

Annual Report 2017

HUMILITY
COMPASSION
RESPECT
COURAGE
LOVE
HOPE



serve
the
city.



Serve the City VZW

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Foreword

Many people doing small things together can make a big difference!

But who are the many people?

In 2017, many people joined us on our monthly Focus Days. We sent volunteers to refugee centers, to shelters for women, to soup kitchens, and to the streets, to show kindness in practical ways to people in need. Many people joined an ever-increasing number of weekly projects – small teams of volunteers serving at the same place, on the same day, at the same time every week. Hundreds of people joined our Big Volunteer Week in 2017, and our team buildings continued to grow in size and strength.

What small things?

Volunteers helped refugee children with their homework, visited elderly patients in the

hospital, taught Turkish teenagers English and Flemish, cleaned, painted, gardened, and served meals. The Breakfast4Refugees team served up to 500 people a morning during the summer, when the Sudanese migrants were staying at Park Maximillian.

And what big difference?

Carlos is alive! And sober! And he has a place to live! We met Carlos during our first Big Volunteer Week in 2005. He was a well-known disruptive drunk, living on the streets of Brussels. We served him as best we could, but eventually lost track of him. I wasn't even sure he was still alive. Then, on the Friday of the 2017 Big Volunteer Week, I ran into him! I brought him to meet our volunteers, and he told us how he has stopped drinking and now has a place to stay. He has written a book to help others understand the life of people on

the street and we are helping him sell it.

That's just one story. There are many others! But it's all possible because we are doing this together!

With great thanks to our team, volunteers, partners, financial supporters, and the people we serve, I am very happy to present our 2017 Annual Report. Thank you for your involvement in Serve the City Brussels. It wouldn't be the same without you!

Joy and peace



Carlton Deal

Executive Director

About Serve the City

What we do

Serve the City Brussels is the founding branch of an international organization that mobilizes people to become active volunteers in their local environment. Serve the City was founded in 2005 in the spirit of solidarity. We wanted to turn what we can often perceive as broken or lost in our societies into hope and beauty. We believe in people and in humanity and try to convey the idea that everyone can make a difference with the smallest gesture. To do so, we welcome new volunteers and connect them with local partners every week. We partner with schools, faith communities, governmental entities, and companies to provide help and support to the marginalized population of Brussels. STC organises weekly projects, monthly and annual events, along

with corporate team-buildings to connect potential volunteers to bring help in areas with the most need. Our goal is connect people through kindness and make a change in our social landscapes. The dream of Serve the City is to see everyone serving someone else. We encourage the people we have served to become volunteers, as soon as they are able to. In that sense, the goal is not as much about meeting needs, as it is facilitating the kind of volunteering in which every person can participate. So, we like to say that Serve the City is for everyone! We are eager to continue growing our volunteer base and in turn expanding the reach of our projects because many people doing small things together can make a big difference.

Who do we serve?

Serve the City serves anyone in need. We want to address different challenges in Brussels. Therefore we do not focus on one particular population. We serve:

- People who are Homeless
- Asylum seekers and Refugees
- People who are Elderly
- People who are Disabled
- Children in need
- Victims of abuse

We know them by their needs. What if we knew them by name?

Mission

1. To mobilise volunteers to show kindness in practical ways to people in need.
2. To champion volunteering by introducing as many people as possible to the practice, and making it more effective and impactful.
3. To be a representative voice for volunteers and city-wide STC volunteering movements in world forums.
4. To be agents of transformation in our cities as we cross the line!

Vision

The vision of Serve the City is everyone serving! We want to be catalysts in the transformation of lives, neighborhoods, and cities as people volunteer to serve others. We do this by connecting the resources of the city with the needs of the city, by facilitating local volunteer involvement, and promoting the inclusion of everyone.

Serve the City is optimistic. We want to see and to show people that they can make a change. We want to promote solidarity and humility. We strongly believe that we all have the opportunity to serve another. Our message is simple: whatever your background or future, you have the power to act in your local environment. Every action, no matter how big or small, will help to build a better future for people in need.



