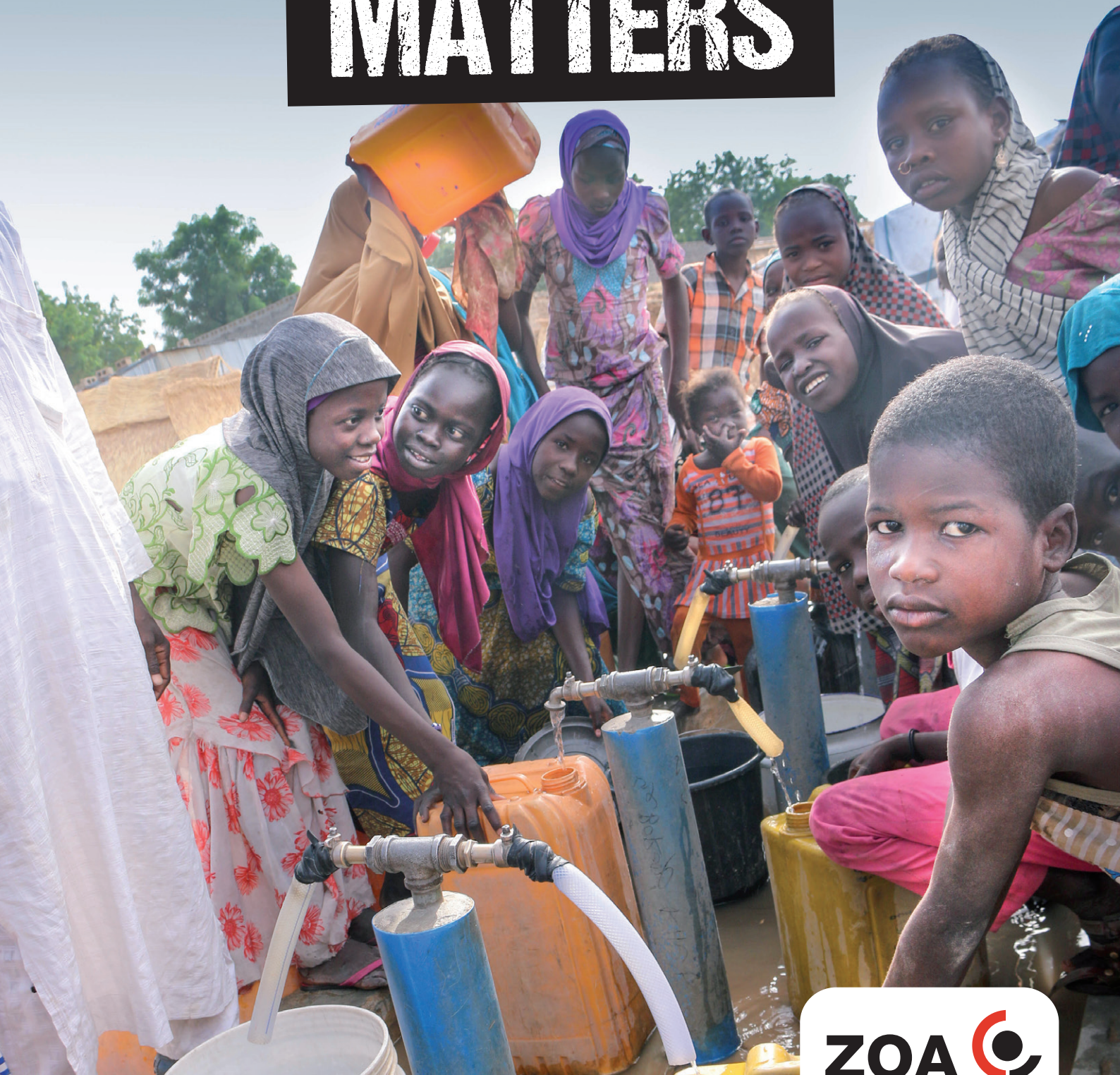


ZOA STRATEGIC PLAN 2019 – 2022

EVERY LIFE MATTERS



RELIEF | HOPE | RECOVERY

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Preface

Dear all,

In front of you is the new strategic plan for ZOA called 'Every Life Matters'. It has come together after a consultative process in which many individuals within the organisation have contributed.

As the title suggests, ZOA has put people at the centre of its new strategy. In a world that is ruled by statistics and where big numbers count, ZOA wants to put its focus on the individual, acknowledging that we are all uniquely created in the image of God. 'Every life matters' means that we want to focus on the most vulnerable and aim to improve their self-reliance. It also means that we want to give them a voice and want to see them actively participate within our projects and programmes, from need identification all the way to project evaluation.

We realise that some of the strategic objectives we have set ourselves are ambitious. However, we believe they are justified considering the plight of refugees and displaced people and their ever-increasing number.

ZOA operates in a complex environment in which it faces many challenges. We are proud of the committed staff we have, who are willing to go the extra mile in serving those in need.

