

# IMPACT

REPORT

2024

STOP SEX  
FOR WATER

Special  
Rapporteur  
on water  
promises  
full support

PAGE 24

JANE NYAMWAMU

'I see the  
beginning of  
a powerful  
movement'

PAGE 26

WATER AND TOILETS

Schools as a  
starting point  
for WASH

PAGE 18

WATER JUSTICE

Addressing  
inequalities  
for a water  
safe future



12  
Together with  
women and girls  
we worked on  
water, toilets,  
equality and  
climate justice.



22  
Campaigning  
against sextortion:  
from music festivals  
to the global stage  
of Miss Universe.



28  
Bringing communities,  
the government and  
the private sector  
together for safe  
water in Nepal.



**On the cover:**  
Nampaso Mekure from  
the Naishorua women's  
group in Kajiado County in  
Kenya. Read her story on  
the backcover.  
PHOTO: JEROEN VAN LOON

## CREDITS

**Production:** Karin Bojorge, Noa Gortworst, Jappe Kok, Sabiha Siddique, Karmath Subedi, Connie de Vries, Dieneke van der Wijk and all colleagues of Simavi.

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**SIMAVI, MAY 2025**

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## GLOSSARY

|             |                                      |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>CSOs</b> | Civil Society Organisations          |
| <b>GBV</b>  | Gender Based Violence                |
| <b>HRWS</b> | Human Rights to Water and Sanitation |
| <b>NGO</b>  | Non-governmental organisation        |
| <b>SDG</b>  | Sustainable Development Goal         |
| <b>LLA</b>  | Locally Led Adaptation               |
| <b>WASH</b> | Water, Sanitation and Hygiene        |

# Making impact

Storms, wildfires, droughts, floods and unrelenting heatwaves battered the globe in 2024, the result of record-breaking temperatures. Politically, it has also been a rough year, threatening progress when it comes to climate justice.

On World Environment Day, June 5, UN Secretary-General António Guterres, spoke on climate justice: 'We cannot accept a future where the rich are protected in air-conditioned bubbles while the rest of humanity is lashed by lethal weather in unliveable lands.' He called it a disgrace that most vulnerable nations are being left stranded with the impacts of a climate crisis they did nothing to create.

As the climate crisis is foremost a water crisis, and as women and girls are among the most affected, it is essential to put women and girls at the centre and provide them with the means to tackle the water crisis. This is Simavi's unique focus and approach and what we continued to work on in 2024.

Locally led climate adaptation principles remain fundamental to our programmes, such as the Water Justice Fund, for which we were rewarded with an extra 1.45 million euro from the Dutch Postcode Lottery. We use innovative shared governance and participatory grant making mechanisms to shift power and decision making to the women and girls who are living in remote, under-served and oppressive environments, and are most likely to experience water vulnerability.

Together with our partners we make ourselves heard around the world, at major events such as COP29, the World Water Forum and directly to the United Nations. We continue to fight for climate adaptation finance directly benefitting women and girls in marginalised communities.

We use our campaigns in the Netherlands to strengthen our message and gather support for our programmes. Through our Stop Sex for Water campaign, we collected 61,000 signatures and presented these to the UN Special Rapporteur on water and sanitation in Geneva to raise awareness. We organised a multi-day sponsored hiking event on the mudflats in the Netherlands for the Water Justice Fund, and with the online HER Film Festival we drew attention to women's rights.

In the first quarter of 2024 we organised a successful closing event for the WASH SDG programme.

## 'Simavi successfully sharpened its programme focus'

The closure of two major programmes made it necessary for Simavi to enter a period of transition. We took advantage of this situation by bringing more focus to our organisation, concentrating on three overarching programmes: the Water Justice Fund, the new WASH, Learn & Share programme and Sarwacha as a project under the Sustainable and Inclusive WASH programme. Over the last year, Simavi successfully sharpened its programme focus and managed to adapt to its financial situation by intensifying fundraising, adjusting the organisational structure and by working more efficiently. We are ready to proudly celebrate our 100-year anniversary in 2025 with you and continue to look for ways to increase our impact.

