

# Facts & Figures



Violet and Esther are pupils at the Kyamatanga primary school. Their school now has a WASH Club where students learn about water, sanitation and hygiene and think of smart ways to generate funds for their schools WASH facilities.

PHOTO: SHARIF HUSEIN

## Report of the supervisory board

# A year of resolve, transition and growth

The year 2024 was a challenging yet pivotal year. For Simavi, having to adjust the organisation to the consequences of the closure of two major programmes. And for water and climate justice, as newly elected administrations in various parts of the world, including the Netherlands, threatened progress.

It has only strengthened Simavi's resolve to bring the voice and experiences of the women and girls most affected by climate change to the tables where decisions are made. 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.

### New member of the board

The supervisory board strengthened itself by welcoming Jochem Schuurman as the newest member of the board. Schuurman replaced Hans Valkenburg, who left in September 2023, and brings 18 years of experience in the financial sector with him. And valuable experience as grant operations manager at IKEA Foundation. At the end of 2024, the supervisory board had to say goodbye to Joyce Browne, who had been vice-chair and a valuable part of our team since 2020. Joyce brought a commitment to health and astute critical thinking and understanding of power dimensions in the development sector. As the youngest member to ever be appointed to the supervisory board; her knowledge, experience and perspective provided for a uniquely valuable contribution. Joyce, thank you so much, you will be missed! Apart from the personnel changes, 2024 was also a vital year for the transition of Simavi as an organisation. As a supervisory board we supported the organisation in bringing focus and increasing impact by concentrating on three overarching programmes and by exploring new partnerships and collaborations. Financially 2024 was also a year of transition. Income from government grants was significantly less than previous years, so the supervisory board encouraged investments in raising more funds from individual donors, companies and foundations in the Netherlands.

### Women as key drivers of change

The supervisory board believes that access to water for women is not only a right, but also a necessity when we want to move towards a more equitable and sustainable society. We need to acknowledge the powerful role of women and girls as key drivers of change and 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 - 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 are 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 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. The supervisory board supports the two mutually reinforcing intervention strategies that Simavi employs: 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 2024 Simavi managed to deliver on 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 Water Justice Fund has already funded more than 70 women-led grassroots initiatives to implement local climate adaptation actions and the WASH, Learn & Share programme has started working in 18 schools and 36 surrounding villages in Uganda. In Nepal Simavi continued its successful collaboration with Dopper on the Sarwacha programme, aiming for a blueprint for WASH system strengthening. Simavi's campaigns in the Netherlands were used to strengthen our message and gather support for programmes. Through the Stop Sex for Water campaign more than 61,000 signatures were collected and presented to the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation. Two extreme multi-day sponsored hiking events on the mudflats in the Netherlands were organised for the Water Justice Fund. And with the HER Film Festival, 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. In 2025 Simavi

will celebrate its 100 years anniversary, a remarkable feat of resilience and adaptation to new realities. The supervisory board is convinced that the Simavi approach has strong potential to attract new partnerships and new donors.

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
Ankie van Wersch-Lenders chair	Strategy; international organisation and partnership building; corporate social responsibility	Managing Director, MVO Nederland	Supervisory Board Member at Het Groene Brein; Tika Foundation; IMAGINE leader
Joyce Browne vice-chair (until December 2024)	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 Expertise centrum Kinderen en Adolescenten Nieuw in Nederland; Advisory Board member of the Green Care Alliance (Groene Zorg Alliantie)
Vera Arnoldus audit committee	Legal; governance	Company Secretary, PharmAccess Foundation	
Willem van de Put	International health development	Director, Culture4Change	Research Fellow, the Institute of International Humanitarian Affairs, Fordham University;
Olutayo Bankole-Bolawole	Organisational development and culture; institutional development and organisation growth, leadership development & management, transformational change specialist in 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
Jochem Schuurman audit committee	Financial management, financial reporting, risk assessment, due diligence, climate philanthropy	Finance Manager at Stichting Springpact / BlueCity /Rechtstreef	

Rotation and election procedure

Supervisory board members are appointed for a maximum of 2 x four-year terms. Simavi is looking at the profile of the supervisory board member that will replace Joyce Browne. A new vice-chair will be appointed in 2025. 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
Joyce Browne	2020 (January)	2024	-
Vera Arnoldus	2021 (March)	2025	-
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 2024

The board convened 5 times in 2024. The standard agenda items for supervisory board meetings throughout the year are:

- discussion and adoption of the annual plan and budget
- formal audits, financials and evaluations
- risk management and fraud prevention
- the impact report
- programme strategy
- strategic partnerships and alliances
- 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 was a sounding board for the management in relation to:

- the Simavi strategy & long-term plans given the changing landscape
- Simavi's Change Process
- the fundraising strategy and financial investment for these plans, ensuring our financial sustainability for the future
- the Water Justice Fund and our ambitions to scale this up.

Audit committee

The audit committee convened 4 times in 2024. 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 2024 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 2025 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.•