



Foundation
Confidence for Children 



Our foundation

Since 1997, the Foundation Confidence for Children has been supporting children throughout the world who are disadvantaged in terms of their life and development opportunities. The foundation's clearly defined objective is to save lives, cure diseases and alleviate material hardship. Our goal is to provide children with better prospects for the future and allow them to lead a self-determined and independent life.

Putting a **smile on children's faces!**

The foundation is supported principally by Swiss Life Select advisors and employees, who regularly donate a portion of their income to help put a smile back on the faces of suffering children and their parents. Various private individuals also support us with their donations. We would particularly like to mention that all the foundation's administrative costs are borne by Swiss Life Select Schweiz AG. This way we ensure that your donation is received in full for the benefit of the children.

This brochure is intended to give a brief overview of what has been achieved, with a clear focus on our main project in Kyrgyzstan. In doing so, it aims also to encourage other aid organisations to get involved with people, especially children in need.

The Foundation Confidence for Children serves the purpose of providing charitable, altruistic support for children throughout the world who are disadvantaged in terms of their life and development opportunities.

Our projects



Main project in Kyrgyzstan

We have decided to focus primarily on the sustainable care of children with facial deformities. We have been working in the poor country of Kyrgyzstan since 2006 and have made this project close to our hearts. In addition to our main project, we also support specifically selected funding projects.

Why Kyrgyzstan?

More children are born with a facial deformity in Kyrgyzstan than anywhere else in the world. Over 500 children are born with this abnormality every year. The special feature of this condition is that affected patients can be fully cured with the right surgical treatment followed by complex conservative therapy. Kyrgyzstan, a small mountainous country like Switzerland, borders Kazakhstan to the north, China to the southeast,

Tajikistan to the south and Uzbekistan to the west. Its capital is Bishkek. We first had to look for the country and its capital Bishkek on the world map when we were asked to help the children of this small Muslim mountain republic in Central Asia. A few years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the country was at the beginning of a comprehensive transformation process and had begun to build a constitutional state and a market economy. But the people struggled with

significant political, social and economic challenges. To date, more than a third of the population still lives below the national poverty line, three quarters of them in rural areas. This large proportion of the population is almost entirely cut off from what we would call basic welfare provision. Despite the introduction of reforms and the support of international donors, the difficult economic situation also impaired the health care system. Among other things, the possibilities of adequate medical care for chronically ill, physically or mentally handicapped or severely injured children were severely limited. Many children were abandoned and delivered to orphanages - partly because of the abject poverty of the young families, but partly also because

of disabilities and congenital - supposedly irreversible - malformations. In their desperation, the young mothers and fathers often saw no other way out.

Particularly children with cleft lips and palates and the associated functional disorders were unable to receive adequate treatment in Kyrgyzstan. The interdisciplinary treatment that has long been an established feature in Europe was completely unknown before we started working in the country.



Bishkek

We have set up a centre in a large children's hospital in Bishkek where a local team of doctors is able to provide children with cleft lips and palates and their families with comprehensive support. The clinic offers maxillary surgery, orthodontics, ear medicine and speech therapy, thus facilitating the entire care of an affected child according to today's standards. As a result, in its four core areas, the centre is now very well supplied in terms of basic equipment that comes very close to what is available in Europe. A high standard of treatment is now provided to small patients by the Kyrgyz doctors without our help. The full range of modern cleft treatment is available today.



Marcel Frei, a dentist specialising in orthodontics, has made a big contribution together with his wife Yvonne Frei.

**The best treatments
for children** that come
very close to European
standards.

An additional clinic in the south allows patients in that part of the country to receive professional treatment as well without the need to travel long distances.



Osh

After our clinic in Bishkek became known throughout the country, at the beginning of 2013 two oral surgeons from the southern part of the country came to us and asked us to help them set up a similar centre. Kyrgyzstan is divided into north and south by a large mountain chain. An additional clinic in the south allows patients in that part of the country to receive professional treatment as well without the need to travel long distances. We were filled with joy and pride when, in spring 2014, the new operating theatre at the regional clinic was opened. The hospital's supply of medical instruments and equipment was then gradually expanded for the treatment of children. The goal of establishing a long-term functioning orthodontic clinic and

guaranteeing a well-coordinated team on site for the care of CLP patients from birth to adulthood was soon reached.

