



# Creating lasting change

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Annual report and accounts  
2020/21 Netherlands





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# Welcome



Looking back on the past year, the continuation of the Covid-19 pandemic had a great impact on VSO's ability to support changemakers all over the world.

As our work leans heavily on the exchange of knowledge and skills, being unable to meet each other face to face has had a great impact on our changemakers, colleagues and volunteers. I am greatly impressed with the way our colleagues and the changemakers we work with have shown resilience under these difficult circumstances and have been able to deliver support to those who need it most.

As we often see in crises, those who are the most vulnerable are hit hardest. We see that the Covid-19 crisis has limited the access to education, healthcare and decent work and has increased domestic violence. With our programmes, we adapted to these circumstances to support the most vulnerable in their immediate needs. I am incredibly proud of the agility of our organisation, and our colleagues who have shown great flexibility in adapting their work to do what needed to be done.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the pressure it put on the healthcare system, sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) in some places became even less accessible to marginalised groups. That is why we are incredibly proud of the start of the Make Way programme. In partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Wemos, Liliane Foundation, Akina Mama wa Afrika, The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians and Forum for African Women Educationalists. This five-year programme promotes innovative practices in intersectional SRHR advocacy. With Make Way, we contribute to advocacy for marginalised people’s sexual and reproductive rights and building capacity of Civil Society Organisations. We are proud of this partnership, as it is a way for us to demonstrate our added value and knowledge on the theme of SRHR. Together with a coalition of very strong Dutch and African partners, we can really make a difference.

The Challenge Fund for Youth Employment (CFYE) has taken flight during the past year, and is now even more relevant due to the economic consequences of the pandemic. The first partners have been selected. They will work on creating decent jobs for young people in Africa and the Middle East. VSO has started a programme providing technical assistance to the implementing partners in Uganda.

The year 2020/21 has also seen the end of some of our projects. Our project in Gulu, focussing on maternal health, has come to an end, as well as the RISE project in Tanzania. The knowledge shared in these projects will make an impact for years to come. And that is exactly how we see our role as VSO, supporting changemakers with knowledge, creating lasting change.

This annual report gives an overview of VSO’s work for change all over the world. From page 30 we highlight some specific VSO Netherlands projects, as well as information about VSO Netherlands as an organisation.

**Erik Ackerman**  
Director VSO Netherlands

Linsey Willeke Douwe Allard Johannes Lot Mohamad Rob Arno Franklin Jeanine Sjoerd Willy Rients-Germ Audrey John Jaime Isabelle Jarne Berry Wouter Eddie Katja Elisabeth Jeannette Andreas Hannie Nils Julia Ezra Robert Alfons Corrie Bas Jan-Willem Anneke Vera Robin Yvonne Bas Arie Joris Rens Chris Anne Maren Johanna Jan Liselotte Michel Edwin Mercedes Maria Melanie Arianne Desiree Thijs Job Kris Corien Fronique Marijke Marleen Ron Nico Jorren Catherine Bert Marijke Tom Andreas Ruth Henco Tannyta Paul Martin Flemming Sietze Ronald David Wilma Jeroen Dieta Marjet Esther Carmen Nathalie Erik Koos Gerrit Jan Richard Joke Matthijs Tamara Agnes Anneke Martin Arjan Rienk Jannie Marcel Sharine Bram Mulder Jmeije Harrye Yanouck Albert Marius Anita Corien Yvonne Pelleriti Louise Merel Aysel Ien Emilia Anne Malak Lisa Nancy Tatelijne Laura Monique Gorter Lexi Medina Nancy Cees Hubert Gerrit Kadri Peter Germa Lippe Loes Peter Harry Mark Bart Dirk Johan Simone Jurjen Anand Heleen Gea Anton Jos Ellen Marco Enrique Maren Maarten Carla Pim Jeanne Marion Annetemieke Marcha Arthur Juliette Rinesh Antoinette Rik Lukas Katri Jeannot Harm Robin Arjan Joris Maran Paulien Joey Merrill Gideon Bram Jeroen Maaikie Steven Erik Birgit Leonie Andre Kim Jose Wasma Gido Nelly Babs Johan Titia Tupe Rose-Anne Erik Elizabeth Marieke Marieke Leonie Rene Karin Vincent Sita Nelly Leonie Celina Andrew Jennifer Karina An Jean Paul Thomas Wim Tineke Ans Angeliek Odette Angelika Anneke Liset Christian Patricia Hanneke Geert Astrid Annet Carlijn Claudia Dien Karin Irma Gitta Petra Elles Arne Jeffrey Mariska Erik Elizabeth Bastiaan Mariel Cinta Urko Gerbertjos Iris Ewelina Melanie Paul Annet Peggy Ceciel Wendy Marloes Vesna Wendelien Jolanda Nathalie Toby Jet Sanne Lilian Martha Renske Elza Jozien Arja Miranda Martine Maria Gladys Doke Erika Con Melanie Leticia Mieke Jaap Quinn Elma Rachel Tom Peggy Jan Karin Herma Miranda Mieke Maloesjka Astrid Chris Anneke Rivka Selma Martine Petra Nienke Tessa Brenda 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Anke Syedkamel Jim Joke Mayra Joris Lianne Marian Benni Anne Hans Gerard Inge Melissa Dennis Lotte Wim Corrie Josan Bennie Jeffrey Willeke Evert Yvonne Sandra Ineke Heinz Rene Sean Daan Eva Inge Jean Mike Longina Esther Petra Ilias Erik Etiënne Matthieu Sarah Albert Rob Karin Ed Lea Hans Cathy Anco Natalia Raoul Marjan Emily Gwennethynn Nico Mariken Susanne Bas Melle Rene Wilbert Alexandra Sanne Kasper Lilian Kim Kimberly Leonie Klaas Koen Laura Karst Marijke Andries Joanita Anke Ineke Annique Nina Els Lede Lideke Dave Frans Arjen Anne Catherine Aysegul Antje Caspar Anke Arjen Bert Akke Annemieke Johanna Maria Annette Anneke Arjan John Corry Gilberto Chris Charlotte Joop Bas Jan Francine Frans Fred Carine Hans Jouri Alexander Sebastiaan Jorrik Jellie Hans Kees Joost Babette Bas Joran Caroline Bertil Dennis Annemieke Bram Annemike Denis Babette Frederica Francy Ben Fokke Floris Fenna Jean Kati Jitske Agnes Alfred Rikie Hilde Desiree Barbara Channah Aleida Corian Annet Emmy Esther Anique 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Johanna Huub Hub Erik Eduard Dennis Eric Frans Danny Erwin Ingeborg Frederique Riet Dorien Casper Hans Edwin Cecile Daphne Ellen Margreet Gert Erik Gert Gerrit Frans Iebe Elke Fred Trudie Hetty Jan Gijts Gerdien Gonneke Herman Rianne Hans Frans Herrold Hein Juerd Janna Suleyman Klazien Kudret Jasper Joera Renske Leandro Karim Tina Jacobus Katia Joannes Carolus Maria Jan Willem Judith Annelies Joop Klaas Monique Josephine Kim Johan Jennifer Jeroen Conny Iris Jacq Hans Jeroen John Johannes Richardus Pieter Jan Ada Joos Johan Jos Jeroen Jurrien Jan Willem Jan Jeroen Jan Jaap Jan Adriaan Hans Jacob Andreas John Jeannet Jose Maria Marjan Michael Marije Margreet Mark Willem Michael Maria Marion Maartje Marjan Miriam Marjon Merijn Machteld Maarten Mariene Anne Maria Marian Maurica Maxine Marije Mirjam Moniek Margreet Marin Margot Marian Marius Mabel Maria Marcel Margriet Marco Marjolein Madelon Mirjam Pieter Bas Oscar Pea Philo Peer Paul Peter Patrick Stefan Paul Christine Petra Olga Pieter 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to the 20.700 people that supported our work financially during the last year. Your support is critical for the successful execution of VSO's programmes and volunteering for development approach. We are grateful that our supporters showed their loyalty to VSO's mission of creating a fair world for everyone, during this challenging corona crisis. Thank you to all who decided to leave VSO a gift in their will. This is an extraordinary gesture that will assure your ideals will live on and support future generations. We are also proud to have welcomed many new supporters. And we are thankful to all supporters that donated to VSO's Coronavirus Emergency Appeal. Your support is helping the most vulnerable people to get through these turbulent times and rebuild even better.



# Our year in numbers



**3,403** people volunteered with VSO

VSO worked with communities in 29 countries, nine of which VSO were working in for the first time.

## 12.9 million

people were reached over 7.65 million indirectly and nearly 5.25 million directly including:



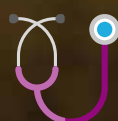
Over  
**2.8million**  
through our education projects



Almost  
**30,000**  
through our resilient livelihoods programme



Nearly  
**1.95million**  
through our wider work on resilience, inclusion and social accountability. To help people prepare for disaster, build peaceful communities, tackle gender-based violence, and create inclusive societies for people with disabilities.



Nearly  
**435,000**  
through our health projects







# Taking volunteering for development to scale

In 2015, the world committed to meet the (SDGs) by 2030. In its commitment, the United Nations recognised the power of volunteering. We will fail to meet the Goals unless we can engage citizens across the world to support, demand, oversee and deliver them.

At VSO, we committed to play our part in delivering the Goals. But given the scale of the challenge, we know that playing our part means being more ambitious. It means challenging ourselves to make a bigger difference. We intend to meet that challenge by taking Volunteering for Development (V4D) to scale.

Our ambition is born out of evidence that volunteering is a highly effective approach to create a fair world for everyone. Done right, the Volunteering for Development model creates a space for every person to play their role in making change happen. It helps drive the change needed to create a world that is equitable and just in its opportunities and in the rights and justice it offers for all.

In 2019, we set ourselves the objective of reaching an additional 5 million people by 2022. This year we have already exceeded that number. We continue to develop the quality of our programming through new design standards. We invested in new capability in our practice areas of health, education, and livelihoods, allowing for better strategic oversight and accelerated growth in our work.

Innovation at VSO is now about scaling our work. It means doing what we know works well in many more places. It means sharing what we know to help others grow their impact.

To support our move to scale, we strengthened our capacity to deliver, creating a Global Programme Implementation Team to ensure quality and consistency. Focusing our technical, programme and business support teams on implementation enables clear prioritisation of work and demonstrates value for money for those who support us financially.

These adaptations mean that we're in a stronger position than ever to deliver greater impact and create a fair world for everyone.

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**This year we overachieved our target, reaching 12.9m people directly and indirectly**

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## Recovering childhood, maintaining learning: Education in emergencies



Millions of children around the world are forced from their homes by conflict and natural disaster. Many of these children do not automatically have the right to state education in the place they find themselves. The trauma they experience by being displaced can have long term effects on their development.

VSO has developed an education in emergencies programme that provides quality early childhood care and education to children aged 3 to 14 living in such circumstances in Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Bangladesh. We combine volunteers who have teaching expertise with those who have community knowledge to provide support, helping children overcome the stress of their experience and environment. Creating safe spaces for learning and play provides a sense of normality, allowing children to regain their childhood.

18-year-old Moreom lives in a shelter made of plastic and bamboo, without running water or electricity. She and her Rohingya community were subject to violent attacks from the army and were forced to leave their home in Myanmar. They found shelter in a refugee camp in Bangladesh, but the camp is overcrowded and at risk of landslides, fires, and cyclones. Life there is difficult and Moreom misses

freedoms of her old life in Myanmar, where she hopes to return one day.

Moreom was inspired to educate children in her camp. She was accepted to train as a VSO 'Big Sister', joining VSO's network of volunteer educators and caregivers in the camp.



One of Moreom's students is four-year-old Monir. His mother, Rashida, was pregnant with him when the army killed her daughter and stole the family's valuables. Rashida fled with her four other children, leaving behind their farm, cattle, and all other possessions. Monir's father was separated from them when he fled to Malaysia before Monir was born. They do not know if he is alive.

Despite this, Monir is happy. He loves playing with friends in camp and started going to VSO's home-based early childhood learning centre aged 2. He learnt to name colours, fruits, and animals, write his name, as well as the Burmese and English alphabets. He now helps Rashida write her own name.

Moreom's VSO training taught her that affection and support are important for children's learning. She explains this to Rashida and other parents, encouraging them to support rather than punish children.

When the camp went into COVID-19 lockdown, Moreom and Rashida worried about Monir's learning. So Moreom continued visiting Monir to help continue his education and provide support. VSO provided materials such as books and colouring pencils so he can learn at home. Monir misses playing outside but Moreom's regular visits make him happy.

