



# Annual Report 2023



Children's  
Relief  
**Bethlehem**



# Contents

## Editorial 4

## Reports

The Year 2023 in Review	5
A Day-Surgery for Children	10
Status of the Project	11
Visualisation of the Building	12
Children's Relief	
Bethlehem Projects	14
Catastrophic Turning Point in the Middle East	16
Hospital Statistics	20
Facts and Figures	22

## Finances

Introduction	24
Income	25
Source of Donations	26
Zewo-Compliant Use of Funds	27
Balance Sheet and Operating Statement	28
Auditor's Report	30

## General Information

Association Children's Relief Bethlehem	32
Head Office	33
Contact Information	34



Dear readers,

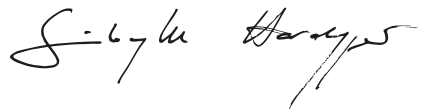
Two anniversaries defined our work this past year: 70 years of Caritas Baby Hospital and 60 years of the Association Children's Relief Bethlehem. On this occasion, I rediscovered an inscription by Father Ernst Schnydrig that had once been placed on the cornerstone of the children's hospital: "We wish to be a bridge of peace in the troubled Holy Land. One small bridge among the other bridges of peace that are needed until the Holy Land is a blessed home for Jews, Christians, and Muslims – for all children of Abraham."

The inscription's enduring relevance became clear at the end of 2023: since the Hamas-led attack on Israel and ensuing war in Gaza, nothing in the West Bank has remained the same. The Association and hospital face great challenges in ensuring their work can be carried out – even under difficult conditions. However, our children's hospital is well-versed in dealing with challenges and has already overcome numerous crises in its history.

Indeed, when looking back to the hospital's origins, we see our work for women and children arose from a major political crisis, one caused by war and displacement. For the past 70 years, the hospital team has always managed to put sick children first – despite adversity and politically delicate situations, despite violence and instability. This has been, and

continues to be, the daily work of our colleagues in Bethlehem. As Chair of Children's Relief Bethlehem, I am proud that our staff and stakeholders have focused their efforts on helping the youngest and most vulnerable.

Our work is underpinned by the conviction that all children have a right to healthcare. And with our hospital, we continue to build our little bridge of peace and hope. My thanks go to our benefactors who continue to support this valuable work.



Sibylle Hardegger  
Chair





# Positive Annual Result Despite War

2023 was shaped by two anniversaries and an ambitious construction project. Plans moved forward, despite the war – an escalation proving the importance of institutions like Caritas Baby Hospital. (Sybille Oetliker, Managing Director)

2023 began for the Association Children's Relief Bethlehem with a great deal of hope. Two anniversaries were on the agenda: 70 years of Caritas Baby Hospital in Bethlehem, and 60 of

our Association. In Bethlehem, celebrations were planned for the children's hospital that is vitally important to the Palestinian population and integral to Palestine's healthcare system; In Lucerne, we marked the anniversary of the Association's foundation.

Then came October 7 and the brutal attack on Israel, orchestrated from Gaza by Hamas. Soon afterwards, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared war. By the end of 2023, most residents in the Gaza Strip had been driven from their homes, more than 20,000 Palestinians had been killed, and tens of thousands injured.

Due to the war, Israel also sealed off the West Bank, where new roadblocks were set up in addition to the previous



checkpoints, impeding the mobility of the Palestinian people in the West Bank. The children's hospital in Bethlehem was forced to respond immediately to the new situation. Stores of medical supplies and heating oil were stockpiled. A 24-hour hotline was set up to advise worried parents who are unable to travel to Bethlehem with a sick child. In addition, the social care team worked to ensure that chronically ill children continued to receive their medications (see pages 20–23).

### No change to construction plans

The strong will to guarantee medical care and expand the range of services at Caritas Baby Hospital united the executive leaders at the hospital and Association, galvanizing their joint commitment to realize the plan for an urgently needed surgical department. Because additional space is necessary for the unit, an extension to the existing hospital building was proposed. After the Board green-lighted the project at the end of 2022, the plans took on concrete form in 2023 (see pages 10–13). This is a positive development, as specialized pediatric surgery is currently not available in the West Bank. In an initial step, a day surgery unit will be realized; the unit will mainly be for scheduled surgeries on an out-patient basis.

An architectural competition for the hospital extension was organized in collaboration with an office specialized in hospital construction. In March 2023, the project was announced in the local media. The stakeholders made a

deliberate decision to have a regional firm build the hospital extension, and a total of ten project proposals from the West Bank and East Jerusalem were submitted.

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**The hospital will  
continue to rely  
on donations.**

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### Monitoring commission

The winner of the competition is architectural firm Maher Nino from Ramallah. The firm has experience in hospital construction and its plan proposes an optimal integration of the extension into the existing hospital structures. After signing the contract, detailed plans for the expansion are now being drawn up. A building commission consisting of two persons from the Association and two from Caritas Baby Hospital has been charged with closely monitoring the work and with regularly reporting to the Board on the project's progress.

The Association's own funds will be used to finance the ambitious project. In addition, the Head Office in Lucerne and the children's hospital ran vigorous promotional campaigns for the extension that were directed at private individuals and institutions. The response to the latter was overwhelming: numerous donors, benefactors and institutions have now pledged their



support, and almost half the costs for the hospital extension were secured already by the end of 2023.