Chris Lukkien (CEO)

Edwin Visser (CPO)

1. Executive summary

With record numbers of refugees and displaced people, the humanitarian needs are higher than ever. It is ZOA's desire to respond and alleviate suffering, particularly of the most vulnerable. **This plan explains how ZOA will respond and highlights the key priorities the organisation has chosen for the next few years as it responds to both the needs and a changing context in which it operates.**

As part of the strategic planning exercise, time was taken to review ZOA's identity statements. **Its Christian roots and identity were both acknowledged and affirmed as being core to the identity of the organisation.** The mission (purpose & vision) statement were sharpened and formulated more succinctly. The core values were updated, with the aim of them playing a more important role in shaping organisational culture, i.e. 'the way we do things around here'.

Over the years ZOA has made many operational choices. These relate to questions such as who it serves, where and how it operates, and the type of work (the 'what') ZOA does. In this plan ZOA's dual mandate of being a relief and recovery organisation is affirmed, but with greater emphasis given to the relief part of ZOA's mandate. **ZOA will continue to focus on working in fragile contexts, supporting some of the most vulnerable in the region.** ZOA's well proven hybrid model – having own operational capacity as well as working through (local) partners - will continue to be normal way of operating. But in line with the Grand Bargain agreement, ZOA will put greater emphasis on localisation.

Rather than expanding the number of sectors in which it operates, ZOA's will keep its focus on the sectors where it has gained experience and expertise over many years: Shelter, Education, Livelihood & Food security, WASH, and Peacebuilding (including land rights).

At the same time, there are many crosscutting themes that impact the work we do in these sectors. ZOA has chosen to particularly focus on gender, conflict sensitivity, and protection and will seek to include these in all of its programme and project activities.

As a signatory of the Grand Bargain agreement ZOA will seek to put agreed commitments into practice and will also seek full CHS (Core Humanitarian Standards) certification.

As we move forward, ZOA will seek to demonstrate more clearly how it contributes towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). At the same, however, due to the nature of its work, adherence to humanitarian principles and practises will take first priority.

Over the next few years, ZOA will particularly focus attention on the following themes. First, ZOA will place people at the centre, both in the service delivery and within the organisation. Secondly, priority will be given to improving the quality of its programme implementation as ZOA reaches out to the most vulnerable. Thirdly, ZOA will invest in its innovation capacity, and, lastly ZOA will focus on growing and better engaging its constituency with the plight of refugees, displaced people, and their host communities.

ZOA will firmly embed all of the above in a broader discussion about its long-term place and position as a Christian humanitarian organisation that is constituency based, but significantly depends on institutional funding, and is working in a highly volatile and fast-changing humanitarian space.

For a 3 minute animation video of our strategic plan, check www.zoa-international.com



2. Trends and developments

2.1 The need

In 2017, conflicts and disasters around the world left an estimated 201 million people in need of the 'last resort' of international humanitarian assistance in order to cope and survive¹. Conflict continues to feature as a main contributor to humanitarian need.

By the end of 2017 an unprecedented 68.5 million² people around the world had been forced to flee their homes – the highest level recorded since the Second World War and nearly double the amount since the start of this millennium. Two-thirds of them come from just five countries: Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar, and Somalia. The vast majority of them (95%) remain in the region with many seeking refuge in neighbouring countries, while others remain trapped within their own country.

Protracted crisis has become the new norm and it is estimated that nearly half a billion people are affected by protracted crises. It creates a very challenging environment in which to bring relief and stability.

Climate change and environmental degradation also threatens food security and stability. The food security situation has worsened particularly in parts of sub-Saharan Africa, South Eastern Asia and Western Asia, most notably in places where next to droughts or floods there is also conflict.

As a result, the significant progress that has been made in the last 25 years in terms of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) still has left many behind, particularly those affected by conflict and natural disasters.

2.2 The changing context – Institutional donors

Governments and multilateral organisations continue to provide the majority of external contributions to humanitarian emergency responses. ZOA is recognised as a trustworthy implementing partner and receives a large percentage of its funding from such donors, either directly or through consortia.

With record numbers of people being displaced, more funding than ever is required. This puts further pressure

on organisations such as ZOA to become more efficient and cost-effective in order to respond faster to crises and doing this in ways that are more attuned to those in need. Secondly, interventions need to be designed and implemented so that they can be scaled up to reach larger numbers of people. Thirdly, interventions are expected to contribute to long-term solutions by addressing root causes and partnering more closely with (local) development actors. Lastly, institutional donors increasingly look for bigger implementing partners that are able to implement large-scale projects. As a result, smaller and medium sized NGOs, such as ZOA, are finding themselves being forced to either implement larger size projects or running the risk of being left behind.

2.3 The changing context – ZOA constituency

In the Netherlands, average charitable giving as a percentage of disposable income is less than 1% and shows a steady decline³. ZOA also experiences a slow but steady decline in its number of supporters. ZOA receives most of its support from committed Christians. Typically, this group is a lot more generous compared to average giving. For ZOA, this is reflected in the fact that, even though there are fewer givers, the average gift continues to increase, resulting in an increase in overall giving.