Rashida and Moreom know that education is key to the Rohingya's next generation if they are



to save their community. They hope Monir can continue his education and realise his dream of becoming a teacher.

Education in emergencies work is also rolled out to host communities, meaning that all children benefit from VSO expertise. Working with host communities creates acceptance of displaced people. VSO-trained teachers also identify and work with children with disabilities, referring them for further support where necessary. As migration and displacement increases, VSO will continue to provide education to children, wherever needed. Many teachers in Rwanda lack adequate training. National volunteers, mentored by international volunteer teaching advisers, are improving the skills of local teachers.





## Defeating Polio in Africa: Delivering in new places



Last year, as the world dealt with a new deadly virus, the 100-year fight against wild polio reached a milestone as Nigeria became the last African country to be declared free of the disease. Yet the threat of rare “vaccine-derived” polio remains. To reduce that risk, VSO has been working with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to establish Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs) that coordinate and manage national disease response.

VSO established polio coordination centres in nine countries across east and west Africa. These bring together health experts and other national leaders to analyse data and make quick decisions to tackle disease outbreaks. Community volunteers play a critical role, engaging with trusted leaders and polio survivors to challenge mistrust around vaccination and encourage communities to adopt new behaviours to stop the spread of the disease. Dr Philip Goodwin, VSO’s Chief Executive Officer, notes the urgency of this work; “This could not have come at a more critical moment. This year Liberia recorded an outbreak of circulating vaccine-derived polio. With the effective infrastructure now in place, the Government of Liberia is equipped to conduct a high-quality outbreak response.”

“2020 has highlighted the fragility of health systems which were already very weak,” adds project lead, Sara Jacobson. “EOCs have long-term benefits beyond polio, as volunteers are trained to build the national capacity to fight future outbreaks.” Along with the physical infrastructure, EOCs will increase partnerships and coordination with the support of technical working groups, led by government experts, to ensure decisions are based on real-time, high-quality data.

The \$6.3 million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that has funded the multi-country polio project represents another milestone for VSO. We implemented this project across several countries in francophone Africa, where VSO hasn’t previously worked. Despite the difficulties caused by COVID-19 travel restrictions, we showed our ability to be agile and respond to where needs are greatest. We demonstrated that we’re able to deliver in new contexts without creating new and expensive country infrastructure. The experience gained from this vital work against polio will allow us to scale and grow our work to reach the poorest and most marginalised, wherever they are.

## Adapting to reach new customers

As COVID-19 took hold in Tanzania, 43-year-old Sada Nalinga felt conflicted about her soap making business. Her liquid soap had been regarded as a luxury, but it was now an essential item. Sada saw an opportunity to expand her business, but travel restrictions prevented her from moving around her region to engage potential customers.

Sada knew she had skills to adapt because she had taken part in VSO’s Tanzania Local Enterprise Development project. This promotes sustainable economic growth by supporting women, young people, and people with disabilities to grow businesses and create jobs. Since 2015, it has provided guidance to 5,000 small businesses and created nearly 3,000 jobs.

Advice Sada received from volunteers became critical. 29-year-old business expert and volunteer Grace Kajange explains, “It’s sometimes difficult to change the way people run their business”, especially since “some men do not allow their wives to do business and believe that women are supposed to look after the family.”

Grace realised that COVID-19 required her to adapt the training; “There is a real need to help our entrepreneurs to adapt to the situation right now, for example using digital marketing and online social networks to promote their businesses.” Adaptation was vital because economic factors including lower incomes, price increases due to scarcity and decreased ability to save, affected businesses. Displaying the positivity and resilience she encourages in participants, Grace adds “In every challenge there is an opportunity.”

After attending trainings, Sada formally registered and licensed her business. Registration meant her product acquired Tanzania Bureau of Standards certification and a barcode that allowed her to supply supermarkets. Her digital marketing training meant she found new customers online. Annual production grew from 240 to 1,200 litres of soap. Sada now invests in the business and support her husband and child.

“I get orders from various companies such as lodges, restaurants, pharmacies, nursing colleges and schools to make liquid soap for them. I feel good that the demand is high, and I can now sell more



due to the high demand in the community”. Sada now supports others, “I have conducted trainings on soap-making to various Small and Medium Enterprises as a way of supporting my community in the fight against COVID-19.”

By working with VSO, Sada’s experience shows how businesses can adapt and support their communities during crisis. She demonstrates that scaling and growing means embedding local knowledge and expertise.





## Mobilising Youth: ICS - 40,000 active young citizens delivering change

This year saw the closure of the International Citizen Service (ICS) programme. Led by VSO, ICS was the UK government's flagship international youth volunteering programme. From 2011 to 2020, over 40,000 young people - half from the UK and half from developing countries - volunteered to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals for communities across Africa and Asia.

ICS made a real impact on poor and marginalised communities, with over 90% of project partners saying they were better able to bring about change after working with young ICS volunteers. It also improved the skills, knowledge, and personal development of each youth volunteer. The programme fostered active citizenship, not just in the UK but around the world, reaching young people across all demographics. Inclusion sat at the heart of the programme with, for example, 37% of UK volunteers coming from the least advantaged social backgrounds, accessing experiences that otherwise would have remained out of reach.

Independent research demonstrated the value of ICS to the UK economy in particular, finding that for every £1 spent on ICS, £4.64 was generated in social value through the skills developed by young volunteers, including increased resilience, problem-solving abilities, and intercultural communication skills. It also showed that volunteers ended placements with a greater understanding of



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poverty, inequality and development, and the skills and capabilities young people can offer in tackling these issues.

After their placements, UK volunteers delivered an 'Action at Home' project, taking part in social action or further volunteering back in their home community. For many, 'Action at Home' was the start of their active citizenship journey, with many involving themselves in the COVID-19 pandemic response.

When lockdown began in the UK in March 2020, former ICS volunteer Molly Bufton Spear, 22, thought about the impact of COVID-19 on her community. Inspired by her placement - a youth employment project in Zanzibar, Tanzania in 2019 - she set up a food delivery service, Molly's Meals, to deliver food to the most vulnerable during the pandemic in Kenilworth, Warwickshire. For her efforts, she won a Prime Minister's Point of Light Award. Elsewhere, former ICS volunteers mobilised their youth networks to tackle disinformation about COVID-19 in

Zimbabwe. The legacy of ICS will continue to be felt. Many volunteers will deliver change in their communities and around the world for years to come. Those skills are needed now more than ever before.



Former ICS volunteer Molly Bufton Spear with her Points of Light Award



## Our vision

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# A fair world for everyone

## Our purpose

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# Creating lasting change through volunteering

## Our values

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### Collaboration

- Empower poor and marginalised people to take charge of their own development
- Share skills and knowledge to create long lasting, sustainable change
- Build collaborative partnerships that promote innovation, growth and impact

### Knowledge

- Lead volunteering for development, setting the standard for ourselves and others
- Use evidence and insight to guide our actions
- Recruit the right people and work where we have the greatest impact

### Inclusion

- Stand beside and advocate for those who have been denied choice and opportunity
- Promote diversity and equality throughout our work
- Encourage different, inquisitive perspectives

### Integrity

- Commit to safeguarding and take a zero-tolerance approach to abuse and harm
- Treat others with respect, as equals
- Be open, transparent and accountable in everything we do



Putting people at the centre of their own development

VSO’s volunteering for development model provides opportunity for everybody to bring about lasting change.

It does that by focusing on those left out by society – those living in extreme poverty, or with disability and illness, those who face discrimination for their gender, sexuality or social status.

These are not passive “beneficiaries” of aid. They are the “primary actors” at the heart of our work. It is from their viewpoint that we seek to define the issues, opportunities and solutions that deliver sustainable change.

What do we mean by primary actors?

Primary actors are the people and communities that we work with. They are the ones engaging in projects, helping us understand the community’s needs, and working with volunteers to build a fairer world. Our responses are driven by demand from the poorest and most marginalised. We always work with local partners who can guide the most effective support.

Why do we use that term?

‘Primary’, because they are principal contributors to VSO’s work and they lead the design and delivery of programmes. ‘Actors’, because they are active agents. VSO doesn’t do development to communities, it works with them.



All our programmes address the root causes of marginalisation by focusing on three areas – what we call “core approaches” - that reliably tackle the structures, systems and conditions that make people vulnerable.

These core approaches are fundamental to our Volunteering for Development approach, ensuring the people we work with have the confidence and capacity to bring about change in their own lives.

Social inclusion and gender

Millions of people face discrimination because of their gender, age, disability, cultural background, sexual orientation. VSO aims to dismantle the causes behind exclusion in all its forms.

Resilience

Disasters, disease outbreaks and other shocks and stresses can have a devastating effect on communities. Those who are already vulnerable are most at risk. Our goal is to help communities and societies prepare and adapt to disasters, as well as reducing their vulnerability to shocks and stresses.

Social accountability

Many people around the world are denied basic rights that are guaranteed in law. Corruption, fear, and unequal power dynamics stop people from speaking up and demanding what they’re entitled to. VSO works to support people exercising their voice, no matter who they are or where they are from. We also help authorities respond to the needs of people they are there to serve.





## Putting the last, first

This year, the world has faced the biggest global health shock in generations. The COVID-19 pandemic presented severe challenges to health systems and created economic upheaval and food shortages. At the same time, global pressures such as climate change and political instability continue to grow. These challenges are interconnected – sustained health emergencies, for instance, cause major economic disruption.

People who are marginalised are hit the hardest in a crisis. They lack resources to cushion against shocks and many will face exclusion due to gender, disability, or social status. The needs of the most vulnerable communities are complex and diverse,

and VSO's investment in our core approaches ensures that people who are marginalised remain at the forefront of our response.

VSO cannot provide specific solutions to every threat, but our volunteers' work to build a resilient, inclusive, and accountable world enhances people's ability to respond – on their own terms.

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**Our core approaches ensures that people who are marginalised remain at the forefront of our response.**

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📍 RWANDA

## Reaching the deaf community during COVID-19

The first case of COVID-19 in Rwanda was recorded on 14 March 2020. Seven days later, the government imposed a full national lockdown. The disadvantages faced by marginalised groups, including people with disabilities have only been heightened by the pandemic. VSO national volunteers in Rwanda have been working to overcome the specific challenges faced by the deaf community.

The communication channels used to convey safety information to most Rwandan citizens are often inaccessible for deaf people who cannot hear radio broadcasts or television programmes. In response, VSO national volunteers, Community Health Workers and National Youth Council representatives collaborated on socially distanced, door-to-door home visits to people with hearing impairments. They reached 297 deaf adolescents who were at risk of not receiving essential safety messaging.

Eric, a VSO national deaf volunteer, worked alongside other national volunteers and partners to develop sign language videos broadcast over television and social media. The videos provided life-saving information based on official messages from the World Health Organisation and the Rwandan Government. Over 600 deaf people re-tweeted the video messages and an estimated 134,000 viewers from the general population viewed further messages broadcast on television. Eric says,

**“For deaf people, the project has helped us access information about COVID-19 and how we should protect ourselves. It's created awareness about the rights of deaf people during this time... We feel safe and are being careful to wear masks and wash our hands ... many deaf people are not able to access information on radio or TV, so they are left behind. We're able to ensure that the messages reach many people.”**





## Preparing for disaster and reducing risk

This year saw the conclusion of a disaster response and community resilience programme that reached 15 countries. Known as the Prepared for Resilience, Recovery and Rehabilitation initiative, the programme was a collaboration between the European Commission Education Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency and the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

This work came at a crucial time as many communities that VSO works with are facing increased risk of emergencies – from natural disasters such as floods, drought, and typhoons, to conflict and gender-based violence. Through the programme, we strengthened the capacity of over 7,000 VSO volunteers and 300 staff on disaster preparedness and resilience. We then used these skills to support 10,000 people from local communities and schools in preparing for different kinds of hazards.

Communities put in place early warning systems, community notice boards, undertaken emergency simulations, and created support plans. Early



Volunteers respond to Cyclone Idai, Mozambique

indications show that communities and schools are now better prepared to respond to disasters.

As well as supporting the communities we work with, the programme helped VSO better understand how to support those volunteering in these at-risk contexts. There are now disaster preparedness plans for 15 countries, which will help us better support emergency responses to disaster in those places. In the past year alone, these plans and response systems have supported VSO to respond to multiple conflict, climate and COVID-19 emergencies.