**Dieneke van der Wijk**  
Director



PHOTO: SANDER STOEPIER



# Simavi's 2024

in review


2024 was an eventful year with many successes and highlights, in our programmes and beyond. A big thank you to everyone who supported Simavi this year!



**MARCH**  
8-17  
Together with our film partner Cinetree, we organised the fourth edition of the annual HER Film festival. To celebrate and connect, we invited 200 powerful women to an inspiring dinner in De Duif in Amsterdam.

**JUNE**  
10

Meike van Ginneken, the Dutch water envoy, signed our petition to stop sex for water.





**JULY**  
3-7  
We organised two challenging 3-day mudflat hikes across the Wadden Sea. Participants hiked straight through the water, raising more than 60.000 euros for Simavi's programmes.



**NOVEMBER**  
11-22  
Simavi was present as an NGO delegate at the COP29 climate negotiations in Baku to advocate and network for more and better funding for climate adaptation.

**NOVEMBER**  
12

Together with other NGO's, we went to the Hague to talk with Dutch members of parliament about the importance of Dutch international development cooperation, in light of proposed budget cuts.



## 2024


**MARCH**  
21  
After 7 years, the successful WASH SDG programme closed. In all countries, including the Netherlands, events were organised, with communities and partners showcasing and handing over the work to the government.



**MARCH**  
22  
Together with EARTH Water, we launched 100% Sex Free Water and kicked off our campaign Stop Sex for Water.

**MAY**  
18-25

We were present at the World Water Forum in Bali to advocate for water justice and hearing the unheard.





**JULY**  
5-7  
During the finals of Miss Beauty of the Netherlands and Miss Universe of the Netherlands was announced that contestants raised 21.000 euro for Simavi.



**OCTOBER**  
13-17  
Simavi was present at Africa Water Week in Cairo together with our partner ANEW to discuss pressing water issues and their solutions on the African continent.

**DECEMBER**  
22  
We visited Geneva to hand 61.000 signatures over to the UN special rapporteur on water and sanitation, Pedro Arrojo-Agudo, to raise awareness around water related sextortion.

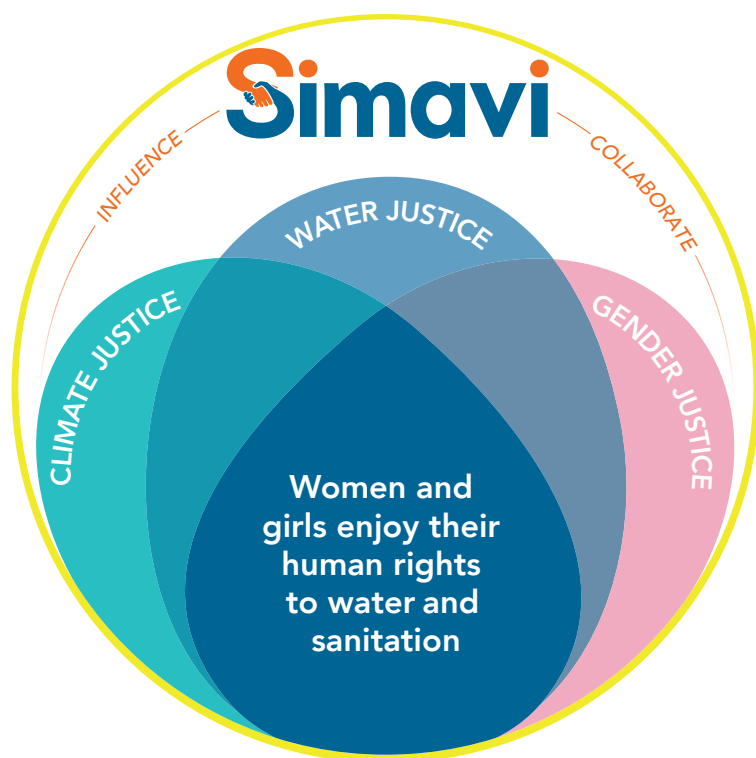




## Simavi's Theory of Change

# Water, climate and gender justice

Simavi has a vision that is simple yet very ambitious: a world in which all women and girls can enjoy their human rights to water and sanitation. Our Theory of Change (ToC) provides a roadmap for all our activities.



