



# Annual Report 2019



**Serve the City VZW**

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# Foreword

## How do you change the world?

What's the recipe? One part elect better leaders, two parts re-allocate financial resources, three parts put more bad people in jail. Stir gently over global warming until boiling...

Checking the cookbook for a better alternative. Let's try this one: mobilise more people to show more kindness in personal ways to people in need. Lives are transformed as kindness is passed from person to person, neighbourhood to neighbourhood, city to city, nation to nation.

In 2018, Serve the City Brussels, the flagship of the global Serve the City movement, mobilised more people to show more kindness than ever before. We celebrated our 100th Big Volunteer Day. We organised a week of volunteering for 800 employees of

the European Commission. Our weekly volunteering opportunities grew to 40, offering an opportunity to serve almost every day of the week. We welcomed 125 volunteers from all over the world to spend one to six weeks serving alongside us.

All this is thanks to the support and engagement of a vast number of volunteers – Board members, staff, Core Team members, Project Leaders, financial supporters, and many hundreds who selflessly give their time to cross the line and care.

Thank you for being a part of this hope-filled community of people who have come together to make a difference. As we like to say in Serve the City, it's a revolution! A serving revolution. And it's going to change the world.



Joy and peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carlton Deal'.

**Carlton Deal**  
Executive Director

# About Serve the City

## What we do and why

Founded in 2005 in the spirit of solidarity, Serve the City Brussels is the founding branch of an international organization that mobilizes people to become active volunteers in their local cities. We wanted to turn what we can often perceive as broken or lost in our societies into hope and beauty. To do so, we welcome volunteers and connect them with local partners to provide help and support to the marginalized population of Brussels. Our goal is connect people through kindness and make a change in our social landscapes. Our dream? That everyone is serving someone else, and that the people we have served become volunteers.

## Serve the City is for everyone!

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. We are eager to continue growing our volunteer base and in turn to expand the reach of our projects because many people doing small things together can make a big difference.

## In a nutshell

### We serve

Anyone in need and we want to address different challenges in Brussels.

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

### We organize

- Volunteering activities such as weekly projects, Big Volunteer Days and a Big Volunteer Week
- Training and awareness events
- Fundraisers
- Corporate team buildings

HUMILITY  
COMPASSION  
RESPECT  
COURAGE  
LOVE  
HOPE

SHIRT & BAG  
SALE

TSHIRT 12€

BAG  
10€

HUMILITY  
COMPASSION  
RESPECT  
COURAGE  
LOVE

at the world need

HUMILITY



# Our Core Values

Every decision at Serve the City is guided by values we believe in.

When we put on a Serve the City t-shirt, we put on...

## Humility

Serve the City exists to serve others. We put the needs of others above our own. We do not presume to be experts on the social needs we find in our cities. We seek to walk alongside those we serve, with empathy.

## 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 recognize the uniqueness of each person's journey.

## 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.

## Courage

Serving another person 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!

## 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. What the world needs now is love.

## Hope

No cause is without hope 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.



# Weekly Projects

In 2019 we offered as many as 39 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 on every day of the week, in neighborhoods all over the city! We served many different kinds of people, in many different ways. Here is an overview of our 2019 weekly serving opportunities.

**For volunteers who wanted to...**



# ... teach

## Bouillon de Cultures

**Goal:** Provide youth in Schaerbeek with educational support. Our volunteers are sent to help teenagers with their homework (eg. maths, English, French, Dutch, physics, etc).

**Volunteer days:** Monday to Saturday  
**Average number of daily volunteers:** 1-2 regular

This project runs during school term time and 2019 the team served 40 weeks in the center.

## Samusocial Gulledelle

**Goal:** We partner with Samusocial Gulledelle to provide homework help for children in a shelter for homeless families housing 130 residents.

**Volunteer days:** Tuesday & Thursday  
**Average number of daily volunteers:** 3

This project runs during school term time and 2019 the team served 31 weeks in the center.

