

# Facts & Figures



Kebirungi Mackline, a student at the Bubwika primary school in the Bunyangabu District in Uganda.

PHOTO: SHARIF HUSSEIN

## Report of the supervisory board

# A year of strengthening and making choices

The year 2023 was difficult by all accounts. Not only did we see devastating wars and earthquakes around the world, but the year also turned out to be the hottest one in history since measurements started. This sad new record left scars across the planet.

Heat waves affected populations around the globe, melting roads in Bangladesh, causing blackouts in India, drying up rivers even in the Amazon, followed by extreme rainfall and deadly floods in Libya, Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya. Among all this, Simavi became an even stronger part of a growing movement of resistance, bringing the voice and experiences of the women and girls most affected by climate change to the tables where decisions are or should be made. We made ourselves heard at the UN Water Conference in New York, during the World Water Week in Stockholm, at COP28 in Dubai, in the Netherlands and in the countries we work in. Putting women and girls at the centre and working on locally-led solutions to tackle the water crisis for the most vulnerable communities is Simavi's unique way of working. A way of working that the supervisory board strongly supports and believes in. The Water Justice Fund, co-created with Simavi's partners in Kenya, Nepal and Bangladesh and launched during the UN Water Conference in 2023, is a great example of this.

### New member of the board

The supervisory board also strengthened itself by welcoming Olutayo Bankole-Bolawole as the newest member of the board. Tayo, currently based in Rwanda, brings extensive experience with her, having worked in senior management positions at country and regional programme levels with international NGOs for more than 20 years. Tayo's experience in building international impact organisations and her feel for culture and learning make her a wonderful addition to our board. At the end of September 2023, the supervisory board had to say goodbye to Hans Valkenburg, who had been a very valuable part of our team since 2019. Hans's sharp but constructive questions and his passion for Africa have been

instrumental during our supervisory meetings. Hans, thanks a million, you will be missed! Apart from the personnel changes, 2023 was also a pivotal year for the strengthening of Simavi's strategy and for making sharp choices for the future, choices that will bring focus and increase Simavi's impact.

It is not only time to acknowledge the powerful role of women and girls as key drivers of change, but even more so to actively ensure they can take up this role. Women and girls need to participate actively, freely and meaningfully, be equally included in decision making, and be heard and respected at all levels of WASH governance.

### Shifting the Power

Simavi believes access for women and girls to sustainable water and sanitation services should be at the heart of the struggle for climate justice, because the impact of climate change affects girls and women most. Shifting the Power - a call to redistribute power and resources to the people who are deprived of their human rights - is and will remain an important part of Simavi's way of working and organisational choices will be made accordingly.

Simavi will further invest in local leadership and support local initiatives and local actors. The focus of Simavi's programmes will be even more on supporting context-driven community engagement through partners who work with grassroots women and girl-led initiatives. This approach is key to authentic and lasting social change and transformation.

### Influencing and collaborating

Simavi will continue to focus on low resource countries and regions in Africa and Asia where the human rights

to water and sanitation for women and girls are most at risk. Two mutually reinforcing intervention strategies are employed: influencing and collaborating. These strategies fit Simavi's role, position and expertise in the international development sector and help to create an enabling environment in which crucial voices, opinions and demands are heard.

In 2023 Simavi managed to deliver on all its programmes and ensured learning and impact was captured. The WASH SDG sub-programmes led by Simavi exceeded all their targets and contributed towards real system change. The successful EU-funded Our Lives, Our Health, Our Futures programme was concluded with a high-level conference in Dhaka.

Simavi's campaigns in the Netherlands were used to strengthen our message and gather support for our programmes. Through the Stop Sex for Water campaign nearly 30,000 signatures were collected to pressure Dutch politicians to designate climate budget to local water solutions ensuring safety and protection for women in the process of water collection and management. An extreme multi-day sponsored hiking event on the mudflats in the Netherlands was organised for the Water Justice Fund. And with the online movie festival Best of HER, attention was drawn to women's rights.

In designing current and future programmes, the principles of the Simavi strategy are clearly reflected. Shifting the Power is increasingly embedded in Simavi's

programmes, influencing work, partnerships, in how Simavi is organised and in Simavi's identity. Change is inevitable, externally and internally, but the supervisory board is convinced that the Simavi approach has strong potential to attract new donors and new partnerships.

### About the supervisory board

- Throughout the year the supervisory board and the management team operated entirely according to the declaration's rules and intent.
- The supervisory board is the managing director's employer and supervisor and acts as her adviser. The board itself has no managerial or operational responsibilities.
- The supervisory board members are recruited according to pre-agreed profiles to ensure the board's composition encompasses diverse areas of expertise. Vacancies are publicly advertised.
- The supervisory board appoints new board members. The supervisory board may involve the managing director in the assessment and selection procedure.
- The accountability and responsibilities of Simavi's supervisory board are described in the organisation's Declaration of Accountability (see [www.simavi.nl/en/governance](http://www.simavi.nl/en/governance)).