Volunteers mobilise to respond to fires in Sierra Leone



Communities prepare for provincial disaster response in Pakistan

## Citizens holding governments to account

Charilous, 20, is a member of the Sierra Leone Union for Persons with Disability youth group. Alongside other national volunteers in Sierra Leone, he has been trained by VSO to monitor the government's delivery of education and health services. Using monitoring tools such as community scorecards and "mystery visitor" exercises, they collect data which can be used to ensure the government delivers on its promises. By enabling citizens to review progress, we are helping citizens monitor issues that affect them and at the same time, helping governments to improve their performance.

"I am glad to be part of this" Charilous said. "To lead a process of change that empowers someone like me to exercise my voice, claim my right and hold those in power to account. This is something I have wished to undertake but never got an opportunity, prior to the support and empowerment from VSO." Charilous is now lead facilitator for a team that monitors services by using the tools gained from VSO training.

**"Due to VSO believing in and empowering me, I am now in a very good position to take this learning to my disabled community, and to use the lessons to open the eyes of citizens on issues affecting them in accessing service and accountability challenges within communities, primary actors, and various development sectors."**



Charilous is not alone. Around the world, over 1,500 people have been trained on citizen led monitoring. With the evidence they gather, people are being empowered to use evidence to help governments recognise what they need to do to deliver on their promises to marginalised people.



# Volunteering for development response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Volunteering for development has never been more critical. We witnessed huge disruption to people's health, education, and livelihoods. In response, thousands of people volunteered in communities around the world, contributing to resilience and recovery.

A VSO volunteer recently said that rough seas make stronger sailors. Over the last year, our organisational resilience has been tested. In just 10 days, we had pivoted 80% of our Volunteering for Development accountable grant funded by the UK government, towards responding to the pandemic. This meant we were able to support girls' education, children living with disabilities, strengthening healthcare systems, protecting basic livelihoods, building community resilience to crises.

The pandemic demanded new solutions, particularly when people could not be brought together physically. Our decades of experience in health, education and livelihoods, and investments in resilience and preparedness planning, enabled VSO to ensure communities could access the support they needed.

We trained and mobilised youth and community volunteers to raise COVID-19 awareness and

disseminate information on risks and prevention. They operated alongside governments to bolster national responses. Our livelihoods and emergency teams responded to growing humanitarian needs, including access to basic food support, cash, and other vital items.

Elsewhere, we established support hotlines and peer support networks to address mental health impacts. VSO's emergency education work responded to huge increases in out of school children as schools closed. Volunteers sustained access to education by supporting families and carers to provide home or community teaching aided by broadcasts accessed by radio and through VSO's education app.

As we remain in the midst of a global pandemic and ever-accelerating climate crisis, VSO continues to strengthen national and community resilience, ensuring the most vulnerable can adapt and respond.

## WE WORKED TO 5 OBJECTIVES:

- 1 Raising awareness of Covid-19
- 2 Continuity of education
- 3 Continuity of health provision
- 4 Continuity of livelihoods
- 5 Building resilience to the pandemic

## Adapting to new challenges at speed

NEPAL

### VSO response to school shutdowns in rural Nepal

VSO stepped up, delivering services whilst schools closed. We ensured children remained safe by training volunteers on safeguarding through the VSOSCHOOL app. We maintained communication between schools and communities through social media. We produced widely accessible radio lessons and broadcast information about staying safe and combating COVID-19 myths, since just 24% of households have regular internet access – far lower rurally.

VSO reacted quickly when Nepal's government announced a countrywide lockdown that left six million children out of school, denying them the stability, safety, and support that school provides. With many of our international volunteers having to return to their home countries, VSO adapted by taking on more community and national volunteers. We conducted research to understand the emerging challenges, which confirmed that prospects were worsening for all children, particularly girls. Adolescent suicide and gender-based violence increased. Lower incomes and high dowry prices meant early marriage became a serious consideration for many households. Almost 90% of girls spent more time on domestic chores.

VSO adapted our Sisters for Sisters programme, which has supported almost 10,000 vulnerable girls

through community mentoring. 15-year-old 'little sister' Anjali describes its importance, "When I was 10 years old, I would rarely go to school as I was occupied with house chores. My parents also didn't find it important for me." Her 'big sister' offered support, "It was Big Sister Muni who came and talked with my parents about how important it is for me to access education."

During lockdown, Big Sisters engaged encouraged parents to prioritise education, not chores and marriage. Anjali explained, "Most of my days during lockdown were spent doing house chores and taking care of my nephews. The schools are closed, and we are unable to get an education."

Despite face-to-face mentoring being impossible, Muni persevered. "Big Sister Muni called me and informed me about the virus and how we can protect ourselves. Through mobile mentoring, Muni informed us that if we take the proper precaution of washing hands and not going out from home without any urgency, we will stay protected."

When reduced incomes, school closures, and lack of supplies meant sanitary products were unavailable, VSO delivered hygiene kits and lessons on making reusable sanitary towels. After restrictions eased, Big Sister Muni taught Anjali "to make homemade sanitary pads which we learned earlier in school. This helped me and my mother to access pads during the height of lockdown."





📍 ZIMBABWE

## Youth engagement to stop the spread of COVID-19 disinformation

Myths and misinformation about COVID-19 abound, particularly in remote communities. This has created an 'infodemic', making the pandemic worse. The World Health Organization describes an infodemic as 'an over-abundance of information – some accurate and some not – that makes it hard for people to find trustworthy sources and reliable guidance when they need it'. In this environment, false claims about cures and prevention, scams, manipulated videos and conspiracy theories thrive.

In Zimbabwe, a team of 16 VSO youth volunteers, known as the Youth Engagement Action Team, worked with communities to debunk myths and share tips for spotting fake news, and spread scientifically accurate messages. They exposed false claims that people of African descent cannot get COVID-19 or that drinking alcohol provides immunity and showed 'official' documents used for disinformation to be false.

The team in Zimbabwe are part of a wider Youth Engagement Network established by VSO in Africa and Asia, that supports young people to volunteer in their communities. Many former International Citizen Service (ICS) volunteers – inspired by their experience – are involved. These youth-led networks exist in Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India,



Young volunteers plan how to stop the spread of COVID-19 disinformation amongst communities in Zimbabwe

Nepal, and Tanzania and are integrated to work alongside other VSO volunteers on our projects where possible. This strengthens projects by introducing new perspectives and energy which compliments the expertise of others.

Whilst the UK government decides its future international youth volunteering approach, these networks demonstrate the power of young people to create and deliver change. VSO continues to support these networks, seeing the vital difference they make in communities they are uniquely placed to serve.



The Zimbabwean Youth Engagement Action Team (YEAT)





# Scaling up our policy and advocacy work

VSO uses evidence from our projects to create policy change around the world so that societies are fairer, open, and inclusive.

Our work takes a “bottom-up” approach, helping people in the communities we support to identify the drivers of poverty, vulnerability and exclusion around them. We don’t speak for our primary actors; we support them in making their voices heard on issues and decisions that affect them.

Across Africa and Asia, our volunteers and staff help bring the voices of primary actors into decision-making spaces. VSO volunteers help bridge the gap between governments, service providers and people who have been marginalised. They bring expertise on how to drive policy change and advocate for rights.

In Bangladesh, we worked with the Ministry of Education to ensure pupils had access to digital learning materials while schools were closed. In Ethiopia, we contributed to regional guidelines for the continuation of essential health services during the pandemic. In Myanmar, Thailand, Sierra Leone, and Zimbabwe we worked to help citizens hold their governments accountable for their delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals by supporting their participation in the UN’s High Level Political Forum.

This year, VSO delivered fifteen policy changes in countries around the world – five more than the year before. For instance, we led Zimbabwe’s National Volunteer Draft Strategy alongside the Ministry of Youth, Sports, Arts and Recreation, Zimbabwe Youth Council, UNV, and Higherlife. Together, we created a National Volunteer Strategy that empowers volunteers, prioritising their recognition, participation, and support. Crucially, it encourages inclusivity, meaning that people who are marginalised are not left behind. Our policy and advocacy work has intensified to ensure the needs of the world’s most marginalised are not forgotten during the pandemic.



Representatives from VSO presenting our Citizens Voices report to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres

## Bringing marginalised voices to power holders

VSO and United Nations Volunteers (UNV) have worked together for over a decade to advocate for inclusive, impactful, and quality volunteerism. Collectively, we put marginalised people’s voices at the centre of UN discussions on development.

This year, VSO has made sure that Voluntary National Reviews – which governments use to report progress against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals – include marginalised voices.

All over the world, VSO volunteers have run sessions with local communities. Citizens share views and experiences on what is happening in their neighbourhoods, learning about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their government’s commitments to reaching those targets. We specifically work with underrepresented groups – such as youth, people with disabilities, LGBT, and people of certain castes or ethnicities – and submit evidence we gather to national governments or directly to the UN.

This work is vital because marginalised people are often unheard, meaning issues they face are not addressed. VSO’s standing in the UN system and our membership of the Volunteer Groups Alliance – one of 17 UN-recognised stakeholder groups –

allows us to make those voices heard. By doing this, we raise awareness of government obligations towards citizens. Hearing marginalised voices in UN-associated forums gives governments opportunities and motivation to act.

Last year, we submitted our ‘Citizens Voices Nepal’ report to the UN. The report incorporated marginalised people’s voices and presented a fuller picture of progress towards the SDGs, providing evidence that certain groups are being left behind.

In Thailand, we worked with UNV to gather evidence from other volunteering organisations to understand how youth volunteers responded to COVID-19. The voices of youth project volunteers were featured in Thailand’s national review, which included information on issues affecting them but impacting across society, such as child and youth mental health.

Using our evidence, we are influencing national SDG policy by emphasising the importance of volunteering in making progress against the Goals. Governments in many countries now consider volunteering as vital to the development agenda, reiterating the view of VSO and the UN that delivering the SDGs is impossible without volunteering.





## Raising the Global Standard of volunteering for development

Throughout the pandemic, VSO continued to lead efforts with other volunteer-involving organisations across the globe, to advance responsible and impactful volunteering.

Since 2017, VSO has played a key role in the development of the world's first Global Standard for Volunteering for Development. This promotes responsible international volunteering work. The standards were developed with the involvement of organisations from the "Global South" and cover four key areas: Designing and Delivering Projects, Duty of Care, Managing Volunteers and Measuring Impact.

Since the launch of the Global Standard in Kigali, Rwanda, in 2019, 111 organisations have become signatories, meaning they agree with the principles of the Global Standard, and they intend to implement them in practice. Volunteer-involving organisations have also used the Global Standard as a tool to support the development of national volunteering policies in Ethiopia, Kenya, Nepal, the Philippines, and Sierra Leone.

In partnership with the African Union, VSO has used its position to promote the Global Standards across 55 member states. As a trusted voice, we are now building on this work to advance national volunteering policies that reflect the Standards and our Volunteering for Development method across the African continent. This is a great leap forward in integrating volunteering into national development initiatives.

Last year, VSO led the development and pilot of a self-assessment process that helps organisations assess themselves against the Global Standard. This process was tested and successfully validated by 30 volunteer-involving organisations, including Mission Des Jeunes Togo, National Forum for Advocacy Nepal, Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development, Singapore International Foundation, World University of Canada, and Yayasan Sukarelawan Siswa Malaysia.

We are now in a process of drafting additional content for the standards, covering online volunteering, increasing volunteer

diversity, environmental protection during placements, and enhanced safeguarding for volunteers and communities.

VSO is a global leader in volunteering for development, and as more organisations continue to adopt the Standard, we are proud to be leading on improving the impact, quality, safety and effectiveness of volunteering everywhere.

**“We really wanted to test the content and structure of the Global Standard to ensure it works in practice. This process also has been key in ensuring that Volunteering Involving Organisations’ have a voice in informing revisions to the Global Standard itself before rollout to the wider Volunteering for Development sector in late 2021.”**

**- Rahim Hassanali, VSO’s Project Coordinator for the Global Standard**



Government and civil society representatives unite behind the Global Standard in Kigali, Rwanda



# What we do

## VSO Netherlands

**We are incredibly proud of all the work that has been done by changemakers from all over the world in the past year. As VSO Netherlands, we are proud to be able to support these changemakers, providing access to quality education, decent work and Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR). Over the past year, we have further developed our methods for Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL), so we can learn from our experience and improve our work in the future.**



©VSO/Craig Mawanga

**Shireen, a grade 4 student in Lilongwe, Malawi with her mother.**

### COVID-19

With over 22 million confirmed cases worldwide, the COVID-19 pandemic is a global health crisis affecting all our programmes, and all the countries in which we work. The communities we serve are now faced with multiple challenges – from the risk of contracting the virus itself and its impact on overstretched health services, to the knock-on repercussions from containment measures on health, education and livelihoods systems. During the past year, we have adapted our work to respond to these new challenges.

One of the most effective ways we can help combat the spread of COVID-19, and limit its impact on fragile health systems, is by building people's knowledge and awareness. We have promoted preventative action in communities, including practising good hygiene and physical distancing measures, in line with national government guidelines and recognised best practice.

Our work is always focused on supporting the most vulnerable people in society – but now more than ever it is critical that we take steps to ensure that no one is left behind. We are ensuring that all the messages we share are not only accurate, but also culturally appropriate, gender responsive, available in local languages, and accessible. In Rwanda, for example, we are working with volunteers, community representatives and partner organisations to support Deaf people across the country, by adapting accurate information into sign language videos and establishing a video call hotline.

We are especially conscious of the increased risk of domestic and gender-based violence during periods of increased isolation, so we have trained community health workers to handle incidents, refer where needed, and provide psychosocial support.

We're also working to anticipate, and mitigate against, future challenges that will arise after the initial emergency response. We are continuing our work to strengthen health systems, and advocate people's access to essential services.

### Programmes

#### Youth and their sexual and reproductive health and rights

Everybody, including those who are most marginalised, should be able to realise their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). SRHR are human rights, that allow people to make informed decisions about relationships, their bodies, family planning, sexuality, and well-being. In 2020/21 VSO, together with leading partner Wemos, Liliane Foundation, Akina Mama wa Afrika, The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians and Forum for African Women Educationalists started a diverse and dynamic SRHR partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, under the Strengthening Civil Society framework. At the end of May 2020, we received the news that our alliance was selected for this partnership. Between June and December 2020 the consortium worked on the final project proposal. VSO was an active member of the proposal development team, dedicating time, expertise and writing skills. The positive outcome of the grant decision came at the end of December.

Our new, five-year Make Way programme (2021-2025) aims to break down barriers to SRHR by promoting a new way of looking at, and organising, SRHR issues, through an intersectional lens. This means making overlapping vulnerabilities visible to understand their effects on people's SRHR. With insights and sound data, as a consortium, we develop innovative tools and build capacities of other civil society organisations to advocate the required policy and societal changes.

For everyone to realise their SRHR fully, change is needed at various levels:

1. Marginalised youth need to be able to speak out collectively in defence of their SRHR and hold duty-bearers to account;
  2. Duty-bearers at (sub)national, regional and global levels need to formulate and implement strategies, policies and plans with an intersectional lens that lead to quality SRHR services, available, accessible and acceptable for all;
  3. Society at large needs to respect the SRHR of all, including marginalised youth (leave no one behind).
- Our programme actively promotes innovative practices in intersectional SRHR advocacy. We will adapt and develop new types of tools to reveal and analyse the complexity of SRHR inequities and identify solutions to the interrelated barriers faced by marginalised youth. We are looking to work with a growing number of civil society organisations

to encourage mutual learning of this innovative approach to SRHR and SRHR advocacy and to create effective ways to ensure no one is left behind. This step involves new analysis of existing data as well as complementary research and will result in a user-friendly guideline for intersectional SRHR advocacy.

Between January and April 2021, VSO set up the project structure in the Netherlands and the five countries of implementation (Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Zambia). Firstly, by sourcing and inducing programme and support staff members. Secondly, by setting up the governing, financial and risk management structures, both within VSO and with(in) the consortium. Thirdly, by preparing the start of implementation, in part by describing regional and national volunteer roles, mapping civil society organisations, selecting geographic locations, and adapting tools to the needs of our programme.

In the meantime, VSO started preparing for a number of critical roles in the programme:

1. Building capacity on and embedding the use of a social accountability approach among formal and informal Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to improve intersectional SRHR service delivery.
2. Share and build on our experience in facilitating meaningful youth engagement. Contribute to mapping the lived SRHR experiences of marginalised youth by contributing our expertise on social inclusion and gender.
3. Support in embedding of VSO's MILE method - Measuring Impact for Learning & Empowerment (see also the section on Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning below).
4. Building the capacity of our consortium partner the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians, especially in the field of project management, HR and finance.

#### Youth and employment

Together with Randstad and Palladium, VSO is fund manager of the Challenge Fund for Youth Employment (CFYE). CFYE is a six-year programme funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It started in October 2019 and is expected to run until December 2025.

The fund aims to create a prosperous future for 200,000 young women and men in the Middle East, North Africa, Sahel & West Africa and Horn of Africa. This is achieved by supporting youth employment initiatives in these regions. Initiatives offer youth,



particularly young women, opportunities for decent work that delivers better prospects for personal development, is productive, and offers a stable income, social protection and safe working conditions.

The fund focuses on supporting businesses that create, match or improve inclusive and decent jobs for youth. With a combination of technical assistance and grant funding, we enable private sector entities to invest in the labour force of the future. Once projects are selected for implementation, tailored technical support through a blended model of Palladium consultants and VSO national, international and corporate Randstad volunteers is made available to maximise the delivery of results.

“The trend is changing, the culture is changing; I see many organisations involving young people, young people have the potential to do anything, if they have the opportunity to be engaged. They just need this opportunity and can then contribute innovative solutions to drive business as well as drive social and political change.”

**Bisrat, CFYE Youth Researcher Ethiopia**

VSO has three key roles in the fund:

1. Providing expertise during scoping and selection of partners that will implement youth employment initiatives;
2. Leading on integrating youth participation, youth empowerment and resilience as key impact areas to successful youth employment in the Fund’s activities
3. Providing technical assistance to these initiatives through volunteering.

The year 2020 was the first full year of implementation for the Challenge Fund. No one could have predicted or could ignore the ramifications of the Covid-19 pandemic. While the measures and lockdowns in the fund’s countries of operation have forced us to shift our operation approach, the pandemic also created opportunities for creativity and innovation. In this challenging context, we have launched a strong and diverse portfolio of projects in Uganda, initiated a second round of calls for proposals and selection process in Egypt and Nigeria, kicked off scoping and outreach for the third round of calls in Jordan, Kenya, Sudan and South Sudan. We have improved our

understanding of and refined our strategies regarding youth engagement, youth participation and resilience.

In Uganda, the first seven implementing partners were selected to create, match or improve over 15,000 jobs in Uganda during the next three years. At least half of these jobs will be for women. The implementing partners have proposed a range of solutions in different sectors; from clean energy to a cooking school, from green animal feed solutions to healthy entrepreneurs in local communities. The full portfolio can be viewed on the CFYE website. The first four volunteers, out of a total of approximately 100 during the lifetime of the Fund, were deployed in Uganda to ensure that the social impact targets of the implementing partners are met.

“If I were a business owner I would make sure to develop the workplace culture to centre around creative thinking, innovation technology, good communication and an environment where young people are able to express themselves better. Having young people in my business will help me to introduce energy and enthusiasm to help grow and improve a business and, at a time of digital technology, who else but young people can easily participate and fit into this new world of work.”

**Hannah, CFYE Youth Researcher**

In 2020, our scoping exercise identified a pressing need for jobs for women in Egypt and the call for solutions was focused on this. In Egypt, we selected five partners to work on the solution, jointly with the Challenge Fund, on creating, matching or improving over 10,000 jobs. The portfolio is diverse, focusing on e-commerce, professional cleaning services, organic produce and digital skills building. In Nigeria, we launched a call focused on digital jobs and vocational level jobs. The selected eight partners will create over 15,000 jobs. In Nigeria, several digital solutions will be used to create jobs for and with young Nigerians in urban and rural areas throughout the country.

As mentioned, scoping and outreach has started in order to identify promising partners to implement youth

employment solutions in Jordan, Kenya and Sudan. A first round of selection is planned for May 2021.

With CFYE’s core processes set up and piloted, the first quarter of 2021 was a good moment for a more significant self-evaluation. As a result of this stocktaking process, the fund is adapting its operations significantly. In the coming year, we look forward to work with our partners on applying this learning to meet the goal of creating new and better employment for 200,000 young people through innovative, private sector-driven solutions, and provide thought leadership more broadly to catalyse the creation of aspirational employment opportunities for young people beyond those directly impacted.

**Bangladesh Youth Employment programme**

In Bangladesh, VSO is working to create education and employment opportunities in a context where families have lost all their investments and savings. Through the Bangladesh Youth Employment programme, these families received cash support with support from Dutch foundations.

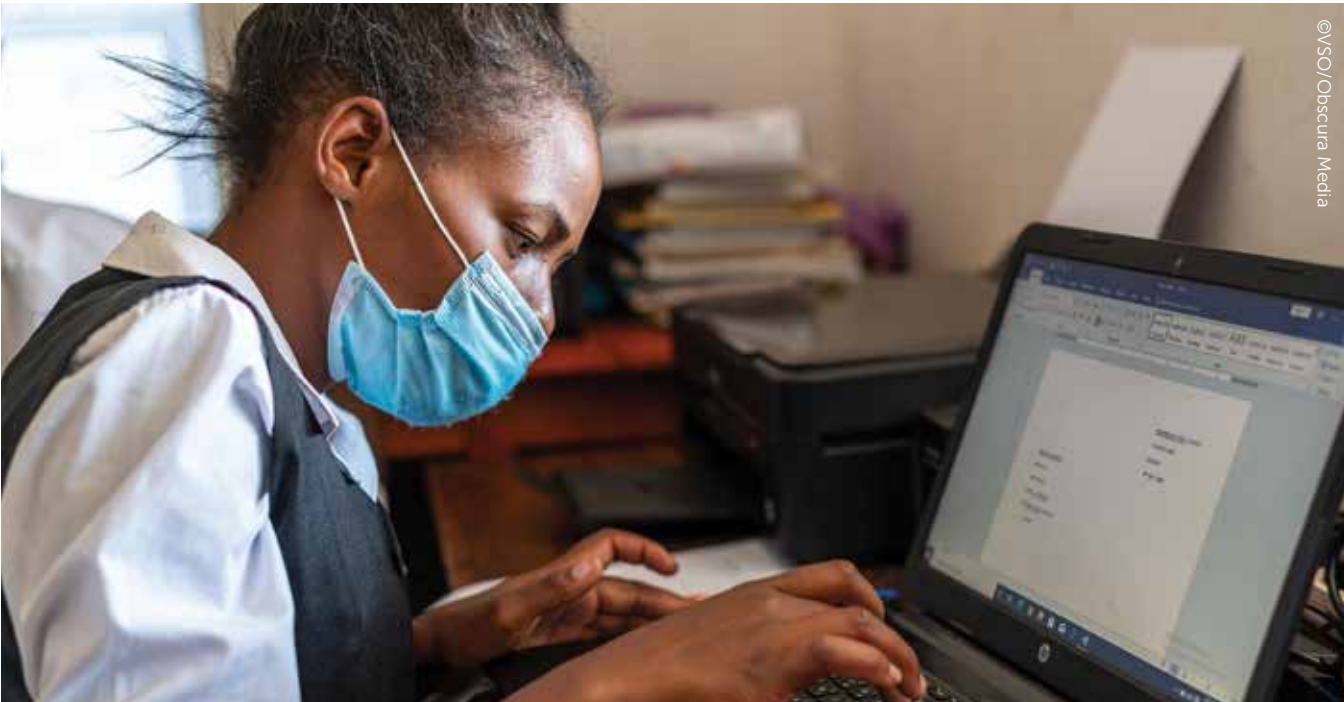
The programme approach, to strengthen village youth groups in community volunteering and to nominate candidates for vocational training, works very well. After training, trainees are coached in setting up their small business. Extra effort was made to have girls take leadership positions in the youth

groups, and families were motivated to allow girls to join the training courses. This even resulted in girls becoming professional drivers. They are often employed by international NGOs.

**Education**

In 2020, VSO Netherlands started to coordinate online training and coaching of national education networks in 16 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, from Afghanistan and Tadjikistan to Vanuatu and Solomon Islands. The networks lobby and advocate in their countries for the quality of education, inclusion of girls and marginalised children and monitor budget flows towards education. With the training they will be better equipped to conduct research as a basis for strong advocacy messages. VSO is delivering this training as it was selected by the Global Partnership for Education – Education out Loud programme for its learning partnership.