## Café Lingua

**Goal:** Brings together new-comers and locals to focus on social and cultural exchange through language learning. We send volunteers to the café with the aim of giving refugees and asylum-seekers access to social environments in the resident country, while integrating them into a community of local learners and tutors.

**Volunteer days:** Wednesday & Thursday  
**Average number of daily volunteers:** unknown

# ... assist the homeless

## Le Phare

**Goal:** Serving a warm meal with friendly conversation to those in need, especially those who are living on the street. This project is run entirely by Serve the City.

**Volunteer days:** Tuesday

**Average number of weekly volunteers:** 8

In 2019 the team served 45 weeks in the center.

## Mobile Library

**Goal:** STC runs this project. We help to collect, sort out and catalogue books to give out to the homeless.

**Volunteer days:** Thursday

**Average number of weekly volunteers:** 10

In 2019 the team served 50 weeks at the center.

## Solidarité Grands Froids

**Goal:** Coordinates a large depot, collecting and sorting items year-round for Brussels' homeless, providing clothing, toileteries, home-ware, toys, shoes and much more to those in need.

**Volunteer days:** Tuesday, Thursday & Friday

**Average number of weekly volunteers:** unknown

In 2019 the team served all year round in the center.

## Missionaries of Charity

**Goal:** Assisting the nuns of the Missionaries of Charity in their food service for the homeless, including setting up beforehand, service and cleaning up afterwards.

**Volunteer days:** Tuesday & Wednesday

**Average number of weekly volunteers:** 2-3

In 2019 the team served all year round at the center.

# ... serve asylum seekers

## Breakfast4Refugees

**Goal:** Serving Breakfast to those living at Parc Maximilien or at Nord Station in Brussels and to asylum seekers queueing at Pacheco. This project is run by STC.

**Volunteer days:** Monday to Tuesday

**Average number of weekly volunteers:** 20

In 2019 the team served 52 weeks at the center.

## Foyer Selah

**Goal:** Having fun socializing and playing games with asylum seekers in a family-friendly environment.

**Volunteer days:** Wednesday

**Average number of weekly volunteers:** 10

In 2019 the team served 50 weeks at the center .

## Porte d'Ulysse

**Goal:** This center provides a warm, dry and safe place for homeless undocumented migrants to stay each night. Every morning and evening, seven days a week, teams of volunteers cook and serve breakfast or dinner to those staying at the center. The center is run almost entirely by volunteers.

**Volunteer days:** Monday to Sunday

**Average number of daily volunteers:** 7

In 2019 the team served 52 weeks at the center.



# ... connect with the elderly

## Brugmann Hospital

**Goal:** Serving tea and coffee to elderly patients at three geriatric units to interact with people at the end of their lives, many of whom do not receive visits from their families.

**Volunteer days:** Wednesday

**Average number of weekly volunteers:** 3

In 2019 the team served 40 weeks at the center.

## Petites Soeurs des Pauvres

**Goal:** Helping the nuns at Petites Soeurs des Pauvres to serve dinner to 100 elderly people, and joining them as they serve the homeless in the Marolles, by making and serving sandwiches on the weekend. Serve the City coordinate the volunteers on this project, working together with the residents of Petites Soeurs who help to prepare the food.

**Volunteer days:** Monday to Sunday

**Average number of weekly volunteers:** 10

In 2019 the team served 40 weeks at the center.

## New project in 2019

### Parc Parmentier

Help to maintain this green space by picking up dead branches, clearing the drains of debris, and doing general gardening work. This activity takes place outdoors (jackets and boots can be provided onsite if you do not have your own). Come and join us and get some fresh air!

# ... help people in a time of need

## Les Chèvrefeuilles

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

**Volunteer days:** Tuesday

**Average number of weekly volunteers:** 4

In 2019 the project was active for 42 weeks.

## L'Îlot

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

**Volunteer days:** Wednesday

**Average number of weekly volunteers:** 3

In 2019 the team served 42 weeks at the center.