### **Large public interest**

Benefactors demonstrated their great solidarity in matters concerning the hospital's running costs (see pages 25–29). This is important as, in the future, widespread poverty in the West Bank and lack of public services will retain the dependence of the hospital on donations.

As a consequence of the war in Gaza, Children's Relief Bethlehem, donors and media alike requested information about the hospital's work and the current situation in Bethlehem. To meet these demands, the association published several articles in major

media outlets, while the Steering Committee and the Managing Director held several interviews. Content and wording of these activities were closely coordinated with the executive team at the hospital.

### **Honoring the founders**

It was 70 years ago that Hedwig Vetter from Switzerland and Palestinian physician Dr. Antoine Dabdoub laid the cornerstone for the children's hospital. In 1953, they opened a pediatric ward in a local hospital and established the first basic pediatric medical service in Palestine.

Over the years, the facility has grown steadily. In 1978, the hospital opened its own building, where medical care and nursing services are continually

being modernized. To date, hundreds of thousands of children have been treated at the hospital. This work was made possible when Father Ernst Schnydrig from Switzerland founded the Association Children's Relief Bethlehem 60 years ago (at the start of 1963), thereby guaranteeing the long-term financing of the children's hospital. Since then, countless private individuals, foundations, church communities and parishes, cantons, cities, and communes have supported the project, enabling thousands of children to receive medical care and transforming the hospital into a mainstay of the Palestinian healthcare system.

To honor and commemorate the three founders, who stood at the beginning, a new inscription with their names has been put up at the hospital entrance. The close collaboration between local stakeholders and the Association in Switzerland has been a hallmark of our work from the very start. It is the reason that Caritas Baby Hospital in Bethlehem is the most successful private Swiss development project in Palestine. ●



### Financial Year Closes with a Profit

From a financial perspective, 2023 was a very good year for the Association Children's Relief Bethlehem, with the final operating statement presenting a surplus of CHF 4,516,980. After allocation to the hospital fund, the total profit amounted to CHF 2,109,371. This was used to build up reserves to cover the hospitals operating costs and

to counteract currency fluctuations. Nearly CHF 400,000 were allocated to a fund created to finance the expansion of the children's hospital and its services.

The strong annual result was made possible thanks to generous support from countless private individuals, religious institutions, and foundations as well as cantons, cities, and communes. The Association also received several large bequests, and the financial result contributed to the good outcome. After incurring a large loss in 2022, the positive statement in 2023 is particularly pleasing. Donations of CHF 14,120,917 were collected, CHF 1,472,060 alone for the day surgery. This amount combined with assets in the new fund for expanding the hospital and its services means that work on the project can begin.

The costs for operating the hospital in 2023 were slightly lower than in the previous year. This is partly because fewer children were treated due to the war in Gaza, but also because the strong Swiss franc and relatively weak US dollar compared to the Israeli Shekel had a favorable impact on expenses (detailed information on finances on pages 24–30). The level of self-funding at the children's hospital was 34.7 percent. (soe)





# A widely supported project

The extension of the children's hospital is endorsed by the local community. In the following, CEO Issa Bandak reports on the encouraging reactions and support he received for the project in Palestine.



Issa Bandak,  
CEO Caritas Baby Hospital

“I’m not the only one who has a great personal interest in the new day surgery. The people in Palestine also understand the great significance of the project. As such, we hardly need

to convince anyone: an operating room is simply a must for many people. For this reason, our efforts don’t just reflect a strategic decision, but also have an important emotional component.

The echo from specialists has been particularly encouraging. Even doctors who conduct operations in other regional hospitals – and who might fear competition – have welcomed the development. Our expertise in pediatric care is unparalleled, and our work is highly valued.

Our plans have also met with much interest in official bodies. The Palestinian Ministry of Health in particular has voiced strong support, while the Office of the Palestinian Prime Minister has also expressed approval. Due to good contacts, we were able to acquire funding from the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development for the first time.

Importantly, our staff members are excited about the hospital extension: they’re working to realize it as though it were their own project. After all, our projects serve our country and our people. And even if it is a long time in the making: by building our healthcare infrastructure, we’re building a future Palestinian state.” ●

# Operations Will Soon Be Possible

**Caritas Baby Hospital is expanding its services to include a surgical unit, enabling operations in a child-friendly environment. Construction is due to start as soon as possible.**

In the West Bank, there is currently no specialized pediatric surgery department. Children's Relief Bethlehem is closing this gap with its plans to open a day surgery at the Caritas Baby Hospital in Bethlehem. However, because the existing hospital building

is already at capacity, an extension is needed.

