 Global Income by Source



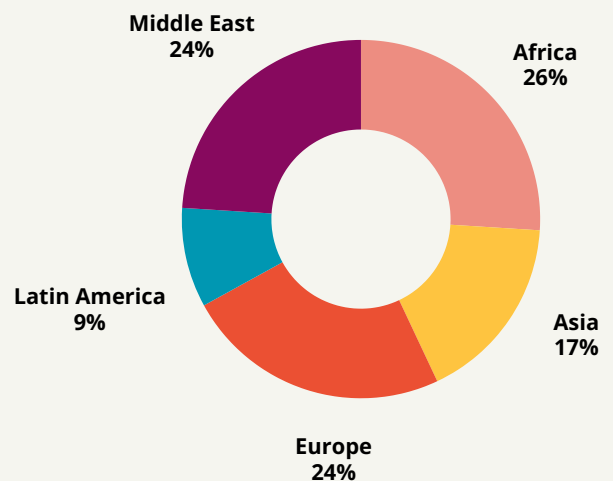
2 Global Expenditure by Sector



3 Project Expenditure by SDG

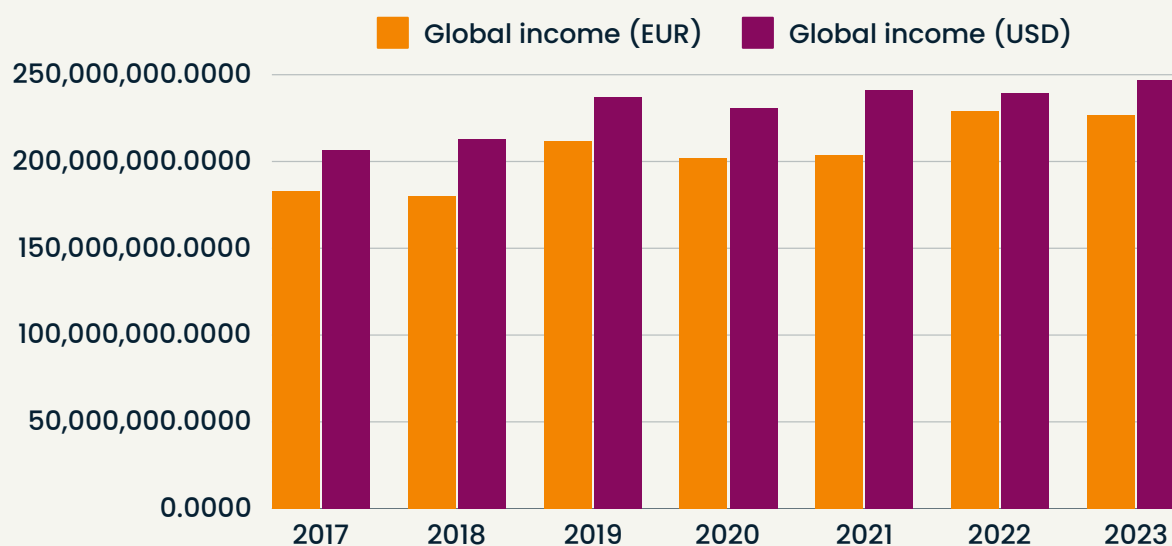


4 Project Expenditure by Region



5 Global Income 2017 - 2023

Year	Global Income (EUR)	Global Income (USD)
2017	€ 183,161,256	\$206,830,982
2018	€ 180,186,090	\$212,714,378
2019	€ 211,691,247	\$236,885,391
2020	€ 202,080,172	\$230,699,503
2021	€ 203,927,141	\$241,119,418
2022	€ 228,748,270	\$239,651,247
2023	€ 226,667,032	\$247,038,890

