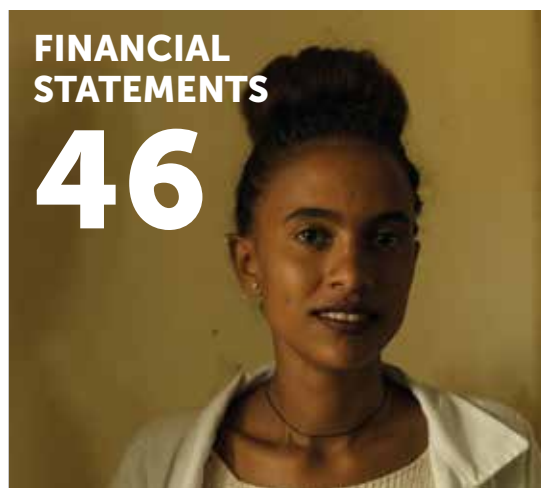




# **A FAIR WORLD FOR EVERYONE**

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**Annual report and accounts  
2018/19 Netherlands**



**Top left:** A young girl speaks up in class at Shree Nepal National Community Secondary School, Surkhet where VSO supports girls to stay in education.

**Middle left:** International Citizen Service (ICS) volunteer, Nul Toh, at a Community Action Day in Cambodia.

**Bottom left:** In Pakistan VSO works with local organisations and police officers like Officer Rukshana Mangi to support women reporting gender-based violence.

**Top right:** VSO assists the Ethiopian government to help ensure children with disabilities, like Tariku, get the opportunity to go to school.

**Middle right:** Macklyne Katsuiime from Uganda completed a VSO funded course in tailoring and now earns 50,000 UGX per month.

**Bottom right:** Tsigemariam Bekalu at Mulu Asefa Primary Hospital in Ethiopia where VSO helps to improve maternal and newborn health.

# CONTENTS

Welcome	2-3
Our global impact	4-5

## **STRATEGIC REPORT**

### **How we work: Doing development differently**

Volunteering for development	8
Our volunteers	9-10
Core approaches	11-13

### **What we do: A fair world for everyone**

Global Programmes	
- Inclusive Education	16-19
- Health	20-23
- Resilient Livelihoods	24-27
Global Leadership	28-29
Global Engagement	30-31

### **VSO Netherlands**

What we do	32-35
Organisation & Management	36-43
Long term vision	44-45
Balance sheet	46
Statement of income and expenditure	47

# WELCOME



**The past year – April 2018 to March 2019 – coincides with my first full year at VSO. To me, this was an inspiring discovery of the impact of our work and our unique volunteering for development approach. Here are some of the things I learned, especially through visiting some of VSO's programmes in Uganda and Tanzania.**

## Bringing people together

Meeting an agricultural expert volunteer from Sri Lanka in Uganda and a marketing expert from the Philippines in Tanzania: I realized that VSO truly is an international network of people who are brought together to create change. National volunteers, usually young experts who want to contribute to development in their country, currently outnumber international volunteers. I met Robert, a Ugandan volunteer who had played a key role in setting up a business hub for young entrepreneurs in Gulu. By means of his ambitious and energetic approach, VSO was able to reach out to dozens of promising initiatives and support them with advice, skills and small capital.

## Leaving no one behind

Having access to secondary education cannot be taken for granted in many low income countries. Young people who lack skills and resources is one of the key challenges in countries like Uganda, with one of the youngest populations in the world and unemployment levels reaching 80%. VSO, together with the Technical and Vocational Education Training centre in Arua, established an outreach programme for young people who had previously been excluded from any skills training. This programme focuses on agriculture, providing six-month practical training that allows its participants to develop their skills and start a small business in horticulture or livestock farming. We visited many promising examples,



**Catherine Mungate, pictured with her daughter and granddaughter in Epworth, Zimbabwe, spent two years in prison. Since her release Catherine has been supported by VSO to start her own business rearing chickens.**

including young women like Rose, who proudly showed us the plot of land that she worked to earn her future livelihood. The promise of leaving no one behind is truly central to VSO's way of working. This programme not only operates in Uganda, but in so many other places in the world where VSO works with communities and groups that were often not reached before.

There is no reason to be complacent: the challenge to break through the cycle of poverty and exclusion remains enormous in very many places. In the year to come, we will continue to work on our mission: A fair world for everyone.

For now, I am proud to present this annual report. The report sets out to recount the global impact, ways of working and results of VSO's global network in chapters 1-3. Subsequently, we will focus on the specific contribution of VSO in the Netherlands in chapter 4.

A special thanks goes to all of our volunteers, individual givers, partners and donors who have contributed to our work.

**Erik Ackerman**

Director VSO Netherlands



©VSO/Peter Caton

Ugandan VSO volunteer Deborah (right) at the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at Moroto Regional Referral Hospital.

# OUR GLOBAL IMPACT

OVER THE LAST **60 YEARS**

VSO HAS WORKED IN OVER **90** COUNTRIES

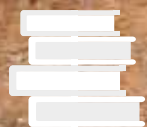
WITH MORE THAN **80,000** VOLUNTEERS,

AND SUPPORTED OVER **50,000,000** PEOPLE

In 2018/19 we supported over

**1,000,000**

people, including;



Over **550,000**  
through our education programmes



Over **175,000**  
through our health programmes



Over **115,000**  
through our livelihoods programmes



Over **170,000**  
through our resilience, inclusion and  
social accountability programmes

We worked in



countries

We worked with over

**4,700**



volunteers

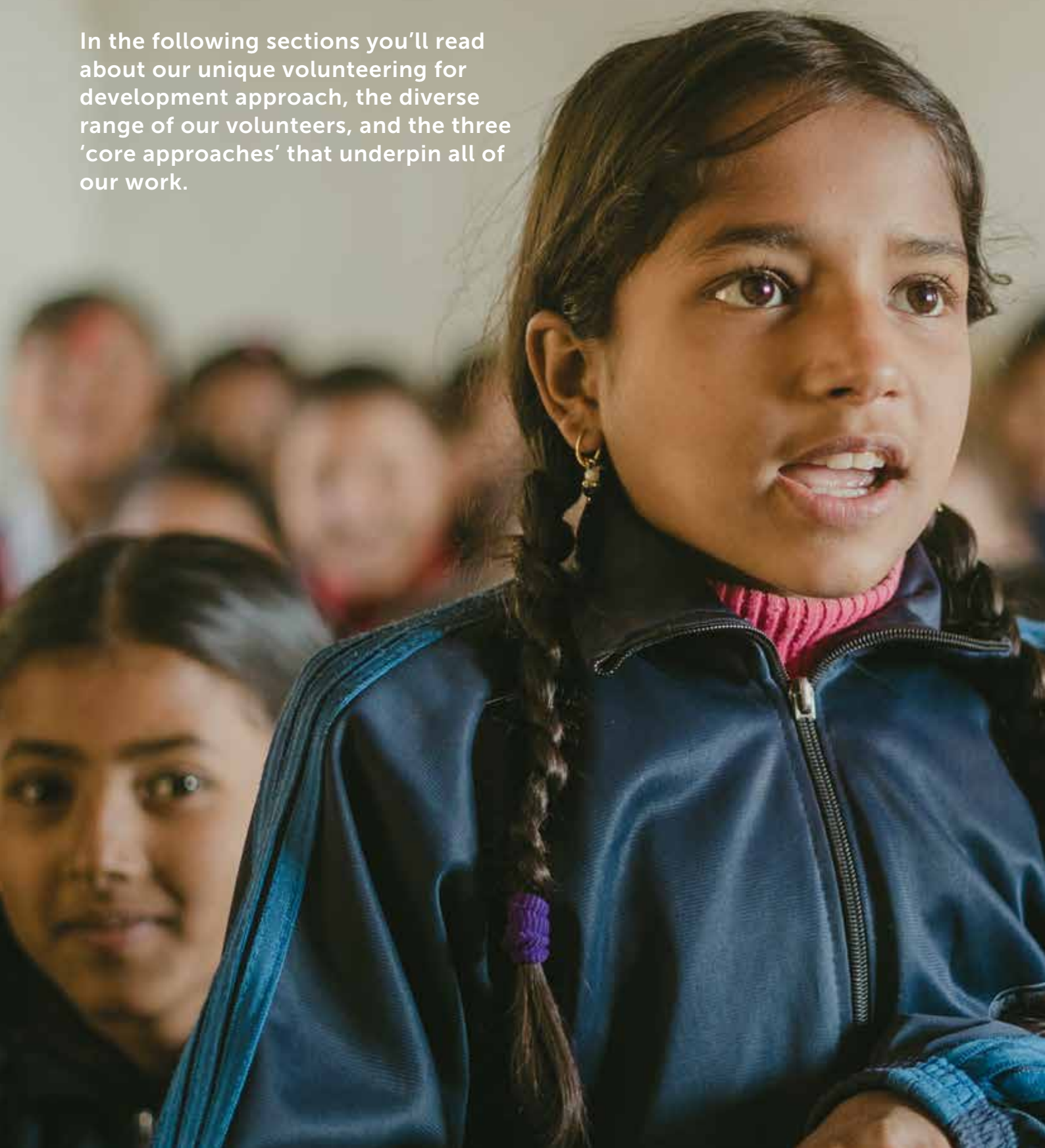


Co-operative leader Kudu runs his own thresher business, allowing fellow farmers to quickly and easily add value to their crops in Mokwa, Nigeria.

# HOW WE WORK

At VSO we pride ourselves on doing development differently. We fight poverty not by sending aid, but by working through volunteers and partners to create long-lasting change in the some of the world's poorest regions.

In the following sections you'll read about our unique volunteering for development approach, the diverse range of our volunteers, and the three 'core approaches' that underpin all of our work.



# DOING DEVELOPMENT DIFFERENTLY



# VOLUNTEERING FOR DEVELOPMENT

## Putting people first

**At VSO, we know that people in developing countries have the power, courage and desire to help themselves. That's why we use a volunteering for development approach that puts the most marginalised people first.**

We focus on those who are traditionally left out in society – people who are poor, disabled, ill, female, young, gay.

These people are not passive recipients of aid so we don't call them 'beneficiaries'. They are the 'primary actors' at the heart of our development approach.

They are closely involved in every aspect of our programme design and delivery, and are critical to ensuring long-lasting change.