## CollectMet

**Goal:** COLLECTMET is a project run by AlimentAB asbl and their purpose is to reduce food waste. The project involves collecting unsold fruit and vegetables at the Abattoir market in Anderlecht and redistributing it at COLLECTMET's sorting point to people in need and to other associations working in the social sector.

**Volunteer days:** Sunday

**Average number of weekly volunteers:** 3

In 2019 the team served 48 weeks at the project.







# Big Volunteer Day

Once a month, 7 times a year, Serve the City Brussels organizes a volunteering event to serve our city in practical ways. We call it a Big Volunteer Day. It is a day that we want to dedicate to people who often get overlooked. On this day, we try to know them by their names. Our volunteers contribute to different projects, from distributing food for homeless people to sorting out donations or playing games with children. This year, a new project was added, called 'Recycle with Us,' that analyses the activities that we do to see if there is a greener, more sustainable way to do it!

**7** Big  
Volunteer  
Days

over

**750**  
volunteers

**2300**  
volunteer hours

# Big Volunteer Week

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

**Why?** Because at Serve the City we believe that many people doing small things together can make a big difference.

**How?** With the help of hundreds of people who gathered together to help those in need throughout the week.

**When?** 29<sup>th</sup> June - 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2019

## What?

### Social projects

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



### Practical projects

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



### Street projects

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



The week concluded with a buffet and street concert at Place du Nouveau Marché aux Grains. We invited everyone we had met during the week, including the people we served. This was an amazing moment for volunteers, migrants, and others from countless diverse cultures to connect around food, music, dance, and friendship. We had over 200 participants on Thursday alone, with other days averaging around 100-130.

kindness **STARTS**  
— WITH — *me!*

over

800

volunteers

average of

135

people per day

over

2500

volunteer hours

# Corporate Volunteering

The vision of Serve the City is not only to connect individuals with the needs of the city but also to connect 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.

Many 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 and transportation equipment, and in many cases with their ability and knowledge. This support is essential to us, as we are self-funded. Without this generosity STC could not run as many programmes that we organise across the city.

Another way in which organisations engage with us is through our team building events, where companies and institutions hire us to run volunteer projects. For these events, we aim at combining enjoyment and empathy;

through the participation of these projects, co-workers can have fun while getting to know each other, and discover themselves in a much more deeper and different way than in the normal working environment, and at the same time they get to be more informed about the issues that impact their city.

Before the actual volunteering work, we always prepare our participants by giving information about the people that we help. It is always a good occasion to raise awareness about the issues, for example the homeless face.

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

We led 31 team buildings in 2019 for a total of just over 1000 employees.

Here are some of the companies that we worked with:











# International Volunteers

In 2019, Serve the City continued its partnership with International Volunteer Headquarters program (IVHQ), which arranges for people from around the world to come to Brussels to volunteer.

The individuals who sign up for the project come from many countries with the drive to give back to the places they are visiting whilst having time to see and enjoy the countries they are in. Volunteers spend their time in the morning helping on the many projects Serve the City is involved in such as helping refugees, working with vulnerable people, or supporting NGOs whilst in the afternoon is free time to get a broader perspective on their host country.

This is a great project for both volunteers and Serve the City combining

both empathy and enjoyment, giving back whilst having fun serving.

During 2019, **116 IVHQ volunteers** contributed a total of **4000 hours**, or **over 160 days** to helping Serve the City and its partners.

Volunteers registered for the following projects:

- **45** people for NGO Support
- **63** people for Food Outreach
- **2** people for the Community Outreach
- **6** people for Renovation



# Fundraising

Apart from financial support from corporate organisations, we also (co)organize our own events to raise funds. Our fund-raising events In 2019 were as follows:

## Pub Quiz

Each month of 2019, Serve the City organised a Pub Quiz to fund our various activities. Pub quizzes are frequent in big cities like Brussels, and many non-profit organisations use this initiative as means to raise funds.

We invited people once every month, usually on Tuesday, to our partner bars in Brussels. Our trivia experts signed their team up on our website and got ready for 8 rounds of deep thinking about various topics. Questions could be about Europe, History, Brands, Sport, or even General Knowledge.