### Composition

Simavi's supervisory board is composed as follows:

Supervisory board members	Area of expertise	Current position	Other ancillary positions
<b>Ankie van Wersch-Lenders</b> chair	Strategy; international organisation and partnership building; corporate social responsibility	Managing director/CEO of Powered by Enviu	Founder and board member of Pro2 Foundation; Tika Foundation; IMAGINE leader
<b>Joyce Browne</b> vice-chair	Global health; maternal health; epidemiology; planetary health and climate justice	Associate professor, UMC Utrecht	Chair member of Global Health Knowledge Centre; advisory board member of Expertisecentrum Kinderen en Adolescenten Nieuw in Nederland
<b>Vera Arnoldus</b> audit committee	Legal, governance	Company secretary PharmAccess Foundation	
<b>Willem van de Put</b>	International health development	Senior research fellow at the Institute of Tropical Medicine Antwerp	Senior research fellow at the Institute of International Humanitarian Affairs, Fordham University; Co-founder/director of Culture4Change
<b>Hans Valkenburg</b> audit committee (until September 2023)	Planning and control; Theory of Change; international development; poverty alleviation; journalism	Self-employed consultant on finance, strategy and planning	Non-executive member of the board of Tearfund; Member of the supervisory board of Holland Zorggroep
<b>Olutayo Bankole-Bolawole</b> (from October 2023)	HR, institutional and organisational development; leadership development; transformational change; international development	Global director of people and culture, Tearfund	Board member, Ajegunle Community Project, Lagos, Nigeria; Expert on Africa, WASH and Women, World Economic Forum
<b>Jochem Schuurman</b> audit committee (from March 2024)	Financial management; financial reporting; risk assessment; due diligence; climate philanthropy	Grant operations manager, IKEA Foundation	

### Rotation and election procedure

Supervisory board members are appointed for a maximum of 2 x four-year terms. The board's rotation schedule is as follows:

Supervisory board members	Appointed	End of first term	End of second term
Willem van de Put	2018 (December)	2022	2026
Hans Valkenburg	2019 (September)	2023	-
Joyce Browne	2020 (January)	2024	2028
Vera Arnoldus	2021 (March)	2025	2029
Ankie van Wersch-Lenders	2022 (November)	2026	2030
Olutayo Bankole Bolawole	2023 (October)	2027	2031
Jochem Schuurman	2024 (March)	2028	2032

### Compensation

The remuneration policy for the supervisory board remains unchanged. Members of the supervisory board do not receive any form of compensation. Actual expenses incurred may be reimbursed.

### Supervisory board meetings in 2023

The board convened five times in 2023. The standard agenda items for supervisory board meetings throughout the year are:

- the annual plan and budget
- the annual report
- programme implementation and societal impact
- strategic partnerships and alliances
- formal audits, evaluations and risk assessments
- risk management and fraud prevention
- review of the governance structure
- development of the organisation, its capabilities and the strength of its leadership
- employee engagement.

In addition to the standard agenda items, the board also discussed and reviewed the following items this year:

- the Simavi strategy
- the diversity and inclusivity policy
- new impactful programmes
- the fundraising strategy and financial investment for these plans
- the appointment of the new finance and operations director.

### Audit committee

The audit committee convened three times in 2023. Meetings took place about two weeks before the regular

supervisory board meetings. Simavi's managing director and director of finance and operations also attended. Topics included the annual budget and forecasts, the internal financial reports and annual accounts, the auditor's report and the governance structure. The external auditor also participated in the discussions of the annual accounts and the auditor's report.

### Management system

A safe management system is in place. Simavi's ISO-certified quality management system is an important means to ensuring the controlled and reliable execution of the organisations operations and mitigating the associated risks.

### Self-evaluation of the supervisory board

In line with Simavi's governance code, the supervisory board annually evaluates its performance.

### Recognition

In 2023 Simavi and its partners operated in turbulent circumstances. The supervisory board greatly appreciates the commitment and perseverance shown by Simavi's volunteers, employees and management team throughout the year. The supervisory board especially thanks Simavi's in-country partners for their cooperation and impactful work on the ground and expresses its appreciation for the strong relations with the organisation's Dutch and international stakeholders. Looking forward to 2024 and beyond, the supervisory board has confidence the Simavi team will find new and effective ways to achieve our common purpose: powerful women, healthy societies. •