Also, as part of the GPE Education out Loud programme, VSO was selected in 2020 to further develop a programme on aid effectiveness in Technical and Vocation Education in Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia. We are leading a consortium with pan-African organisations FEMNET and Reality of Aid, and with the UNESCO Chair for Youth, Work and Lifelong Learning (University of Groningen & University of Gulu, Uganda) as a knowledge partner.



In Kyamutheke Vocational Training Center, Kenya, youth are empowered who couldn’t advance to higher levels of education due to poverty and other limiting challenges.



Our education programme in Ethiopia suffered from both the Covid-19 pandemic as well as the ongoing ethnic conflicts. Schools were closed for a long period of time, and many families, also from our project schools, had to flee. Children of these ‘internally displaced’ families are visiting the local schools near their temporary settlements, including our project schools. Because of the conflict that is affecting many communities, where schoolchildren and teachers also become targets, many of the host schools have to deal with high numbers of traumatised children, parents and teachers. The psycho-social support training VSO is providing to teachers and instructors is highly appreciated and needed. Because of the crisis, inflation in Ethiopia peaked, thereby increasing the number of extremely poor people. The project where possible allocated cash and basic support for the very poorest.

### Successful conclusion of the RISE programme in Tanzania

2020-2021 was the last year of the Raising Income for School Education (RISE2) project in Tanzania, a three-year project aimed at improving education outcomes for marginalised children, especially girls, in Muleba district by 2021.

The project was expected to improve education outcomes by:

- Enabling primary school teachers to adopt participatory teaching methodology and teaching aids when delivering classroom sessions.
- Equipping head teachers, ward education coordinators, school committee members with knowledge and skills on school management and leadership, including skills on how to develop, implement and monitor school development plans.
- The project also aimed to improve food and nutrition security for marginalised farmers by ensuring that they have food all year round as well as increasing income from farming by lead farmers.

The project reached a total of 250 teachers who received training on participatory teaching method (PTM), teaching aids as well as sports and child rights, 16,800 children reached through sports and interactive theatres, 3,020 farmers who were trained on GAP, livestock and poultry management, business skills and village community banking.

Primary schools successfully institutionalised PTM and other better teaching practices into their school culture. In addition, marginalised and lead farmers adopted good agricultural practices, leading to

increased production. The project improved the quality of primary education for 10,000 children, improved household food and nutrition security for 2,880 marginalised household members, improved household income through farmers and strengthened school management, accountability systems and community engagement.

Most of the farmers under the RISE2 project joined village community bank (VICOBA) groups. This provides financial stability and resilience to farmers. Through VICOBA, farmers are able to save, lend and borrow money which they could use to purchase inputs, buy drugs for livestock, and maintain their farms. Since it is not easy for smallholder farmers to obtain credit from banks, VICOBA will be vital for farmers’ access to credit.

### Maternal and neo-natal health programme

At the end of 2020, VSO finalised the maternal and neo-natal health programme in Gulu, Uganda. During the lockdown in Uganda, Village Health Teams supported by VSO within this programme proved essential in mapping and supporting pregnant and lactating mothers, even bringing them to the health centres with the bicycles provided through the project, as public transport was halted. In general, as an overall result of the programme, the lower health centres became more capable of preventing and handling complicated pregnancies and deliveries, resulting in less transfers of mothers to the regional hospital. An external evaluation indicated that the programme contributed greatly to improved MNH indicators in the Gulu district, moving from position 11 to position 5 according to the MNH National league table. In this programme we worked together with Rutgers’ partner organisation ‘Reproductive Health Uganda’ on the prevention of pregnancies, and with the Isala Ziekenhuizen Zwolle.

### Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Together with our colleagues in programme countries, we continuously carry out research and evaluation of our programmes, using participatory approaches. Our goal is to learn and improve our programmes, so we can support the changemakers we work with in the best possible manner. Mid-term evaluations and evaluations of programmes are performed by external local or international consultants. For long-lasting programmes, like the maternal and neo-natal health programme in Uganda, VSO international experts document and disseminate learnings internally as well as externally.

By working closely with different people and functions across VSO, we bridge the gap between programme knowledge and evidence, to inform and strengthen our People First strategy and Volunteering for Development approach. Ultimately, we aim to increase the quality of the evidence that is available, to help prove and improve the impact of VSO’s work.

### Make Way

Within Make Way, our planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning (PMEL) approach is of central importance – being participatory, inclusive and responsive to power imbalances. VSO’s Measure Impact for Learning & Empowerment (MILE) has been adopted as the primary PMEL approach.

MILE is an action-oriented process and a people-centric methodology. It recognises that CSOs (and the marginalised youth they represent) must have a central stake in the PMEL cycle of our programme. By putting CSOs at the centre of planning and execution of monitoring, evaluation & learning in the Make Way programme, MILE ensures that Make Way remains a participatory, accountable, and empowering programme.

### Challenge Fund for Youth Employment

The Challenge Fund for Youth Employment’s MEL Framework, developed during the Inception Phase of the programme in consultation with the DDE and IOB, describes the programme’s MEL strategy, procedures, and tools. In the second half of 2020, the development and refining of its various components continued. Tools for project implementation were designed, including a standard MEL template for CFYE IPs and the quarterly project review process was outlined. A local MEL service provider in Uganda, together with national volunteers, worked on developing and testing a Data Quality Assurance (DQA) approach with our first cohort of projects.

Based on initial experiences of working with implementing partners in Uganda, the need was identified to further segment and customise our monitoring and evaluation tools and processes at the project level. Given the diversity in the types of implementing partners and impact models we work with, data collection approaches and tools must better account for the different contexts and types of relationships that IPs may have in the jobs they plan to create, match or improve. Accelerators or investors working with multiple enterprises, for example, require different tools and approaches than single private-sector enterprises being supported



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**Abednego, is the secretary to the Kathiani Football group. Abednego has been supported with skills building through VSO.**

directly by CFYE. This is also true of NGOs supporting self-employment, and IPs running job matching platforms. As we continue to refine the MEL system, we aim to balance the need for structure and standardisation with the practical realities of our diverse set of IPs and job creation models.

VSO is leading on integrating youth-led Participatory Action Research as a tool for monitoring, evaluation and learning within this programme. Through a structured process, youth are leading monitoring, evaluation & learning efforts focused on specific questions or elements of implementation.

### Partnerships and networks

In 2020, we invested time and effort in building new and strengthening existing relations with the Dutch government, the European Union and international foundations.

Together with our partners, we successfully submitted a proposal for the strategic partnerships on strengthening civil society with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in the field of SRHR, resulting in the Make Way programme. The partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the cooperation with local embassies will allow us to achieve great impact within this programme.

At the same time, we are exploring new fundraising opportunities with different European bilateral



governments and have submitted proposals in the field of livelihoods and health to the governments of Denmark and Finland.

We are currently implementing EU-funded programmes in different VSO countries and are expanding our portfolio with four new programmes awarded in 2020, for Nepal, Tanzania and Cambodia.

VSO Netherlands was successfully certified as a sending organisation under the Europe Aid Volunteer Programme and supported country offices in obtaining certification as a hosting organisation.

We received donations from different Dutch foundations for our programmes on health in Uganda, youth employment in Bangladesh, inclusive education, psycho-social support & livelihoods in Ethiopia and education & livelihoods in Tanzania. All the contributing foundations have been very supportive and flexible in adjusting these programmes to the Covid-19 emergency.



Esther, a Community volunteer teacher in the Unlocking Talent through Technology (UTT) project in Malawi. UTT focusses on marginalised groups. The children learn through apps installed on tablets.

In early 2021, VSO Netherlands was invited by the GPE/Education out Loud financing framework for civil society in education, to become the online learning partner for 16 national education networks in Eastern Europe, Asia and the Pacific.

### Networks

VSO strongly supports investing in knowledge sharing and consequently we are a member of the following networks: Wo=Men (Dutch gender platform); Share-Net Network on Sexual and Reproductive Health & Rights); Partos (the membership body for organisations working in international development. VSO's director Erik Ackerman joined the board of Partos in November 2020.

In 2020, VSO Netherlands became host and chair of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) in the Netherlands. GCE is the largest international network that lobbies for inclusive, equitable and quality education, and is the watchdog on the international commitment towards reaching SDG 4 worldwide.

### Placement of volunteers

VSO's Covid-19 response focused on shifting priorities within our existing programmes, which had an impact on volunteer placements throughout the year. National volunteers assisted partners and primary actors to adapt to the emerging crisis: providing health education to those with no access to information, developing distance education options, advising businesses on alternative sources of income and providing psycho-social support (e.g. prevention of gender-based violence). Several programmes changed direction or were put on hold, resulting in several volunteer placements being cancelled and candidates withdrawn.

In most cases, serving international volunteers were repatriated to their home country. Not because of high risks of infection with Covid-19, but rather because flight options quickly diminished, reducing VSO's ability to provide duty of care standards and to repatriate at a later stage if needed. All 25 volunteers sent by VSO Netherlands were repatriated successfully in a matter of a few days, often on the very last available flight. Although shocked by the unfolding events, a number of returnees continued their role remotely.

The pandemic sparked the need to develop more formal e-volunteering models, providing remote support to partners and VSO programmes, sometimes in combination with an in-country assignment. Remote volunteering is developed not

only as a Covid-19 response, but also as a permanent modality offering more flexible volunteering options in future.

Without the option to organise live events, webinars on volunteer opportunities for Education and Livelihoods filled the gap. Although no immediate in-country jobs could be offered, building a strong pool of candidates was still key. The long lead times needed to prepare international volunteers for deployment meant we had to plan ahead for better post-Covid times. The newly acquired LinkedIn Recruiter Seat proved an effective tool to recruit specialist and hard to find skills. This is a platform for finding, connecting and managing candidates, which shows us good candidates for the position we are recruiting for.

Amidst the pandemic, The Challenge Fund for Youth Employment (CFYE) has started the first projects in Uganda. Initially only with National volunteers due to travel restrictions, supported remotely. Once Challenge fund programmes start in Egypt, Nigeria and Kenya, travel restrictions will hopefully be eased, enabling us to deliver the work through a combination of National and International volunteers.

Now that more and more countries have found ways to operate international volunteers in a safe way (Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Cambodia, etc.), a careful process of risk assessment for each volunteer candidate is developed, assessing individual (health) risks of candidates, the country's security context and quarantine processes. As a large proportion of our volunteer candidates is 60+ and since age is a risk factor in itself for Covid-19, we were only able to prepare candidates under 60 for in-country work. Being fully vaccinated will no doubt mean that more older volunteers can be considered.

Overall, the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in far less volunteers being recruited by VSO Netherlands, who contributed to our programmes: 15 volunteers against a planned 72. Four national volunteers supporting the Challenge Fund for Youth Employment, five volunteers supporting remotely and three volunteers starting remote support with the intention of continuing in-country as soon as Covid-19 restrictions allow. Fortunately, in-country opportunities have increased and our first in-country volunteer left for Sierra Leone at the end of March.

After three months of volunteering in Myanmar, Johan Brusten had to return home because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The return home was quite a bumpy ride. Johan: "As a Belgian citizen, I was supposed to join a French evacuation flight through Singapore and Dubai. But then I received an email saying that this was very difficult to organise. VSO therefore arranged a flight back through Singapore, which was suddenly cancelled when the country closed its borders. Luckily, in the end VSO managed to arrange a flight from Rangoon to Doha, to Frankfurt and Brussels. After this I was in quarantine in my apartment for two weeks."

In December 2019 Johan flew to Myanmar for the second time, because he had not yet finished his work there. He is connected to the Ta'ang Education Institute in Lashio, Myanmar. He now continues his work by keeping in touch with teachers and other employees of the institute. "Over the past years we have founded 50 schools in local villages."

Together with the Ta'ang Education Institute, Johan has started a new project, researching how the training of teachers can further be improved, so that the schools in the villages can be further improved after the lockdown.

**"We have also started a project called 'out of school', researching how many children do not attend school and the reason for this. I was working on this already before I returned, now I am working on this project from Belgium. I work online every day."**



# Organisation and management

## VSO Netherlands

**VSO Netherlands is an independent organisation that works fully aligned with the global VSO network. Besides VSO Netherlands, this network consists of the 22 country offices in Asia and Africa, the international office in Kingston and a representation in the United States. VSO Netherlands contributes to the international network through programme development, raising funds, placement of voluntary experts abroad, providing information and strengthening the programmes of our country offices by building partnerships in the Netherlands.**

### Governance

VSO Netherlands has endorsed the principles of good governance that have been defined in the SBF-Code Good Governance for Charities. These principles are included in the Qualification System for Charities, which replaces labels such as the CBF/CBF Certificate, the RfB label and the Label for Charities from 1 January 2016.