Our philosophy at the two hospitals caught on. During our first visits we saw very quickly that the treatment of children with cleft lips and palates in Kyrgyzstan consisted exclusively of surgery and that children were regularly only operated on at the age of three to four years. Today, as in Europe, children are operated on using modern surgical methods in the first year of their life.

To date we have put a smile on many children's faces.



Cleft lips and palates

What exactly is a cleft lip and palate?

Cleft lips and palates are a group of quite common congenital malformations in humans. What such people have in common is that during embryonic development parts of the mouth area do not form normally. Colloquially they are often referred to in discriminatory terms as «harelips» (after the characteristic cleft in the upper lip) or in the more severe form as «fishing tongs» (severe anatomical impairment caused by cleavage of the upper jaw, tooth and facial skeleton).

Complete rehabilitation of children with cleft lips and palates requires not only complete anatomical and functional closure of the cleft formation by surgical intervention, but also the deployment of a variety of conservative therapeutic measures. This combined therapy with long-term treatment from birth to early adulthood is the only way of avoiding permanent functional disorders such as language problems, hearing loss due to insufficient ventilation of the middle ear, misaligned teeth and problems of food intake due to residual perforations in the palate.

The work of oral and maxillofacial surgeons

The surgical closure of cleft lips and palates following early orthodontic treatment is the first rehabilitation measure for children. As a rule, a complete cleft lip and palate is operated on in two steps: first the cleft lip at the age of four to six months and then the cleft palate

before the end of the first year of life. Primary cleft operations, i.e. the initial operations, are of particular importance, as it is possible with optimum surgery to achieve a result which renders corrective operations superfluous, while inappropriate surgery causes irreparable damage.

Embryonic developmental disorders not only cause cleft in the affected parts of the face, but also a shortage of tissue and deformations of the lips, muscles and facial skeleton, often with noticeable asymmetry in the entire region of the mouth and nose. Therefore, in addition to closing the lip, the surgeon must also compensate for the tissue deficit by means of elaborate plastic measures and eliminate the deformations and asymmetries.

Cleft lip surgery first eliminates the most conspicuous aesthetic defect and lays the foundation for the entire

rehabilitation. It is one of the most difficult procedures in oral and maxillofacial surgery, as it requires many years of experience as well as a sense of harmony and aesthetics.

In this procedure, the two lip stumps of the split lip are united and the oral vestibule is formed. The most important part is the exact unification of all tissue

Search first in every face for the person behind it.

layers. In the case of cleft lips there is a deformation of the nasal entrance, which is why the structures of the nose must also be symmetrically designed and a nasal base formed surgically.

While in the case of cleft lip aesthetic concerns mainly have to be taken into account, functional issues are to the fore in the case of cleft palates. Not only the anatomical closure of the cleft separating the oral from the nasal cavity is required, but also the formation of a functional soft palate, which closes the nasopharynx completely during articulation, thus enabling normal col-

loquial speech, undisturbed swallowing and improved ventilation of the middle ear by pulling the auditory tube.

The multi-layered functions of the palate can be restored by detaching the mucous membrane on the nose and mouth from the bony palate and uniting in the midline and soft palate by carefully reconstructing the various fine bundles of muscles. The bony part of the hard palate is not reconstructed. In the course of the following months, tight connective tissue forms between the bone stumps, which ensures a secure closure. After the completion of the primary operations, there are largely regular anatomical conditions in the area of cleft formation, thus allowing the children to develop normally.

What is the objective of surgical treatment?

The objective of the treatment of patients with cleft lips and palates is aesthetic and functional rehabilitation. Oral, maxillofacial and facial surgeons do their best to achieve the best possible result in terms of aesthetics, form and function during the primary operation. However, as children who are still very young at the time of the first operation grow naturally, corrective follow-up procedures are usually necessary. These, like the primary operations, concern all areas affected by the malformation. In addition to the lip, jaw and palate, they also include the nose, the upper jaw and the language function.