We support them by creating spaces and opportunities for them to influence change in their own lives.

They become volunteers themselves, inspired and motivated by VSO volunteers to give back to their communities. They learn through training and

workshops. They tell us what their needs are. They begin to interact with the organisations, systems and structures around them, to create change.

Because the change is led by the poorest and most marginalised, the results benefit the people who need it most. Communities direct and take ownership of the changes that take place, and in doing so take charge of their futures.

This approach builds more resilient households, institutions and societies. It changes policy and practice at local, national and global levels. All of this brings us a step closer to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a set of 17 global goals designed to ensure the health and wellbeing of all.

It takes us a step closer to creating a fair world for everyone.



©VSO/Georgie Scott

Whycliffe Rutalemwa (left), junior welding instructor, works with one of his students, Mujuni Acleo, at the VSO-supported St Simon Peters Vocational training institute, Hoima, Uganda.

# OUR VOLUNTEERS

Bringing different perspectives

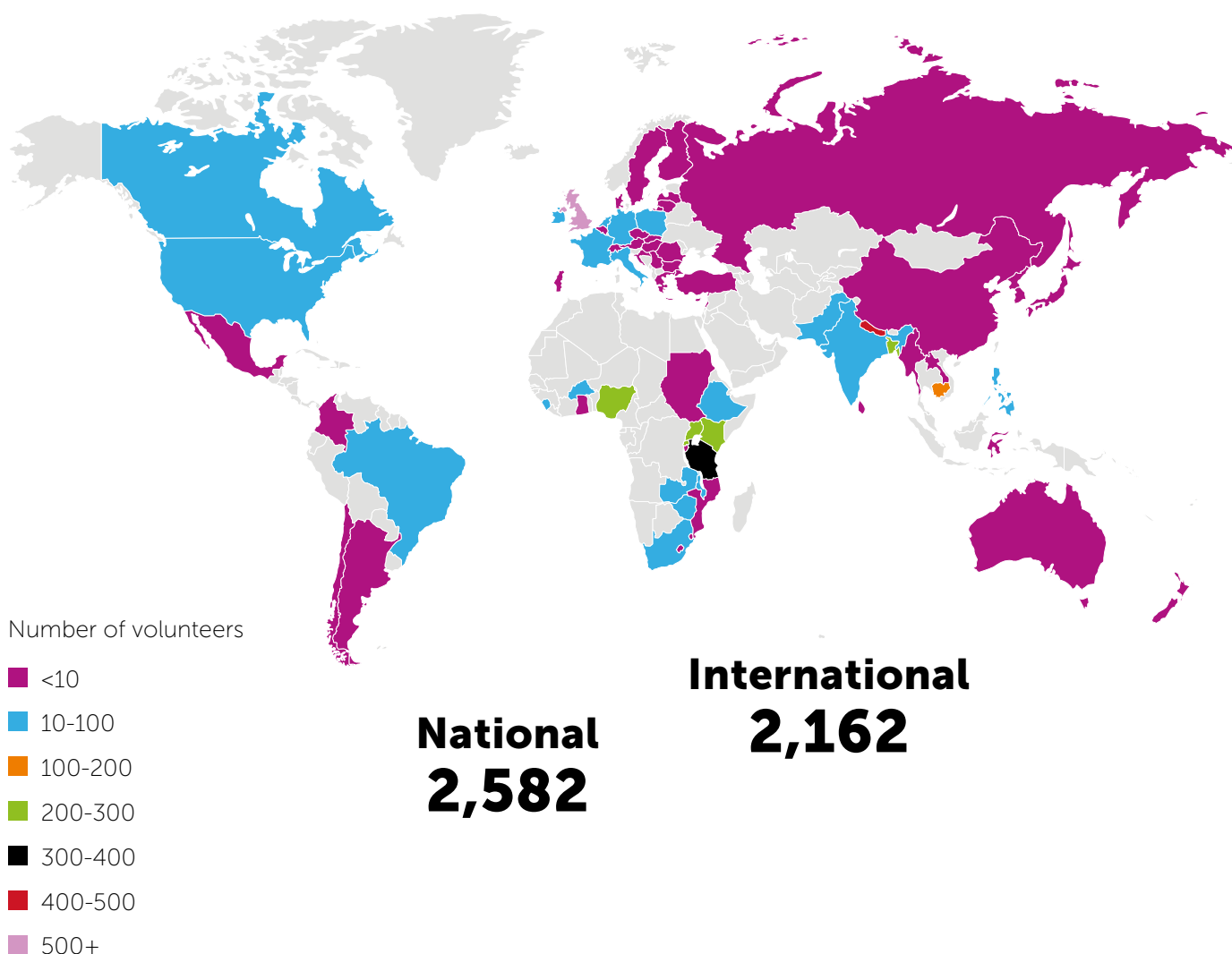
**VSO volunteers come from all over the world, bringing a mix of perspectives, expertise and ideas from a wealth of different countries, backgrounds and experiences. However, the majority today are volunteering in their home country, bringing a deep understanding of the local context.**

Our volunteers may live and work in a community for years. While others may volunteer for short, targeted placements. However long they volunteer with us, their focus is on developing the systems and conditions for positive social change.

Our volunteers:

- develop new, creative ideas for solving poverty from within communities themselves
- build the confidence and ability of communities to take ownership of change
- reach out to the most remote and excluded people.

## Where our volunteers came from in 2018/19





**“I show farmers what seeds to use, how to plant with the right spacing, what fertiliser to use, when to apply it, how to increase their yields. If there’s a problem, we’ll discuss the issue with other volunteers and find a solution.”**

**Musa Medugu, national agronomist volunteer, Mokwa, Central Nigeria**

### **Different perspectives supporting farmers in Nigeria**

In Nigeria, volunteers have supported farmers to achieve the best yields and price for their crops, transforming subsistence livelihoods into profitable businesses. A range of volunteers designed, researched and implemented the project, all working together. This is part of the Improving Market Access for the Poor (IMA4P) project – you can read more on page 26.

Community volunteers are the crucial link into the communities, helping to mobilise farmers and facilitate training. These volunteers come from the community they work in and are essential to the sustainability of the project. Once other volunteers leave, community volunteers will remain, continuing to help and encourage farmers in their community.

These volunteers work with Nigerian professionals, who bring their own skills and knowledge of

farming, conducting training throughout the project. The professional volunteers work with graduate volunteers, who get essential hands-on experience of agriculture.

They are supported by technical specialist volunteers from countries like Kenya, India and the Philippines. These volunteers help develop the direction of the project with on-the-ground research. They are experts in their fields, with specialisms in areas like value chains, market assessments, gender and agronomy.

The project is strengthened by the contribution of corporate volunteers from Accenture, an international professional services company, who helped to create initial networks and partnerships, ensuring the project’s success.

# CORE APPROACHES

## Leaving no one behind

**Across all our programmes we focus on building communities that are resilient, inclusive and accountable. These three 'core approaches' are fundamental to our volunteering for development approach, ensuring that the people we work with have the confidence and capacity to bring about change in their own lives.**

### Social inclusion and gender

Around the world, thousands of people are discriminated against because of who they are. This may be on the basis of their gender, age, disability, cultural background, sexual orientation, and many other factors. We aim to understand and address the systemic causes of this discrimination.

VSO is tackling discrimination and creating safe spaces for accountability in Pakistan, where there is a stigma attached to women reporting crimes like rape and honour-based abuse. We are combatting gender-based violence and challenging harmful cultural taboos by working with Rozan, a local NGO, and the Pakistan Forum for Democratic Policing.

Together, we've helped the police create environments where women feel safe reporting these crimes. We have also supported a high-profile public awareness campaign to make women in Sindh province aware of their rights in law.

VSO is also challenging structural discrimination and making sure everyone has an equal opportunity to earn a living. In the last year, the Tanzania Local Enterprise Development (T-LED) programme continued to focus on building support for the people most disadvantaged when it comes to building small and medium-sized businesses: women and people with disabilities. So far, the project has created over 1,500 new jobs, and 40% of the businesses supported are headed by women. Two percent are led by people with disabilities.



**Entrepreneur Bora Mganda from Mwanza, Tanzania, is using the support of VSO's T-LED programme to grow her nutritional food business, scaling up to match demand by investing in technology.**



## Resilience

Disasters, disease outbreaks and other shocks and stresses can have a devastating effect on communities. This can be especially damaging on those communities that are already marginalised.

VSO community volunteers have been helping people in the poorest neighbourhoods of Sierra Leone. In 2017, a mudslide devastated the capital city of Freetown, killing more than 500 people and leaving thousands homeless, with the city's poorest worst affected.

In this city and around the country, 75 volunteers have been helping people prepare for and learn how to lessen the impact of future disasters.

This year, disaster resilience specialist volunteer, Jonah Tendere, has been working with hundreds of national volunteers trained by VSO in disaster preparedness. Jonah has 20 years of experience working in disaster risk reduction in his home country of Zimbabwe and has created a guide for teachers across Sierra Leone. The guide he produced gives teachers information on how to keep school communities safe. It highlights hazards that could cause a disaster, and what to do in the event of emergency.

So far, volunteers have trained 150 teachers across the country on disaster risk reduction and response. Six hundred more teachers will be trained in the coming months.

Cyclone Idai devastatingly hit Mozambique in March 2019. Entire communities were left without food and shelter. In order to respond and adapt to this crisis, Jonah was redeployed to help co-ordinate the humanitarian response. He brought his experience of disaster contexts to create a strategy for delivering emergency supplies to the communities worst affected, some barely accessible by road.

**Community volunteers  
delivered Disaster Risk  
Reduction sessions to over  
**30,000**  
young people in Sierra Leone**

**“A book has been created to teach children about disaster risk reduction, which has been embraced by Sierra Leone’s Ministry of Education. I believe that this intervention will transform communities – children are the best agents of change.”**

**Jonah Tendere, disaster risk reduction expert  
volunteer from Zimbabwe**



## Social accountability

Millions of the poorest people around the world are denied basic rights and entitlements that are guaranteed in law. Yet corruption, fear and power dynamics can stop people from speaking up and demanding what they deserve. VSO is committed to giving people a voice, no matter who they are or where they are from, as well as helping authorities better respond to that voice.