VSO Netherlands has a one-person board of directors, with our director Erik Ackerman as its only member, supported by our management team. As from March 2017, VSO Netherlands works with a supervisory board. The primary responsibility for the organisation’s actions lies with the director/manager and his management team. The director fulfils his duties according to the regulations of the board of directors.

Erik Ackerman started as the director of VSO Netherlands on 12 March 2018. The Supervisory Board has determined the remuneration/salary and terms of employment of the director. The Board uses the ‘Beloning Directeuren van Goede Doelen’ Advice Scheme, which indicates a maximum standard for the annual income, based on weight criteria. The remuneration of the director of VSO Netherlands is in accordance with function group E of the Scheme (BSD-score 335). The director’s maximum annual income, which is relevant for assessment, is € 88,928 (from 1 July 2020). During the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, the director’s total annual income amounted to € 88,800, while the total income including employer’s contributions amounted to € 117,550.

### Monitoring

The supervisory board of VSO Netherlands oversees the work of the organisation, serves as an advisor and

interlocutor to the management and as the employer for the director. The members help the organisation to reach its best potential in terms of its mission, goals, plans and internal working methods. They do this by monitoring as constructively and critically as possible and by giving solicited and unsolicited advice to the management.

As per the articles of association, the board is composed of five members, who receive no compensation for their duties. Members of the board are appointed for a period of four years. They can be reappointed once. During this financial year, there were no changes to the composition of the board. Mr. Fons de Zeeuw was re-appointed as a member for a second term.

### Meetings and areas of oversight

The Supervisory Board had four regular meetings during this financial year. In addition, three update calls were scheduled. As a result of the Covid pandemic, all meetings were held online. In this period the Supervisory Board’s attention was focused on, among other things:

The planning and budgeting cycle – the board approved the annual and financial reports 2019-2020, set the multi-annual budget and discussed and approved the annual plan and budget 2021-2022. Quarterly progress updates and financial updates were presented to the board for the monitoring of activities and the oversight of financial management. This year, special attention was given to the necessary (financial) adjustment for the organisation due to the Covid pandemic.

Programme development and partnerships – the board took note of the positive developments regarding the new strategic (SRHR) partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and was informed on the progress in ongoing programmes, such as the Challenge Fund for Youth Employment. In addition, the board discussed the business development strategy.

Risk management – the board put the topic of risk management on its agenda and performed an initial review of the newly established risk register for the organisation. It was agreed that the supervisory board will discuss the risk register annually, while the audit committee will monitor this on an ongoing basis.

Public fundraising and branding strategy – the board was presented with the new branding and public fundraising strategy. It advised the management about this and continued to monitor the implementation throughout the year.

Relation with VSO International – the board discussed relevant developments within VSO International. In addition, the board discussed and provided input on the draft operating agreement with VSO International, which will be finalised in the beginning of the new financial year.

### Self-evaluation

The board conducted a self-evaluation in March 2021. In preparation for the meeting, the chair of the board interviewed all the members and the director on key topics for reflection. The chair drafted conclusions and agenda items for further discussion during the meeting. The findings included a positive

appraisal for the open and transparent atmosphere during the board meetings, as well as the efficiency of meetings, which were found to be well prepared. The working relationship and contact between board members are experienced as good and professional, likewise with the director and his staff.

A few areas for improvement were identified. The board concluded that update calls between regular meetings are useful but tended to become board meetings with decision points; they should be restricted to updates. In addition, the board should make more time for the strategic agenda and key themes, ranging from developments within VSO international, public fundraising to important programme areas. Acknowledging the limitations caused by the Covid measures, the members look forward to more personal and social interaction in the next year.

### Audit and remuneration committee

The supervisory board has two committees. The audit committee (Fons de Zeeuw (chair) and Nynke Runia) and the remuneration committee (Guus Eskens and Maria Verheij). The audit committee met four times in the financial year. It focused on the preparation of the 2019-2020 financial statements, the budget for 2021-2022, the multi-annual budget and financial monitoring. The audit committee took on the monitoring of and advising on the new risk register as an extra task.

The remuneration committee met twice to discuss the objectives and work plan of the director, as well as the director’s appraisal, contract and salary.

Supervisory Board	
<b>Guus Eskens (chair)</b>	<b>Starting date:</b> March 2017 Trustee of VSO International, Kingston, UK Board member Healthnet TPO, Amsterdam Board member Netherlands Society for Tropical Medicine and International Health Chairman Stichting ‘Drie Straatjes’, Rotterdam Board member of the Otto van Kranendonk Fund Board member of the Knowledge Centre for Global Health
<b>Dr. Philip Goodwin</b>	<b>Starting date:</b> March 2018 <b>Other positions:</b> CEO VSO International, Trustee Royal Nation Lifeboat Institution
<b>Fons de Zeeuw</b>	<b>Starting date:</b> May 2016 <b>Other positions:</b> director international at Oost NL, member of the Supervisory Board of NDNL
<b>Maria Verheij</b>	<b>Starting date:</b> January 2019 <b>Other position:</b> Director communications at Ahold Delhaize
<b>Nynke Runia</b>	<b>Starting date:</b> January 2019 <b>Other positions:</b> freelance consultant, Board member Amnesty International Nederland (July 2020)



Structure and staff

VSO Netherlands continued to operate as a flat organisation in which the professional responsibility of the employees is most important. They work in both permanent but also in project-based teams. These teams align closely with their counterparts in the global VSO organisation, distributed among 25 offices across the world. This enables us to make the most use of the knowledge and skills within our international network.

- The five permanent teams within the organisation are:
- Volunteering
  - Programmes
  - Business development
  - Fundraising & Communications
  - Support & Finance

As of March 2021, the management team was expanded from three to four members, with an additional member representing the programme team. This reflects the increased importance and size of the programmatic pillar within VSO Netherlands. The current composition is: the director, the manager fundraising & communications, the programme manager (CFYE) and the manager operations. A key focus of the management is to foster close cooperation between the departments and to guide the organisational development. Following the new strategic plans and programmes, VSO Netherlands recruited for a number of new staff positions that are key to help realise the ambitions. These positions sometimes add to the team and sometimes fill vacancies that arose. In 2020-2021, one fixed staff members and six temporary colleagues left the organisation, while three staff members were added to the team.

On 31 March 2021, 26 paid staff members (21 FTEs) were employed by VSO Netherlands. Twenty women and six men were employed. We expand our permanent team with flex workers when necessary; in 2020-2021 we had one flex worker. Throughout the year, three interns worked at VSO Netherlands. Our sick leave rate is at 3.2% on average throughout the year. This number is higher than in the years before, due to colleagues who were sick for a longer period of time. The management team is working on identifying the causes of long-term sickness and implementing improvements.

The age of our employees:

Age category	Female	Male	Total
25-35	3	2	5
35-45	6	3	11
45-55	5	0	5
55+	4	1	5

VSO Netherlands adheres to the Social Work collective labour agreement in the remuneration of all employees. All positions are scaled in accordance with the positions referred in the Code of Conduct for Charities Netherlands. VSO Netherlands provides co-determination for its employees through staff representation (PVT). In 2020-2021, the PVT consisted of three employees.

Volunteers in the Netherlands

In 2020-2021 there were 39 volunteers active for VSO in the Netherlands. They support VSO in many different ways, depending on their knowledge an-d expertise. For example, 35 volunteers support us by writing articles, taking photographs and conducting interviews with volunteers who have returned from the field.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct for Charities, our volunteer policy dictates which activities our volunteers can perform and which they cannot. We also set out how we interact with our prospective volunteers, how we inform volunteers and how we communicate with them about their input. Thanks to this policy we guarantee the legal position of volunteers, we make sure that they and other involved parties know what they can expect, and we ensure volunteers will continue to find it appealing to work with us.

Risk management

In 2020, VSO Netherlands has set up a risk register and identified all strategic risks for the organisation. The risk register will be assessed on a regular basis by the management team. Key risks are discussed on a quarterly basis with the audit committee. The supervisory board will discuss the risk register at least once annually.

Communication with stakeholders

VSO Netherlands has multiple ways of communicating with our diverse group of stakeholders. We continuously work on maintaining and improving communication with them:

- Our donors and relations receive Changemakers magazine twice per year. In this magazine, we highlight the results and impact of our work, the stories of our experts on assignment and our partners.
- We inform our supporters about the impact of our work through email updates. New donors are thanked for their support and informed about our work with a customised customer journey.
- We are continuously reaching out to new fundraising audiences. At the beginning of 2021 we started a new series of online campaigns with the 'Changemakers talking game'. This is a set of cards that helps parents and children talk about a fairer world. This introduction to VSO is the first step to engage new supporters with our mission for a longer period.
- Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram are important for engaging our community.
- We maintain a personal relationship with the business partners and funds that work with us, through a permanent account manager. We report on substantive and financial results and discuss learning points.

At the beginning of 20/21 we started with acquisition of new donors through online campaigns.

Complaints, ideas and wishes

VSO Netherlands takes all complaints, ideas and wishes of stakeholders seriously. VSO Netherlands records all comments and complaints from donors because they offer the opportunity to improve our work. For this, we have a special complaints procedure, which can be found on our website. We have received 53 complaints from individual givers compared to 41 complaints last year. We receive most complaints as a result of face-to-face recruitment. All complaints are recorded and handled in accordance with our internal quality guidelines. We distinguish three kinds of complaints: general complaints, complaints from volunteers and complaints from individual givers. In 2020-2021, no general complaints or complaints from volunteers were filed.

Systematic use of Resources

It is very important to us to carefully handle the resources that are entrusted to us by donors, business partners and individual givers. VSO Netherlands continuously strives to work as effectively and efficiently as possible. We use a multi-annual strategy, based on the strategy of the global VSO network. This serves as a starting point during the drafting of annual programmes and budgets. We work with specific, measurable goals based on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and target values. Evaluation results are incorporated in the development of the following annual plan. The multi-annual strategy, annual plans and their respective budgets are drafted under the responsibility of the director. The Supervisory Board confirms them.

All projects developed by VSO have a custom 'monitoring and evaluation framework'. In association with the VSO Country office, we draft this protocol to be in line with the wishes and needs of the donor, and the capacities of our local partners. We monitor each project annually, and adjust budget and/or goals where necessary. The international VSO network uses various instruments for assessment. We gather results from our programmes through our Annual Reviews. At these stakeholder meetings, at which all partners, volunteers and individual members of target groups are represented, we discuss the impact and learnings of that year. Their feedback is input for the planning of the following year or development of new programmes. Where we work with NGOs and CSOs for capacity strengthening, learning is part of the process, including annual partner reviews. In addition, programmes are evaluated during mid-term and end-term evaluations, by internal or external evaluators. And we perform our own participatory research on specific issues.

An evaluation report is delivered periodically by country offices, where the most important learning points are outlined per project. These learning points are considered in future projects. Our management evaluates the results of our projects annually. The results of this evaluation could lead to adjustment of budgets and/or goals. Adjustments are always deliberated upon with the country office involved and the local partners. In the annual report, the director accounts for the followed policy and expenditure of financial resources. We publish the annual report together with our financial statements, which are approved by the Supervisory Board and furthermore verified by our external auditor (Dubois & Co).





Nandi locals and VSO volunteers during the deafway project community awareness parade in Nandi town, Kenya.

### Fundraising Expenditure

We spent € 616,807 on fundraising in 2020-2021 and we raised € 5,697,546. The percentage expenditures on raised funds is 11 percent (14 percent in 2019-2020). Investments in fundraising were made at the end of the financial year, which has an increasing effect on the calculated percentage. The results of these investments will appear in the income in the coming financials years.

Investment in fundraising did not only lead to financial resources. People are increasingly aware of the work of VSO and development cooperation in general. We therefore allocate 50% of fundraising campaigns to provide information.

### Costs of Management and Administration

VSO Netherlands had operating expenditure of € 338,314 in 2020-2021: 6 percent of our total expenditures, below our own maximum of 11 percent. This internal standard equals the percentage VSO Netherlands uses to pass on the costs of management and administration to the programmes to be implemented.

### Continuity reserve

VSO Netherlands is a financially healthy organisation, with an adequate financial 'buffer'. At VSO, this buffer (continuity reserve) consists of the disposable equity. This enables us to meet our financial commitments even during periods of negative results. The Supervisory Board together with management determines the minimum and maximum level of the continuity reserve using research on the financial risks of the global VSO network as a whole as the basis.