Most of ZOA's supporters have a more conservative (reformed) church background, many of whom are active in their local church. ZOA's constituency is relatively young with the 35-54 year olds being the largest group of givers. At the same time, we are blessed with many older givers, some of whom have supported the organisation since the beginning. Giving by companies, as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR), continues to grow in the Netherlands and has become increasingly important for ZOA as well. In total, it is estimated that contributions from companies to good causes amount to €2 billion. Likewise major donors, trust and foundation are becoming more important for ZOA as a source of income, which is consistent with the general trends in the charitable sector.

¹ Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2018

² UNHCR Global Trends Report 2017

³ CBF, www.cbf.nl/nieuwsbericht/geven-in-nederland-2017-20-jaar-cijfers-en-trends-over-gevend-nederland



ZOA has a considerable number of schools and churches that faithfully support the work. However, both schools and churches receive requests from an increasing number of charities.

Legacy income for charities is expected to increase in years to come, as we are in the middle of the largest transfer of wealth from one generation to the next. For some charities, legacy income already forms a significant part of their annual income. For ZOA this is not the case and it would benefit from a (pro-)active legacy strategy.

2.4 The changing context – Working with partners

The importance of partnerships continues to grow within the humanitarian sector. Institutional donors are expecting humanitarian actors to implement large size projects (see also 2.2) covering multiple locations, sectors and areas of expertise. Organisations are joining forces in partnerships and consortia in order to be able to implement such large-scale projects. ZOA, also, has seen a significant increase in the number of partnership and consortia in which it participates.

Partnerships are also important for the sharing of knowledge and resources and can play an important role for lobby and advocacy. As organisations work together, they have the stronger voice. This is one of the reasons why ZOA participates in several networks.

Looking ahead, it is particularly the collaboration with local partners that will receive greater attention as the localisation agenda is gaining momentum.

2.5 The organisation

ZOA has a solid organisation with good administrative policies and procedures and a flat organisational structure. The former contributes to ZOA being able to account well for its operational activities and ZOA is generally known as a trustworthy partner that is able to deliver. Our flat organisational structure means that decision making is happening close to where projects are implemented, allowing the organisation to be agile and quick to respond. At the same time, there is a sense that many of the organisation's policies and procedures require both an update and an upgrade, as they have not kept pace with a changing organisational environment and changing donor requirements.

Secondly, ZOA is in the process of upgrading its quality management system (QMS). The aim is to both simplify and improve the system. The next and arguably more challenging stage of this project will be for it to become fully operational in such a way that the QMS will help ZOA worldwide to improve its way of working.

Lastly, ZOA's culture is typified by its Christian roots and is characterized by words as committed, hard-working, honest, faithful, but also self-critical. The existing core values of human dignity, stewardship, faithfulness, and justice are seen as important, but appear to play a limited role in defining the organisational culture, i.e. 'the way we do things around here.'

3. Who we are and what we stand for

3.1 History

ZOA was founded in 1973 in response to a humanitarian crisis in South-East Asia. Since then ZOA has grown from a small organisation with a regional focus to a professional organisation that runs high quality, integrated programmes for people affected by conflict or disaster in more than 15 countries worldwide. In addition to receiving private support and funding from the Netherlands, ZOA has become a trusted partner for an increasing number of institutional donors and partners around the world. From the three students that operated from a room in the attic, the organisation now employs nearly a thousand people worldwide. What has remained throughout is ZOA's commitment and determination to bring real, tangible, and sustainable change to people affected by conflict and disaster. What has also remained is the importance of its Christian identity as the source of inspiration. The motivation and sense of calling that moved the early founders into action, still lies at the heart of the organisation today.

3.2 Identity – purpose, vision and values

As part of the strategic exercise, ZOA reviewed its mission statement with the aim of providing greater clarity and articulating its identity more succinctly. As a result, the Mission statement was split into two separate short statements, a Purpose and a Vision statement. ZOA's motivation and identity were articulated in a Sense of Calling statement. All are further explained below.

ZOA also reviewed and slightly adjusted its values. As we move forward, ZOA will seek to ensure that its values drive the organisational culture and bring greater consistency in the way programmes and activities are implemented. In that sense, the values reflect the core behaviour we expect from our staff. An explanation of the new values can also be found below.

3.3 Sense of Calling

We believe in the biblical message of reconciliation and restoration for a broken world. We believe we have a specific responsibility to restore hope for people, particularly those in vulnerable positions. Inspired by our faith, we reach out to people in need, irrespective of their race, ethnicity, religion or gender.

3.4 Purpose

We support people who suffer because of armed conflict or natural disasters, by helping them to rebuild their homes and their livelihoods and to live peacefully together in stable communities. The mandate can be summarized in these two terms: relief and recovery. Therefore, we speak of a dual mandate. The context in which we operate is often fragile. We strive to be in areas where our added value is greatest and seek to reach out to the most vulnerable.

3.5 Vision

We believe that God calls us to bring peace, reconciliation, and hope to a broken world. We work towards a world where people have hope and live dignified lives in peaceful communities, and have faith that one day we will experience the true peace.