At Simavi, we fight for water justice, climate justice and gender justice. Simavi's Theory of Change guides us towards making a meaningful impact. We focus on women and girls because they are hit the hardest by climate change and inadequate access to water and sanitation. At the same time, women are often excluded from participating in decision-making processes. That's why empowering communities and specifically women and girls to take ownership of the process of adapting to the impacts of climate change is crucial.

### What role do we want to play?

We believe that states are ultimately responsible to realise the human rights to water and sanitation. At the same time, we see it as the role of civil society to hold states accountable to the people and communities they serve. We believe civil society, women and girls, and their communities understand best what is needed in their country or community. We want all stakeholders – civil society, private sector and governmental organisations – to work together towards system change so long-term sustainability is guaranteed.

That is why Simavi does not see it as its end-goal to provide communities with water and sanitation services directly. We see it as our role to support

Simavi's end-goal is not to provide communities with water and sanitation, it is to support civil society, women and girls, and their communities to claim their rights.



Sareen Malik from ANEW (right) advocates for women to be at the heart of WASH.

### COLLABORATING:

#### A strategic partnership with ANEW

In 2024 Simavi supported ANEW, the African civil society network on water, with a small grant. ANEW is an autonomous Africa-wide platform for African civil society organisations (CSOs) actively involved in the field of sustainable water management, water supply and sanitation. It aims to ensure that the diverse voices of African civil society organisations on water and sanitation are represented and heard in the development and implementation of Water and Sanitation plans and policies. The grant from Simavi helped ANEW to push for a revised Africa WASH policy on gender which will be finalised in 2025. Sareen Malik, executive secretary of ANEW: 'This new policy will be guiding for all African countries. The support of Simavi made it possible to attend the Africa Water Week in Cairo and speak with ministers and other officials about the importance of a women-centred approach in WASH. This advocacy work has been successful. Women will now be at the heart of the new Africa WASH policy.' In 2024 Sareen Malik also travelled to Bali for the World Water Forum to lead a session about the central role of gender and social inclusion in fostering equitable and inclusive access to water and sanitation.

civil society, women and girls, and their communities to claim their rights. For example, by supporting influencing activities or in gathering evidence to support the claims of women and girls and community-based organisations. We work to overcome gender inequality, amongst others by ensuring women and girls take part in decision-making on water and sanitation and by ensuring their needs are being considered.

Simavi's work is based on human rights and on the locally led adaptation principles. Communities have valuable knowledge, resources, and expertise that are critical to achieving sustainable development. We understand the importance of building partnerships and trust between communities, governments, and other stakeholders, and of being flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances.

### How do we apply our ToC?

Simavi's Theory of Change helps us to ensure focus and describes how our key strategies contribute to our goal. Two mutually reinforcing strategies form the core of our work.

The first strategy is **collaboration**. We collaborate with civil society organisations and community groups in the countries where we work to strengthen their efficiency and leadership. We do this through funding and supporting these organisations, networks, movements and feminist groups. We want to enable them to work and advocate more effectively, strengthening knowledge, skills, data collection and collaboration. Together we shift the power towards women and girls. The second strategy is **influencing**. With like-minded organisations we influence local officials, policymakers,

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>

funders, civil society actors and private actors to take responsibility for women and girls' rights to water and sanitation. We want them to own their roles and responsibilities. We want to challenge existing power imbalances. And we want to make sure that access to water is not merely seen as a technical problem but as a human rights issue that is related to other global problems, such as climate change and gender inequality.

To achieve structural impact Simavi applies different tools. One of them is the gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) tool. Another one is the approach which helps us to address financial, institutional, environmental, technological and social sustainability (FIETS) aspects in our water programmes.

### How do we measure our progress?

All our activities should contribute to achieving our goal. That's why we design our activities such as our advocacy work and the programmes we work on with partner organisations in Africa and Asia, in line with our Theory of Change.