In September 2020, the management reviewed the reserve policy, which was subsequently approved by the Supervisory Board. It was determined that VSO's reserve level should be around € 1.27 million. The

surplus can be used as an investment in the growth of VSO Netherlands and our impact. This year was the second year of a four-year investment path. The planned investment in growth has taken place on a smaller scale. Due to extra income and savings on management and administration the effect of this investment is less than planned. On 31 March 2021, the continuity reserve was € 1,874,846, a decrease of € 29,239 compared to the previous financial year.

It could be that the effect of the Corona pandemic will affect future income of VSO in the coming years. At the moment we estimate that the continuity reserve and liquid assets are sufficient to withstand these future effects.

### Investment policy

VSO Netherlands has a risk-averse investment policy. We also do not have any direct investments in stock funds at the moment. We therefore act in accordance with the Guideline on Financial Management (Richtlijn Financieel Beheer) of Goede Doelen Nederland.

### Safeguarding and integrity

Protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm is central to achieving our mission of ending global poverty. At VSO we are committed to ensuring that the experience of our organisation is free from any form of abuse or exploitation. VSO International has a Global Safeguarding Policy that VSO Netherlands adheres to, and which is aligned with the CBF guidelines on integrity. VSO Netherlands has appointed a part-time integrity officer. All staff have attended a safeguarding training course, focusing on preventing, reporting and handling safeguarding issues.

All VSO volunteers and staff members are familiar with our Code of Conduct, which sets out the standards and expectations of employees and volunteers in terms of professional ethics, integrity, acting as a representative and safeguarding, which support our vision, mission and values. The Code of Conduct of VSO is signed by all employees, the local (office) volunteers and VSO volunteers who are going to work in developing countries. The Code of Conduct has also been published on the VSO Netherlands website. Employees, volunteers and other (external) stakeholders are obliged to report safeguarding incidents to the appropriate integrity officer/ safeguarding lead. An external counsellor (vertrouwenspersoon) is available at all times to provide support for our employees. All incidents are investigated and dealt with by VSO Netherlands and VSO's Global Safeguarding Lead according to the global safeguarding guidelines, if necessary, with the aid of external parties. Support and care is available for victims through the Dutch organisation Slachtofferhulp.

### Long term vision

#### People First

VSO International has set out its long-term vision and objectives in the People First strategy and the operating plan 2019-2022. Our People First strategy focuses on supporting the delivery of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) specifically on the principle of "Leaving No One Behind". It outlines three strategic shifts we want to make as an organisation:

- Firstly, we want to extend and deepen our impact through a portfolio of global programmes that harness the power of our volunteering for development approach and through a focus on social inclusion, social accountability and resilience. We will increase the reach of our programmes from 1.5 to 5 million people in the next three years.
- Secondly, we want increased global engagement by leveraging our relationships with communities, partners and volunteers, in order to mobilise active global citizens across the world in support of the SDGs.
- Thirdly, building on our Global Programmes and Engagement, we will step more fully into our Global Leadership role to position volunteering as a powerful contribution to delivery of the SDGs.

### VSO in the Netherlands

VSO Netherlands is a full part of VSO International. Our strategy 2019-2021 aims at increasing our positive impact on the lives of our primary actors

by enhancing our success as a fundraiser, recruiter and programme developer. We aim to develop our impact by means of more and larger, effective programmes, enabled by successful recruitment and fundraising. In that way, we help build and grow VSO's portfolio.

During the final year of our 2019-2021 strategy, key priorities for VSO Netherlands will be:

- Focus on high-quality implementation of our new programmes, notably the Challenge Fund for Youth Employment and the Make Way programme within the SRHR Partnerships of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These are complex, multi-country programmes and we continue to strengthen our capacity in the field of programme and financial management, as well as monitoring, evaluation and learning.
- Continuing to develop new programme opportunities in the fields of education, livelihoods and health, but also related to VSO's core approaches: social accountability, social inclusion and resilient communities. Building as much as possible on the experience and expertise gained in VSO's current programmes.
- Develop and deepen our relations with partners and donors. Our position as the European Union hub for VSO, working beyond the Netherlands with a variety of stakeholders, will be strengthened further.
- Strengthening our brand: VSO's brand awareness is low and the understanding of what we do among those who know us is limited. We will focus more on the impact of our work and positioning volunteering for development as an effective approach. We have adopted the 'Changemakers' concept as a key element in our positioning, and this will be strengthened further.
- Continue to work on our financial objective – that is well on course – to double our income and therewith the spending on our mission by the end of 2021 compared to 2019. In addition, we will continue to focus on the objective of diversification of income, further improving the mix between restricted and unrestricted as well as the number of partners and channels.

During the year 2021-2022, we will collectively embark on the formulation of a new strategy, for 2022 to 2025, together with our team and stakeholders. This strategy will define the next step in our development as an organisation, building on what was achieved, and adding new ambitions to improve the impact for our mission: A fair world for everyone.



# Annual financial statements

## Balance as at 31 March 2021

	31.03.2021 €		31.03.2020 €	
<b>Assets</b>				
<b>Fixed assets</b>				
Tangible fixed assets		30,409		40,769
<b>Current assets</b>				
Debtors	376,136		10,261	
VSO current account	7,381		93,208	
Other receivable, prepayments, accrued income	2,276,961		335,023	
		2,660,478		438,492
<b>Cash at bank and in hand</b>				
		3,444,474		1,976,629
		<b>6,135,361</b>		<b>2,455,890</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>				
<b>Funds</b>				
Continuity reserve	1,874,846		1,904,085	
Designated reserve	115,087		129,037	
		1,989,933		2,033,122
<b>Provisions</b>				
		40,755		40,755
<b>Liabilities</b>				
Other		2,074,083		0
<b>Current liabilities</b>				
Creditors	164,521		54,598	
Taxes and social insurance	53,33		46,476	
Other payable, accruals and deferred income	1,812,729		280,937	
		2,030,589		382,011
		<b>6,135,361</b>		<b>2,455,890</b>

## Statement of income and expenditure for fiscal year 2020-2021

	Financial year 2020-2021 €	Budget 2020-2021 €	Financial year 2019-2020 €
<b>Income</b>			
From private individuals	2,230,966	2,109,944	2,478,886
From companies	55,100	373,055	89,643
From government grants	2,853,753	749,201	135,375
From affiliated (international) organisations	28,805	144,532	227,191
From other non-profit organisations	528,922	870,492	651,751
<b>Total income</b>	<b>5,697,546</b>	<b>4,247,224</b>	<b>3,582,846</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Expenditure on objectives			
Education	422,129	753,456	592,267
Health	3,033,828	489,045	358,874
Livelihoods	423,114	963,588	802,353
Core approaches	373,241	534,963	324,764
Provide information	529,892	597,424	699,127
	4,782,204	3,338,476	2,777,385
<b>Raising funds expenditure</b>	<b>616,807</b>	<b>688,805</b>	<b>501,949</b>
<b>Operating expenditure</b>	<b>338,314</b>	<b>433,177</b>	<b>337,731</b>
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>5,737,325</b>	<b>4,460,458</b>	<b>3,617,064</b>
<b>Balance income and expenditure</b>	<b>-39,779</b>	<b>-213,233</b>	<b>-34,218</b>
Balance financial income and expenditure	-3,409	-500	-572
<b>Net expenditure / income</b>	<b>-43,189</b>	<b>-213,733</b>	<b>-34,790</b>
Movement designated reserves	-13,950	0	-30,963
Movement to continuity reserve	-29,239	-213,733	-3,827

	2020-2021	2019-2020
Expenditure on objectives as a percentage of total expenditure	83%	75% 77%
Raising funds expenditure as a percentage of total income	11%	16% 14%
Operating expenditure as a percentage of total expenditure	6%	10% 9%



Cash flow statement

		2020-2021		2019-2020
		€		€
<b>Cash flow from operational activities</b>				
Net expenditure / income		-43,189		-34,790
Depreciation		10,360		18,286
Working capital				
- Decrease / increase current assets	-2,221,987		256,071	
- Increase / decrease provisions	0		28,574	
- Decrease / increase current liabilities	3,722,661		-169,739	
		1,500,674		114,906
		1,467,845		98,402
<b>Cash flow from investment activities</b>				
Investments minus disposals	0		-26,747	
Equalisation	0		0	
		0		-26,747
<b>Decrease / Increase Cash at bank and in hand</b>				
		1,467,845		71,655
Balance at 1 April 2020 / 2019	1,976,629		1,904,974	
Balance at 31 March 2021 / 2020	3,444,474		1,976,629	
<b>Decrease / Increase Cash at bank and in hand</b>				
		1,467,845		71,655

The cash flow statement has been compiled according to the indirect method

Valuation principles

General

VSO Netherlands has compiled the annual financial statements in conformity with Directive 650 for reporting by charitable organisations. The Stichting VSO Fonds financial data were included in the annual financial statements. Due to inactivity, Stichting VSO Fonds was dissolved as at 16 January 2017.

Assets and liabilities and the results are valued based on historical costs.

Assets and liabilities are given in nominal values, unless otherwise stated in the balance sheet heading. Income and expenses have been allocated to the year to which they are applicable. Profits are only included if they were realised by the closing date. Loss and risks originating before the end of the reporting year are included if they were known before the annual financial statement was compiled. The income from legacies is included in the fiscal year for which the amount can reliably be determined.

Affiliated parties

From 20 March 2018 Stichting VSO Nederland and VSO International have entered into an association. This replaces the former federation agreement. The Affiliate Agreement stipulates that VSO International is entitled to appoint three of the five members of the supervisory board of VSO Nederland (provided they fit in with the frameworks of independent supervision as stipulated by the CBF directives and in the articles of VSO Netherlands). The Agreement also stipulates that the chair of the supervisory board of VSO Netherlands is a member of the Board of Trustees of VSO International. Furthermore, mutual settlement provisions have been made regarding recruitment costs, programme funding, and other activities which are jointly undertaken.

General basis of the annual financial statements  
Conversion of foreign currency

Receivables, liabilities and obligations in foreign currency are calculated according to the exchange rate on the balance sheet date. Transactions in foreign currency during the reporting period are calculated in the annual financial statements according to the exchange rate

at settlement. Exchange rate differences arising from conversion on the balance sheet date are included in the State of Income and Expenses.

Tangible fixed assets

We have valued tangible fixed assets at the acquisition price, less depreciation. Investments made with funds VSO Netherlands had made available for that purpose have been entered as liabilities in the balance sheet by means of an equalisation reserve. We decrease this equalisation reserve with the yearly depreciation. The investments have been capitalised at the acquisition price, less depreciation. The actual value of the tangible fixed assets is the same as the book value.

Receivables

Receivables are valued at nominal value. Any provisions for irrecoverability have been deducted from the amount.

Provision

The provision has been valued at nominal value.

Notes on the annual financial statements

Inception and aim

Foundation VSO Netherlands was established on 22 September 1989 and has as its aim combating poverty, underdevelopment, and social exclusion in developing countries. The Foundation aims to achieve this by various means, including strengthening the knowledge

and capacity of people, organisations and governments that are involved in this objective, and by disseminating information and conducting research.

Address

Stichting VSO Nederland Weg der Verenigde Naties 1  
UTRECHT

Funding

The Foundation derives its funding from:

- subsidies;
- donations, gifts, bequests and legacies;
- contributions and donations from third parties and benefactors;
- other income.

The Foundation does not have the aim of generating profit.

Entitlements and obligations not included on the balance sheet

On 1 January 2020, VSO Netherlands entered into a new lease for the office space at Weg der Verenigde Naties 1 in Utrecht for a period of five years. VSO Netherlands has extended the contract by five years. The rent per annum for the coming financial year amounts to approximately EUR 86,000. Furthermore, VSO Netherlands has a leasing obligation for photocopying equipment for the coming year of EUR 6,500.

Notes on the balance as at 31 March 2021  
Assets (in euros)

Fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets	31.03.2021	31.03.2020
	€	€
Book value as at 1 April	40,769	32,308
Additions	0	26,747
Disposals	0	0
	40,769	59,055
Depreciation	10,360	18,286
Depreciation on disposals	0	0
Book value as at 31 March	30,409	40,769

The total acquisition value of the tangible fixed assets amounts to EUR 178,336. The cumulative depreciations amount to EUR 147,927. The insured value of the tangible fixed assets is EUR 148,000.