VSO volunteers can help by bridging the gap between decision-makers and communities. They empower communities to hold decision-makers to account and support policy-makers and service providers to be better able to respond to community concerns. In the last year, VSO volunteers supported more than 30,000 citizens to hold decision makers to account.

VSO volunteers are working with four prisons in Zimbabwe, supporting inmates to identify areas of improvement in prison health services and hold authorities to account where standards fall short. Over 70 inmates were involved in the exercise, which has resulted in improved access to sexual and reproductive health services and better nutritional standards.

In India, VSO has made use of citizen-led monitoring on the progress of the SDGs. This is empowering people with disabilities to demand services in the states of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Assam. Over 800 disabled people were consulted by volunteers on the quality of local services.

A subsequent campaign to spread awareness on services and entitlements reached 1,500 disabled people. This led to 72% of people accessing at least one service or entitlement due to them.



©VSO/Cynthia R Matonhodze

Nurse Rosina Brekwa in the clinic at Chikurubi Female Prison, Zimbabwe.

# A FAIR WORLD FOR EVERYONE

## WHAT WE DO

VSO has three strategic priorities to support our vision of a fair world for everyone.

- To deepen and extend our impact through a portfolio of Global Programmes, focusing on the three areas of education, health and livelihoods.
- To leverage our relationships with communities, partners and volunteers to deliver Global Engagement – mobilising active global citizens across the world in support of the SDGs.
- To step more fully into our Global Leadership role to position volunteering as a powerful contribution to the delivery of the SDGs.

You'll read more about our work in these areas in the following sections.





# INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

## A right for all children

Education should be the right of all children, no matter who they are or where they are from. That is why our projects focus on inclusion and why our volunteers live and work in the communities they support.

In 2018/19 VSO's education programmes supported over

# 550,000

children to access a quality education.



Over the last year we have rolled out an early childhood care and education in emergencies programme. This is the only childhood education programme happening at Cox's Bazar refugee camp, working with children aged 3-5 years.

The mothers and older sisters of Rohingya children are educating them through songs and stories, which have been shared by VSO volunteers and can be accessed any time through a mobile app.

### Recording Rohingya refugee songs and stories

There are hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugee children living in camps in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. They have experienced violence and ongoing trauma in some of the most crucial years of their lives. Most still lack safe spaces to learn and play.

The programme is designed to support children's emotional development and help them grasp early literacy and numeracy. It's essential that they don't miss out or fall behind. We have plans in the coming year to test the replication of this approach in refugee camps located in Kenya and in Uganda, where there are still 1.4 million refugees.



Rohingya children draw pictures with the notebooks and colour pencils donated by VSO at the home-based child friendly center at Jamtoli, Bangladesh.



© VSO/Alice Kayibanda

**Teacher Josephine Nyirampuhwe on her way to Boli Nursery School in Rwanda with some of her pupils who are helping her to carry teaching materials.**

## Bringing low-cost resources to classrooms in Rwanda

In Rwanda, most classrooms are basic with only a chalkboard at the front of the classroom and rows of wooden desks. Some classrooms hold more than 50 students, making it challenging for teachers to engage with the children.

Building Learning Foundations is VSO's largest-scale education programme to date. We are working in every government-funded school in Rwanda, providing training and mentoring in learner-centred, inclusive teaching of foundational skills.

A little bit of creativity has helped teachers explain concepts with physical materials. This helps students to build a deeper understanding.

Volunteers run demonstration lessons with the teachers. Rwandan graduate volunteers are working with, and supported by, international education specialists. They show the different exercises and games teachers can play. Teachers can now get students interested, run group exercises and gauge the progress of all their pupils at once.

These teaching and learning materials are being introduced in 140 schools across the country.

We are now working on creating a teachers' guide and video to train teachers in other countries to produce low cost resources to teach numeracy. Soon, we won't just be inspiring the next generation of Rwandan children, but will inspire hundreds of thousands of children worldwide.



It costs under

**£10**

**to stock a classroom with basic teaching and learning materials**

As part of this project, one low-cost solution is transforming classrooms overnight.

VSO volunteers are showing teachers how to create teaching materials for very little money. This is by using items found in the local environment, like rice sacks and bottle tops.

**VSO is working in more than**  
**2,000**  
**primary schools in Rwanda**

“I have learned that I need to speak up and be active. I am inspired by my Big Sister to study hard and take part in extra activities. Today, I am regular at school and very happy to be in the school. I like to study and be with friends. I dream to be a teacher and serve in my community.”

Pramila, a 'Little Sister' on VSO's Sisters for Sisters' Education project in Surkhet



# Helping the schoolgirls in Nepal who need it most

In Nepal, issues such as early marriage, domestic duties and menstrual taboos can lead to girls missing school or dropping out entirely.

VSO's Sisters for Sisters' Education project in Nepal pairs girls with 'Big Sister' female role models, who mentor them to stay in school and encourage parents to prioritise their daughters' education. The big sisters act as role models, sharing advice and their own experiences.

During the pilot, 93% of little sisters were confident the project would help them to stay in school. The little sisters on the project have seen great improvements, with an increase in their reading and numeracy abilities.

What's more, big sisters report feeling more confident and more able to express themselves after becoming mentors to the little sisters.

Now, we are expanding this work to reach three more districts in Nepal. This expansion will have a special focus on supporting those with physical disabilities. They will receive individual support – particularly important given that more than 30% of children with disabilities in Nepal do not attend school.

So far 320 Big Sisters  
have mentored  
**1,183** Little Sisters  
in their communities

Over **9,400**  
girls will be supported to remain  
in education in the upcoming  
phase of Sisters for Sisters

# HEALTH

## Breaking the cycle of poverty

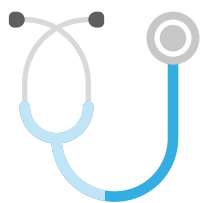
**Poor health creates a vicious cycle of poverty. Those in poverty become too ill to work, and money spent accessing healthcare pushes people further into poverty.**

VSO volunteers work with health workers, communities and governments to improve health services and rights for the most marginalised and disadvantaged women, babies, adolescents and youth to break the cycle of poverty.

In 2018/19 VSO's health programmes reached over

**175,000**

mothers, babies and young people



### Tackling sexual health taboos among young people in Zambia

VSO's volunteering for development approach is opening conversations on sexual reproductive health services between adolescents, young people and those who exercise influence over them.

In Zambia, stigma around sexual health is having a devastating effect on teenage girls. Three in ten young Zambian women in rural areas aged 13-19 are either pregnant or already mothers. Sixteen thousand teenage girls have dropped out of school after falling pregnant.

Volunteers on the Adolescent TALK! project have been building young people's sexual health knowledge through community outreach, sessions in school classrooms and at health facilities. Highly-respected community elders in the community were trained as volunteer 'change champions', to break down stigma and help change community attitudes.

The project reached nearly 8,000 young people, and stretched to one remote Zambian island named Mbabala. On this island, the introduction of sexual health education has dramatically reduced teenage pregnancy. In 2019, no girls have dropped out of school for this reason.

Since the introduction of this project, there have been fewer teenage pregnancies, more young people accessing contraceptives, and enhanced sexual health knowledge.

The project reached **8,000** girls and boys aged 10 to 19



©VSO/Jason J. Mulikita

Monica Atim, a VSO community volunteer 'change champion' – trained through VSO's Adolescent TALK! project in Zambia – talks to Annie Mwewa and her teenagers Veronica and Mary about contraceptives.



**Midwife Catherine Swaray scans Isha Fofohan. Isha is five months pregnant. VSO volunteer Dr Kiran Cheedella assists her at Batanoi Community Health Centre, Sierra Leone.**

### **Pioneering maternal health technology to reach the most isolated communities**

In the past year, we have strengthened our track record in improving the quality and reach of maternal health services. This year, we have been working on an innovative and life-saving project in Bombali district, Sierra Leone.

Here, midwives based out of basic rural health posts have to cover a huge area, operating with the most meagre of resources. Through a joint project, working with General Electric, they are now able to offer free ultrasound services in these communities. Volunteer doctors from the UK have given local midwives guidance on how to use the machines.

The volunteers mentor and share their professional knowledge with the midwives. The portable ultrasound machines help clinicians calculate a woman's due date and spot abnormalities and high-risk pregnancies. At-risk women can then be

transferred to the district hospital before it's too late. It is the first time that such services have been available, free of charge, to expectant mothers in this part of Sierra Leone.

VSO-trained midwives are also teaching women about self-care, nutrition and exercise during the clinics. This is to boost the chances of healthy pregnancies and deliveries. VSO is discussing possibilities to upscale this model to other parts of the world, together with partners.



**2,490**  
ultrasound scans  
conducted



**250**

Deaf adolescents  
and youth educated  
on sexual and  
reproductive health

**191** healthcare  
professionals taught  
basic sign  
language skills

## Teaching sign language to healthcare workers in Rwanda

In Rwanda, more than 30,000 people experience hearing loss. A lack of interpreters and knowledge of sign language among health professionals means some Deaf people are not given the right information or treatment.

The Imbere Heza project is helping young people with hearing impairments to take control of their sexual health and make informed decisions.

Deaf volunteer Niyonsaba Brown has run training in Rwandan Sign Language with almost 200 health professionals. She has also run education sessions on sexual health and rights with Deaf people.

Nurses were given 12 intensive days of training in sign language. Now, they can understand the health concerns of their Deaf patients and explain what treatment they can provide.

"This project is innovative. I am the first and only Deaf VSO Rwanda national volunteer. This is the only project of its kind in the whole country," said Brown.

**3,000**

parents and  
community members  
educated on Deaf  
awareness and sexual  
health issues

**100**

Deaf people trained  
in Rwandan Sign  
Language over 10 days

“The life of Deaf people is not easy, especially those who don’t get information about sexual and reproductive health. Now, when we go to hospital, someone can communicate with us.”