SENSE OF CALLING



PURPOSE

We provide relief, hope and recovery to people impacted by conflicts and disasters

as we work towards...



VISION

A world where people have hope and live dignified lives in peaceful communities



VALUES

We value **people**
We are **faithful**
We are good **stewards**
We serve with **integrity**

Our values

We value people

All people are made in God's image and we therefore place people at the centre of our work. We treat people with respect and dignity, irrespective of ethnicity, gender, religion or age. We seek to enable people to live normal and peaceful lives, develop their potential, and to provide hope for the future.

We are faithful

We want to bring lasting change and are committed to stay when the initial crisis is over. Even when local circumstances are challenging we seek to reach out to the most vulnerable.

We are good stewards

We utilise the resources entrusted to us in the best possible and most responsible way. We are efficient, effective, transparent, and accountable to those we support and those who support us.

We serve with integrity

We expect from each other the highest standards of personal and organisational integrity. We are open and honest in the way we deal and communicate with our stakeholders. We treat people with respect and speak the truth in love to one another.



4. The choices ZOA has made

4.1 Introduction

Over the years ZOA has made many strategic choices, including choices regarding its mandate, regions, sectors, and crosscutting issues. These choices are not necessarily recorded in policy documents, but are very important. They are mentioned below, whereby specific (changes in) priorities within those choices are highlighted.

4.2 Dual mandate - relief

ZOA's relief projects are implemented in response to conflict and/or natural disasters, and aim to address short-term needs. In the context of a sudden onset crisis, the first phase is that of 'search and rescue' and medical care. We position ourselves in the phase(s) that follow(s) immediately after that and we concentrate on providing food, clean water, non-food items, cash and shelter. In addition, we will give more attention to psychosocial well-being of beneficiaries within our interventions, recognising that many suffer from traumas as a result of the conflict or disaster.

Although ZOA's relief projects are not primarily focused on institutional reform and capacity building, efforts are made to adopt a longer-term perspective as soon as this is possible. ZOA also seeks to plan and monitor in a conflict-sensitive way in order to prevent 'doing harm' to long-term development processes.

When ZOA provides relief after a natural disaster in a non-conflict setting, the involvement will be as brief as possible. The length of intervention depends on the nature and the magnitude of the disaster, the availability of local follow-up capacity and the time needed to make a proper connection with longer-term reconstruction processes. However, ZOA's involvement in natural disaster response programmes will normally last no longer than three years. Many of the countries in which ZOA operates are characterised by chronic or recurring crises. This means that it can be expected that many of ZOA's country programmes implement both relief and recovery projects at the same time.

For any new relief intervention (i.e. outside existing programme areas), ZOA's Disaster Response Team normally takes the lead and is positioned to respond at short notice. As with any other intervention, such response will often be done in collaboration with both

international and local partners in order to maximise the impact of the response and avoid duplication of effort. In that regard, we want to uphold the commitments from the Grand Bargain of which we are a signatory. Over the past years, and following an in-depth review⁴, ZOA has strengthened its disaster response capacity through the Disaster Response Team (DRT) and has carried out more relief activities in existing country programmes. In response to the increased needs in the world, **ZOA wants to further develop and strengthen its position as an effective and reliable implementing partner in relief and aims to increase the relief component of its work to around 30%.**

4.3 Dual mandate - recovery

ZOA's recovery programmes are planned and implemented in conflict-affected and fragile settings. Groups targeted include all conflict-affected communities among which are refugees, IDPs, returnees and host communities. ZOA aims to be inclusive and conflict-sensitive in the programmes it implements, supporting all people affected by a conflict irrespective of race, ethnicity, religion, disability, or gender.

In addition to addressing short-term needs, ZOA's recovery efforts endeavour to encourage processes of structural change, such as institution building and the tackling of vulnerability and social inequality, as these contribute towards improved livelihood conditions. ZOA believes these are foundational for resilient and peaceful communities.

As we move forward, **ZOA wants to retain its core strength and expertise in early recovery.**

4.4 Working in fragile contexts

ZOA focuses particularly on countries, and areas within countries, categorised as 'fragile.' Such fragility is often caused by conflict. For ZOA's recovery programmes, 'conflict-related fragility' is an essential characteristic of the context in which it chooses to operate. The underlying causes of conflict are often related to access to livelihood assets, such as land and water. It also has a strong negative effect on the peoples' livelihood strategies, resulting in a further increase in the number of people affected.

⁴ 'Evaluation of Disaster Response in ZOA' by Dirk Frans – Senior Consultant, May 2015



We recognise that not all responses will be within a fragile context. A response to a natural disaster, for instance, could be in an area that is normally considered as stable. However, people living in conflict-affected areas are often more severely impacted by natural disasters.

4.5 Serving the most vulnerable

ZOA seeks to help the most vulnerable. This includes women, children, elderly, female headed households, disabled, minorities, refugees and IDPs who need protection. The most vulnerable are not necessarily the poorest people. In the context of violent conflict, relatively wealthy people may be among the most vulnerable.

