

2021 Annual Report



**TÉLÉCOMS
SANS FRONTIÈRES**
Communications for life

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Thirty years ago, the founders of TSF created a humanitarian association to bring clothes, food and other necessities to refugees from the Gulf War in Iraqi Kurdistan. They continued their commitment by creating Télécoms Sans Frontières eight years later, to better respond to the needs of populations affected by conflicts and disasters. “Communications for Life” was born.

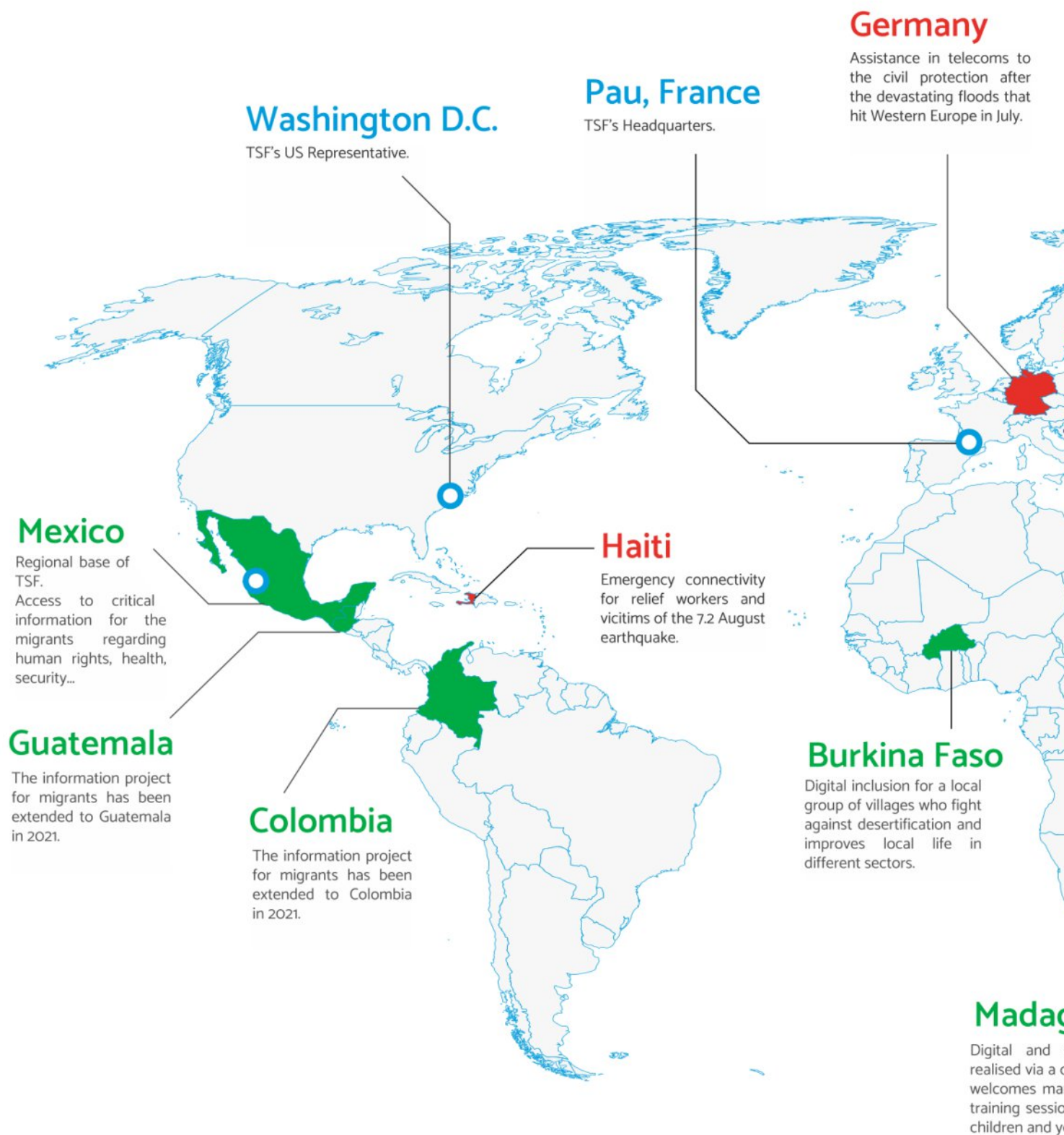
2021 was not just one year more. It was the year when thousands of people lost at best their homes and their environment, and at worst, sadly, loved ones in the floods in Western Europe or the earthquake in Haiti. The year in which people from Latin America, Southern and Sub-Saharan Africa, and Central Asia chose to risk their lives for their families, by embarking on a dangerous and difficult migratory journey. It was a year in which thousands of families struggled for a decent life, access to medical care or the reconstruction of their homes in Syria or Lebanon.