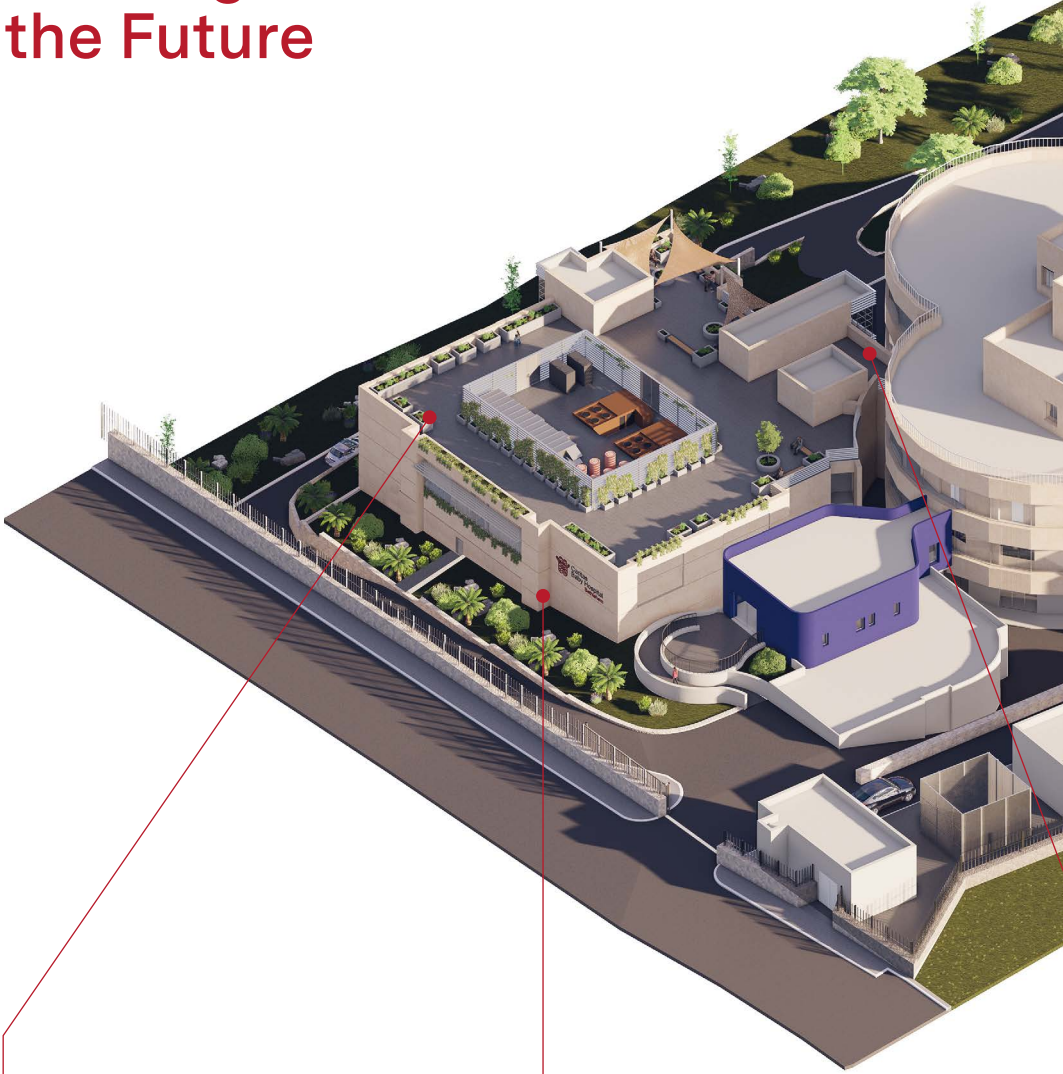
The architectural firm Maher Nino from Ramallah, which has experience in hospital construction, won the public call for projects. In addition to aesthetic considerations, their design was chosen because it integrates the extension into the existing building and has child-friendly interiors.

Detailed plans are now being drafted. The ground-breaking ceremony will take place as soon as financing for the extension has been secured. ●





# Looking to the Future



## Operating Rooms

The day surgery is for pediatric surgical procedures that are scheduled in advance. It offers a child-friendly environment for operations, and young patients will no longer have to be transferred to another hospital or clinic.

## Sterilization Unit

The sterilization system in the underground level upholds excellent hygiene standards, thus preventing infections and increasing the safety of the children treated.




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**“In the day surgery, we will combine medical procedures with human compassion.”**

Dr. Hiyam Marzouqa, Medical Director

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### **Short Hospital Pathways**

Because the extension is directly connected to the existing building, moving a hospitalized patient to the day surgery is safe and easy. And if a patient requires hospital treatment after out-patient surgery, the wards are easily accessible.

### **Design Continuity**

The architectural style of the extension echoes that of the existing building. The clever integration into the original structure conveys a sense of continuity and ties in with the history of Caritas Baby Hospital. The contemporary features of the hospital extension are inviting and will help sick children feel at ease during their stay. The pleasant atmosphere of the modern, child-friendly interior is designed to promote healing.



# Projects Promote Youth Activities

**Last year, more than CHF 250,000 were allocated to projects for children and adolescents in the region. Emergency aid amounting to roughly CHF 200,000 was granted in particular to war victims in Gaza.**

Since its foundation, the Association Children's Relief Bethlehem has funded regional activities that support women, children, and adolescents. These efforts are rooted in the conviction that children need a good environment to grow into healthy adults. In addition, the Association provides emergency aid.

## **Playground and Music Lessons**

In 2023, the Board of Children's Relief Bethlehem awarded funding to a total of 14 non-profit organizations in the region, chiefly projects that enable recreational activities for children and young people. This support is particularly relevant in a region where public funds for such services are largely lacking.

One of the projects to receive funding was the "Sounds of Palestine" organization in Bethlehem, which enables children in refugee camps to take music lessons. The renovation of a playground in Cremisan, on the outskirts of

Bethlehem, was also financed, as was a project in Nazareth that organizes leisure-time activities and tutoring for Palestinian children from needy families. A total of CHF 256,183 was allocated to projects.

The Board has also decided to allocate CHF 120,000 from the fund for project expenses for Bethlehem and regional projects to the day surgery at the children's hospital.