Our Core Values

Every decision at Serve the City is guided by values we believe in.. This is why we want them to be reflected in our volunteers, team members and partners when they represent Serve the City. We are a values-in-action movement! When we put on a Serve the City t-shirt, we put on:

Humility

Serve the City exists to serve others. That is the foundational element of every contact, every relationship, every partnership, every activity. Humility means we put the needs of others above our own. Humility also means we do not presume to be experts on the social needs we find in our cities - homelessness, care for the elderly, or people who are disabled, or any others we are asked to serve. We are eager to learn and to share that knowledge with others. To do so, we work in collaboration with groups who have this expertise and offer ourselves as a resource to further their goals.

We seek to walk alongside those we serve, with empathy. We respond to their needs with the intention to lift each person up. We are committed to their best interest, showing kindness and respect in word and deed.

Compassion

We serve people to initiate relationship, and the first step towards a relationship is learning each other's names. To know people by their name is to recognise the uniqueness of each person's journey - their joys and pains, strengths and weaknesses, aspirations and frustrations. We want to see people as human beings instead of categorising them into "groups" that are nameless and faceless. We reinforce the idea that each individual is special by sharing personal stories.

We will always put the individual above the task because showing compassion is essential to meeting physical needs. We don't just 'do things' - we spend time with people. We talk to them. Our volunteers have conversations with those we serve, because social exclusion may be one the biggest problems that the individuals we serve face.

Respect

We carry out projects in collaboration with all members of society without prejudice based on gender, race, faith, or political preference. We fight against prejudice and encourage acceptance. As one of our main goals is to bring people together, differences are not a problem but rather a chance to learn.

We treat every person equally; favouritism is not in our vocabulary. We do not promote any political or religious agenda. People from all walks of life and schools of thought are welcome within the community of Serve the City. All we ask is that they share our vision and values.

Courage

Serving another person takes a type of courage that is hard to find and not often promoted in our society. It is about facing difficult realities and sometimes deep suffering and injustice, to be vulnerable and to step outside of our comfort zone. We are so inspired by the courage we see in our volunteers! Thanks to those people, and so many of them, ready to dedicate one or two hours of their busy week, we have hope that we can change the world!

In fact, we often remark on how the courage that it takes us to 'cross the line' pales in comparison to the courage we find in the lives of people in need. We learn about courage from them - the tragedies they have endured, the challenges they have to overcome in their everyday life, their every attempt to face the future without fear. We want to be with them, to look for solutions together.

Love

There can be many motivations for serving someone, such as a sense of duty, or responsibility, or even guilt - but the service that makes a real and lasting difference is motivated by love. Only with love will we be able to see the individual as a person with a name and not just as a need to meet before our 'job' is done.

Love is composed of concrete attitudes, actions, and connection. It involves the ongoing cultivation of sharing, patience, kindness, generosity, selflessness, forgiveness, protection, trust and perseverance. Indeed, what the world needs now is love.

*Have enough courage to
trust love one more time and
always one more time.*

— Maya Angelou

Hope

No cause is hopeless as long as there is a single person willing to persist in addressing it. No person is beyond hope if there is a single person willing to learn their name and show them love. Our society might be facing challenges, but we can make it better. Broken realities may become beautiful, stronger and renewed with hope.

It might be difficult to see how one can make a better place because the world and its problems are overwhelming. There are indeed many issues to be addressed in our societies, but we do not lose hope. Our approach is start small and take action. What might seem small to us could be life-changing for someone else. Many people doing small things together can make a big difference!



Weekly Projects

In 2017 we offered as many as 31 weekly serving opportunities for volunteers. The projects were set up in partnership with local charities, and they were led by STC-trained Project Leaders.

There was something for everyone! We offered an opportunity to serve on every day of the week, in neighbourhoods all over the city. We served many different kinds of people, in many different ways - everything from teaching French, to serving breakfast to refugees, to helping children with homework, to visiting people in the hospital. Here is an overview of our 2017 weekly serving opportunities.

For volunteers

who wanted to...

... teach

Bouillon de Cultures

What: A truly unique experience teaching English and Dutch to groups of 5-10 teenagers between 12-20 years old in the Turkish community of Schaerbeek

When: Tuesday and Thursday evenings

Where: Schaerbeek

Foyer Selah Languages Classes

What: Lively and interactive French-language classes for asylum seekers of all ages and backgrounds.