While ZOA focuses on the most vulnerable, it does not exclude beneficiaries that are less vulnerable or better off economically. By strengthening entrepreneurs or even the middle class, the whole community – including the most vulnerable – can benefit. However, for ZOA it would never be a stand-alone purpose to set-up businesses. When undertaking such projects, it would be with the aim of benefitting the most vulnerable.

4.6 Supporting crises affected people in the region

There is an ongoing debate in society about refugees and (economic) migrants. There are those who portray refugees as fortune hunters. On the other side of the debate, there are those who have a very inclusive view and want to include people migrating for economic reasons (“fleeing poverty”) or climate change in the definition of refugees. ZOA does not agree with either side and upholds the refugee definition as given in the refugee convention of 1951⁵ and which includes people fleeing from violence.

Within the broader context of support given to people impacted by conflicts and disasters, **ZOA continues its focus on providing support in the region.**

There are two reasons for this choice. First, the most vulnerable are mostly those staying in the region. They do not have the means and/or the physical condition to undertake the long journey to Western countries. Secondly, according to ZOA’s experience, refugees and IDPs in general have one main desire, which is to return home as soon as circumstances allow. Therefore, they are better off if they can be offered protection and basic needs in their region of origin, and return home as soon as the situation allows. ZOA will always determine independently, but together with the beneficiaries what is best for them. If the interest of the beneficiaries happens to coincide with the interest of politically motivated donors that is fine, as long as ZOA is confident that it can adhere to the humanitarian principles.

4.7 Hybrid model

ZOA will continue with its hybrid model of operation, whereby we both implement directly, as well as working with and through (local) partners. This hybrid approach helps ZOA to be flexible according to the needs and the possibilities in each context.

In line with the localisation agenda (Grand Bargain), working through local partners will become more important and will receive greater emphasis.

Because ZOA has local presence in its programme areas, ZOA is well positioned to strengthen capacity of local partners through joint programming and on-the-job training. At the same time ZOA underlines the importance of mutual learning, as both benefit from each other’s experience and expertise.

⁵ Convention relating to the status of refugees, 1951, article 1

4.8 Programmatic approach and outcome measurement

ZOA will continue to work from a thorough context analysis for specific geographical areas. The analysis will determine strategic choices made at country level. Although ZOA receives finances based on specific projects, ZOA is committed to be faithful to communities it serves, taking an holistic view of the needs within those communities. Where local needs go beyond ZOA's areas of expertise, ZOA will advocate for other organisations to respond.

ZOA has defined standardised indicators that will provide insight in the state of affairs within an entire programme area. **This coming strategic period ZOA will focus on implementing these standardised indicators.**

4.9 Sectoral choices

As we work towards peaceful communities where people live dignified lives, ZOA focuses on the provision of basic services in five sectors: Livelihood, WASH, Peacebuilding, Education and Shelter. Rather than seeking to expand into new sectors, ZOA wants to further develop expertise in its current sectors. The five sectors complement each other, whereas especially peacebuilding can utilise the other sectors to access areas that might be inaccessible for stand-alone peacebuilding projects. In ZOA's **Shelter** programming, the focus is on the provision of tents/ tarpaulins or cash. In addition, ZOA is sometimes involved in repairing damaged houses. When houses need to be rebuilt from scratch, ZOA applies the 'building back better' principle.



Within **Education**, ZOA focuses on primary education, lower secondary education, functional adult literacy and numeracy, and vocational training. ZOA aims to connect youth to the employment market and increase the inclusion of youth into society through vocational training. Education projects may include the rehabilitation of school buildings, and in order to improve quality, it is often necessary to focus on training of teachers. Depending on the context, education projects will include a focus on the psychosocial well-being of students.



ZOA's **WASH** programmes focus on the provision of clean drinking water, sanitation facilities and hygiene practises. Most of ZOA's WASH work takes place at community level, but increasingly includes watershed level

approaches as IWRM (Integrated Water Resource Management). The latter means that ZOA takes into account the availability of water and the sharing of available resources between different user groups like farmers, pastoralist and households. This is done on catchment area level, taking into account the hydrological aspects and the needs of all stakeholders by addressing their interest while considering social dynamics and conflict triggers over this resource. Furthermore, external factors such as climate change, environmental degradation and desertification are included in this approach.



Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL)

traditionally focuses on agriculture. Particularly within the context of climate change approaches for sustainable and efficient agriculture and food systems will be stimulated. At the same time, as the world sees more and more people (including displaced) living in urban settings, there is a need to develop skills and expertise on urban FSL. Where necessary ZOA will also ensure that people have access to food and non-food items (NFIs), either through direct **distributions** or through **cash programming**.



Peacebuilding programmes relate to ensuring the presence of justice, social cohesion and mutual acceptance.

Community Based Social Therapy provides an opportunity for participants to recover from conflict, encourage reconciliation and to discover a new and positive perspective from which they are enabled and empowered to build and support their societies, and to formulate and achieve individual and common goals.