## **Emergency Aid for Gaza and Syria**

The outbreak of war in the Gaza Strip grossly exacerbated the suffering and hardship of Gaza's population from one day to the next. Children's Relief Bethlehem provided funding to emergency aid programs run by Caritas Jerusalem and the Latin Patriarchate as well as the German Caritas Association, which works with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in Gaza. All these organizations are experienced in the region and have a good local network for distributing aid. Already in spring, the Association had approved funds for earthquake victims in Syria. A total of CHF 194,973 was spent on emergency aid. ●



# Catastrophic Turning Point in Mideast

**2023 left many Israelis and Palestinians traumatized. The horrific Hamas massacres, followed by the devastating war in Gaza also shocked the rest of the world. A nightmare with a backstory.** (Inge Günther, Middle East correspondent)

The ultra-conservative Israeli government's announcement of a "judicial reform" sent shock waves through the country. The goal of the rightwing coalition was to undermine the power of the Supreme Court – the supervisory authority in Israel's democracy. For Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu personally, it was about no less than circumventing his corruption trial.

The plan triggered massive protests. For nine months, liberal Israelis took to the streets, waving the blue and white national flag in defense of democracy. Even fighter pilots refused to fly missions as long as the government failed to respect the rule of law.

Meanwhile, the West Bank was close to the boiling point, fueled by two right-wing racists in Netanyahu's cabinet: one, Minister of Finance Bezalel Smotrich, is also responsible for occupied Palestinian territory, the other is Itamar Ben-Gvir, previously convicted

of hate crimes and now Minister of National Security. And in fact: there was an increase in Palestinian attacks, Israeli military raids in refugee camps, and aggression by radical Jewish settlers.

## Raid on Huwara

Of these events, one stands out. After the shooting death of two settlers, an armed mob numbering in the hundreds took vengeance on the Palestinian village of Huwara (near the West Bank city of Nablus) on the evening of February 26, 2023, burning down some 30 houses and leaving a trail of devastation in their wake, with one person killed and many others wounded. That Israeli soldiers stood idly by during the rampage was a cause for outrage among many Israeli citizens. Yet Cabinet Minister Bezalel Smotrich coolly observed that Huwara deserved to be "wiped out."

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**The path to a two-state solution appeared more obstructed than ever.**

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Netanyahu's dependence on these ultra-conservative politicians became apparent when he locked horns with the opposition. Indeed, still in spring, the mass protests had forced the Prime Minister to concede to a morato-



rium on judicial reform. In summer, however, Netanyahu's coalition had pushed through a first law designed to curb the Supreme Court's ability to nullify government decisions.

In any event, leftist opposition to settler policy played only a marginal role in the protests, and the belief that the unresolved Palestinian question could simply be ignored – as propagated by Netanyahu – was widespread in Israel society. Especially as an agreement with Saudi Arabia to normalize relations seemed within reach.

### **Hamas-led terrorist attack**

It was a fatal illusion, and one that was brutally shattered on October 7, 2023 – a day that will go down in Israeli history as the “Black Shabbat”

and that brought death to at least 1200 people. Some 250 others were taken hostage by radical Islamic Hamas and its allies and held in Gaza.

It was at dawn on October 7 that thousands of well-trained militants penetrated the Israeli border from Gaza, using bulldozers to breach the border wall as well as motorized gliders and rubber boats. Armed to the teeth, they needed only minutes to overcome army posts and advance to the closest kibbutzim and an open-air festival, where they mercilessly massacred hundreds of civilians, women, children, and men.

The terrorist attack – orchestrated by Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar – caught Israel by surprise. Secure in the belief



that their high-tech surveillance equipment would keep Gaza at bay, the Israeli army had even deployed border units to the West Bank. Kibbutz residents and festival goers were forced to wait for hours in mortal fear, often hiding in barricaded rooms or makeshift hideouts, until the special forces arrived. For many, help came too late.

### Israel declares war

The attack was a massive blow to Israel's self-image as a safe haven for Jews. That Hamas gloated, posting gruesome videos of the atrocities online, only strengthened the collective resolve for retaliation. In record time, Netanyahu's government mobilized 360,000 reservists and declared war. The aerial bombardments alone were more powerful than anything Gaza had ever seen. Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said Israel was "fighting human animals" and would act accordingly.

The bombs even targeted southern Gaza, where the Israeli army had instructed thousands of Palestinian families to seek shelter. The humanitarian situation further deteriorated during the ensuing ground maneuver: with the aim of destroying the Hamas network of underground tunnels, Israeli troops occupied hospitals and schools believed to be located above shaft entrances. In addition, there were shortages of food, drinking water, medications, and fuel throughout the region.

During a seven-day ceasefire, 105 hostages were released in exchange for 240 Palestinian prisoners. And then

the war resumed. By year's end, Gaza had counted more than 20,000 fatalities, a third of which were children. The fate of the remaining hostages taken by Hamas – who continued to launch their rockets unabated – remained uncertain.

### Escalation of settler violence

In the West Bank, away from the horrors of war, radical Jewish settlers felt ever-more emboldened to expel their Palestinian neighbors. In addition to setting the fields of Palestinians on fire, demolishing cars and other property, the settlers had itchy trigger fingers – and were responsible for more than ten Palestinian deaths. It was Ben-Gvir, Minister of National Security, who put the Israeli citizens into uniform and armed them. Many Palestinians living in the Jordan Valley and south of Hebron had no choice but to abandon their dwellings.