When: Monday and Friday evenings

Where: St. Catherine, Brussels

SamuSocial Gulledelle

What: Homework help for children in a 'école des devoirs' at a center which houses 200 residents, all large families with one or both parents.

When: Tuesday and Thursday evenings

Where: Woluwe-St. Pierre

As an expat working in the Brussels bubble, the volunteer work at Gulledelle helps keeping me on the ground [...] I must say that even after a long day of work I come out recharged after the time I spent with them.

— Flavia

Average number of volunteers on Tuesday evenings; 3. Average number of volunteers on Thursdays; 3 Project runs during school term time and 2017 the team served 31 weeks at the centre.

... serve refugees

Breakfast4Refugees

What: Serving breakfast to refugees as they stand in line at the World Trade Center to apply for asylum, as well as people outside the asylum seeker process who are living at or near Parc Maximilien

When: Monday and Tuesday mornings

Where: Parc Maximilien

Volunteers serve on Monday & Tuesday mornings and on average there are 20 volunteers per week involved in this project, 50 weeks per year.

One of the leaders says

I learned how to be happy no matter what my personal situation is and how to be stronger even in the worst situations.

What inspires me is the smiles of the kids who come from countries in war.

Haren Center

What: Serving breakfast with a warm smile and positive support to refugees and migrants who have spent the night at the Haren Center

When: Every morning

Where: Haren, near NATO

Approximately 7 people every morning

Everyone who is coming here has a big big heart, that it's impossible not to smile

Foyer Selah

What: Having fun socialising and playing games with asylum seekers in a family-friendly environment

When: Wednesday evenings

Where: St. Catherine, Brussels

Average number of volunteers each week; 10, project is active 50 weeks in a year.

Volunteering at the Foyer has been both deepy humbling and rewarding and this year has been particularly exciting as many of the residents have recently gained asylum. My favourite part of volunteering at the Foyer is that many of the volunteers and residents become really good friends and even when a few of the residents get positive results and find their own homes, they still come back on Wednesday evenings to hang out with us!

— Niam

Rafaël Centre

What: Sorting out and packing food bags for families in need for the food bank run by an intergenerational refugee housing center

When: Wednesdays and Fridays

Where: St Guidon, Anderlecht

Average number of volunteers per week; 3, open 52 weeks per year.

Volunteering here is an opportunity to inspire hope and respect to those we serve. Refreshingly supporting the regular staffs.

— Osama, project leader

... assist the homeless

Le Phare

What: Serving a warm meal with friendly conversation to those in need, especially those who are living on the street

When: Tuesday lunch time

Where: St Catherine, Brussels

Average number of volunteers per week; 8, we serve 45 weeks per year.

Coming to Le Phare is my medicine for the week

Missionaries of Charity

What: Assisting the sisters of the Missionaries of Charity in their food service for the homeless, including setting up beforehand and cleaning up afterward

When: Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons

Where: Gare du Midi area

2-3 volunteers per week, serving all year around.

The Missionaries of Charity is a beautiful experience for anyone who is willing to reach out to those presently less fortunate

— Matt

Mobile Library

What: Helping to collect, sort out and catalogue books to share with homeless people so they can borrow books for free

When: Thursday evening

Where: STC office, Etterbeek

Average number of volunteers per week; 10

... connect with the elderly

Brugmann Hospital

What: Serving tea, coffee and conversation to elderly patients at three geriatric units in order to provide interaction and conversations for people at the end of their lives, many of whom do not receive visits from their families

When: Wednesday afternoons

Where: Schaerbeek

This project had an average of 3 volunteers per week in 2017. Volunteers spend around 1,5hrs at the hospital and the project is active 40 weeks each year.

'How can people show more compassion & care for the elderly'? This is what the elderly needs and we as volunteers have the privilege of showing that and being a small part of their lives.

— Lois

Little Sisters of the Poor

What: Helping the amazing nuns from the order of the Little Sisters of the Poor as they serve dinner to 100 elderly people, and also joining them as they serve the homeless in the Marolles, by serving sandwiches on the weekend

When: Every weekday evening, Saturday and Sunday mornings

Where: Les Marolles, Brussels

... help people in a time of need

Honeysuckle

What: Supporting women by spending time building a friendly rapport with them and their children at a women's crisis center

When: Tuesday evenings

Where: Ixelles

Average number of volunteers per week; 4, project is active 42 weeks per year.