Thanks to the loyal support of its partners, and despite the difficulties related to COVID-19, Télécoms Sans Frontières in 2021 assisted more than 600,000 people around the world. Our connectivity and information diffusion solutions have also been important for other humanitarian actors and UN agencies in Haiti, Bosnia and Latin America.

While we can be proud of this shared achievement, we must also continue our commitment at the heart of humanitarian crises to ensure that connectivity and access to information help those who have lost everything, or have nothing left to lose, regain hope.

Jean - François CAZENAVE

Jean-François CAZENAVE,
President of Télécoms Sans Frontières



Washington D.C.

TSF's US Representative.

Pau, France

TSF's Headquarters.

Germany

Assistance in telecoms to the civil protection after the devastating floods that hit Western Europe in July.

Mexico

Regional base of TSF.
Access to critical information for the migrants regarding human rights, health, security...

Haiti

Emergency connectivity for relief workers and victims of the 7.2 August earthquake.

Guatemala

The information project for migrants has been extended to Guatemala in 2021.

Colombia

The information project for migrants has been extended to Colombia in 2021.

Burkina Faso

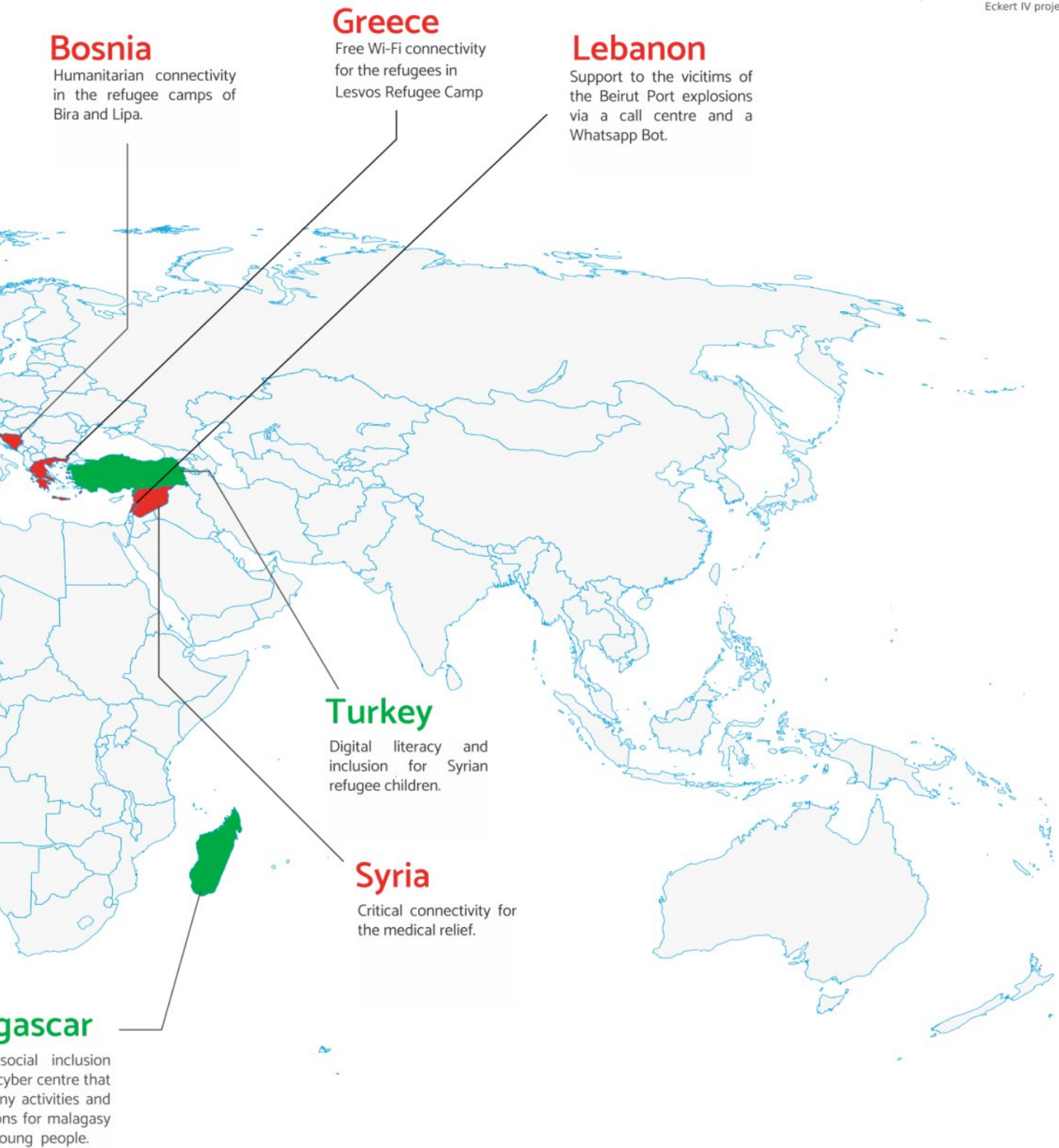
Digital inclusion for a local group of villages who fight against desertification and improves local life in different sectors.