Within ZOA **Land rights** is considered as a sub-sector under Peacebuilding. Secure access to land and secure ownership of land, for housing-, agricultural- and other livelihoods purposes is one of the cornerstones of making sustainable, positive return of displaced people and development possible. The basis for achieving tenure security is the resolution of conflicts around land. Land conflict resolution and a clarification and documentation of land rights are essential components of sustainable peacebuilding processes in many contexts.

4.10 Cross-cutting themes

There are multiple cross-cutting themes that have to be taken into account throughout all projects. Inclusion, environment, DRR, gender, conflict sensitivity and

protection are just a few of them. Although all relevant, **ZOA has decided to give priority to three specific themes, namely conflict sensitivity, gender and protection.**

Conflict sensitivity: ZOA works in many of the most fragile states in the world. This is a highly complex and conflict-affected context, where its presence and interventions can easily do harm, with (high) risks for the population and ZOA's reputation. The work in WASH, FSL and Education gives ZOA a unique opportunity to contribute to more peace and less conflict, particularly when conflict sensitivity is integrated in its sectoral work.

Gender: ZOA strongly believes that all people, regardless of gender should be treated equally and with respect. In today's world women and girls still carry a disproportionate burden when it comes to conflict and disaster and are amongst the most vulnerable. Systematic discrimination against women and girls is both a cause and a result of existing inequalities in many countries in which ZOA operates. It is therefore crucial to ensure that all ZOA's projects are gender sensitive as a minimum. Where possible projects will go beyond this and specifically focus on the roles of men and women in a community/ society with the aim of seeking to make positive changes in the role division and relations between the different genders.

Protection: ZOA will incorporate protection principles throughout its projects. By doing so, ZOA seeks to avoid exposing people to potential harm as a result of its actions as well as ensuring that people have access to impartial assistance.

4.11 Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are aimed at eradicating extreme poverty by 2030. Many of ZOA's programmes contribute in one way or another to the SDGs, especially in relation to the provision of basic services and peacebuilding. **ZOA will seek to demonstrate more clearly how it contributes to the SDGs by using ZOA's standardised indicators.**

At the same time, ZOA acknowledges that SDG's and humanitarian principles do not always align. The SDGs focus on long-term systematic change, whereas humanitarian action tends to be more short-term and focused on saving lives and alleviating suffering. Especially within fragile contexts in which it operates, ZOA will focus on ensuring that humanitarian principles are adhered to.

4.12 Core Humanitarian Standards

ZOA is a signatory to the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS). The CHS places communities and people affected by crisis at the center of humanitarian action. ZOA's work is already in line with the CHS and we are committed to the standards as set out in the CHS. However, improvements are needed with regard to involvement of beneficiaries in the project design, implementation and evaluation, including feedback mechanisms. **In this strategic period, ZOA will seek to obtain full CHS certification.**





4.13 Grand Bargain

ZOA also is a signatory to the Grand Bargain agreement in which a broad range of donor governments, UN organisations, and NGO's have committed themselves to the following (among others):

1. More financial transparency
2. More support and funding tools to national responders
3. Scale up use of cash-based programming and more coordination in its delivery
4. Reduce duplication and management costs
5. Periodic financial expenditure reviews
6. More joint and impartial needs assessments
7. A "Participation Revolution": listen more to and include beneficiaries that are affected

For the coming strategic period the emphasis will be on putting these seven commitments into action.

Especially the so-called 'localisation' agenda requires further attention in the coming years and will impact the role of ZOA (and other international NGOs) in the field of relief and recovery. Also – and in line with the CHS commitment – ZOA will seek to make more visible how the 'participation revolution' is working in practise.

4.14 Working with partners

ZOA will continue to work through partnerships and consortia and expects consortia to further increase in importance in the coming years. For this reason, **ZOA wants to further develop its capacity to manage and successfully participate in consortia.** Whether even closer collaboration might be required in future, is something that will be explored during this strategic period. Likewise, ZOA will stay actively involved in Christian networks and sees these as good platforms for lobby & advocacy, as well as for staying in touch with like-minded partners with whom closer collaboration might be sought in future (see also 5.6)

In line with the Grand Bargain, **the collaboration and capacity building of local partners will particularly receive attention.**

4.15 Working with Institutional donors

ZOA will continue its strategy of donor diversification as it seeks to avoid dependency on a single donor. This was also the reason why ZOA Germany was created and in this strategic period ZOA expects to receive more German institutional funding as part of its donor diversification strategy. Good donor and consortium management is another key aspect that will help ZOA achieving this goal.

5. Strategic priorities

5.1 Introduction

ZOA operates in a fast changing humanitarian environment. This provides both short-term and long-term challenges. The choices ZOA is making for this strategic period are aimed at addressing some of the more immediate challenges, whilst keeping the eyes firmly focused on the longer-term future. In short:

1. ZOA will place people at the centre, both in our service delivery and within our organisation.
2. ZOA will improve the quality of its programme implementation as it seeks to reach out to the most vulnerable;
3. ZOA will focus on improving its innovation capacity and more proactively share its expertise and experience with others (including policy makers)
4. ZOA will grow and increase the engagement of its constituency with the plight of refugees, displaced people, and their host communities;
5. ZOA will continue to explore and prepare for its long-term future through the use of a broad-based strategy group and through the use of scenario planning;

All these choices are further worked out in detail in the paragraphs below.