This way, for example, scars in the area of the upper lip and/or the nasal entrances, the nose itself and/or the position of the upper jaw are corrected

or any remaining holes in the palate area and/or cleft jaw are closed and the anatomical prerequisites for speech are improved. As with primary operations, the close interplay of the individual disciplines of the cleft centre is decisive for the success of the treatment.

In patients with double-sided clefts, nasal tip lifting and shaping is usually performed at this time. Functionally important residual holes in the area of the palate are closed secondarily. Speech disorders diagnosed by phoniatrics and speech therapy in the sense of a dysfunction of the soft palate, which can-



The timing of secondary operations depends on the individual development of the patient, whereby, in addition to growth, function (articulation and phonation) is also decisive for the timing of the corrective intervention.

not be remedied by intensive language training alone, are corrected by means of speech-enhancing surgery.

At the age of around nine to eleven years, the crevice is closed by filling it with autogenous bone. For this purpose,

bone is transplanted from the iliac crest to the cleft palate and covered with gingivoplasty.

Following the completion of growth, position correction of the upper jaw, which is usually too short and too narrow, can be planned in close collaboration with orthodontists. Corrective osteotomy is a corrective operation in which the upper jaw is placed in a physiological positional relationship with the lower jaw.

It is frequently also necessary to adjust the lower jaw in order to achieve an acceptable jaw relation. Finally, corrective interventions on the tip of the nose and nasal scaffolding usually form the final secondary surgery in the course of the restoration measures for patients with cleft lips, jaw and palates.

The future is full of challenges and hopes: a look ahead to the coming years.

Of course, there is still work to be done: the local colleagues in Osh need to be trained and integrated into the centre. We will be further expanding and supporting the maxillofacial surgery department in Osh in the near future so that we can also hand over this project entirely to the Kyrgyz. We are confident that as many as possible of the 250 to 300 new cases per year in Kyrgyzstan will benefit from the treatment centres in the future and that the children can be protected from permanent severe disability. We also wish to start a new project soon at the children's hospital in Osh. Moreover, we are planning to start operating on other malformations frequently encountered in Kyrgyzstan.

We can be proud of ourselves.

We started our work with a grand vision: to be the first interdisciplinary treatment centre for children with facial deformities in Central Asia. There is still no comparable institution in Kyrgyzstan, or in the four neighbouring Central Asian republics. We are now very close to achieving this objective. The final step towards opening and maintaining the centre will be the task of our colleagues in Kyrgyzstan in the years to come. Our role will then solely be to provide support. And we shall be very happy to do so.

**Every child deserves
the opportunity** to be
healthy and independent
and to live in dignity.

Supported projects

In addition to our main project in Kyrgyzstan, we also support other organisations. Our sponsored projects help to meet basic needs and provide access to education, so that the children can have a better future.

Confidence for Children Centre

We launched another project close to our hearts in 2021. We opened a centre in Addis Ababa bearing our name, Confidence for Children. Single mothers in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa suffer great hardship. Through our commitment we, together with the *ilanga* association, have succeeded in making this centre a reality. In the coming years, we will help to further expand and manage this centre.

Kenyan Children Help

This association was founded by Annedore Biberstein (president) and Hanna Zbinden (secretary). The two long-time friends decided to support a school and help children living in the most impoverished circumstances, thus providing them with a chance at a better future. They knew how important school and education are for the future of the country. Many children and young adults are still illiterate today. So a good school education is crucial for young people. That is the only way they will have an opportunity to learn a trade and support themselves and their family.

ilanga

ilanga supports social, environmental and tourist projects in Africa, with a focus on Ethiopia. By helping people to be capable of self-development, the association, working in a modest framework, strengthens the capacity-building skills of the local population. *ilanga* supports women with children in Ethiopia so that they can improve their livelihoods as well as the life and development opportunities of their children over the long term. Projects that help children and young people also benefit from the association's resources and expertise.