Tumukumde Lydia, who has learnt sign language at Umutara School for Deaf children, where VSO national volunteer Niyonsaba Brown is working

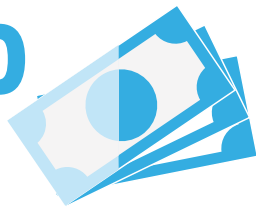
# RESILIENT LIVELIHOODS

Bringing security and dignity to all

**Millions of people are struggling without a reliable source of food and income to support themselves and their families. VSO works to address the barriers to social and economic independence. Our skilled volunteers make sure people have the skills and opportunities needed to live more secure and dignified lives.**

In 2018/19, VSO's livelihoods programmes supported over

**115,000**  
people



## Supporting youth to earn a decent living

Climate change, rapid globalisation and automation of jobs are all posing new challenges to the world's workforce. These changes are felt acutely in developing countries. Huge youth populations urgently need to be skilled-up and connected to the world of work to be able to thrive in this changing world.

VSO's work in four training colleges in Tanzania is changing the vocational curriculum on a national scale, helping to set a new standard of education. The focus is on teaching employability skills and updating training information to meet the current requirements of the private sector.

Experienced professional volunteers work alongside corporate volunteers from Randstad, the largest global recruitment company in the world. They are training local staff on setting up career centres and exploring new strategies for matching youth to local jobs.

So far, two career centres have been established where new graduates can share their CVs and be matched with potential employers. Most importantly, these centres reach out to private sector companies who help to screen candidates to maximise their chances of being recruited.

Others registering with the centres and using their services continue to be coached on their employability skills.



**1,800**

Tanzanian graduates  
received career advice

**Tatu Mohammed Makame, sewing at the Subra Tailoring Enterprise in Nungwi, Zanzibar.**

**740** Tanzanian graduates  
are now employed after  
receiving technical and  
employability skills training

## Empowering young mothers in Tanzania

We don't make assumptions on behalf of the people we work with. We let them speak for themselves.

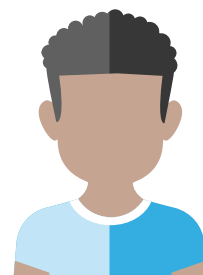
In Tanzania, the Lake Zone Youth Empowerment (LZYE) project is doing this through 'aspiration analysis'. In focus groups, volunteers are asking young people what their dreams for the future are and how they would like their life to look five years from now.

The project works with youth aged 15-26, with a focus on supporting girls, young or expectant mothers and those with disabilities to find employment. These groups report that their needs and rights are often overlooked. Their families see them as a source of shame, rather than potential.

For young women like Jida, pictured below, the focus group is a rare opportunity to think and express what they want to achieve, and what they want to change about their lives. They talk about their current circumstances, such as challenges at home as well as financial and cultural pressures and restrictions.

Over the next two years, volunteers and local partners will help young mothers to receive career advice and help them find entrepreneurial and employment opportunities to escape the restricted and stigmatised lives they would otherwise lead. The hope is that this approach will build confidence and empower these young mothers to become strong, independent members of their community, able to bring up their young children as they would wish.

The LZYE project  
will build the  
confidence and  
life skills of  
**3,000**  
marginalised youth



“My dream is to become a tailor, but capital is my biggest challenge. My mother died so I live with my grandparents and I don't have enough money to pay for materials. Self-confidence can help me reach my career goals and help me know who I am and what I stand for.”

Jida Musa, 19, from Mwanza, Tanzania

---

# 24,000

farmers supported  
across four countries

# 25%

increase in farming  
yields in Nigeria

# 92%

of farmers in Cambodia  
report increased yields

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## The future of farming

VSO is supporting farmers in remote and rural regions, with volunteers sharing their skills and experience to create long-lasting change in farming communities.

One example of this is the Improving Market Access for the Poor (IMA4P) project. Volunteers are helping people turn farming into a viable business and compete in a modern economy.


This has been crucial in Nigeria, where farmers make up two-thirds of the labour force. They often rely on age-old agricultural techniques to earn a living. VSO has been introducing modern methods to help boost the income and independence of farming communities.

Volunteers have been sharing advice on how to get the best yields from crops, showing how to plant and space seeds on demonstration farming plots. Training in how to use modern machinery is helping farmers to process higher-volume harvests and management skills has helped to strengthen group co-operatives.

This encourages farmers to save money and market their produce as a group. They can now sell in bulk and negotiate higher prices and are taking charge of their own development.

Forty-five percent of participants were female, and many had never farmed or earned money from farming before. Often, women work on their husbands' farms, cut off from making financial decisions for the family, but IMA4P has helped them become independent producers in their own right.

In total, 24,000 people were supported to start their own farming business or improve their current business. The advice went beyond agronomic techniques into areas such as money management and gender issues. Now, husbands and wives report increased collaboration and sharing over household financial decisions.

A close-up portrait of a smiling woman with dark skin. She is wearing a purple headwrap with a white geometric pattern and a large, colorful shawl with a floral design in shades of pink, blue, and green. She is also wearing large, round, beaded earrings. The background is a soft, out-of-focus natural setting.

“I am happier now because my farming business is profitable. One third of the yield I store to sell at a later date, one third I use to pay school fees, and one third I save for emergencies. I’ve also joined a savings group, and with the money I’ve saved I’m planning to invest that money back into farming.”

Fatima Zubairu, farmer on the IMA4P project from Mokwa, Nigeria

# GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

## Setting the standard

**As the world's leading volunteering for development organisation, we have a responsibility to share best practice. Our partners, other non-governmental organisations and those working in the development sector around the globe, look to us for direction and leadership.**

### Responsible and impactful volunteering

VSO is committed to promoting high standards and learning. Over the last year, we have been working with 39 diverse organisations across the sector to develop a global set of standards for responsible and impactful volunteering. We will be launching these standards in the coming year.

We have also produced research highlighting VSO's unique contribution to development through volunteering. This includes an overview of our maternal health work in East Africa and research documenting how VSO is helping Deaf adolescents in Rwanda to become more aware of their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

We have begun a learning partnership with the Institute for Development Studies, which is a global research organisation for sustainable change. This partnership is helping us understand how our volunteering model enables people to hold those in power to account.

We have supported volunteers and primary actors (the people in communities we work with and for) to contribute to important regional and global conferences. They have shared their experiences and expertise with decision makers. For example, VSO's work on promoting gender equality in Nepal was presented at the Commission on the Status of Women at the UN.

VSO's powerful film on 'husband schools' in Sierra Leone won at the SDG Action Film Festival. The film highlights how male peer-to-peer approaches are tackling gender-based violence. It was later screened at the UN during the High-level Political Forum, the annual global meeting to review progress on delivering the SDGs.



**Ambrose Williams participated in the VSO-supported Husband School. He has since transformed his behaviour and has become a dedicated family man in Kenema, Sierra Leone.**



**Daisy Jeptoo teaching at the Urafiki Deaf unit in Nandi, Kenya. The unit was set up following a community consultation carried out by Deaf VSO volunteers.**

## Influencing policy

We know that across the world the space for civil society is shrinking. This means that there is often less opportunity for people to come together and hold those in power to account. Volunteering can be an important entry point for this work. VSO's Valuing Volunteering research shows that volunteering is often the first step towards people becoming active citizens.

We start by listening to people on the ground, working with them to understand the genuine problems they are facing. These people begin to recognise the drivers of poverty in their own contexts. It helps them to decide where policies need to be changed, and to plan for change in their own lives.

Changes to policies and guidelines can protect and make provisions for those who are marginalised or facing discrimination. In Nepal, a national Nepali

VSO volunteer has co-created guidelines which outline services available to women and girls. These guidelines are the first of their kind and will help women who have experienced abuse to access the help they deserve.

In Kenya, VSO has worked to develop sector guidelines for teaching children with disabilities. The guidelines will make sure these children are not overlooked and have their needs met. The President of Kenya launched the guidelines this year. They are already informing the Ministry of Education's strategic plan for the next three years.

In Ethiopia, VSO coordinated a group of organisations to shape the development of a new law. This law will provide greater space for civil society organisations to operate in the country. It will also promote volunteering.

# GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

## Inspiring action

There are a growing number of people who are aware of what's happening around the world, and their place in it. VSO has an opportunity to use this potential for good, inspiring people to think of themselves as 'global citizens'. VSO is taking the lead in mobilising and engaging people to take positive action for the better.



ICS volunteers working with a local school in Bhardev, Nepal. They taught lessons on sexual rights, sexual health and child marriage, and organised a rally in the streets for World Environment Day.

We are building global engagement by:

- Encouraging our volunteer network to become global citizens and advocates of the SDGs.
- Creating opportunities for those most affected by poverty and exclusion to create change in their own communities.
- Developing partnerships with funders, private sectors, civil society and other international NGOs.

### Citizen-led monitoring

Citizen-led monitoring is one way we are engaging people around the world to lead their own development. It's an opportunity for citizens to generate their own evidence, open spaces for dialogue with those in power, and hold those in charge to account. VSO's citizen-led monitoring work is underway in six countries. It has so far

supported more than 30,000 people to understand their rights, and why the SDGs matter to them and their communities.

In Uganda, students found their teachers were not regularly attending school. Students rated their teacher's attendance with community scorecards. Then, teachers, parents and the ministry of education came together to discuss the issue. As a result, teacher attendance has improved by 120%.

In Tanzania, volunteers ran a campaign to reduce domestic violence for domestic workers. Volunteers worked in collaboration with gender officers from local police departments. Together, they educated domestic workers on the support they are entitled to.

## Youth engagement

VSO believes that young people are agents of their own development. Across all our programmes, we support young people to come together to advocate on issues that matter to them.

In Lesotho, young people created 17 youth-friendly corners in healthcare centres across Mafeteng district. VSO trained 680 peer educators who work across these facilities to provide young people with the information they need to protect their sexual health and rights.

In Nepal, a network of youth volunteers organised a mock parliament. This built young people's knowledge of the political process. This group can now engage confidently with decision-makers.

VSO also leads the UK government-funded International Citizen Service (ICS) programme. This brings together young people from the UK to volunteer side-by-side with young people from developing countries. On their return home, ICS volunteers take on an 'active citizenship' challenge. For example, they might raise awareness of development issues in their local community, write to their member of parliament or fundraise for a cause they support. Many become passionate advocates for creating change in their own communities and beyond.

Through ICS, which saw more than 3,000 young people take part last year, VSO has created a global network of active citizens.



“For me, an active citizen is someone who gets involved and helps make systemic changes to make the world a better place. This could be through awareness raising, fundraising, volunteering, petitioning, and encouraging those around you to get involved too. Since I've returned from my VSO ICS placement, I've done all these things, and fully intend to keep on doing that for the rest of my life.”