I am motivated to empower women especially going through a difficult time. I hope they take away something from each session!

— Lucie, project leader

L'Îlot

What: Interacting socially, have fun and providing emotional support to women who have struggled with various challenges, such as abuse or addiction, at a temporary crisis center

When: Wednesday evenings

Where: Ixelles

Average number of volunteers per week; 3, they visit 42 weeks per year.

The people we meet at L'Îlot sometimes make a profound impact on us, I hope we sometimes manage to do the same!

— Charli





... assist us

Serve the City Van

What: Getting behind the wheel to help us assist regular and occasional projects - transport donations, food, equipment, helping individuals move out of their center to private accommodations

When: Flexible

Where: Everywhere!



Focus Day

When it all comes together

Once a month, Serve the City organises a volunteering event that everyone can participate in. It takes place on a Saturday, in the center of the city. Almost 100 volunteers come each month, many of them serving with us for the first time.

For many years we have called these volunteering events Focus Day. We challenge our volunteers to focus on the needs of people in our city who are vulnerable, or overlooked. We determine together to put values into action. We start the day together, then send volunteers to projects all over the city - in many cases, working with the same associations as we do during the week.

In 2017 our Focus Days were hosted by Bozar. At the beginning of the day we welcomed volunteers, briefed everyone on Serve the City vision and values, and assigned volunteers to projects. We always propose a wide range of projects and activities on Focus Days, which divide into three categories: practical, social, and street projects. At the end of the briefing, each team is sent out to serve for 2-3 hours. Each team is led by a Project Leader who helps volunteers connect with each other and serve

successfully at their project. At the end of the day, each team has a debrief, and all volunteers are invited to meet up for drinks afterwards.

Focus Days give people a chance to experiment with volunteering. It is a very meaningful experience to join a large group of people who are giving an afternoon to make a difference in the city. Many people decide to join a weekly serving group following their Focus Day experience.

In 2017 we have organized 7 Focus Days that brought together almost 700 people. In September and January, instead of a Focus Day, we organised Welcome Back Brunch events to help volunteers re-connect and re-evaluate what we are doing and how we are doing it. We are always happy to see that many people, motivated to make a difference in our city, return month after month to serve with us.

Special Note: In 2018, we decided to change the name from Focus Day to Big Volunteer Day. We felt like the name Focus Day had some meaning once it was explained, but Big Volunteer Day is much easier for people to understand who are new to Serve the City.

Big Volunteer Week

The international Serve the City movement was born from the STC Brussels Big Volunteer Week in 2005. We still hold this week every year, in the first week of July, to bring together everyone and everything we are doing during the year.

In 2017, from the 1st to the 8th of July, hundreds of volunteers from all around the world joined us in Brussels to serve people in need. We organised serving opportunities all around Brussels allowing volunteers to serve alongside local associations who are assisting the needs of the city.



The week started by a debriefing on Saturday with 100 volunteers. The day was divided in three sections:

- Zoom In workshops about homelessness and human trafficking; opportunities to make sandwiches and cards to distribute; opportunity to learn a song and a dance that we could share on the streets of Brussels
- We hit the streets to distribute sandwiches and cards, while the choir/dance team spread love and hope at the Bourse
- A community dinner in the evening with all volunteers

Then during the week, from Monday to Friday, between 140 and 170 volunteers were distributed in 16 to 20 different projects each day. We offered a broad range of projects that served people in need all over the city.

Big Volunteer Week projects



Social

Games, outings, walks, and any other activities that connect people, break down barriers, and facilitate friendship.



Soup Kitchen

Serving food and friendship to the hungry and hurting.



Practical

Painting, cleaning, gardening, simple carpentry and construction projects, and other hands-on tasks that help our social-profit partners be at their best.



Street Presence

Spreading kindness, hope, love and friendship to those who need it across the city.

The BVW concluded with a Community dinner at the Ferme du Parc Maximilien which was joined by over 500 people. We invited everyone we had met during the week, including the people we served. This was an amazing moment for volunteers, refugees, and others from countless different cultures to connect and bond around food, music, dance, and friendship.