Although the two-state solution has once again entered international discourse after October 7, 2023, the hatred and violence make a way forward seem less possible than ever. ●





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مركز المدينة  
Municipal Center

# Fewer Children Treated Due to War

The war in Gaza also impacted the Bethlehem hospital: fewer children were treated than in 2022, as many access roads were blocked. Hospital management and staff worked hard to ensure all children had access to medical care. The intensive care unit was the only hospital department to record a high number of patients throughout the year.

Treatments at Caritas Baby Hospital	2023	2022
Outpatient treatment	35'144	43'586
Hospitalizations	3'152	3'770
of which in the intensive care unit	260	341
Total number of patients treated	38'296	47'356

In 2023, nearly 40,000 children were treated at Caritas Baby Hospital. Although the number is high, it is lower than in the previous year. The number of patients fell significantly after the outbreak of the war in Gaza on October 7, 2023 due to limited access to the hospital. However, in the first nine months of the year, the hospital was still very busy.

Last year, 3,152 children were admitted to the hospital, 16 percent fewer than in 2022. The decrease in outpatient treatment was even greater: 35,144 sick children received medical care, 19 percent fewer than the previous year. Although patients from Bethlehem and vicinity were still able to reach the hospital after the war began, families living in Hebron or remote villages often chose not to make the at times unsafe journey. Instead, many parents with sick children sought help from non-specialized services in their villages.

This led to suboptimal medical treatment of sick children, which is likely to have long-term consequences that are difficult to predict. Hospital management provided a 24-hour service hotline, but the service was unable to fully replace direct contact with the young patients. However, chronically ill children always received treatment, and their medical supplies were guaranteed at all times.

## High demand for subspecialties

The statistics confirm the wisdom in building up the range of pediatric subspecialties at the hospital. Respiratory diseases, gastrointestinal complaints, and neurological abnormalities number among the most frequently diagnosed illnesses. Expertise in these areas is especially strong at the children's hospital. The neonatal intensive care unit, which is mainly for treating premature babies, and the pediatric intensive care unit for older children were always at full capacity.

Demand for complementary medical services – particularly early childhood physiotherapy – rose sharply last year. In 2023, an additional position was created so that as many young patients as possible can benefit from this important service.

### **More needy families received help**

The social care team faced particularly difficult challenges in 2023. The families of a total of 3,211 children received financial aid, as they were unable to afford the modest deductible charged for medical care.

This is 5 percent more than in the previous year, despite the fact that fewer children were treated – a development caused by the rapid spread of poverty since October 2023.

Hospital management and the Board spared no effort to maintain services at the children's hospital and retain employees. When patient numbers were low, overtime hours were reduced, document management was stepped up, and more internal training sessions were organized for staff. ●



## Facts and Figures



**114,811  
Lab Tests**

Many different kinds of analyses are conducted in the hospital lab at Caritas Baby Hospital, including for rare or complex cases. The testing facility represents a sustainable strengthening of diagnostic capacities at the hospital.

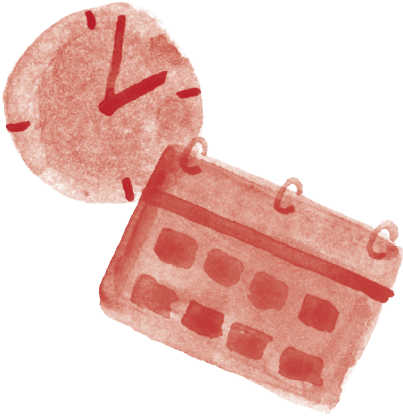
## 9,870 Overnight Stays of Mothers

Sick children recover better when they can be close to their mothers. The Mothers' Residency Department at the children's hospital is unique in Palestine and was in great demand last year.

## 30 Percent More Premature Babies Saved

The expertise in neonatal care at Caritas Baby Hospital is widely recognized, and an increasing number of hospitals are referring babies born before term to the children's hospital.





## Hospital Stays Last 4.5 Days

The long-term trend of shorter treatment durations has continued. The average hospitalization at Caritas Baby Hospital decreased by 2.2 percent to 4.5 days.

## 3,221 Families Receive Financial Aid

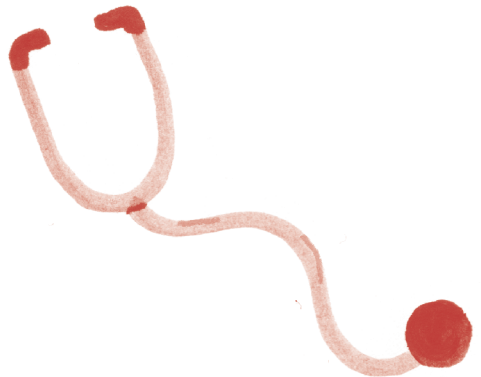
Thanks to the hospital's social services, needy families who are unable to afford the hospital deductible receive financial aid. Compared to the previous year, the number of families supported increased by 5 percent in 2023.

## 2,447 Hip Examinations

Numerous hip examinations of newborns were conducted at the children's hospital in Bethlehem. This is a critical step in the early detection of hip dysplasia and for ensuring healthy development of a child's joints.

## 15,298 Cases of Respiratory Ailments

Last year, respiratory diseases were once again the most common complaint at Caritas Baby Hospital, making up 40 percent of all treatments.





# Finances – Introduction

The Association Children's Relief Bethlehem and Caritas Baby Hospital each keep their own accounts. At the end of the year, the figures are consolidated and presented in the Association's operating statement.