Sarah Warren, VSO ICS volunteer talking to the public about UK Aid

# WHAT WE DO

## VSO NETHERLANDS

**VSO seeks to stand side by side with the poorest communities and most vulnerable groups and work together to claim and fulfil their rights. That is what we do as a global organisation, and what VSO Netherlands contributes to with our potential: as a European centre for recruitment of international volunteers, as a broker of transformative partnerships for knowledge sharing and capacity building and as a fundraiser for impactful programmes. Together with over 20 country offices in the Global South and the hubs in the UK and Ireland, VSO Netherlands helps deliver the best possible impact of the global VSO network.**

### **Programmes and partners**

VSO Netherlands runs a number of innovative and successful programmes.

The “Inclusive Education for all in Ethiopia” programme started in 2016. This year more donors contributed to specific subprojects of this programme, such as education for children with disabilities and livelihood support for parents of ethnic minorities. The main donor Weeshuis der Doopsgezinden agreed to provide extra funding in order to support the programme until December 2019. The programme was also the centrepiece of our fundraising campaign at the end of 2018, which focused on the inclusive education programme in Gumuz and the work we do to tackle discrimination of vulnerable groups in this region (featuring young Tariku who, after being kept at home for most of his childhood like most young people with disabilities in the region, gained access to school with the help of his teachers and VSO experts).

The goal of VSO’s livelihoods programme ‘Raise Income for School Education’ (RISE) is to improve learning outcomes for marginalised children,



**Selama Hussein Makame, 49, has been supported through VSO's Commercial Agriculture for Smallholder Farmers project.**

especially girls in Kamachumu division, Muleba district. VSO's approach is to improve the quality of education via teacher training, and ensure food security at household levels to make sure children can attend school. Besides improving backyard gardening for the most marginalised households, the programme also trains over 100 lead farmers to improve commercial farming for improved food security and income. RISE is funded by the Sint Antonius Stichting. We also started an extension on a programme for skills training and employment opportunities for youth in rural Bangladesh. This programme aims to strengthen marginalised youth by organising them in youth clubs and providing vocational training and job opportunities for at least 222 youngsters.

The health programme "Sharing knowledge, saving lives in northern Uganda" was implemented from August 2016 up to February 2018. In March 2019, we started the follow-up programme "Improving the lives of mothers and new-borns in Gulu, Uganda", which is directed towards improving the quality of care at lower level health facilities and in the community. VSO Netherlands is implementing this programme with the support of Nefkens Foundation for Development Cooperation and Dioraphte Foundation.

#### **Successes:**

- Education in Ethiopia: the focus on early childhood education and bilingual education resulted in a growing number of children of ethnic minorities in pre-school classes. Also setting up Resource Centres for children with disabilities in many schools and training teachers, parents and school managers in dealing with children with disabilities increased the participation of many children with disabilities and learning problems.
- To improve employment opportunities especially for girls in rural Bangladesh, corporate volunteer Bart van Krimpen (Randstad) successfully conducted labour market research. The VSO Bangladesh team is currently working on adjustments in the programme to improve the outcome for youth with the conclusions and recommendations from Bart's report.
- The RISE programme managed to mobilise 3000 farmers and started setting up demo-fields for agriculture training.
- A team of Isala Hospital anaesthesiologists gave their first training to Ugandan anaesthesiologist students in March 2019. The focus was on skills training, as they proved to have excellent knowledge. After finishing their training, these

students will be working throughout the country to improve anaesthesia for, for example, women in need of a Caesarean section. These skills are much needed as the aim of the government is to provide this service at some health centres, which is currently not possible due to lack of staff.

#### **Challenges:**

- Ethnic clashes recently forced the programme "Inclusive Education for all in Ethiopia" to suspend its activities.
- Main challenges within livelihoods were several delays in RISE-II caused by difficulties in obtaining a visa for volunteers in Tanzania and the late cancellation of an international placement due to medical reasons. Fortunately, all positions are now covered and we plan to get activities and results on track in the current year.
- For the health programme in Gulu, we aimed to have the baseline study ready by March 2019. However, some indicators still need to be measured. This will be done by the volunteers who have recently arrived, which will increase their knowledge of the targeted health facilities.

#### **Funding and partnerships:**

- VSO Netherlands started to explore new partnerships with several foundations that share our vision and impact ambitions.
- In addition, VSO Netherlands started exploring partnership opportunities with institutional donors such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the European Union.
- New funding was secured for the Bangladesh programme from GSRD Foundation, Weeshuis der Doopsgezinden and two smaller family foundations new to VSO Netherlands.

## Placement of volunteers

The volunteering for development approach is at the heart of VSO's work with local partner organisations, with the ultimate goal of improving the lives of marginalised people. Our Dutch VSO volunteers are part of a very diverse team of professionals, each with their own strengths: local community volunteers provide a link with the communities, national volunteers (recruited from within the project country) contribute technical expertise available in the country itself and international volunteers (recruited from other African or Asian countries or from the Netherlands) bring specific technical skills not available in-country.

And we are no longer just bringing "solutions from the North". Yes, certain very technical skills are still in short supply in the South (e.g. neonatal care, new on-line solutions in Education) and for these critical skills there is a high demand from specialists from the North, but there is a lot of local knowledge. VSO's work focusses on building this locally available capacity and adding more technical skills where needed.

During the past year, a total of 83 professionals were recruited, trained and sent by the VSO Netherlands office to projects in Africa and Asia, who work alongside hundreds of national and community volunteers, contributing to VSO's overall goals. Fourteen of these have applied directly to VSO Netherlands, others were recruited through our partnerships with the private sector. Through Randstad for instance, 34 volunteers provided technical expertise on youth employability in East Africa, India and Bangladesh.

### A few highlights:

- Several Dutch primary education specialists have supported schools across Rwanda to train local "Education champions" to help their fellow teachers get to grips with a new and demanding school curriculum. A curriculum which is now in English, after the country made a sudden change from being Francophone in the past)
- In Tanzania Dutch volunteers have worked with the local community to ensure sustainable incomes through better agricultural practices and better education.
- Also in Tanzania, Randstad employability specialists have trained teachers and students and young people in general to think through their career choices, help them develop soft skills to succeed in life (CV writing, being interviewed, develop confidence) and help them directly applying for jobs or give them basic skills (marketing, business development) to start their own small business. Innovative solutions were developed together with local partners: small career centres attached to schools, mentoring schemes for young people by successful local entrepreneurs and an online vacancy platform.
- Several groups composed of strong professionals from companies such as SAP and Mondelez have provided local partners with insights and tools how to strategise their work on sustainable incomes for farmers by expanding markets for their products and improving value chains.



©VSO/Nicky Woo

**Students at Mkokotoni Vocational Training College, Zanzibar. Teachers at the college are supported by VSO and corporate volunteers from global recruitment company Randstad.**

In the next few years we expect to see larger VSO programmes in maternal & neonatal care and education and consequently a growing demand for specific technical skills in these areas. Such skills are also in high demand in a very competitive European job market. However, starting in August 2019 VSO Netherlands will recruit Europe-wide and there are significant differences in regional labour markets and availability of key skills. For example, Germany and Eastern Europe have huge pools of highly trained professionals, a test recruitment campaign in Scandinavia yielded very promising results and Italy has a strong NGO sector to engage with. By conducting a Europe-wide Labour Market analysis, partnering with key organisations in these countries and targeted recruitment campaigns for specific skills in specific countries we will be able to expand our recruitment reach in more European countries.

By means of partnering with other organisations and by expanding our recruitment reach in more European countries we aim to match this growing demand with more volunteer professionals.

## **Fundraising**

The work of VSO Netherlands is supported by more than 30,000 individual givers, whose generous support is critical for the execution of VSO's international programmes and volunteering approach. We have a large loyal donor base, more than 15 percent of our donors have been supporting us for more than ten years. Sixty-three percent of the active donors have been supporting us for more than five years. We continuously work on maintaining and improving communication with them. The largest part of our supporter acquisition is performed through the direct dialogue channel. This year, we took the first steps in diversifying our income by broadening our fundraising activities.

## **Campaigns**

We launched two campaigns this year, one in the spring and one in the winter. In the spring campaign, we focused on maternal care in Uganda, where a Dutch volunteer midwife trained her Ugandan colleagues. The aim of the project is to reduce child and mother mortality rates. The central theme of the winter campaign was 'The first day of school'. In this campaign we showcased VSO's work to enhance the resilience of disabled children with our education project in the Benishangul-Gumuz region. Both campaigns were integrated in various communication channels: online on the VSO website

and social media advertising, through our Lifechanges magazine and in the story of our door-to-door fundraising. In the winter campaign, we added a new element: we developed an online lead generation campaign, which we will follow-up in 2019.

## **Community**

VSO is more than an office in Utrecht, we are part of a worldwide movement of people from all walks of life who are showing the world that sharing knowledge for development really works. In the coming years, we will invest in relations with these people. We want to build a powerful network of volunteers who will show their support for our mission and act as ambassadors of VSO. This year we have taken a first big step by setting up a community strategy, which will be followed up next year with the development of a community platform and many more activities to further develop our VSO community.

## **Successes:**

- The total of our income target was met with lower expenditure than estimated.
- The focus on quality of staff paid off; the fundraising team has been completed with the filling of two positions: senior fundraiser and head of public fundraising and communications.
- A focus on funds diversification through the online channel has resulted in a successful lead generation campaign.

## **Challenges:**

- Our fundraising channel mix is not balanced, as we are very dependent upon door-to-door fundraising. In 2019 we will develop a new online platform that is suitable for new online fundraising activities.
- We have to make a connection between the financial supporter in the Netherlands and our work in developing countries and our volunteering for development approach. Therefore, in 2019 we will develop an engagement strategy.
- We give supporters a warm welcome to VSO Netherlands through a range of emails in which we present VSO Netherlands and explain what we do with their donation. We developed this to reduce the number of people that end their financial support in the first few months. In 2019, we will take the next steps in developing this journey.

# ORGANISATION & 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 23 country offices in Asia and Africa, the international office in Kingston (UK) and an office in Ireland. VSO Netherlands contributes to the international network by 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 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 has replaced labels such as CBF/CBF-Certificate, the RfB-label and the Label for Charities from 1 January 2016.