Madagascar

Digital and... realised via a... welcomes ma... training sessio... children and y...

Our activities around the world in 2021

Télécoms Sans Frontières - CC-BY-SA
Source: Users:jecowa via Wikimedia commons
Eckert IV projection





Humanitarian
Communications





+443,000

people assisted by TSF in 2021 during humanitarian crises



55%

of beneficiaries highlight improved psychological wellbeing following TSF's assistance



97%

say that TSF's assistance has had a positive impact on their lives



20TB

transferred through TSF's emergency connections



BEIRUT PORT EXPLOSIONS



Lebanon

13,897 calls

+12,000 beneficiaries

During the first quarter, TSF continued its support to the victims of the two massive explosions that took place on 4th August 2020 at the port of Beirut, causing 180 deaths and over 6,500 casualties.

Thanks to the collaboration with the local organisation Live Love Lebanon and the consortium of NGOs Beirut Relief Coalition, the call centre set up by TSF right after the accident allowed families affected by the explosion to request assistance and to be put in touch with the appropriate NGOs to respond to their needs (in particular food, medicine, reconstruction assistance, clothing,

hygiene, and financial assistance).

Once the first emergency phase was over, before disengaging, TSF accompanied its partner Live Love Lebanon in the establishment of a long-term technical solution allowing them to continue their activities of distribution of humanitarian aid and of reconstruction.

Co-funded by





Greece

+9,000 connected devices

+15.8TB transferred

CONNECTIVITY FOR REFUGEES IN LESVOS

Throughout the year, TSF maintained its satellite connection in the Mavrovouni refugee camp, on the island of Lesbos. An evaluation conducted between May and June showed the importance this connection has on the lives of people that feels abandoned and is completely disconnected from the outside world, and their relatives.

During this evaluation, 97% of the beneficiaries reported that the connection has had a positive impact on their lives. Mental health and having access to up to date information were highlighted as the two main concrete positive impacts. Indeed, 55% of the refugees stated that the connection has offered a psychological improvement and 80% could find news on their home country, information on their rights, asylum procedures and COVID-19 among others.

The results of the evaluation showed also that instant messaging is the most important use across gender and age groups considered, followed by internet calls and access to information. Refugee camps are particularly

stressful environments, where people feel often stuck and abandoned for months, sometimes years, without any possibility to live a normal, fulfilling life. Even just an exchange on instant messaging apps or a short video call with their friends and relatives can significantly improve their psychological well-being and help them keep going despite the hardship they are going through.

“ We don't do anything here. I want to work. I want to live. I want to do something. And this is why it is important to have internet. Because it allows us to be in touch with friends and family. My sister is here but the rest of my family is in Congo and I worry about them, they worry about me. With Internet I can send them messages and tell that I'm fine. So, thank you for the connection, it helps us. We would go crazy otherwise!

Fatimada, 38, from Congo

”





Haiti

“

It is crucial to have internet to manage all the information and to coordinate everything.

Team member of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)

”

SOUTH-WEST HAITI EARTHQUAKE



A powerful 7.2 magnitude earthquake hit Haiti on Saturday 14 August. The impact of the earthquake on an already highly vulnerable population was catastrophic. More than 2,200 casualties were confirmed and over 12,000 people were reported injured. More than 50,000 houses were destroyed.

TSF installed a broadband satellite connectivity at the first humanitarian coordination centre set up in Les Cayes, the main city in one of the areas most affected by the earthquake. This centre quickly became the main coordination hub for the humanitarian response in the affected areas and served all the relief organisations arriving on the ground. Members of TSF's team also provided telecom support to the United Nations Disaster

Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) assessment operations conducted in the surroundings of Jérémie and Les Cayes. In addition, TSF installed a satellite broadband connection at the operational centre of Doctors Without Borders (MSF) in Les Cayes. This connection was essential to ensure that the supply of medical equipment for the treatment of patients could continue without interruptions.

In parallel, a TSF team carried out mobile Wi-Fi operations for isolated communities in the surroundings of Les Cayes, in order to provide Internet connectivity for a few hours to the populations affected by the earthquake. These operations covered mainly the villages of Corail Henry and Sucrerie Henry, where the network was out of service and damage was extensive. Most of the houses were destroyed, leaving the residents with no option but to sleep in makeshift shelters in very precarious conditions. In view of this situation, even just seeing someone reach their village was a source of relief and deep gratitude.

“

I have friends in Canada and France, I could send them messages and download voice messages, it is very important for us, thanks a lot!

Jean-Marie Romain, victim of the earthquake

”

Co-funded by



RÉGION
Nouvelle-Aquitaine





GERMANY FLOODS

“

The Red Cross team asked us to install an internet connection for their office. It was a real need, so that they could continue their work despite the connectivity problems, and it was urgent.