A team consisted of 5 to 6 people, who each paid a participation fee of €10. The first 2 teams won prizes such as a free meal, gift vouchers, or a bottle of wine.

The pub quizzes are an important part of our revenue. On average, they raise 700 euros each time, with no cost on our side. We used the funds for both general administrative support at the office, and selected projects, such as:

- L'Îlot: Providing Christmas presents for the children
- Foyer Selah: Giving the residents a trip
- Petites Soeurs des Pauvres: Supplying equipment and volunteers to refurbish the residence
- De Overmolen: Helping to supply housing for refugees
- African Enterprise: Helping to set up a maternity unit in Nairobi

## Book Sale

The English Book Charity Sale organized two book sales for Serve the City in 2019: one in June and one in September. On this day, we helped them install the material at the Stonemanor British Book Store, where people donate and buy secondhand books by the centimeter. This event brings amazing energy as many people buy secondhand books to support Serve the City.

Serve the City received € 6000 from these events.

## 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.

This year we partnered with Ingenico, who had a team of runners for the 20k. 1600 € was raised for Serve the City.



# Other activities

## Our events around volunteering

### Info-sessions

The aim of these sessions is not only to inform our volunteers about Serve the City's mission and projects, but also to get to know our volunteers and the skills that they might be able to offer. This enables Serve the City to create a true volunteering community. Volunteers can register for an info session on our website.

The sessions are held on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays.

### Project Leader trainings

Project Leaders are a crucial element of Serve the City's success in supporting those in need. To better prepare our Project Leaders in their volunteering activities, Serve the City developed a new three-pronged approach Project Leader Training Curriculum "Know-Understand-Do:"

- **KNOW:** Get to know Serve the City both in Brussels and in the international context of being a global movement.
- **UNDERSTAND:** Learn more about Serve the City's heartbeat for people and places, and the characteristics of how STC operates, all of which can facilitate quality project leading.
- **DO:** Having attended the project leader training, new project leaders are assigned projects to put their knowledge into practice!

### Facebook City Guide

(with [visit.brussels](https://www.visit.brussels))

This Facebook Community Guide launched in 2019 regroups recommendations and tips of the community leaders who run local groups and activities, offering a local perspective on the vibrant capital of Belgium. In the section 'Get Involved,' Serve the City is featured as the ideal place for volunteering while on a holiday.

### Zoom IN Film Project

The Zoom IN series were organised in collaboration with the Brussels-based organisation The Constellation. In this series we had group discussions about the films from their documentary series called "Open Your Eyes."

### International Forum in Brussels

Every year, Serve the City International organizes an International Forum for all Serve the City branches to create link and unity between all. This year, Serve the City Brussels hosted the forum. The vision of the forum was based on the slogan 'Kindness Starts with Me.' A total of 100 participants from all over the world attended.

The Brussels team, led by David Anderson, took responsibility to organise all the logistic for this forum, making sure our guests would feel more at home. On Thursday evening we held a welcome drink, dinner, concert, and pub quiz. Lynn oversaw all the delicious food given on Thursday evening, Friday lunch and dinner, and Saturday lunch. Our main location for the forum was at MAD at Place du Nouveau Marché aux Grains, and on Sunday we met at Thon Hotel, near Rogier.

The workshops gave an overview and in-depth discussion on the values and goals of Serve the City. The Global Operations Team (GOT) unveiled a few new STC products, such as VoluME, the Serving Stories

Podcast, and Focus. STC Brussels had a great time learning from each other, and were blown away that STC is all over the world and what the people were doing. It was really motivating. The resolution was to continue our mission of spreading kindness across our cities. Overall, it was an enjoyable experience.

#### Achieving the 2020 Vision:

At the end of the forum, we reviewed the 2020 Vision set in 2016, with the objective of bridging the gap by the end of 2020 to have achieved the 2020 Vision which included the following:

- Family and Formal
- New and Maturing
- Local and Global
- Inspired and Inclusive
- Reunited and Resolute

### Grants

Grants can enable financing for projects, and public institutions and private bodies offer to support projects with specific aims.