5.2 Putting people at the centre

ZOA wants to put people at the centre of its service delivery. Driven by its values, ZOA wants to ensure that its services are meeting the needs of the people it seeks to assist and that its interventions are aimed at improving peoples' self-reliance. Beneficiary participation, measuring impact and beneficiary satisfaction form an integral part of the approach. While the CHS self-assessment generally showed positive results, it also revealed the need for more work on beneficiary response mechanisms. This will be addressed in the coming period.

Having the right, well-trained staff is key to providing good services. In recent years, ZOA has regularly struggled to find the right people for the job, particularly for senior management roles. Of course, the locations where ZOA works has an impact on the ability to find staff. Moving forward ZOA wants to explore alternative ways of finding quality staff and new HR channels for recruitment are expected to be part of the solution. Once staff have joined the organisation, it is important that they receive the right training to equip them for their

work so that they can thrive and contribute optimally to the purpose of the organisation. This includes instilling ZOA's values and making sure that the 'ZOA way of working' is well embedded. In short, both recruitment as well as learning & development will receive special attention during this strategic period.

ZOA recognises that many of its staff work in very challenging environments. Care for staff therefore will receive extra attention and ZOA will explore how it can best provide a level of care that takes into account the fact that staff work in conflict areas, regularly face insecurity and work in isolated areas.

5.3 Serving the most vulnerable through improved quality programming

Humanitarian interventions need to be relevant to the context in which ZOA operates. Understanding the local context and peoples' needs as well as good collaboration with local authorities, international institutions and other (Local and International) NGOs remain key for successfully reaching and supporting the most vulnerable.

However, and partly in response to ever tightening donor expectations and auditing requirements, there is a need to improve the underlying systems, policies and procedures that support ZOA's interventions. Some are outdated, while others are not consistently applied across ZOA country programmes. This means that a more standardised 'ZOA way of working' will be developed, backed up by a well-functioning Quality Management System (QMS) and supported by the right software. Where possible processes will be simplified.

Furthermore, ZOA wants to harness the quality of its programming by growing the country project portfolios to €5m per country. This will provide more financial flexibility allowing all key country roles to be filled with quality staff. Included in this, will be a thorough review of how direct and indirect costs are applied and the way ICR is used.



The aim is also to change the role of ZOA HQ. HQ will continue to focus on its 5 key roles:

1. Providing overall direction and setting the ZOA strategy;
2. The place where standards and good practises are developed and rolled out;
3. Ensuring compliance with agreed practises and policies;
4. Raising of private funding; and,
5. Providing professional input and expertise.

The aim is for HQ-departments to become more strategic in their role and more pro-active in supporting and advising country programmes. This change in approach can best be characterized by the key question departments should ask when interacting with country programmes. Whereas this question used to be, ‘how can I help you?’ this question should change to ‘how can I come alongside you?’ or ‘How can we achieve this goal together?’ This change does not require the existing organisational structure to change, but rather will require a change in attitude or culture.

There is a need to improve information collection to ensure outcome and impact is measured more consistently. Not only do donors require more evidence-based interventions, but ZOA also has an obligation to show the results of its interventions to those it serves. For this purpose, standardised indicators will be used to collect data on the consequences of ZOA's interventions.

The strategic and annual planning cycle will be both improved and simplified, whereby the focus will be on monitoring performance through the introduction of

key performance indicators. With regard to financial information, ZOA will move towards monthly financial reports, with a greater emphasis on forecasting.

5.4 Develop innovation capacity

Innovation is defined as the introduction of something new. Humanitarian work and recovery work as carried out by NGOs is typically not very innovative. Firstly, this is inherent to the nature of the work. Especially relief work implies rather straightforward interventions, e.g. the distribution of handouts or cash, the restoration of shelter, etc. Secondly, the lack of innovation has to do with the context in which humanitarian organisations operate. In both post-disaster and in a conflict-setting, infrastructure such as power supply and communications are often only partly working and the availability of resources and commodities is limited. Thirdly, the ever-urgent nature of relief and recovery work often leaves little room for reflection by humanitarian actors. For ZOA, this has not been any different. However, in this strategic period, ZOA wants to develop its capacity for innovation.

As the needs continue to increase and the environment in which ZOA operates remains volatile and fast changing, only the biggest organisations and those organisations that are able to adapt and apply new solutions to their work are likely to survive. Innovation for an NGO like ZOA can apply to one or more of the following: products, processes, and paradigms. Product innovation can apply to the sectoral interventions, e.g. in the WASH sector, one could apply new water pumping, treatment, conservation and distribution technologies.

Innovation of processes could apply to internal, organisational processes such as the use of apps to support existing processes as well as to external processes, e.g. the way field data is collected.

The last innovation area concerns the paradigms that are used. As a learning organisation, ZOA needs to review its concepts and models constantly. Do the interventions used lead to the desired outcomes and change? Are they fit for the ever-changing context? For example, how can one be more effective in urban areas where more than half of ZOA's target group lives? How can interventions lead to more peace and stability within a society?