Sébastien Latouille, TSF Head of Mission in Germany

”

Germany

In mid-July 2021, torrential rains hit Western Europe causing the worst floods in decades in several regions in the West of Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands. The floods caused more than 180 deaths and thousands of people were forced to leave their houses. Internet and phone lines were down in many of the affected areas, hampering rescue operations.

In solidarity with the affected populations in Germany, TSF deployed to two of the highest priority areas: Ahrweiler's district and the town of Euskirchen. In Ahrweiler, satellite lines were provided to the local firefighters and all the other emergency responders including the Federal Agency for Technical Relief (THW), who were rescuing people in areas where the mobile networks were cut off. In Euskirchen, following the request of the Red Cross, our team installed a broadband satellite connection in their local office to support their emergency operations. After

the torrential rains and consequent floods that hit the area, the city remained cut off from the rest of the world, without electricity and without telecom network. It was thus extremely difficult for the relief organisations to contact the victims, search for missing people and coordinate their work. TSF's connection was particularly important for them to facilitate and speed up these operations.

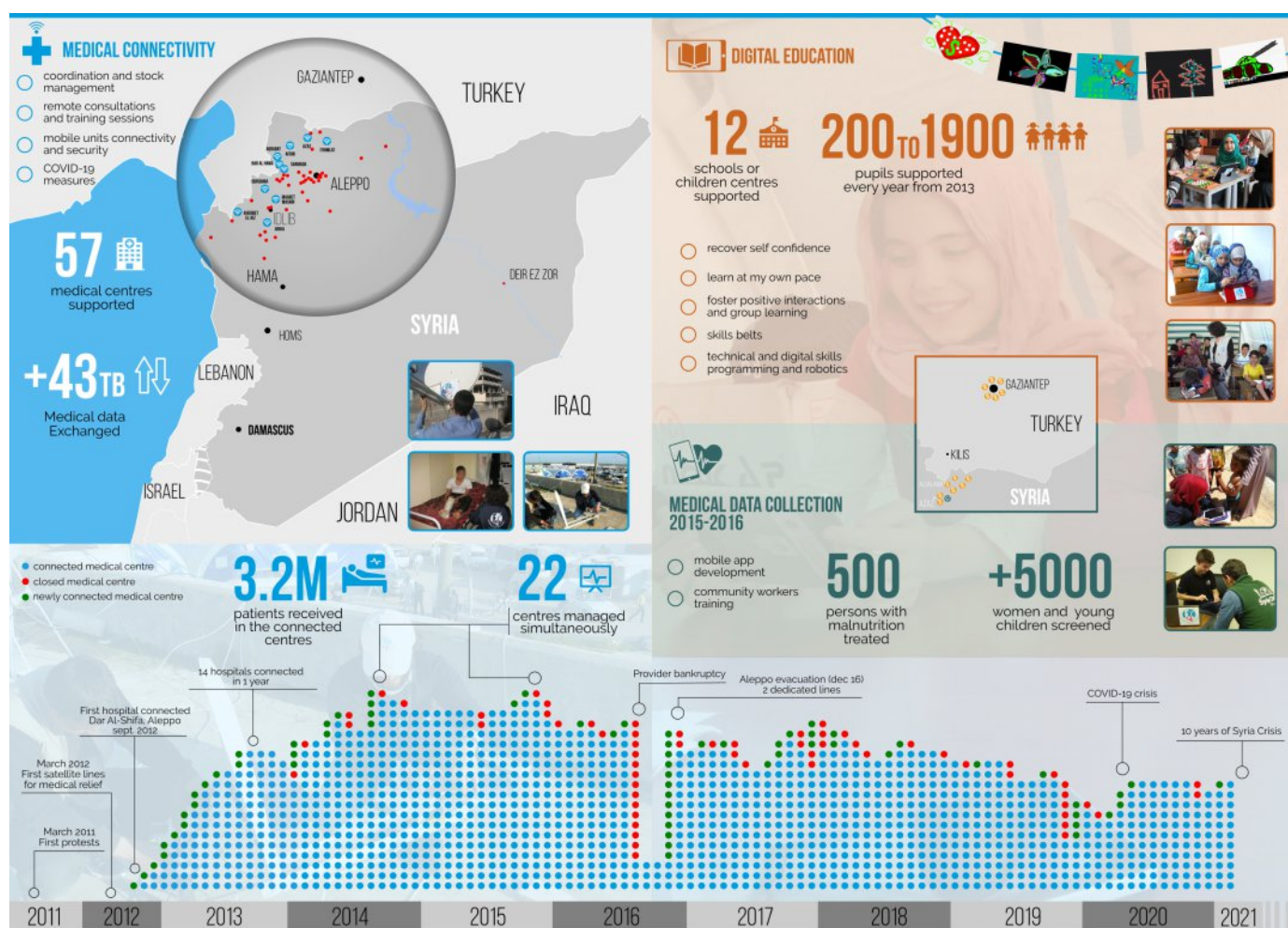


Syria

+421,000 beneficiaries

2.3TB transferred

SYRIAN CRISIS



2021 marked 10 years of war in Syria. TSF supports the affected Syrian population since March 2012, through connectivity for medical relief and digital resources for education. This represents the longest mission in TSF's history.