In contrast to the Association Children's Relief Bethlehem, which is financed exclusively through donations from private individuals and institutions as well as bequests, Caritas Baby Hospital draws on various sources of income. Donations from Europe cover approximately two thirds of the hospital's costs. However, to secure long-term operations at the hospital and to further advance its standing in the region, hospital management must also seek ways to generate local income. These funds stem from the following sources:

- Performance contracts with the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Health and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA)
- Hospital fees calculated on the basis of socially equitable rates that are paid by the families of sick children
- Local donations

In terms of expenditures, the main costs for the hospital are incurred by salaries, medication, and other medical supplies, but also infrastructure and other costs such as water and heating oil. The Head Office in Lucerne endeavors to keep its own costs as low as possible to ensure that the hospital receives the greatest part of all donations (see page 27).

## Reserves and employee pension fund assets

The Association's financial statement also includes provisions for the pension plans of hospital employees. These are held in trust by Children's Relief Bethlehem. In addition, the Association maintains reserves to ensure that running costs are covered even in difficult times. ●



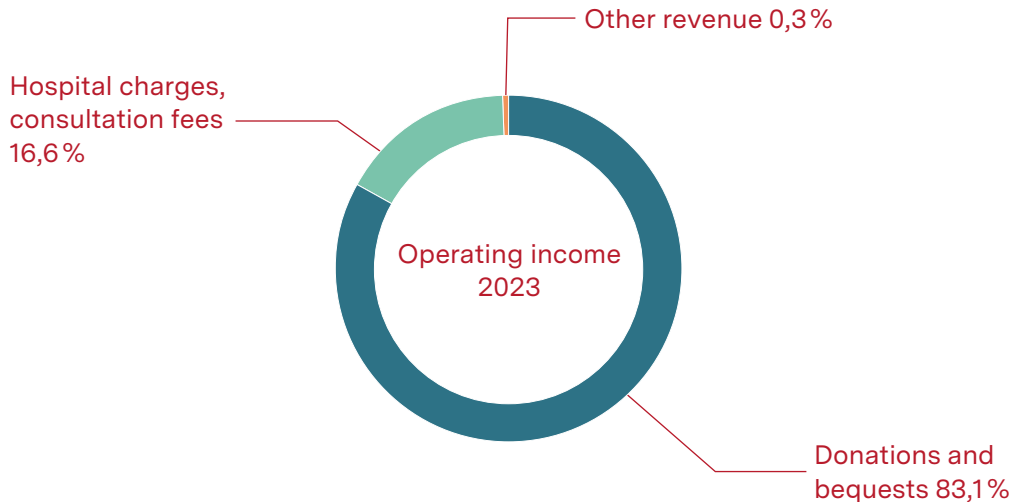
The detailed balance sheet and financial statement in the Auditor's Report can be accessed online via the Association's website:

[www.childrens-relief-bethlehem.org](http://www.childrens-relief-bethlehem.org)

# CRB Income

Operating income (in CHF)	2023	2022
Donations and bequests	14,120,917	10,397,937
Hospital charges and consultation fees	2,826,593	3,214,767
Other revenue	50,572	45,876
<b>Total operating income</b>	<b>16,998,082</b>	<b>13,658,580</b>

The annual statements of the children's hospital and the Association Children's Relief Bethlehem are consolidated. Operating income stems from three sources: donations and bequests, locally generated income (hospital charges, consultation fees, performance contracts) and other revenue (e.g. Association membership or the sale of meal vouchers at the hospital). The financial result is shown separately in the annual statement (page 29).

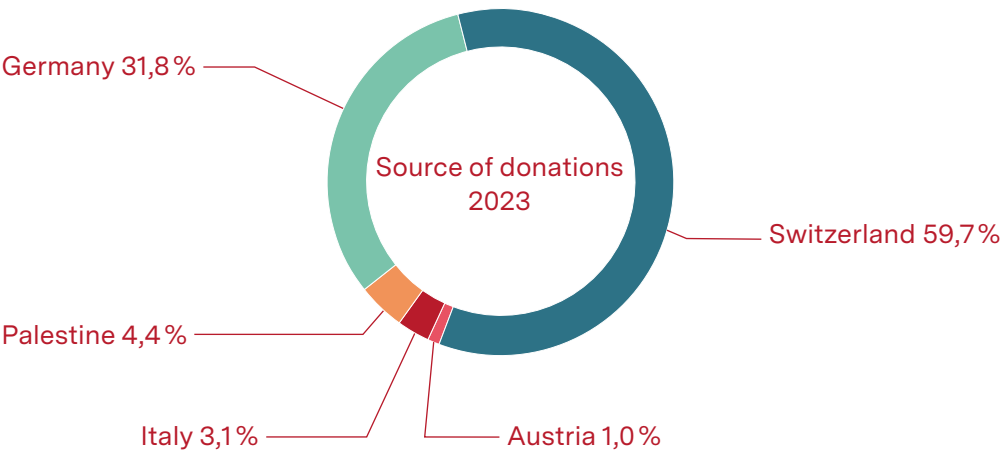


Donations and bequests make up the largest part of income. Locally generated income is also significant, although at 16.6 percent of the overall income, the amount decreased compared to the previous year (23.5 percent in 2022). There are two reasons for this development: the decline in the number of children treated and the unfavorable exchange rate for the Swiss Franc. ●

# Source of Donations

Income from donations and bequests (CHF)	2023	2022
Switzerland	8,432,425	5,325,677
Germany	4,485,881	3,802,446
Italy	442,392	435,596
Austria	146,126	168,404
Palestine	614,094	665,814
Income from donations and bequests	14,120,917	10,397,937

Income from donations and bequests rose by 35.8 percent compared to the previous year. The increase was particularly strong in Switzerland (up 58.3 percent), thanks to large bequests and the highly successful campaign for the new day surgery at the hospital (pages 10–13). In 2023, income in Germany was EUR 4,566,786; the Association Children’s Relief Bethlehem received EUR 150,000 from Austria. Donations of EUR 442,460 were sent directly to Bethlehem from Italy.