VSO Netherlands has a single tier board of directors. As from March 2017, VSO Netherlands has operated 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. In addition to his position at VSO Netherlands he has an additional position as chairman of the board of the foundation 'GroenLinks in de Europese Unie'.

The Supervisory Board has determined the remuneration/salary and terms of employment of the director. The Board uses the Advice Scheme 'Beloning Directeuren van Goede Doelen'. This Advice Scheme 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. The director's maximum annual income, which is relevant for assessment, is € 84,880 (from 1 July 2018). In the period from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019, the total income including employer's contributions amounted to € 81,060.

### Monitoring

The Supervisory Board, the supervisory body of VSO Netherlands, serves as a sounding board for the management and as the employer for the director. The members help to get the organisation on the highest possible level 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 management. The composition and duties of the Supervisory Board are recorded in the articles of association. The members receive no compensation for their duties. Members of the Supervisory Board are appointed for a period of four years. They can be reappointed once. In the past financial year, two members of the board stepped down. Steven Hubeek and Joke Langbroek were greatly thanked for their valuable contribution to VSO Netherlands.

In the framework of the Affiliate Agreement that was signed in March 2018 with VSO International, two additional members were nominated by VSO International, following an open recruitment process. Maria Verheij and Nynke Runia were appointed by the VSO Supervisory Board in December 2018.

The Supervisory Board met four times during this financial year. In this period the Supervisory Board's attention was focused on, among other things:

- Start of the new director
- The multi-annual strategy and budget for 2019-2021
- Vacancies in the board
- Integration with VSO International
- VSO's institutional and partnership funding strategy
- Fundraising and community building
- Preparation and approval of the 2019-2020 annual plan and its budget
- Annual accounts and report for 2017-2018

The Supervisory Board has two subcommittees. The audit committee and the remuneration committee. The audit committee, consisting of Mr. Fons de Zeeuw and Ms. Joke Langbroek (succeeded by Ms. Nynke Runia) met three times in the financial year. It focused on the preparation of the 2017-2018 annual accounts, the budget for 2019-2020, the multi-annual budget and financial monitoring.

The remuneration committee, consisting of Mr. Guus Eskens and Mr. Steven Hubeek (succeeded by Ms. Maria Verheij) 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</b> Chairman	<b>Starting date:</b> March 2017  <b>Other positions:</b> chairman Supervisory Board I+ Solutions Worldwide, board member Healthnet TPO, board member Nefkens Stichting Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, board member, Josephine Nefkens Stichting, chairman Stichting 'Drie Straatjes' Rotterdam
<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 NDL
<b>Maria Verheij</b>	<b>Starting date:</b> December 2019  <b>Other position:</b> director of communications at Akzo Nobel
<b>Nynke Runia</b>	<b>Starting date:</b> December 2019  <b>Other positions:</b> freelance consultant Member of the Supervisory Board of IVN Natuureducatie Member of the board, Stichting 'Petje Af' (until May 2018)
<b>Steven Hubeek</b>	<b>Starting date:</b> April 2010 (resigned December 2018)  <b>Other positions:</b> freelance advisor, volunteer 'De Normaalste Zaak'
<b>Joke Langbroek</b>	<b>Starting date:</b> April 2016 (resigned December 2018)  <b>Other positions:</b> chief program officer Plan Netherlands

## 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 permanent but also in project-based teams.

These teams align closely with their counterparts in the global VSO organisation, dispersed over 25 offices across the world. This enables us to make the most use of the knowledge and skills within our international network.

The four permanent teams within the organisation are:

- Volunteering
- Programmes & Partners
- Fundraising & Communications
- Support & Finance

Following the new strategic plans, VSO Netherlands recruited for a number of new staff positions that are key to help realise the ambitions; sometimes adding to the team, sometimes filling vacancies that arose. In 2018-2019, three fixed staff members and two temporary (freelance) colleagues left the organisation, and nine staff members were added to the team.

On 31 March 2019, 22 paid staff members (18 FTEs) were employed by VSO Netherlands. Eighteen women and four men were employed. We expand our permanent team with flex workers when necessary; in 2018-2019 we had four flex workers. Throughout the year, three interns worked at VSO Netherlands. Our sick leave rate is exceptionally low, at 0.8% on average throughout the year.

### The age of our employees:

Age category	Female	Male	Total
25-35	3	0	3
35-45	7	3	10
45-55	5	0	5
55+	3	1	4

VSO Netherlands adheres to the Sociaal Werk collective labour agreement (CAO) for 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 2018-2019 the PVT consisted of three employees.

Margret Kawanga, a teacher on VSO's Unlocking Talent programme, oversees students working on their tablets at the Learning Center of the Mdzobwe Primary School in rural Lilongwe, Malawi.



## Volunteers in the Netherlands

In 2018-2019 there were 31 active volunteers for VSO Netherlands. Twenty-five of them are 'alumni': returning experts. Their support is very diverse and depends on their knowledge and expertise. They work for example as editor, photographer, translator, office support staff and help at events. Volunteers also conduct assessment interviews with candidate experts in teams of two. This is an important part



of our selection procedure. Most assessors are alumni. Their own experience enables them to assess whether people are suited for assignment. In 2018-2019, VSO Netherlands decided to also engage volunteers in the role of trainers. Their candidate training courses take place over several years and will continue to be supervised by an expert trainer.

VSO Netherlands also offered the possibility to organisations to have their employees perform part of their re-integration at the VSO office.

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.

## Communication with stakeholders

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

- Our donors and relations receive the 'Lifechanges' 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.
- Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram are important for the growth of our community.
- We organise an annual 'Heart for VSO' event, where we welcome donors and interested people. We highlight the results of our work and organise, for example, a participative discussion about a topic that is central to our policy.
- We maintain a personal relationship with the business partners and funds that work with us, through a permanent account manager. Most important is to learn from each other. We report on substantive and financial results and discuss learning points.



**Emily Kamwendo, 62, was trained as a solar engineer on VSO's Solar Mamas pilot project in Malawi. She says that the project is changing the way women are viewed in her community.**

- For people who are interested in working abroad via VSO, we organise a 'Meet VSO' meeting several times per year. We inform them about all aspects of the work and discuss the possibilities. Upon return from their work, there always is an evaluative debriefing.
- Our country offices have close contact with our partners and the organisations they work for, our primary actors. VSO Netherlands closely involves these primary actors and other stakeholders, such as governments, knowledge institutions, fellow NGOs, in the design and preparation of new programmes and their monitoring.

#### **Challenges:**

- In 2019 we will develop an engagement strategy to engage people with our mission and our work, looking beyond one-way communication (sending information).

#### **Successes:**

- VSO Netherlands has a well-designed database for making extensive selections and has great potential for infrastructure needed in the future. We have aligned our data policies with new General Data Protection Regulation.
- We made a start with a new community strategy: building a lively community that acts on the VSO mission as ambassadors of VSO Netherlands.

### **Complaints, ideas and wishes**

VSO Netherlands takes all complaints, ideas and wishes of stakeholders seriously. VSO Netherlands records almost all comments of donors as a complaint, even if it is an idea or wish. Both serve the same purpose: they offer the opportunity to improve our work. For this purpose we have a special complaint procedure, which can be found on our website.

We received 113 complaints from individual givers compared to 76 complaints last year. Seventy-three of these complaints are in the category 'Rude or aggressive acquisition' and 40 complaints are in the category 'Agreed on limited financial support or one off donation'. The increase can be explained by the fact that we acquired more individual givers (+150%) than the year before.

We record every complaint and handle them in accordance with our internal quality guidelines. We distinguish three kinds of complaints: general complaints, complaints from volunteers and complaints from individual givers. In 2018-2019 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 are given 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, as well as 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. The most important ways to obtain results from our local partners are the Annual Partner Review and the Partnership Monitoring and Learning Tool.

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 annual accounts, which is approved by the Supervisory Board and is furthermore verified by our external auditor (Dubois & Co).



ICS volunteer Nul Toh at a Community Action Day with his team in Cambodia.



**Macklyne Katsuiime, 30, completed a short course in tailoring at St. Josephs Vocational Training Institute in Uganda.**

### **Fundraising expenditure**

We spent € 717,798 on fundraising in 2018-2019. In that year we raised € 3,197,823. The percentage expenditures on raised funds is 22 percent (17 percent in 2017-2018). VSO Netherlands meets the standard set by the approval regulation of the Centraal Bureau Fondsenwerving: a maximum 'cost percentage of raised funds' of 25 percent over an average of three years. Investment in fundraising did not only lead to financial resources. People are more aware about the work of VSO and development cooperation in general. We therefore allocate a part of the cost to provide information.

### **Costs of management and administration**

VSO Netherlands spent € 229,385 on management and administration in 2018-2019: 7 percent of our total expenditures, well 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 of the continuity reserve using a research on the financial risks of the global VSO network as a whole as basis.

In September 2018, 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 € 1.2 million. The surplus can be used as an investment in the growth of VSO Netherlands. This year was the first year of a four-year path of investment. On 31 March 2019, the continuity reserve was € 1,907,912, representing a decrease of € 105,738 compared to the previous financial year.

## 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 the experience of our organisation is one that 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 further implemented and developed its integrity system last year. We elaborated our Integrity policy, appointed a part-time integrity officer and raised awareness among our staff during a safeguarding training course. The training focused on preventing, reporting and handling safeguarding issues.

All VSO volunteers and staff members are familiarised 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 also 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 directions, if necessary with the aid of external parties. Support and care is arranged for victims (Slachtofferhulp).

Last year, there were no reports of safeguarding incidents from or about employees of VSO Netherlands or VSO volunteers recruited from the Netherlands.

# LONG-TERM VISION

## “Taking Volunteering for Development to Scale”

### People First

VSO International has set 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 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) specifically on “Leaving No-One Behind”. It outlines three strategic shifts we wanted 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.
- Secondly, we want increased Global Engagement by leveraging our relationships with communities, partners and volunteers, 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.