Throughout the year, TSF maintained its support to UOSSM's (Union of Syrian Medical Relief Organizations) medical staff in their daily work with the populations of north-western Syria, via satellite connections. 10 primary health centres, hospitals or coordination centres are benefiting from this connectivity.



+740 connected devices

1.9TB transferred

BALKAN MIGRATION CRISIS



Following a fire in December 2020, the Lipa camp was rebuilt and reopened in October 2021, for a maximum capacity of 1,500 people. As a continuation of the mission in Bira, TSF is supporting the Bosnian government in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), by installing Wi-Fi coverage in the Lipa camp, mainly covering the accommodation and common areas (refectory etc.).

TSF carried out the study and the installation of High Density Wi-Fi access points in December 2021. Currently, 12 access points are in service and allow the refugees in the camp to keep in touch with their relatives and to access information.



Caribbean South- East Asia



Natural disasters are becoming more and more catastrophic. Strengthening the capacity of regional disaster response mechanisms means the possibility to save more lives and further improve the wider humanitarian coordination.

Jean-François Cazenave, President of TSF



REGIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

In October, TSF started a two-year project funded by the Internet Society Foundation to build regional responders' capacity to recover emergency telecommunications in the most disaster-prone regions of the world: the Caribbean and South-East Asia.

As part of this project, TSF will equip the Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) in the Caribbean region with emergency telecommunication kits. In addition to the kits, TSF will also share its expertise on the use, configuration and maintenance of the equipment during two training sessions per region. The combination of emergency telecommunication equipment and training will increase the autonomy of these two regional disaster response mechanisms, who will be better equipped to respond to the next humanitarian emergencies requiring telecom support. In this way, this project is part of a global objective to strengthen the resilience of populations in the face of natural disasters through better preparation and a more tailored response.





Awareness raising and Protection

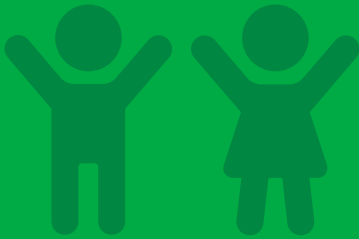
Information diffusion
Digital education





+207,000

beneficiaries of TSF's information
diffusion activities



1,700

children and youth
participated in digital
education activities



23%

of students trained had
never used a computer
before TSF's training



INFORMATIVE SCREENS IN SUPPORT OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES



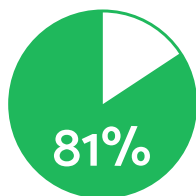
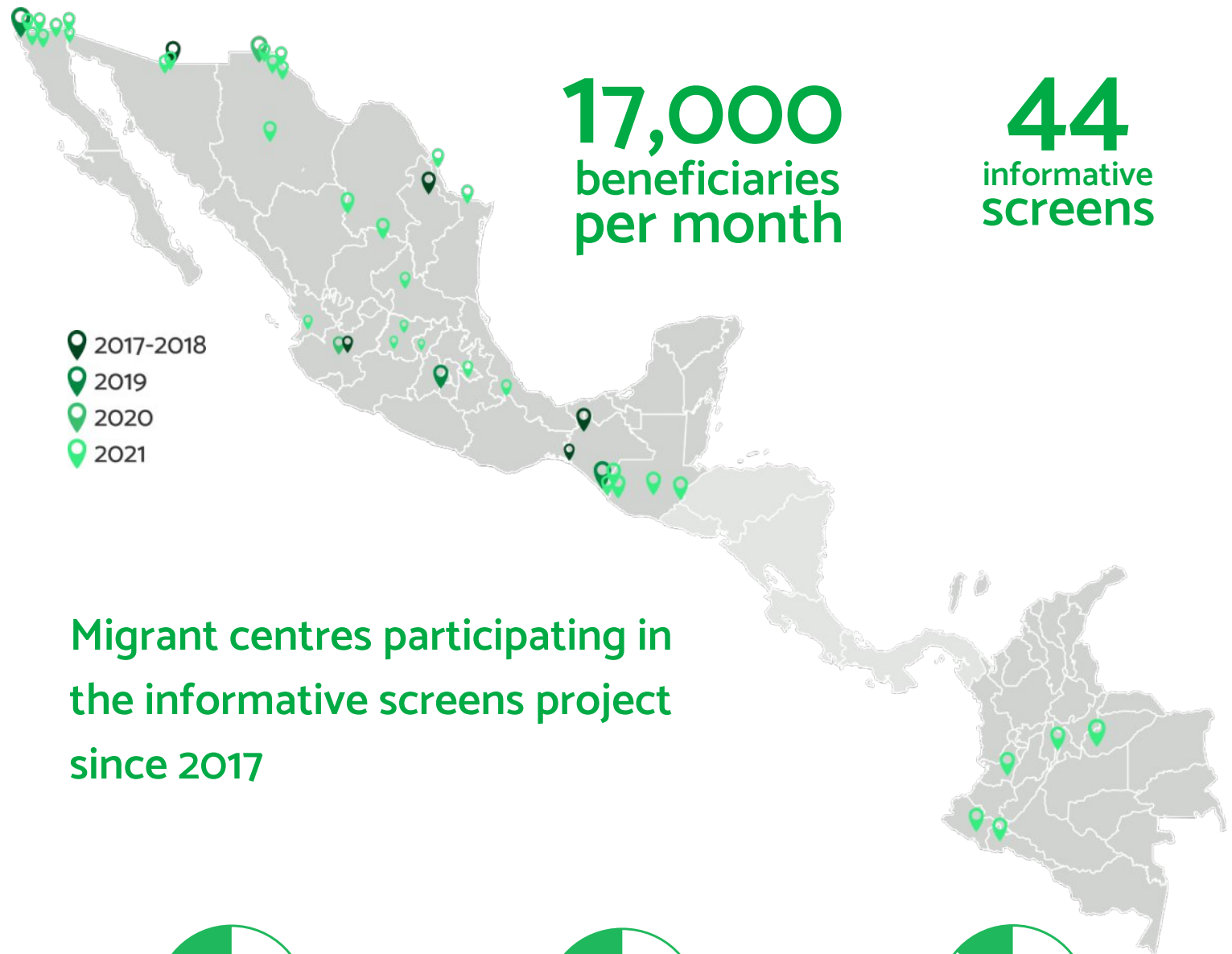
Mexico
Guatemala
Colombia

44
informative screens

17,000
beneficiaries / month

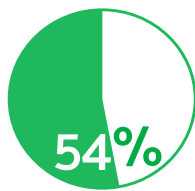
Every year in Central America, hundreds of thousands of people flee the violence, poverty and lack of opportunities they have known since childhood. In their countries of origin: El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, people have been suffering for years from deep social inequalities, political instability, and the expansion of organised crime. From an early age, one wonders... what am I doing here? If you are well, you don't migrate. But many of us don't have a choice" shares a Honduran migrant who made her way north, to Mexico in the hope of finding a safer place. Since 2017, TSF has been providing assistance to asylum-seekers in Mexico, allowing them to access key information, namely regarding their rights as refugees or important information about administrative procedures. All the information presented through playlists is adapted to the regional and local contexts and is updated twice a week, to have the most accurate and relevant information.

Through collaboration with help.ngo and coordination with Catholic Relief Services the system has already been implemented in three migrant centres in Guatemala. Likewise, through collaboration with the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the Colombian Red Cross, it has been installed in 2 centres in Colombia and will soon be installed in 3 other centres with the objective of having a first pilot of the system in South America. By the end of 2021, 44 centres in Latin America are displaying essential information.



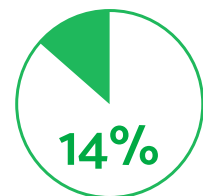
new information

For 81% of beneficiaries the information on the screens is considered new. This is a significant percentage, given the amount of information available in the media, shelters, and social networks.



safety

54% of beneficiaries felt protected and safer after reading the information on the screens.



decision making

Some examples of decisions made by beneficiaries: change their itinerary, stay in Mexico, return to their place of origin, apply for asylum or a humanitarian visa, request medical or psychological assistance.

“ The screens have helped me to want to look for a solution, seeing the phone numbers, everything has helped me to calm down, to want to look for legal help. I will wait calmly.

Honduran migrant.

”





“ I come to the after-school support sessions to learn English online, using the Duolingo app. I learned about this during the Saturday activities at the centre. It's been now three weeks that I've been using the app and I learned a lot, it suggests exercises, lessons and it corrects also my mistakes. I really like the app because it follows my progress, at my level, and I'm becoming more independent than before.

Kevin, 16 years old

”

IT CUP COMMUNITY CENTRES



**Madagascar
Burkina Faso**

**410 entries / month
at the cybercafe**

**300 young people
participating
in the activities**

**+130 students
trained on computing**

Opened in 2012, the IT Cup Centre in Miaryinarivo was conceived as a vector of social links thanks to digital technology around useful topics for the local populations in a perspective of sustainable development.

The activities organised by the Centre include access to and training in digital tools, as well as their use for development issues such as education, data collection and Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

The cybercafé is open to everyone and provides access to computer equipment and internet.