In 2019, Serve the City Brussels continued its role in the EU-funded project, "Empowering Youth through Entrepreneurial Skills" (EYES), which aims to accompany inactive youth in North-Western Europe onto the labour market. Serve the City's key role in this project is to provide volunteer coaches for youth.

### Peacejam 2019 Conference

In 2019 we attended the The Peacejam Belgium Conference at KU Leuven. The conference connects young people with Nobel Peace Prize winners to mentor and educate them about driving social change. Our volunteers in STC Brussels alongside volunteers in STC Leuven organised projects at the event to introduce youth to volunteering projects and social change initiatives.

# L'Îlot: an islet of hope in the center of Brussels...

Cold had just arrived to Brussels and the sun had left some hours ago. We wait until we are all ready and we go inside. *L'Îlot* is a temporary crisis shelter for women in need. Volunteers go there every Wednesday at 8pm to spend some time with them: they have games for their kids and offer some self-care treatment for the women at the center.

As part of this social project, we offer to do their nails. Sometimes they don't want to because they are tired or have other things to do. But this time "Marta" (ndlr: not her real name) was free and took a seat with us. She picked a very intense dark blue colour nail varnish that looked great on her pale skin. Spontaneously, she started talking about her past life. She really needed to talk and this is the reason we are there.

She used to live in a little town in Belgium, far away from Brussels. She owned a nice house, where she lived with her husband, near her workplace. Without changing her face, as if she was just talking about something irrelevant, she tells us that her husband **tried to kill her** once. She was traumatized for a while, and that stopped her from taking any rational decisions at the time. However, she finally decided to leave her home. She moved to a small apartment in the same town.

Nevertheless, as it is not a big city, she could easily run into her ex-husband on the street and she was clearly too afraid to let this happen. So, she took an even more **difficult decision**: she moved to Brussels, where she didn't know anybody and had nowhere to stay. She had no choice if she wanted to

keep herself alive. Moving meant **starting from zero**: she lost her job, her house, her family. It even meant living in the street for some weeks. **"I ended up by losing hope"**, she says. All I could think about while I was listening to Marta is that what might be even harder than living in the street is not to have expectations of improving her life conditions, to think that your life might just end like that.

Fortunately, her hope came back when she found out about *L'Îlot*. Once again, she had a bed to sleep in, a blanket to cover herself from Brussels' cold and some warm food on the table. She recovered **hope of having a worthy life**. Hope of working, socializing and having the possibility to live her life with dignity. She is extremely thankful for what *L'Îlot* has given her. She only has words



## L'Îlot: an islet of hope in the center of Brussels...

of gratitude towards the project and their workers. “She never complains and never stops smiling”, added the cook, who had just arrived. The story of Marta is one of **courage and resilience**. Despite the obstacles she has had to go through, she keeps her smile and her hope of getting back the respectable life she once had.

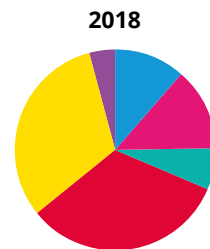
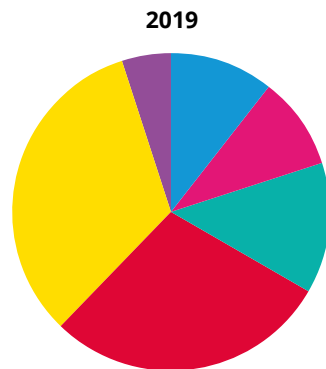
What happened to Marta could happen to anyone. There is no specific profile of gender violence’s victims. The only common characteristic is that they are women. Gender violence is not always easy to perceive as it can be subtle, sometimes silent. As it happened with Marta, you might only realize it when you are just a few steps away from death. She had never thought about being a victim of gender violence, or even imagined herself living in the street. But unfortunately, it happened. Besides gender violence, there are a lot of other issues that could lead a person to live in the street, such as being a victim of fraud, losing their parents at an early age, divorcing, losing a job, drug addiction, etc. And we, any of us, could be victims of any of these events.