Corporate Social Responsibility and team building

The vision of Serve the City is not only to connect individuals with the needs of the City but also organisations and companies. Both private and public sector organisations can bring much needed resources and expertise to the needs of the city. These resources come in many forms.

Organisations and companies have supported Serve the City financially in our many projects. They have also supported us with concrete resources such as food supplies, IT hardware, vans and equipment and in many cases with expertise and knowledge that organisations intrinsically have internally within their structure.

This support is essential to us as we are self-funded and without this STC could not run its many programmes across the city.

The main way organisations engage with us is through our team building events where companies and institutions contribute to our objectives through paying us to run volunteer events for and with them. For these events, we aim at combining enjoyment and empathy. In the first place, this allows the participants to discover themselves and their coworkers in a deeper and different way than a normal work day. On the other hand, it allows us to inform citizens and do some prevention. Before

the actual volunteering action, we always prepare our participants and give information about the population we are going to serve. It is always a good occasion to raise awareness about the issue of homelessness or the challenges that migrants face.

After our day of giving back to the community, the Pladis Brussels team was left feeling humbled after working with Serve the City... we gained such perspective in helping only a fraction of the homeless population in Brussels and now know how we are able to continue to make a

difference. Not only was the day full of lifting spirits, we felt uplifted by the fun way in which Serve the City organized and ran the collaboration events.

The organisational team help the disadvantaged in our society by serving food, care or practical work projects while living out our motto to 'know people by name.'

We led 30 team buildings last year with an average of about 15 people per event. Our busiest times were being May-June and September-November.

We worked with some amazing organisations and are proud to partner with the EU Commission, Coca Cola, J&J, Bayer, Levi's, Akkanto, Slaughter and May, Mastercard, Euroclear, and Telefonica.

Telefonica used Serve the City twice to organize teambuilding activities and it was a real pleasure. Everything was very well organized in simplicity and good mood. The activity was a success and the goal achieved.





Fundraising

Companies also support us directly through direct donations and the support of these amazing companies helps us fulfil our social objectives.

Companies such as UPS, Toyota, Luminus and Euroclear were our main sponsors last year. With their help, we were able to support many disadvantaged people in our city.

We also organise our own events to raise funds. Our fund-raising events In 2017 were as follows:

Pub Quiz

Each month of 2017, Serve the City organised a Pub Quiz in order to fund our various activities. Pub quizzes are rather frequent in big cities like Brussels. Many NGOs use this means to raise funds.

We invited people once a month, usually on Tuesdays, to our partner bars in Brussels. Our trivia experts signed their team up on our website and got ready for 10 rounds of deep thinking about various topics. Questions could be about Europe, Belgium, Sports or even Christmas songs.

A team consisted of 6 people, who each paid a participation fee of € 10. The first 3 teams would win prizes such as a free meal

or a bottle of wine.

The pub quizzes were an important part of our revenue since they bring on average € 500, with no cost on our side. We used the funds for general administrative support at the office or special projects, like support for a volunteer whom we discovered to be homeless. With Pub Quiz proceeds we were able to pay rent for her in a social housing center. We continued to support her until she was able to return home to her family in Germany.

Brussels' 20K

Every year, at the end of May, the city of Brussels hosts a massive 20k event. Like many other charities, we use this as an occasion to promote our association at a fun city-wide event.

In 2017 we had 6 Serve the City runners in the 20k. Each runner received an amazing t-shirt, and the confidence that the money would be used for a good cause.

Book Sale

The English Book Charity Sale organised two book sales for Serve the City in 2017: one in June and one in December. On this day, we helped them install the material at the Stonemanor British Book Store, where people donate and buy second hand books by the centimeter. This event brings amazing energy as many people buy second hand books to support Serve the City.

Serve the City received € 3000 from these events.



Other activities

Our events around volunteering

Info-sessions

For a better support of our volunteers from the beginning of their involvement, we decided to start 'Info-sessions' in October. The point is to get to know our volunteers before they start volunteering with us and introduce Serve the City so they can have a more complete picture. Prior to the Info-sessions we discovered that some people who were volunteering with us on a weekly basis did not know about the Big Volunteer Days. Thanks to the Info-sessions, important information is communicated from the beginning.

People interested in volunteering can register on our website for Info-sessions that take place on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays and last for 15-30 minutes.