However, a majority of young Malagasies do not have access to computers. This is why an introduction (free of charge) is given each year to around 150 students in partnership with several schools in the city. A personalised evaluation system allows each student to follow their

progress. This training includes the basics of using a computer and Internet, and raises awareness of possible risks: scams, fake news, protection of personal data, etc.

The extracurricular activities are free and open to all children. The location of the IT Cup Centre in the heart of the city allows children from 20 different schools to participate in the activities.

Every month, around 200 young people take part in the activities while learning about digital tools: school follow-up, manual activities, board games, Malagasy stories and a technical club. During the technical club, participants discover robotics and programming in a fun way using Scratch and the mBot programmable robot.

Acces to digital technologies



Computing and Internet training

For the past five years, the local team is committed to raising awareness among beneficiaries about responsible use of the internet and discovering the different aspects of digital technology for themes that are important to the Itasy region. The computing training provided at the IT Cup centre in Miarinarivo has offered eight hours of practical workshops to students in the second and first year of the town's public high school. The students are divided into small groups at the beginning of the year, based on their computing experience. Among the high school students who participated in the training in 2021, more than one in five had never used a computer before the training.

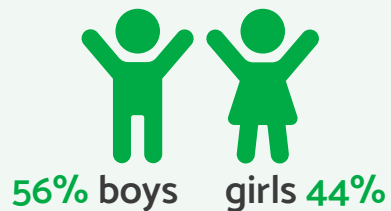
Depending on the entry level, the training allows students to discover how a computer and Internet work: research and e-mail.

Dividing the students into small groups ensures that each student uses the computer (maximum three students per computer). The last training session is dedicated to raising awareness of the proper use of technology, particularly social media, in the form of an interactive role-play followed by a discussion. The most common risks are explained to them: scams, risks linked to pseudonyms and false identities, viruses...

Online school resources are also presented.

Extra-curricular activities

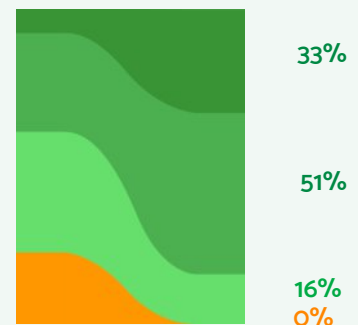
300 children participating



+130 children trained
Second and first grade classes of the public high school of Miarinarivo

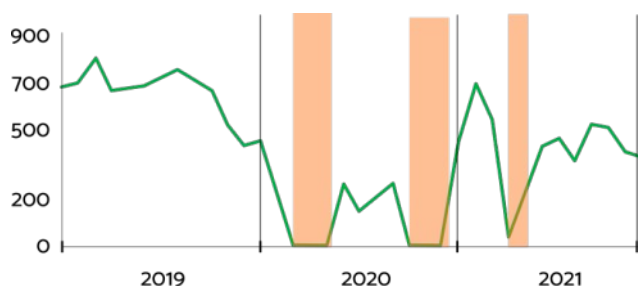
Before the training

8% advanced level
31% intermediate level
38% beginner level
23% never used a computer