*L'Îlot* means islet in French and that is exactly what this center is. For Marta and many other women, it meant a second opportunity in their lives, and not giving up from a hopeless life. It is a safe place to stay to escape from an environment of fear. In the middle of a sea of anguish and hopelessness, they were able to find an oasis, an islet of help and safety.



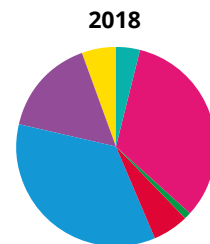
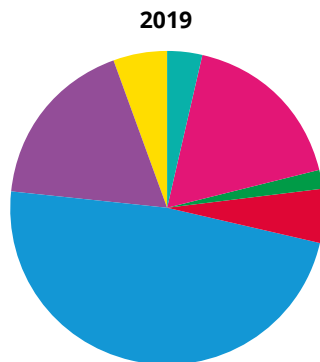
# Financial Report

## Revenues



	2019		2018	
Donations	26 973 €	11%	38 930 €	11%
Grants	24 308 €	9%	44 942 €	13%
Corp. Donations	33 235 €	13%	22 701 €	7%
Services	73 146 €	29%	111 807 €	33%
IVHQ / VV	83 484 €	33%	107 494 €	32%
Other	12 184 €	5%	13 360 €	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>253 330 €</b>		<b>339 234 €</b>	

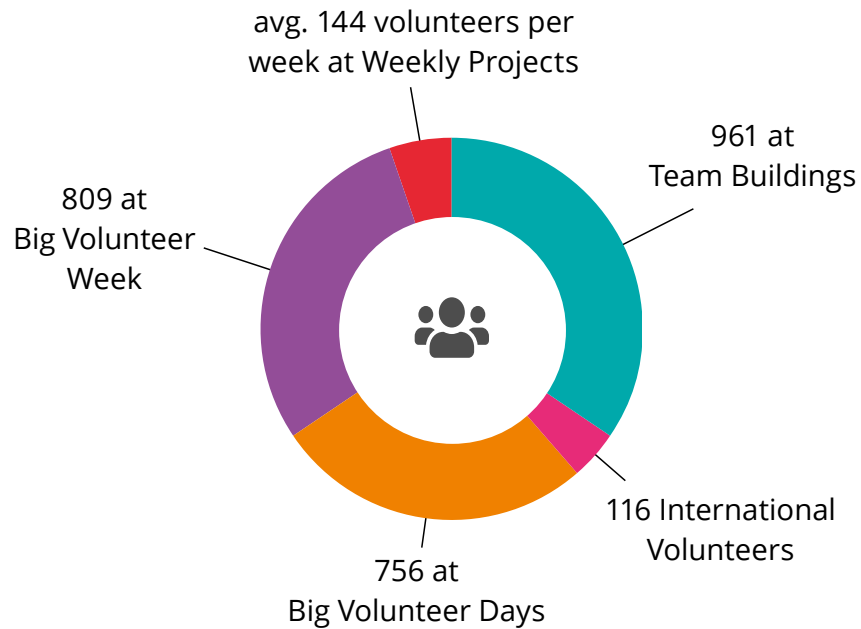
## Expenditure



	2019		2018	
Admin/Logistic	9 497 €	4%	11 340 €	4%
Project Support	45 875 €	18%	98 856 €	33%
Communications	5 058 €	2%	3 460 €	1%
Rent	14 223 €	5%	16 209 €	6%
Salary/Consult...	125 531 €	48%	100 280 €	35%
IVHQ	46 247 €	18%	45 200 €	16%
Other	14 340 €	5%	15 820 €	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>260 771 €</b>		<b>286 165 €</b>	

# The Year in Numbers

## Volunteers



## Volunteer Hours