Thanks to those events, we are able to know every and each individual approaching us and create a true volunteering community.

Project Leader trainings

In the idea to accompany our volunteers, we developed a Three Sessions Project Leader Training Curriculum (Know, Understand, Do).

The content of those workshops was based on the experience we already had accumulated by running previous project leaders trainings. After having identified the needs for training, we tailor-made a programme that, we think, can help our volunteers to lead projects. We strive to develop the best training for new and long-term project leaders at Serve the City Brussels. Therefore, we divided the programme in three relevant sections:

Other activities

- Get to KNOW Serve the City – both in Brussels as in the international context of being a global movement with about 100 cities currently involved
- Get to UNDERSTAND Serve the City's heartbeat for people and places, the characteristics of how Serve the City operates and how to lead a Serve the City project well.
- Get to put knowledge into practice as they DO. After having attended the first sessions, the project leaders get their hands on serving when the occasion occurs.

We are also eager to share our resources with other Serve the City organisations. This is why we presented our Project Leader Training material during a workshop at the Serve the City International Forum 2017 in Berlin, Germany. This is the first prototype that is meant to be extended and adapted to other cities.

Zoom in

The ZOOM IN project is one of the training experiences we offer to our volunteer community to gain better understanding of the current situation and needs in our fields of serving. The idea of a ZOOM IN event resulted out of our planning for effective project leader training opportunities. These events are great to share, equip, resource, learn and build community – therefore we decided to open the invitation to everyone instead of just to project leaders at Serve the City Brussels. The first one occurred on the 7th of November 2017. The first chosen topic was: 'The Current Status Of Asylum Seekers in Belgium' and about 40 people came to hear about the subject.

ZOOM INs take place in evenings and for a couple of hours, a previously chosen theme is discussed. For the occasion, experts, people concerned by the issue and volunteers are invited to talk about their knowledge and experience on the field. The evening concludes with a Q&A session with the guest speakers.

International activities

Forum in Berlin

Serve the City International organises an annual International Forum for all Serve the City organisations every year in order to create link and unity between all. In 2017 we met together in Berlin in October. Serve the City Brussels attended and took various leadership roles.

The Forum started with a Welcome Dinner which allowed everyone to meet, network and kick off the conference in a context of friendship. The following days were divided in different activities which consisted of plenary sessions and breakout sessions. Plenary sessions gave an overview of the values and goals of Serve the City and more specific topics such as using our global website, organising Community Dinners, and developing Project Leaders were covered in breakout sessions. This gave many cities the opportunity to present

projects and initiatives that could be a resource for others.

The Forum helped all of us gain a better understanding of issues and needs that each city faces. During this forum, Serve the City Berlin also organised a tour of the city, led by refugees. We were grateful to see the city from their point of view.

Finally a the Berlin Resolution was adopted. With this resolution, the Serve the City organisations committed to:

- Deepen our commitment to develop volunteers as our network and resources grow;
- Harmonise communication by using the same logos and statements to create a unique identity while respecting the diversity between all cities;
- Improve the communication plans by

using innovative techniques in order to inspire, encourage and help one another;

- Provide starter packs with tools and resources for new member of Serve the City while developing a City Connection Matrix to help existing Serve the City organisations to grow;
- Reach out to cities on the edges of our movement, to help them develop and feel connected.



Grant Applications

Grants are a good way to finance beautiful projects. Many different organisms like the European Commission or private companies offer to support specific projects. We took this opportunity by applying to a number of fund possibilities. We had our first success this year with two grants in process.

We are involved in 3 EU projects: one as a participant and two as a possible partner. The participant project is about the impact that volunteering has on both EU and community values and runs for six months. Our partners in this project are in Ireland, Croatia and Britain. The applicant projects are about getting NEETS back into the labour market and the development of Co Working Spaces for volunteers and the vulnerable in society. These are pan- European projects with partners from Spain, Greece, Britain, Germany, Netherlands, Portugal and France.

Local activities

New partnerships

We are always open to new partnerships, as long as they match our values and goals. In this spirit, we started a partnership with the Plateforme Citoyenne au Soutien des réfugiés in 2017. This partnership resulted in our breakfast project at the migrant center that they were running: La Porte d'Ulysse (Haren Center).