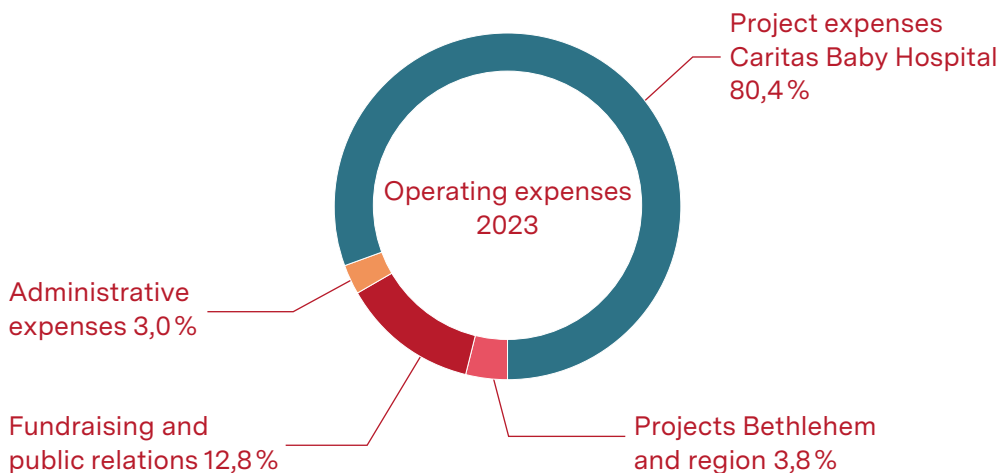


Nearly 60 percent of all income from donations (donations and bequests) stemmed from Switzerland. Donations from Germany made up just under a third. The remaining contributions to the hospital (8.5 percent) came from Palestine, Italy, and Austria. ●

# Zewo-Compliant Use of Funds

Operating expenses (in CHF)	2023	2022
Project expenses		
Caritas Baby Hospital	10,033,416	10,612,079
Projects Bethlehem and region	477,535	255,432
Fundraising and public relations	1,595,936	1,297,839
Administrative expenses	374,215	417,984
<b>Total operating expenses</b>	<b>12,481,102</b>	<b>12,583,334</b>

Most of the expenditures were used to cover costs at Caritas Baby Hospital. Regional projects were funded with just under CHF 500,000 (page 14). Fundraising and public relations are essential for making the work at the children's hospital visible and for securing the hospital's financing; related costs in 2023 were higher compared to the previous year due to the successful campaign for the day surgery and activities for the anniversary. Administrative expenses include the costs incurred at the Head Office in Lucerne.



For every franc donated, 80.4 centimes went directly to Caritas Baby Hospital, and 3.8 centimes to the regional projects; only unrestricted funds that were not donated specifically to the children's hospital were used for the latter. A total of 84.2 centimes is spent on projects and 15.8 centimes on other expenses that remain within the Zewo-specified range. ●

# Balance Sheet

Balance sheet as at December 31 in CHF	2023	2022
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents and money market investments	16,088,013	12,778,154
Current investments with a quoted market price	14,254,858	13,313,960
Receivables from goods and services	3,349,687	3,375,510
Other current receivables	1,855,671	1,831,281
Accrued income and prepaid expenses	135,284	100,226
Non-current assets	1	3
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>35,683,514</b>	<b>31,399,134</b>
<b>Liabilities and equity</b>		
Current liabilities	312,631	415,376
Non-current liabilities	5,160,000	5,982,000
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>5,472,631</b>	<b>6,397,376</b>
CBH fund for restricted donations	4,700,465	3,072,771
CBH fund for restricted donations / day surgery	1,472,060	-
<b>Total fund capital</b>	<b>6,172,525</b>	<b>3,072,771</b>
Organization capital	24,038,358	21,928,987
<b>Total liabilities and equity</b>	<b>35,683,514</b>	<b>31,399,134</b>

\*In addition to the restricted donations, CHF 1,800,000 of the organization capital is earmarked for the project day surgery (total CHF 3,272,060).

\*\*Gross revenue from donations including CHF 34,000 from the City of Geneva as well as legacy donations and collections from Kinderhilfe Bethlehem im Deutschen Caritasverband e.V. in the amount of EUR 4,566,786. EUR 3,700,000 was transferred from Germany to Kinderhilfe Bethlehem Luzern. This includes support from Sternstunden e.V. in the amount of EUR 80,000.●