Current assets

VSO current account	31.03.2021 €	31.03.2020 €
Amounts due from VSO International	7,381	93,208

No interest is calculated on the claims in the current account. The current account is a balance sheet item for expenses advanced on both sides which are regularly settled by means of invoices.

Other receivable, prepayments, accrued income	31.03.2021 €	31.03.2020 €
Government grant receivable	2,114,862	99,583
Contributions for programme funding	5,000	121,761
Payments advanced to programme offices	79,239	3,320
Companies receivable	0	31,362
Rental deposit	21,768	21,768
Rent	19,875	19,695
Prepaid health insurance premium	3,616	4,943
Other	32,601	32,591
	2,276,961	335,023

In the receivable from the government is included the total 5 year unconditional contract with a total value of €2.402.050.

Cash at bank and in hand	31.03.2021 €	31.03.2020 €
Saving accounts	749,981	1,804,811
Current account	2,694,359	171,683
Cash at bank and in hand	135	135
	3,444,474	1,976,629

De liquid assets are immediately payable.

Liabilities (in euros)

Funds	31.03.2021 €	31.03.2020 €
<b>Continuity reserve</b>		
As at 1 April	1,904,085	1,907,912
Deficit for the year	-29,239	-3,827
As at 31 March	1,874,846	1,904,085
<b>Designated reserve</b>		
"Caroline van der Wal prize"		
As at 1 April	129,037	160,000
Movement financial year	-13,950	-30,963
As at 31 March	115,087	129,037

In the financial year 2017-2018, VSO Netherlands received EUR 200,000 from the estate of Caroline van der Wal. This is a bequest without right of usufruct. In the years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 the reserve will be used to co-finance the Educational improvement programme in Ethiopia.

Designation of result

From the debit balance of EUR 43,189 for the financial year 2020-2021, EUR 13,950 has been withdrawn from the restricted funds for the Caroline van der Wal Prize. The remaining EUR 29,239 has been withdrawn from the general funds.

Occurrences after balance sheet date

There were no occurrences after the balance sheet date which have to be included in the annual report. Based on the standard of 1.5 times the annual expenses of the work organisation, the maximum continuity reserve allowable amounts to EUR 3,008,825.

Provisions	31.03.2021 €	31.03.2020 €
As at 1 April	40,755	12,181
Donations financial year	0	40,755
Disbursed in financial year	0	12,181
As at 31 March	40,755	40,755

Uncertainty has arisen about the approval of the submitted hours for the European Union program. Since the project audit has not yet been completed at the time of completing the annual accounts, we have decided, for reasons of prudence, to make a provision for this.

Liabilities	31.03.2021 €	31.03.2020 €
Advance contribution for programme funding	2,074,083	0

In the advance contribution for programme funding includes a unconditional five-year contract with a programme partner. The total amount of the contract is € 2,402,050 of which € 2,074,083 is due after one year. The remaining part is presented in the current liabilities.

Current Liabilities

Taxes and social insurance	31.03.2021 €	31.03.2020 €
Taxes and social insurance	46,794	39,535
Pensions	6,544	6,941
	53,339	46,476

Other payable, accruals and deferred income	31.03.2021 €	31.03.2020 €
Holiday allowance, leave and year-end bonus	119,441	100,227
Advance contributions for programme funding	1,527,720	89,245
Liabilities to programme	75,391	37,589
Audit fees	15,730	12,705
Other	74,447	41,172
	1,812,729	280,938

The advance contribution for programme funding includes an unconditional five-year contract with a programme partner. The total amount of the contract is € 2,402,050 of which € 159,798 is transferred to the partner in 2020-2021. A total of € 2,074,083 is presented in the liabilities.



Notes to the Statement of Income and Expenses for the fiscal year 2020- 2021

Income (in euros)

	FY 2020-2021 €	Budget 2020-2021 €	FY 2019-2020 €
<b>From private individuals</b>			
Donations	2,068,026	2,089,944	2,476,886
Legacies	162,940	20,000	2,000
Total	2,230,966	2,109,944	2,478,886
<b>From companies</b>			
Companies	55,100	373,055	89,643
Total	55,100	373,055	89,643
<b>From government grants</b>			
European Union	0	0	45,480
NOW grant	79,525	0	0
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	2,774,228	749,201	89,895
Total	2,853,753	749,201	135,375
The income from Ministry of Foreign Affairs includes the income from a unconditional five-year contract of € 2,402,050 with a programme partner.			
<b>From affiliated (international) organisations</b>	28,805	144,532	227,191
<b>From other non-profit organisations</b>	528,922	870,492	651,752

	FY 2020-2021 €	Budget 2020-2021 €	FY 2019-2020 €
<b>Balance financial income and expenditure</b>			
Interest on bank deposits	-3,409	-500	-571
	-3,409	-500	-571

Expenditure (in euros)

Total expenditure	FY 2020-2021 €	Budget 2020-2021 €	FY 2019-2020 €
Staff costs	1,435,749	1,702,614	1,416,471
Subsidies and programme contributions granted	3,045.504	887,483	796.585
Payments to affiliated (international) organisations	1.003.749	1,461,025	1.132.363
Communication	41,676	182,000	51,774
Housing	92,610	101,539	81,823
Other expenditure	118,038	125,797	138,047
	3,335,275	4,460,458	3,617,064

Total expenses

Staff costs concern the total sum of the wage costs and agency workers. Staff costs includes the direct wage costs incurred for the realisation of placements of EUR 308,686 and programme contributions of EUR 399,138.

The subsidies and programme contributions granted and the payments to affiliated international organisations, a total of EUR 4,049,252, cover all other direct costs to programmes for (continued) contributions to the capacity strengthening of VSO partner organisations, and, in some cases, other local organisations in collaboration with VSO Netherlands. It includes the unconditional grant to a partner in the Make Way consortium for the period of January 2021 until December 2025 of €2,402,050.

Please refer to paragraph 7(a) for the distribution of these expenses among the objectives.

Distribution of expenses

Total expenditure	FY 2020-2021 €	Budget 2020-2021 €	FY 2019-2020 €
<b>Staff costs</b>			
Wages	1,367,462	1,737,614	1,236,915
Social security costs	255,121	0	211,543
Pension	135,618	0	121,510
Wages charged on to VSO/GCE	-81,517	-35,000	-70,878
		0	0
	1,676,684	1,702,614	1,499,090
Wages charged on programmes	-268,952	0	-130,491
Agency workers	28,018	0	47,872
Total staff costs	1,435,749	1,702,614	1,416,471

In this fiscal year an average of 25 FTEs were employed by VSO Nederland (2019-2020: 20 FTEs).



Name Position		Erik Ackerman Managing director
Employment		Undetermined
	Hours	36
	Part-time percentage	100
	period	12 months
Remuneration (EUR)		
Annual income	Gross wage/salary	€75,802
	Payout 'IKB PG'	€12,878
	Payout 'IKB NPG'	€120
	One-time payment	€0
Total annual income		€88,800
Employers charges		
	Social security	€6,506
	ZVW	€3,896
	Pension premium	€18,348
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>€117,550</b>
The "BSD" score is 335 which relates to function group E		

	FY 2020-2021 €	Budget 2020-2021 €	FY 2019-2020 €
<b>Subsidies and programme contributions granted including payments to affiliated (international) organisations</b>			
Costs related to placements	14,293	238,835	57,946
Costs related to programmes	3,405,799	1,461,025	1,132,363
Provide information	285,121	291,191	336,182
Raising funds expenditure	275,816	262,191	307,815
Operating expenditure	68,223	95,265	94,642
Total	4,049,252	2,348,508	1,928,948
<b>Costs related to volunteer placements</b>			
Advertising and communication costs	9,456	38,000	16,000
"Meet VSO" and other events	0	0	55
Assessment and training	2,087	38,760	25,992
Placement costs	2,659	159,075	9,350
Returning volunteers	0	0	0
Other	91	3,000	6,549
<b>subtotal</b>	<b>14,293</b>	<b>238,835</b>	<b>57,946</b>

	FY 2020-2021 €	Budget 2020-2021 €	FY 2019-2020 €
<b>Costs related to programmes</b>			
RISE - programme	207,632	210,615	263,729
Educational improvement in Ethiopia	26,317	150,000	110,950
Capacity-building programme Bangladesh	159,635	188,000	154,184
Health care programme Uganda	217,437	190,000	240,039
Challenge Fund Youth Education	342,051	415,918	90,073
Make Way	2,448,985	60,000	0
European Union	3,741	40,000	48,066
Provision European Union	0	0	40,755
Other	0	206,492	184,568
<b>subtotal</b>	<b>3,405,799</b>	<b>1,461,025</b>	<b>1,132,364</b>

<b>Provide information</b>	<b>285,121</b>	<b>291,191</b>	<b>336,182</b>
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	FY 2020-2021 €	Budget 2020-2021 €	FY 2019-2020 €
<b>Raising funds expenditure</b>			
Donor recruitment	128,791	42,066	136,451
Acquisition of grants	0	0	0
Acquisition of private and company funds	17,058	32,500	54,744
Donor upgrading and loyalty	13,787	46,000	74,658
Donor database	17,517	20,000	18,258
One-off donations and legacies	97,867	96,625	0
Events	797	25,000	23,704
Other	0	0	0
<b>subtotal</b>	<b>275,816</b>	<b>262,191</b>	<b>307,815</b>

<b>Operating expenditure</b>			
Board costs	4,983	11,340	8,623
Audit fees	30,250	30,250	33,578
Payroll administration	7,434	7,282	6,196
Legal fees	5,374	7,500	2,570
Consultancy	20,181	21,493	36,141
Other	0	17,400	7,534
<b>subtotal</b>	<b>68,223</b>	<b>95,265</b>	<b>94,642</b>
<b>Total direct costs</b>	<b>4,049,252</b>	<b>2,348,508</b>	<b>1,928,949</b>

Make Way expenditure includes the unconditional five-year contract with a programme partner of €2,402,050.



	FY 2020-2021 €	Budget 2020-2021 €	FY 2019-2020 €
<b>Objectives</b>			
Public campaign	29,970	130,000	10,243
Other	11,706	52,000	41,531
<b>Total communication</b>	41,676	182,000	51,774
<b>Housing</b>			
Rent	79,375	88,760	69,644
Other	13,235	12,779	12,180
<b>Total housing</b>	92,610	101,539	81,824
Other expenditure			
Depreciation			
Inventory	10,360	12,000	18,286
Other staffing costs			
Commuting	4,115	21,500	25,880
Advertising	1,143	2,000	4,777
Other travel	16	14,200	13,488
Training	38,583	25,000	16,646
Health and safety service	6,465	1,550	156
Other	2,329	3,150	939
Office expenditure			
Office supplies	432	2,950	1,825
Mail	1,280	1,200	1,108
IT costs	30,170	14,611	13,842
Telephone and internet	13,265	12,990	12,836
Scanning and printing costs	6,430	7,316	16,882
Subscriptions	108	300	375
Other	3,341	7,030	11,009
<b>Total other expenditure</b>	118,038	125,797	138,049

Objectives	1.*	2.*	3.*	4.*	5.*	Raising funds expend- iture	Oper- ating expend- iture	FY FY2020- 2021	Budget FY2020- 2021	FY 2019- 2020
Subsidies and programme contributions granted	0	2,402,050	0	14,293	285,121	275,816	68,223	3,045,504	887,483	796,586
Payments to affiliated (international) organisations	371,008	264,372	371,874	-3,505	0	0	0	1,003,749	1,461,025	1,132,363
Staff costs	43,480	312,488	43,581	308,275	208,184	290,021	229,720	1,435,749	1,702,614	1,416,471
Communication	1,262	9,071	1,265	8,948	6,043	8,419	6,668	41,676	182,000	51,774
Housing	2,805	20,156	2,811	19,885	13,428	18,707	14,818	92,610	101,539	81,823
Other expenditure	3,575	25,691	3,583	25,344	17,115	23,844	18,886	118,038	125,797	138,047
	422,129	3,033,828	423,114	373,241	529,892	616,807	338,314	5,737,325	4,460,458	3,617,064

\*) Objectives  
1. Education  
2. Health  
3. Livelihoods  
4. Core approaches  
5. Provide information



**If you would like to know more about  
VSO's work, visit [www.vso.nl](http://www.vso.nl)**

**VSO Nederland**

Weg der Verenigde Naties 1  
3527 KT UTRECHT  
+31 (0)30 232 06 00  
[info@vso.nl](mailto:info@vso.nl)

RSIN 9868665  
KvK nummer 41155934  
IBAN NL93INGB00000000092