For this strategic period, innovation will receive greater attention and ZOA will seek to create an innovation environment within the organisation. The sharing of ideas within the organisation will be encouraged and existing platforms, such as SharePoint, will be used for that purpose. In addition, an innovation fund will be created for piloting and testing innovation in each of the three above-mentioned areas.

Besides utilising existing innovation power within the organisation, ZOA can also benefit from innovative ideas from other organisations in the sector. ZOA will strive to become an early adopter of new ideas. This will be done by encouraging a culture of learning and through networking with others. In order to stay up-to-date with innovations in the sector ZOA will become a member of at least two innovation networks, visit trade fairs and seek cooperation with the private sector.

Lastly, ZOA wants to be more proactive in sharing its own learning and expertise with others, including policy makers. As such, it wants to become more visible as a professional organisation that contributes to alleviating the needs of the most vulnerable in effective and efficient ways as well as an organisation that is able to adapt to changing circumstances.

5.5 Increase constituency engagement

Because of increased needs, ZOA wants to respond and become more proactive in speaking up for those 95% of refugees and displaced people that stay in the region. They represent some of the most vulnerable.

As an organisation, ZOA wants to continue to be constituency based and aims for at least 25% of its funding to come from private funding, primarily from its supporter base in the Netherlands. As the aim is to grow country programmes towards €5m project

portfolios, private funding will therefore need to increase significantly as well. ZOA sets itself the ambitious target of growing Fundraising and Communication department income by 10% annually.

ZOA will particularly focus on increasing and engaging its Christian constituency, whereby ZOA will focus on attracting new supporters, particularly among those groups and denominations that are already supporting its work. This will be done in such a way that people are touched by the plight of those ZOA serves, as well as becoming engaged and inspired by ZOA's story and its ability to respond. As such, ZOA is seeking to improve the connection between those in need and those who want to respond, resulting in an increase in ZOA's Christian constituency in terms of both size and commitment. Part of this plan includes an increased presence 'in the community', in schools, churches and at Christian events.

As technology has influenced the way information is communicated and received, special attention will be given to new online ways of interacting with supporters.

In a similar way, ZOA will seek to expand its engagement with companies, trusts and foundations. Regarding the latter, this will not only be done in the Netherlands, but also in Germany (and other countries).

A new legacy strategy will be developed and rolled out, with the aim of achieving a significant and systemic increase in legacy income in years to come.

Finally, ZOA will also seek to improve its general profile by having a greater presence in the public domain. As a specialised humanitarian organisation, ZOA wants to inform the public debate and wants to do more to become the voice of the voiceless.

5.6 Explore and prepare for ZOA's long-term future

As mentioned before, the humanitarian space in which ZOA operates is complex and changing rapidly. Many factors are at play, several of which are pulling in different directions. ZOA therefore needs to adapt to ensure that it stays relevant in a changing world and humanitarian system and can deliver meaningful contributions to people impacted by conflicts and disasters.

ZOA's primary driver is the need, which is higher than ever. We deeply care about those impacted by conflict and disasters and want to respond by providing relief, hope and recovery.

At the same time, the humanitarian space is shrinking. Increased insecurity, the politicisation of aid and restrictions from host governments make it difficult to operate as an NGO. Secondly, Institutional Donors increasingly appear to favour bigger NGO's as they seek partners that are able to implement large-scale projects. For ZOA, this means that working through consortia remains of strategic importance. It also highlights the importance of innovation (see 5.4) in order to find new ways of addressing large-scale humanitarian crises. Thirdly, charitable giving is decreasing and traditional ways of fundraising are become less effective. As explained in 5.5, this requires ZOA to focus on identifying who its key supporters are, engaging them better, and convincing them why supporting ZOA is a worthy cause and can make a real difference in the lives of some of the most vulnerable people. Lastly, increased levels of protectionism and the resultant looming trade-war will potentially have worldwide impact in both economic terms as well as security. Such impact will inevitably be felt more by poorer countries and is likely to result in greater inequality. In light of all this, it is of key importance that ZOA continues to explore the long-term impact of such trends in terms of its ability to reach out and fulfil

its mandate. **The key question that need to be answered is what space one can expect there to be in the long-term for mid-sized faith-based organisations, such as ZOA, that are constituency based, but very dependent on institutional funding at the same time.**

As the future looks uncertain and there are an increasing number of factors at play, such exploration can best be done through scenario planning. Through such methodology, ZOA will explore different plausible future contexts and evaluate their impact on the work of ZOA. This should help to make further strategic choices, particularly when it comes to determining the extent by which a closer alignment with likeminded organisations will be required in the future. One way or the other, ZOA will to continue to reach out to the most vulnerable victims of natural disasters and armed conflict. Because we are convinced that every life matters.



EVERY LIFE

MATTERS



Ramy
Iraq



Nur Agha
Afghanistan



Hakima
South Sudan



Hafsat
Nigeria



Yin
Myanmar



Denda
Indonesia