### Growing our impact

We aim to increase our effectiveness, adaptability and sustainability as an organisation. Our overarching targets are as follows:

We will become more effective as an organisation, increasing the reach of our programmes from 1.5 million to 5 million people in the next three years. This will include:

- 2 million children and young people supported to read and write
- 500,000 mothers and new-borns supported to have safe births
- 500,000 young people equipped to make positive sexual and reproductive choices
- 500,000 people in rural communities supported to improve their livelihoods
- 500,000 young people equipped to find decent work
- 1 million people in fragile contexts equipped with increased resilience to withstand conflict and disaster

Within this total we will ensure:

- 1 million young people equipped to hold duty bearers to account or supporting Sustainable Development Goal processes (“youth engagement”)
- 600,000 people with disability reached
- 4 million women and girls reached

We will continue to become more adaptable as an organisation to a rapidly changing context. Our funders & strategic partners see us as innovative & relevant in our approach. This underpins our commitment to meeting primary actor needs.

We will deliver impact by applying our volunteering for development (VfD) approach in our programmes. This approach brings together i) the People First Programme Framework ii) our relational model of volunteering and iii) the core approaches of building inclusion, resilience and social accountability. Our volunteering for development approach is what differentiates us as an organisation.

### VSO Netherlands

VSO Netherlands is part of the global VSO network. In the next three years, VSO Netherlands aims to grow its positive impact on the lives of our primary actors by enhancing our success as a fundraiser, recruiter and programme developer. We want to increase our impact through more and larger, effective programmes, enabled by successful recruitment and fundraising. In that way, we help build and grow VSO’s portfolio.

We will develop as the European Union hub for VSO, engaging effectively with partners, donors and candidates in this region. We aim to double our income and therewith the spending on our mission in the next three years.

Key priorities for VSO Netherlands are:

- Developing new opportunities for programmes within the fields of education, livelihoods and health. We will focus our efforts on a selected number of VSO's programme countries (mainly in Africa) where our efforts can reach scale and to which we are able to attract funding.
- Strengthening VSO's volunteering for development approach by recruiting highly skilled volunteers in the Netherlands, as well as other European countries. We strive towards better integrating programme work and volunteering. We will seek to grow the number of regular and corporate volunteers through new partnerships.
- Building partnerships: in order to combine knowledge, capacities and ultimately achieve greater impact, we will seek to develop strong partnerships with other NGOs, research institutes, the private sector and governments.
- Strengthening our brand: VSO's brand awareness is low and 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 will develop a more balanced income mix. Public fundraising income is currently our main source of income and will continue to be a key pillar. The ambition is to grow this by 25%. In addition, we will develop relations with institutional donors. The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has traditionally been an important player in international development, whose priorities show considerable overlap with VSO's programmatic strengths. In addition, in the post-Brexit era, VSO Netherlands is best positioned to lead VSO's engagement with other European donors. Also in the field of trusts and foundations and the private sector, we will seek to build long-lasting and sustainable relations, based on joint vision and impact. VSO will continue to strengthen its capacity to deliver on this objective.
- Building a strong community: the large group of people who volunteered in the past are important ambassadors for VSO. We see potential to engage more with this group. In addition, we seek to engage other groups who in one way or the other want to contribute to our mission. This can be either as office volunteers, trainers or selectors, fundraisers or communicators. Community building will be a priority in the next three years, with a particular focus on community fundraising.



'Big Sister' Archana, 20, is helping girls stay in school in Dobini, Nepal.

# BALANCE SHEET

as at 31 March 2019

	31.03.2019 €		31.03.2018 €
<b>Assets</b>			
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible assets		32,308	31,348
<b>Current assets</b>			
VSO current account	263,187		68,746
Other receivable, prepayments, accrued income	431,376		104,901
		<b>694,563</b>	<b>173,647</b>
<b>Cash at bank and in hand</b>		1,904,974	2,431,474
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>2,631,845</b>	<b>2,636,469</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
<b>Funds</b>			
Continuity reserve	1,907,912		2,013,650
Designated reserve	160,000		200,000
		<b>2,067,912</b>	<b>2,213,650</b>
<b>Provisions</b>		12,181	30,049
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Creditors	170,454		124,097
Taxes and social insurance	31,311		24,422
Other payable, accruals and deferred income	349,985		244,250
		<b>551,751</b>	<b>392,769</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>		<b>2,631,845</b>	<b>2,636,469</b>

## Allocation of expenses by objective

For allocation of expenses to the designated posts, VSO Netherlands makes use of the document 'Recommendation for application of Directive 650 for management and administration expenses', which is compiled by the sector organisation Goede Doelen Nederland. This means that expenses falling under management, board of directors, general secretariat and finances, and planning and control are fully allocated to management and administration. Where the direct efforts of management, board of directors, general secretariat and finances, and planning and control have been devoted to objectives and/or acquisition of income, these expenses are, in that case, calculated pro rata. Expenses included under IT, accommodation, facilities management and HR

are calculated pro rata based on the FTEs budgeted. Staffing costs, legal fees and communication expenses are allocated, to the extent possible, to the objective for which they have been incurred, or calculated pro rata based on the FTEs budgeted.

\*) Objectives

1. Education
2. Health
3. Livelihoods
4. Core approaches
5. Company partners
6. Provide information

# STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

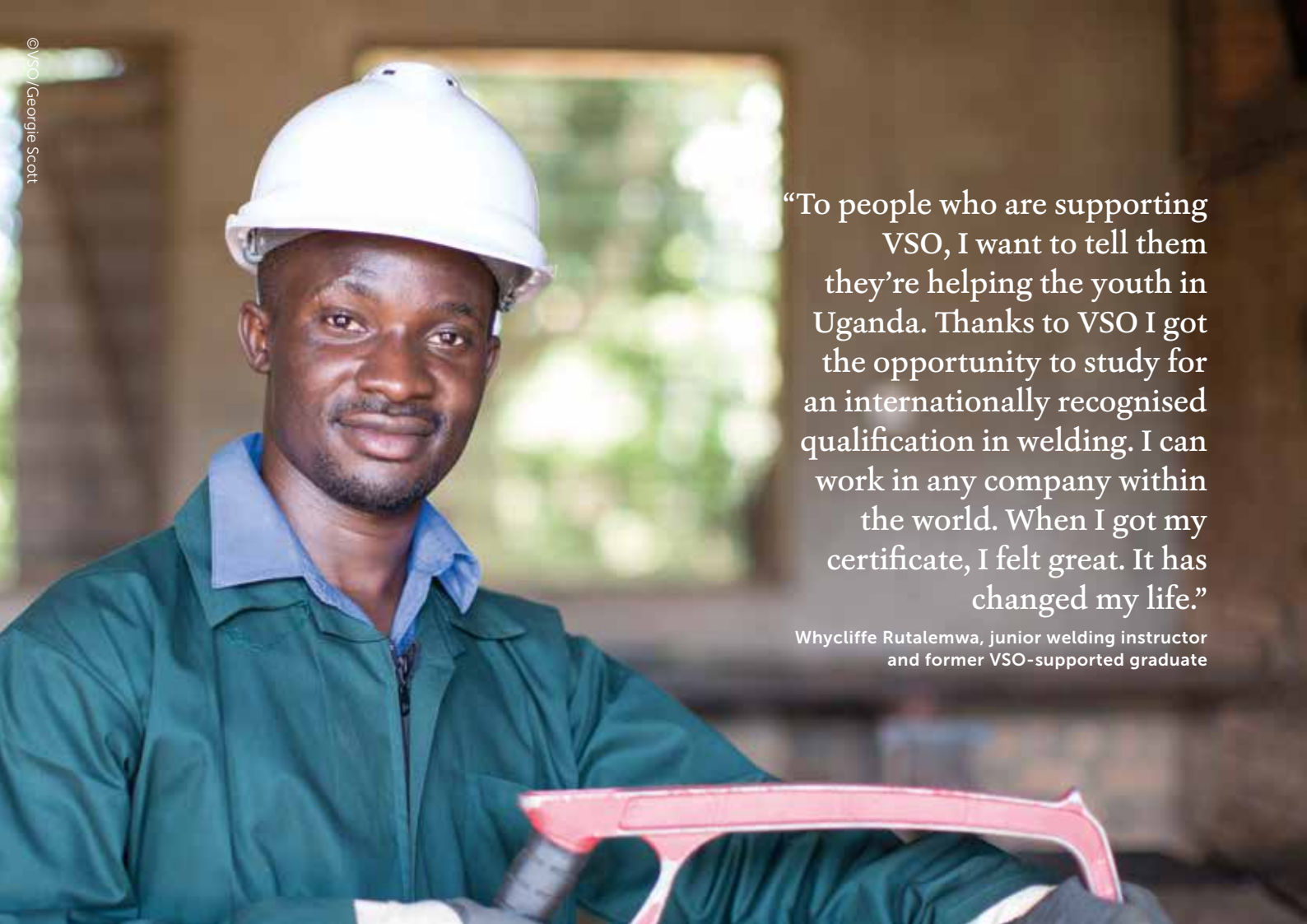
for fiscal year 2018-2019

	Financial Year 2018-2019 €	Budget 2018-2019 €	Financial year 2017-2018 €
<b>Income</b>			
From private individuals	2,425,073	2,441,114	2,595,937
From companies	0	109,000	91,270
From government grants	34,462	32,525	0
From affiliated (international) organisations	250,730	71,175	66,959
From other non-profit organisations	487,558	775,000	299,274
<b>Total income</b>	<b>3,197,823</b>	<b>3,428,814</b>	<b>3,053,440</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Education	831,655	1,078,570	534,642
Health	22,493	55,014	86,315
Livelihoods	455,522	254,747	529,292
Core approaches	25,387	68,084	391
Company partners	155,095	219,147	280,917
Provide information	905,876	893,147	583,430
	2,396,028	2,568,709	2,014,987
Raising funds expenditure	717,798	716,859	525,202
Operating expenditure	229,385	230,907	180,362
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>3,343,211</b>	<b>3,516,475</b>	<b>2,720,551</b>
<b>Balance income and expenditure</b>	<b>-145,388</b>	<b>-87,661</b>	<b>332,888</b>
Balance financial income and expenditure	-349	-470	-587
<b>Net expenditure/income</b>	<b>-145,738</b>	<b>-88,131</b>	<b>332,301</b>
Movement designated reserves	-40,000	0	200,000
Movement to continuity reserve	-105,738	-88,131	132,301
	<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>2017 - 2018</b>	
Expenditure on objectives as percentage of total	72%	73%	74%
Raising funds expenditure as a percentage of total	22%	21%	17%
Operating expenditure as a percentage of total expenditure	7%	7%	7%