Friends Kinderhilfe

Friends Kinderhilfe International has made it its mission to act as a friend to needy children in Sri Lanka and offer them the chance of a better future. With its focus on providing educational support, Friends Kinderhilfe has carried out sustainable projects to promote the education of impoverished children for many years. By focusing on local needs, the association enables children and young people to receive individual support, irrespective of their ethnic origin or religion.



Suizos PRO Indios

The projects financed by Suizos PRO Indios in Guatemala are located in the villages of San Jerónimo Chuaxán and San Juan (both in the department of Sacatepéquez) and in Guatemala City. Local nuns serve extremely poor indigenous children, their mothers and/or fathers, the ill and those who are all alone. On workdays, some 150 to 200 children and

their mothers are provided with a nutritious, vitamin-rich and healthy meal. The people in the area around San Jerónimo Chuaxán are very poor and often do not have the means to provide their children with the bare necessities. In addition to the Comedor project, Suizos PRO Indios funds seven other projects.

Ambassador – Sarina Arnold

Sarina Arnold has been the ambassador of the Foundation Confidence for Children since 2010, working to help children in Kyrgyzstan with cleft lips and palates.

There are two aspects to her work. On the one hand, she works in Switzerland to raise awareness of the deformity, the problems experienced by families in Kyrgyzstan and the construction of the treatment centre. On the other hand, she travels to Kyrgyzstan, where she

visits the centres, cheers up the children in the hospitals and maintains contact with their parents.

Sarina Arnold knows what it's like to be the mother of a child born with a cleft lip or palate. Her own daughter has the condition.

She supports the Foundation Confidence for Children with her «Sarina Arnold - Jewels for You» jewellery collection. Every time an item of jewellery is sold.



How can I get involved?

Would you like to contribute and give the children a «new face»? Many people have the feeling that their support is just a drop in the ocean. But your support can help move mountains!

We are delighted that you are supporting us with a donation to help the children in need. We sincerely thank you on behalf of the children.

Your donation request

Do you know of a project or organisation dedicated to helping children in need with which you have a personal connection and which lies close to your heart? Tell us about it! We would be pleased to review whether we can offer additional support. We only support projects that help to meet basic needs and provide children with access to education. Please send us your documents and let us know specifically what it is you need.

Contact

Foundation Confidence for Children
Zählerweg 8, 6302 Zug
office@stiftung-zuversicht.ch
stiftung-zuversicht.ch

Account details

Foundation Confidence for Children
Credit Suisse Zug
Account 164381-71
BIC: CRESCHZZ80A
IBAN: CH97 0483 5016 4381 7100 0



Scan QR code with the
TWINT app.

We wish to say **thank you**

The successful implementation of a sustainable humanitarian medical project is only possible if all participants want the same thing and complement each other both personally and professionally. And of course every non-material commitment needs a solid material basis. With our foundation, all the requirements are met in a wonderful manner.

Our assistance is only possible because of the trust and support of our donors that we have enjoyed for years. They have not only financed our operations at

the children's hospital, but also created the entire modern infrastructure without which the children could not be provided with adequate treatment.

We sincerely thank all our donors and sponsors on behalf of the children.

A huge thank you also goes to our highly motivated and dedicated doctors and team members who work to help children in need.

**We have
made this project
close to our hearts.**



Helping together.

Publishing details

Foundation office and contact details:
Foundation Confidence for Children
Zählerweg 8, 6302 Zug
Tel. +41 (0) 41 726 51 88
E-mail: office@stiftung-zuversicht.ch
stiftung-zuversicht.ch

A publication of the Foundation Confidence for Children

Editorial office: Foundation Confidence for Children,
6302 Zug
Print: Druckerei Ebikon AG, 6030 Ebikon
Picture credit: Thomas Buchwalder
(title page & pages 5, 7, 11, 12, 20),
Lorenz Huber (pages 2, 6, 15), picture on
page 19 provided by the corresponding funding
project, all other pictures originate from the
Foundation Confidence for Children

© 2022 Foundation Confidence for Children

Reproduction and distribution of the content
only with the express permission of the
Foundation Confidence for Children