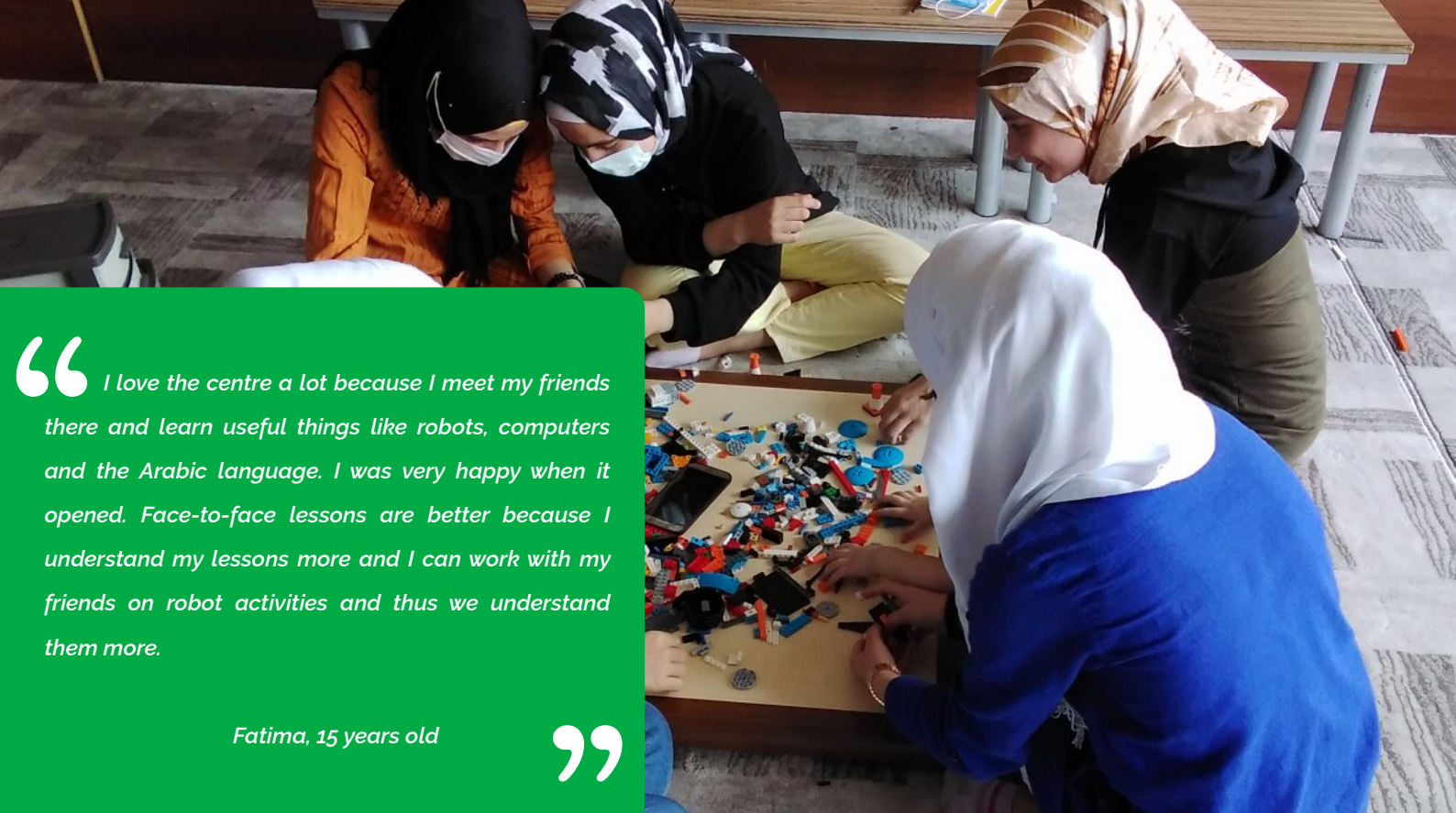
After the training

Impact of COVID-19 on the IT Cup Centre



Madagascar has experienced three periods of lockdown since the beginning of the pandemic. In 2020, this resulted in a significant drop in attendance at the IT Cup centre (by about 70%). The IT Cup team adapted and organised

remote activities in partnership with the local radio station. In 2021 the activities were gradually resumed by applying the protection measures, and therefore sometimes by limiting the number of participants. In this context, the mission of the IT Cup centre remains crucial, both in terms of training and raising awareness of digital tools, and in terms of rebuilding social links, particularly for the younger generation, which was very affected by school and extra-curricular restrictions.



“ I love the centre a lot because I meet my friends there and learn useful things like robots, computers and the Arabic language. I was very happy when it opened. Face-to-face lessons are better because I understand my lessons more and I can work with my friends on robot activities and thus we understand them more.

Fatima, 15 years old

”

LAB4FUTURE

Turkey



200 children supported

Throughout the year, TSF continued its Lab4Future project for Syrian refugee children in Gaziantep. Despite the COVID-19 lockdown measures, which forced the centres where we work to close for the first half of the year, our staff ensured that the activities could continue remotely. During this period, they focused mainly on computer science basics and 3D design. Our staff would regularly send resources, exercises and video tutorials to the children, ensuring constant contact with them and their families. Free Internet data packages and tablets were also provided to those families who didn't have access to these tools so that all children could continue their distance learning.

During the second semester, the centres reopened and the activities resumed, while always respecting all the necessary protection measures for the children and our staff. The children focused more on programming and robotics, activities that were more difficult to carry out remotely. It has been very important for them to have again a direct, face-to-face contact with TSF's instructors, to meet their friends and find the welcoming atmosphere typical of our centres and of the Lab4Future activities.

TSF IN THE PRESS

ComputerWeekly.com

Calling on communications to address humanitarian crises

[Joe O'Halloran](#)

13 Oct 2021

 **LightReading**

How TSF helped to reconnect blast-hit Beirut.



[Ian Morris](#), International Editor

6. June 2021

 **CONNECT-WORLD**
Providing thought leadership for ICT decision makers

Satellite technology is driving faster and more efficient responses to natural disasters

Latin America | 2021



3 NGOs empowering children in Turkey

Mikey Redding

29 Oct 2021

Connecting the disconnected - Communication and human migration

June / July 2021



Il y a 20 ans, les palois de TSF installaient le premier téléphone satellite pour l'ONU

Carlos de Sousa

16 June 2021

TSF , quand la connexion devient vitale

Laurence Fleury

September 2021



With the support of

BABEL

THANK YOU!

to all our partners, donors and supporters who help us make Communications for Life a reality.



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