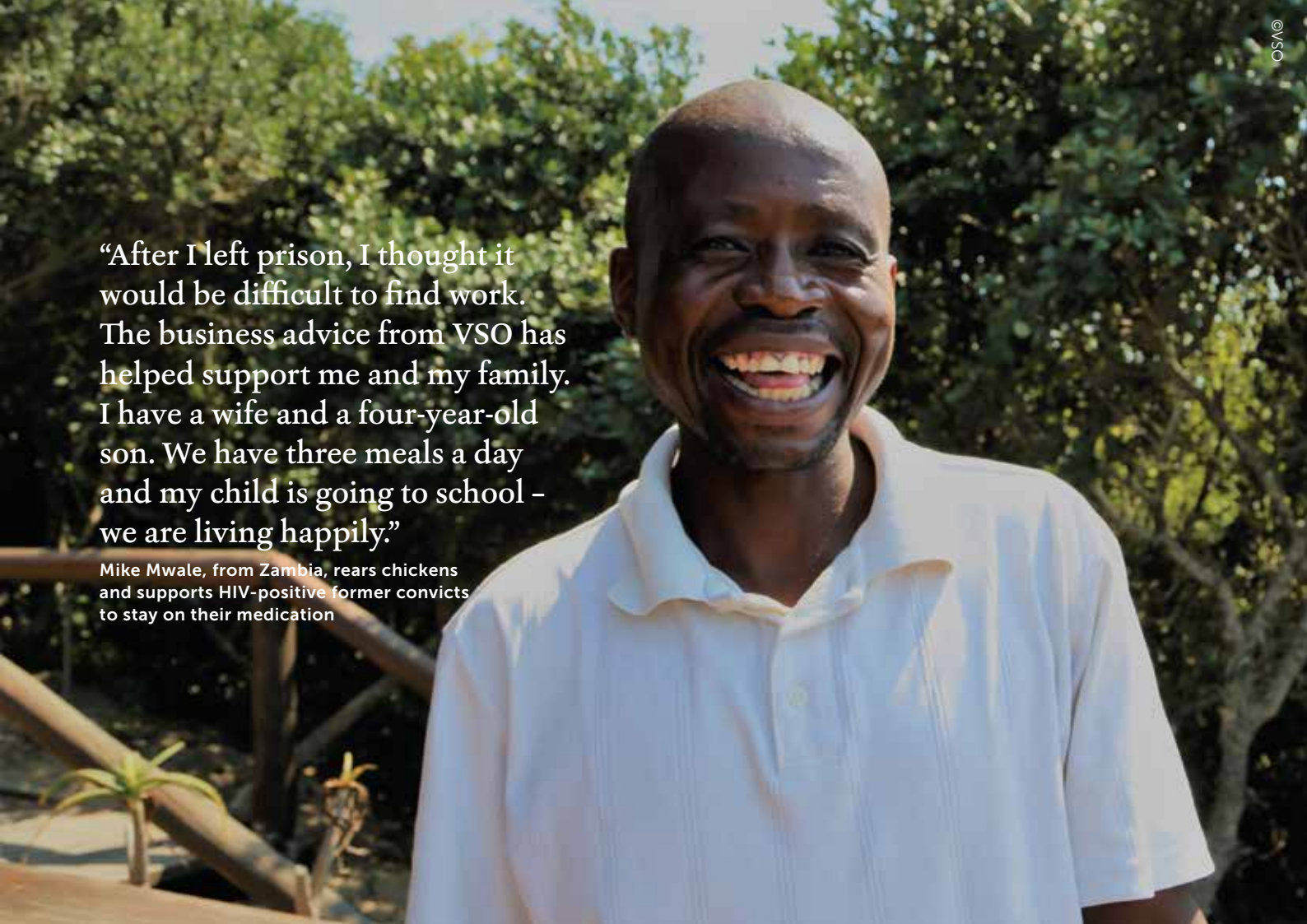
“With the financial management training I received, I save a third of the money I earn in case of emergency. It's important because emergencies can happen at any time.”

Aisha Usman, a farmer from Nigeria, is saving money through a village co-operative strengthened by support from VSO




“To people who are supporting VSO, I want to tell them they're helping the youth in Uganda. Thanks to VSO I got the opportunity to study for an internationally recognised qualification in welding. I can work in any company within the world. When I got my certificate, I felt great. It has changed my life.”

Whycliffe Rutalemwa, junior welding instructor and former VSO-supported graduate



“After I left prison, I thought it would be difficult to find work. The business advice from VSO has helped support me and my family. I have a wife and a four-year-old son. We have three meals a day and my child is going to school – we are living happily.”

Mike Mwale, from Zambia, rears chickens and supports HIV-positive former convicts to stay on their medication



“With training on conservation issues, we are now able to conserve the species of fish. I hope that as community members become more aware and increase their knowledge they can participate in conserving the resources and help develop their communities.”

Chaun Lan, resident of the Tonlé Sap, the largest freshwater lake in Southeast Asia, Cambodia

**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)

+44 (0)20 8780 7500

RSIN 9868665  
KvK nummer 41155934  
IBAN NL93INGB0000000092



## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To: the Supervisory Board of Stichting VSO Nederland in Utrecht.

### A. Report on the audit of the financial statements 2018-2019 included in the annual financial statements.

#### Our opinion

We have audited the financial statements 2018-2019 of Stichting VSO Nederland based in Utrecht.

In our opinion the accompanying financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of Stichting VSO Nederland as at 31 March 2019 and of its result for 2018-2019 in accordance with the Guidelines for annual reporting 650 "Fundraising Organisations" of the Dutch Accounting Standards Board.

The financial statements comprise:

1. the balance sheet as at 31 March 2019;
2. statement of income and expenditure for 2018-2019; and
3. the notes comprising a summary of the accounting policies and other explanatory information.

#### Basis for our opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Dutch law, including the Dutch Standards on Auditing. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the 'Our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements' section of our report.

We are independent of Stichting VSO Nederland in accordance the Verordening inzake de onafhankelijkheid van accountants bij assurance-opdrachten (ViO, Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants, a regulation with respect to independence) and other relevant independence regulations in the Netherlands. Furthermore we have complied with the Verordening gedrags- en beroepsregels accountants (VGBA, Dutch Code of Ethics).

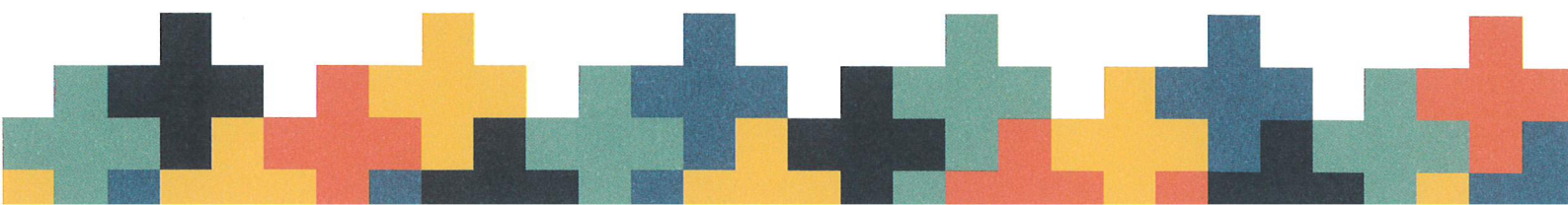
We believe the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### B. Report on the other information included in the annual financial statements.

In addition to the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon, the annual financial statements contains other information that consists of the Management Board's report.

Oranje Nassaulaan 1  
1075 AH Amsterdam  
Postbus 53028  
1007 RA Amsterdam

Telefoon 020 571 23 45  
E-mail [info@dubois.nl](mailto:info@dubois.nl)  
[www.dubois.nl](http://www.dubois.nl)  
KvK nummer 34374865



Based on the following procedures performed, we conclude that the other information is consistent with the financial statements and does not contain material misstatements.

We have read the other information. Based on our knowledge and understanding obtained through our audit of the financial statements or otherwise, we have considered whether the other information contains material misstatements.

By performing these procedures, we comply with the requirements of the Dutch Standard 720. The scope of the procedures performed is substantially less than the scope of those performed in our audit of the financial statements. Management is responsible for the preparation of the other information, including the Management Board's report, in accordance with the Guidelines for annual reporting 650 "Fundraising Organisations" of the Dutch Accounting Standards Board.

### **C. Description of responsibilities regarding the financial statements**

#### **Responsibilities of the Supervisory Board for the financial statements**

The supervisory Board is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements, in accordance with the Guidelines for annual reporting 650 "Fundraising Organisations" of the Dutch Accounting Standards Board. Furthermore, the supervisory Board is responsible for such internal control as the supervisory Board determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

As part of the preparation of the financial statement the supervisory Board is responsible for assessing the foundation's ability to continue as a going concern. Based on the financial reporting framework mentioned the supervisory Board should prepare the financial statements using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the foundation or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

The supervisory Board should disclose events and circumstances that may cast significant doubt on the foundation's ability to continue as a going concern in the financial statements.

The Supervisory Board is responsible for monitoring the financial reporting process of the organization.

#### **Our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

Our objective is to plan and perform the audit assignment in a manner that allows us to obtain sufficient and appropriate audit evidence for our opinion.

Our audit has been performed with a high, but not absolute, level of assurance, which means we may not detect all material errors and fraud during our audit.

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements. The materiality affects the nature, timing and extent of our audit procedures and the evaluation of the effect of identified misstatements on our opinion.

We have exercised professional judgement and have maintained professional scepticism throughout the audit, in accordance with Dutch Standards on Auditing, as well as ethical requirements and independence requirements.

Our audit included e.g.:

- identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, designing and performing audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtaining audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control;
- obtaining an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the foundation's internal control;
- evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the supervisory Board;
- concluding on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting, and based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the foundation's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause a foundation to cease to continue as a going concern;
- evaluating the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures; and
- evaluating whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant findings in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Amsterdam, 4 July 2019

Dubois & Co. Registeraccountants  
Signed on original

G. Visser RA