Serving breakfast to migrants is not new to us, since we have been running a similar project outdoors at the Parc Maximilien, where we offer food and coffee/tea to whoever needs it. We were glad we could leverage this experience for serving breakfast at the new center. La Porte D'Ulysse was a beautiful initiative run exclusively by volunteers and we were honoured to be involved.



An Unlikely Friend...

Hilda's Story

Last summer we met a homeless woman named Hilda who would become a lasting friend of Serve the City. The Breakfast for Refugees project team was serving breakfast at the North Train Station in Brussels early in the morning and we noticed a German woman in her late 60's in the crowd of homeless people. At first, we didn't realize she was homeless as she stepped in and started helping us serve. After some conversation it became evident she was homeless and would be spending the night in the train station. A very kind volunteer named Carol invited Hilda to come home with her so Hilda would have a place to stay until we could discuss options for Hilda.

Over the next several months, Carol and Serve the City developed a friendship with Hilda and provided places for Hilda to stay until Hilda could get her pension from Germany and take care of herself. During this time several volunteers spent time with Hilda helping her with groceries and medicine as she had some health issues along with the other difficulties in her life. We learned she had owned a language translation business for many years, lived in several countries and had traveled the world. Unfortunately, after arriving in Brussels a couple of weeks before we met her she had become sick, had a stay in the hospital and had used all her remaining money.

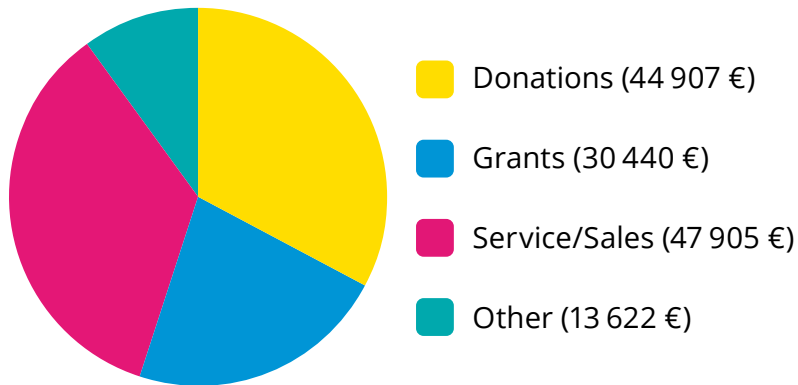
In the end, Serve the City was able to convince Hilda to start the process of reconciliation with her sister who lives in Germany, move to Germany and continue the process of obtaining her pension so she could become financially independent. Serve the City was privileged to get to know Hilda not only by her need but also by her name.