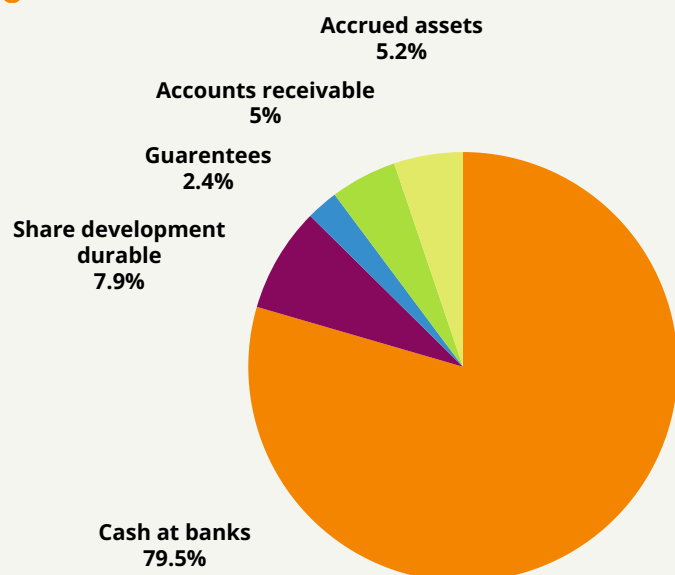


FINANCIALS 2023

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

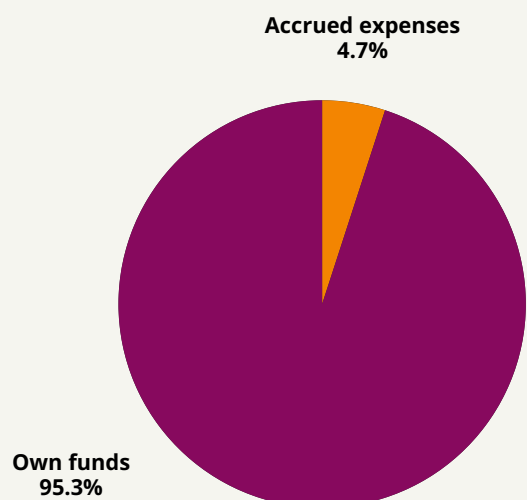
Consolidated balance sheet of the International Secretariat as of 31.12.2023

6 Assets (CHF)



Assets		
Cash	0	0%
Cash at banks	221,686	79.5%
Share development durable	22,160	7.9%
Guarantees (rent)	6,650	2.4%
Accounts receivable	14,072	5%
Accrued assets	14,376	5.2%
Total (CHF)	278,944	100%

7 Liabilities (CHF)



Liabilities		
Project funds	0	0%
Accrued expenses	13,130	4.7%
Own funds	265,814	95.3%
Total (CHF)	278,944	100%

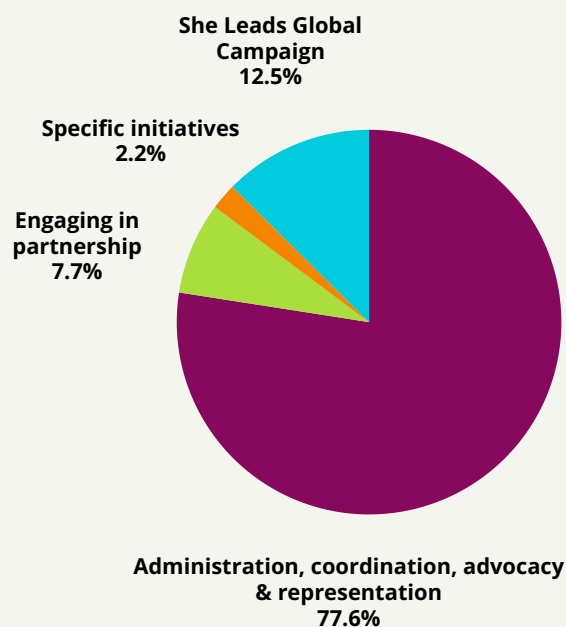
Consolidated statement of activities for International Secretariat for the year 2023

8 Income (CHF)



Income		
Membership fees	604,273	71.1%
Additional members' contributions for specific initiatives	129,336	15.2%
Contributions for She Leads Global Campaign	108,784	12.8%
Other resources	7,641	0.9%
Total (CHF)	850,035	100%

9 Expenditure (CHF)



Expenditure		
Administration, coordination, advocacy & representation	671,957	77.6%
Engaging in partnership	66,495	7.7%
Specific initiatives	18,789	2.2%
She Leads Global Campaign	108,784	12.5%
Total (CHF)	866,025	100%

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Terre des Hommes International Federation

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FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT