

Stiftung Lotti Latrous  
Rämistrasse 5  
CH 8001 Zürich

Telefon +41 43 243 67 48  
info@lottilatrous.ch

[www.lottilatrous.ch](http://www.lottilatrous.ch)

Grand-Bassam, in October 2022

Dear Sponsors,

I am pleased to be able to take the time to write these lines to you. It is important to me to not only put a few lines on paper, but to also tell you about our Centres in as much detail as possible and to tell you again and again how grateful we are that you are part of our lives.

I especially hope that you are well and that you have well survived the heat waves of this year's summer. Here in Grand-Bassam it is rather cool in July/August, so that – at 27 degrees! – we are almost «freezing». I am writing these lines on a Sunday, sitting at my desk as I have just returned from my tour of the Centres. I love Sundays because it is the only day of the week when I can spend a lot of time with our children, our patients and the seniors in the village. The social services' office stays closed and I can dedicate myself in peace to what I like to do most: sit on the edge of our patients' beds, listen to them - attentively, without rushing - talk to them and ask them what they need. Especially those who are dying. We pray, sing, talk, listen to music. And the other patients come by the bedside to say goodbye to their fellow patient, often sitting down with them. This results in wonderful conversations

where everyone can talk about what is on their mind. Without shame and without taboos. They all know that I do not judge nor criticise and that I am simply there to help and try and soothe their pains and sorrow. Especially their emotional pains, which are often very deep. Because suffering from AIDS, living with it and ultimately dying from it is still very stigmatised in Africa.

At a distance, on these Sundays, we often hear the singing of Christian churchgoers and the call to prayer from the nearby mosques, and our little world is in order. I often feel it stops for a heartbeat when we realise here how much our little world is made up of love and understanding for each other. When I leave the hospice, I say goodbye to our patients and each one gets a caress - and then when they smile at me, I can feel that they are at peace.

On these Sundays, my way also leads me to the children's home. Here, too, you can feel that it is Sunday. A few girls are doing each other's hair, the big boys are playing football, and the smaller ones are playing UNO or other card games, while the little ones are laughing and trying to run after the

kitten and the chickens. Here, too, there is peace and quiet, it is simply beautiful. When I see all these children, it warms my heart. They all came to us terminally ill, outcasted and hated. With us, they get everything they need, so that their scars can heal, and they can find their way back to their childhood. True, they do not have the same comfort as our children in Switzerland, but they receive something here that is essential for survival and that they never received before: Love. When I invite the girls over to the house every now and then to take a nap and they snuggle up close in the living room, then I know they are happy. We listen to music and they chat and laugh, real girl talk. When they fall asleep after an hour or so, it's time for me to go out and do gymnastics with my seniors. In order not to wake the girls, I step over them very quietly and as gently as I can. Then I allow myself to briefly look at them

and I see how satisfied their expressions are. Our children are incapable of sleeping alone in a room; they would waste away.

They need each other's closeness. Sometimes I tell them that in Europe the children have their own room all to themselves. They can't understand this and pity their peers because they are alone overnight. So, once I sneak out, I help the Village Ayobâ staff set up the gymnastics group and go to get the seniors. They too are happy and grateful not to have to live alone anymore; somewhere in a tin shack, with barely a roof over their heads, but together in such a beautiful village. We do «gymnastics» for about 45 minutes and just have fun still being able to move. Even if it's with only one leg or one arm, they all join in. Most of the time we play games and often Sunday ends with dinner together, a small beer for



Our girls



Monsieur Gilbert with his Parkinson's and a glass of wine for Maman Alice in her wheelchair, who is paralysed on one side of her body. And even now the music isn't missing, which spurs them all on to a little dance - and those who can no longer dance sing and clap their hands. «Papa Aziz», as my husband is called here, is not far away either and comes to toast before he takes care of the flowers and plants again and makes his wonderful pesto from our own basil, which we all enjoy together. Our little world is in order, our Centres are really an island of «hope», not only in name, but here people live in contentment and love. War, murder, corruption are far, far away.



Gymnastic exercises with our seniors



Our boys

I would now like to tell you why I don't have so much time during the week for the children, the patients and the seniors. The reason is my social services' office, where I spend hours sitting behind my desk. Now we are sponsoring the school fees of well over 800 children of the neighbouring areas, which is an immense amount of work. The mothers whose children are able to go to school have to come with the school documents and the children's grades. These are the 420 mothers who are in our programme and whom we help pay the rent for their shanty town (yes, even in the slum you must pay rent!) and give food aid. This support also requires a lot of office work. Add to that all the people who are sick and need treatment and medication, the parents who come by with their malnourished children, and they all have a right to be heard and helped. I see up to 200 people in my office every day. In the past, I used to ask myself at the end of the day why I was so exhausted in the evening. Today I know that after the last patient I need a half-hour break before I go to the children, the patients and the seniors. Sometimes I am so tired afterwards that I forget my own name. And when I go to bed after such a hard working day, which lasts from six in the morning until seven in the evening - sometimes 9p.m, if I still have to do accounting - I no longer need anyone to sing me a lullaby to fall asleep.

For twenty-three years I have been allowed to do this work, and it still fulfils me day after day. I am grateful that I am able to do it, that I have the strength to do it, even after the «normal» retirement age. And I am very grateful to you, dear sponsors, for this time, because it is you who have made everything possible, it is you who have always supported us. Helping us to save people, to give them back their dignity, to give them back in their desperation, to satisfy their hunger.

I thank you, but also my husband Aziz, whom everyone here calls Papa Aziz, my colleague Marie Odile, who has supported me for decades as well as all

our staff for their help. Many of our staff could also go into their well-deserved retirement after working with us for over twenty years in some cases, but they stay here and continue to help. I also thank all the

volunteers who come repeatedly, the foundation board members and Valérie Keller, from our administration office. They all help to make this world, this small world, better.

From the bottom of my heart,



Lotti Latrous

And finally, the very happy news: Aziz and I became grandparents for the third time. Elsie, the daughter of our Sarah and our son-in-law Rik, was born on Good Friday this year.



Little Elsie with her proud grandparents

**Donations CHF via e-banking:**  
CH44 0024 0240 4286 5400 E  
Stiftung Lotti Latrous  
Rämistrasse 5  
8001 Zurich



**Donations in EUR:**  
CH82 0024 0240 4286 5462 H  
SWIFT (BIC): UBSWCHZH80A  
Stiftung Lotti Latrous  
Rämistrasse 5, 8001 Zurich