# Operating Statement

Operating statement in CHF	2023	2022
<b>Operating income and expenses</b>		
Donations / bequests (restricted use)	10,006,545	9,105,551
Restricted donations for the day surgery*	1,472,060	-
Donations / bequests (unrestricted use)	2,642,312	1,292,386
<b>Total Income from donations and bequests**</b>	<b>14,120,917</b>	<b>10,397,937</b>
Hospital charges, consultation fees	2,826,593	3,214,767
Other revenue	50,572	45,876
<b>Total revenue from sales of goods and services</b>	<b>2,877,165</b>	<b>3,260,643</b>
<b>Total operating income</b>	<b>16,998,082</b>	<b>13,658,580</b>
Project expenses Caritas Baby Hospital	10,033,416	10,612,079
Project expenses for Bethlehem and regional projects	477,535	255,432
<b>Total project expenses</b>	<b>10,510,951</b>	<b>10,867,511</b>
Fundraising and public relations	1,595,936	1,297,839
Administrative expenses	374,215	417,984
<b>Total fundraising / public relations and administrative expenses</b>	<b>1,970,151</b>	<b>1,715,823</b>
<b>Total operating expenses</b>	<b>12,481,102</b>	<b>12,583,334</b>
<b>Operating result</b>	<b>4,516,980</b>	<b>1,075,246</b>
<b>Financial result and other results</b>		
Total financial result		
(prior to change in currency fluctuation fund)	675,990	-2,128,518
Extraordinary, non-recurring, or prior-period result	16,155	3,473
<b>Annual result prior to fund and capital movements</b>	<b>5,209,125</b>	<b>-1,049,799</b>
Change in restricted funds, increase (-) / decrease (+)	-3,099,754	-28,084
<b>Annual result prior to capital movements</b>	<b>2,109,371</b>	<b>-1,077,883</b>

# Auditor's Report

The auditors have examined the annual report for the financial year ending 31 December 2023. The annual report gives a true and fair picture of the organization regarding capital, finances and revenues pursuant to Swiss GAAP FER 21, and is in compliance with Swiss law and the statutes of the organization.

The detailed Auditor's Report with the complete and revised annual financial statement is available on our website:

[www.childrens-relief-bethlehem.org](http://www.childrens-relief-bethlehem.org)

Auditors:

PricewaterhouseCoopers AG (PwC),  
CH-6005 Lucerne

## Children's Relief Bethlehem Pension Fund

Staff permanently employed by the Caritas Baby Hospital are insured against the economic impact of old age, disability and death by the Children's Relief Bethlehem Pension Fund, which is funded equally by both employees and the employer (Expenses 2023: CHF 198,191 ).

## Children's Relief Bethlehem Reserve Foundation

The aim of the Reserve Foundation is to provide the employees of the Caritas Baby Hospital with benefits that supplement those provided by the main Pension Fund (Expenses 2023: CHF 0). ●



Discover more  
about our work at  
[www.childrens-  
relief-bethlehem.org](http://www.childrens-relief-bethlehem.org)



# Children's Relief Bethlehem

**The Association Children's Relief Bethlehem is based in Lucerne and operates Caritas Baby Hospital in Bethlehem.**

The non-profit Association Children's Relief Bethlehem was founded in 1963. It is responsible for operating and financing Caritas Baby Hospital in Bethlehem.

The association also supports smaller projects for mothers and children in Bethlehem and the surrounding region. It offers emergency aid during crisis situations.

The General Assembly is the governing body of the Association. It is constituted by members of the Association and supports the Board. Up to December 31, 2023, the Board consisted of eight persons.

Responsibility for operational management rests with the Managing Director of Children's Relief Bethlehem in Lucerne. Independent offices in Germany, Italy, and Austria actively support the Association through public relations work and fundraising.

Current board members:

- Sibylle Hardegger, Chair (Diocese of Basel)
- Fabian Freiseis, Vice Chair (Archdiocese of Freiburg)
- Michael Angehrn
- Jutta Biermayer
- Hugo Fasel (Representative of Caritas Switzerland)
- Stephanie Hackethal
- Christoph Klitsch-Ott (Representative of Deutscher Caritasverband e.V.)
- Carlo Mordasini

(as of December 31, 2023) ●



# Head Office in Switzerland

The nine employees at the Head Office ensure that the children's hospital can operate as planned.

The team at the Head Office is responsible for operational management of the Association. They acquire donations, communicate the work at Caritas Baby Hospital to the public in Switzerland, carry out administrative

tasks for the Association, and ensure that donations are used for the intended purpose.

Managing Director Sybille Oetliker reports directly to the Board and the Steering Committee. She leads the team at the Head Office and is the supervisor of the CEO at Caritas Baby Hospital. She and the CEO are in close communication and work together to implement the hospital's strategic goals. In addition, the Managing Director coordinates activities and cooperation with the offices in Germany, Italy, and Austria. ●



(From left to right): Sybille Oetliker (Managing Director), Elisabeth Janssen (Administration), Eveline Aregger (Administration), Stefanie Schürmann (Fundraising), Kerstin Bieler (Fundraising), Andrea Imgrüth (Administration), Helen Keller (Head of Finance), Luca Christen (Finance), Richard Asbeck (Head of Communication and Fundraising).

# Contact

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## Impressum

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At long last

## Our Sincere Thanks

In the midst of crisis and uncertainty, your donations ensure that young patients at the Caritas Baby Hospital in Bethlehem continue to receive always first-rate medical care – and your generosity finances 250 jobs for skilled workers in Bethlehem. We thank you, our many benefactors in

Switzerland, Germany, Italy, and Austria, for helping us promote the well-being of children in Palestine. Our sincere thanks also go to countless parishes, church communities, religious communities, dioceses, local abbeys, foundations, cantons, cities, communes, and philanthropic institutions.

Through your trust and unwavering support, you play a vital part in improving the health of Palestinian children in the long run. A heartfelt “shukran” for your solidarity. ●



Children's  
Relief  
**Bethlehem**