David Anderson

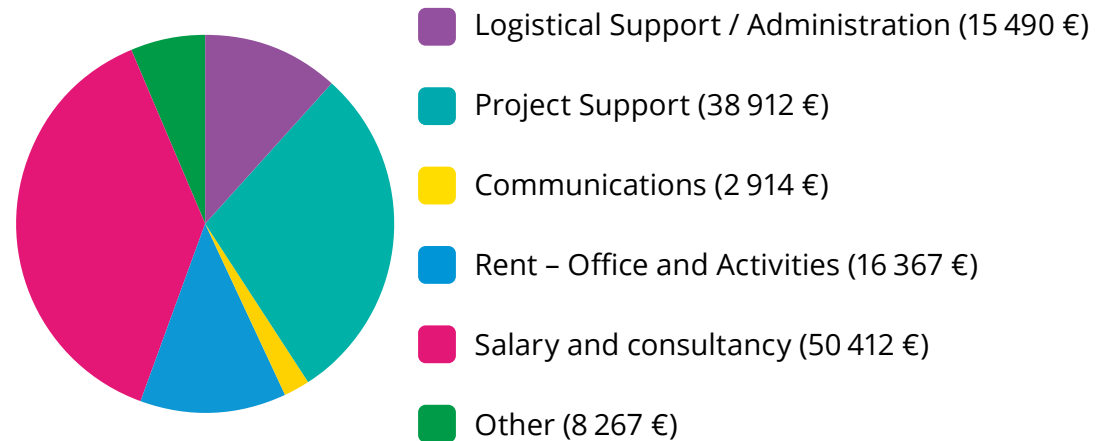


Financial Report

Revenues



Expenditure

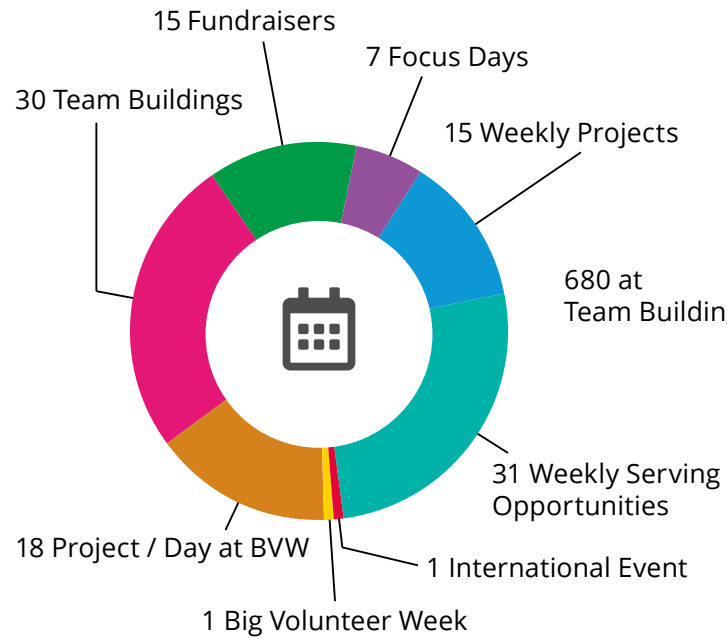


Total Revenues: 136 874 €

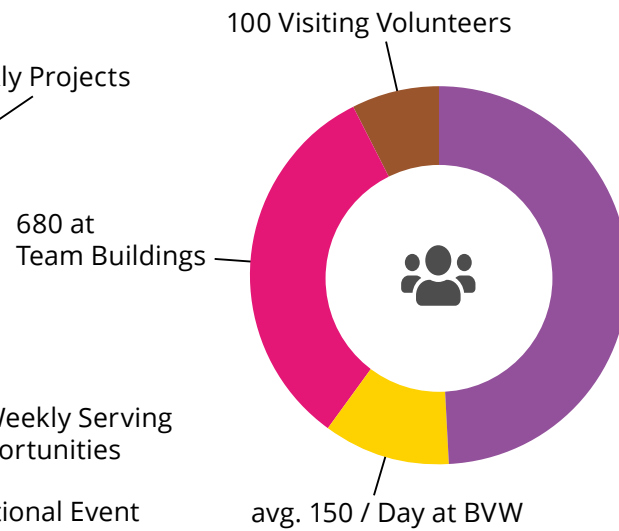
Total Expenditure: 132 362 €

The Year in Numbers

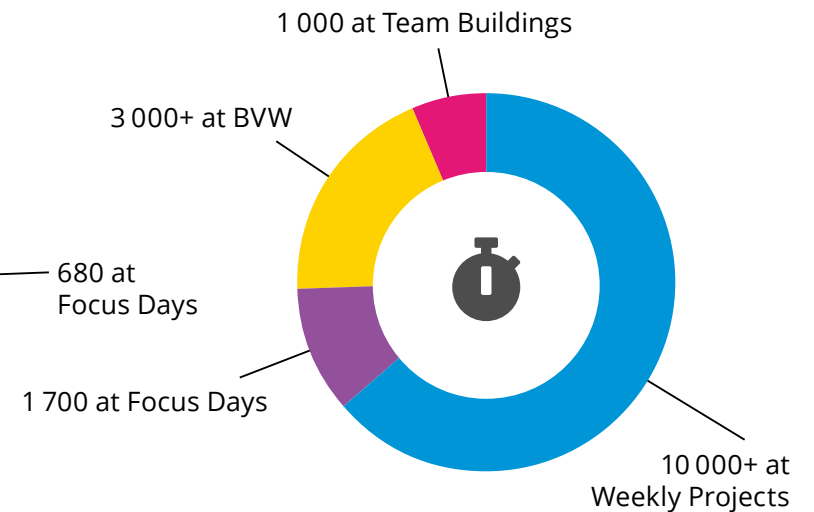
Events



Volunteers



VolunteerHours





*Many people doing small things together
can make a big difference!*