To measure and showcase how programmes contribute to our goal, we developed indicators that are aligned with our ToC. For example, when evaluating sanitation services, we follow the Human Rights' AAAQ framework which stands for availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality of services. Evidence is collected from our activities and programmes, through surveys, mobile tools, and interviews. We have discussions, exchange feedback and track the change in lives jointly with community and stakeholders through community meetings, advocacy discussions and outcome harvesting. In our Impact Report, we bring this information together, using both quantitative data to measure progress and case studies to illustrate the actual impact on individuals.

### How do we increase our impact?

We continually work to improve our impact. We make use of a variety of evidence, from our monitoring systems, evaluations and consultations with key stakeholders, to inform programmes and our lobby and advocacy work. And we invest in learning during the programme cycle. We are open to feedback on our goals and ways of working. Shifting the power is at the core of our strategy: shifting leadership to our partners and the women and girls themselves. Always with our ultimate goal in mind: making sure that all women and girls enjoy their human rights to water and sanitation. •



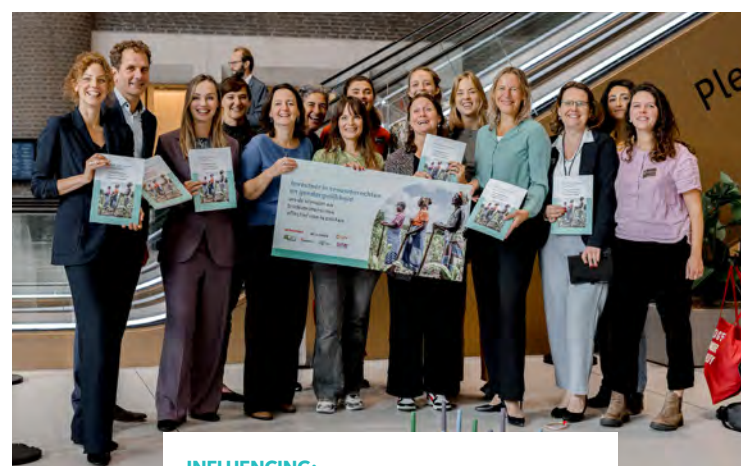
Left: The women of the Mehenatisheel Women's Group. Below: The women of the Mehenatisheel Women's Group shared their experiences with other groups



#### LEARNING:

##### Water Justice Fund in Nepal

In Dang and Kailali Districts in Nepal, women groups have been tackling water issues with the help of grants from the Water Justice Fund. In December 2024, local CBO's brought them together for two peer learning sessions to share experiences and exchange ideas. Although most participants had no experience participating in such community events, they were eager to share their stories with the women of other groups. Many of the challenges they had to overcome, including patriarchal structures, environmental problems and economical challenges were familiar for all women. The groups shared how they had overcome these challenges. For example, the Mehenatisheel Women Group discussed their efforts to build bio-embankments next to the river to protect their land from floods. While they advised others to do the same, they were also honest about the challenges and how they should be avoided, for example by starting the process later in the year when the water-level is lower. But beyond sharing technical information, the women were able to inspire each other, offer support and encourage each other to tackle their own problems. This event highlights the power of knowledge sharing and bringing women together to teach and support each other.



Dutch MP's receive our paper on gender and climate.

#### INFLUENCING:

##### Lobby towards Dutch parliament on gender and climate together with WO=MEN and others

Investing in gender equality is an integral element of climate justice, and climate policy needs to be gender-responsive. A coalition of organisations including Simavi conveyed this message in a joint paper in which we provided concrete recommendations to the Dutch government. On the 21 September, we joined our colleagues from WO=MEN, ActionAid, BothEnds, MilieuDefensie, WECF and Care Nederland at the Dutch Parliament in the Hague to present our paper to Members of Parliament, and discussed with them how they can ensure that Dutch climate action takes into account the position of women and girls.



Face-to-face mentorship in the WOP programme

#### LOCALLY LED:

##### WOP Kenya

The WOP programme, funded by the EU, is about partnerships between water companies to improve water and sanitation access to underserved areas. Out of the current 22 Water Operator Partnerships (WOPs) the one in Kenya stands out since it is a South-to-South partnership. WOP Kenya is led by the Kisumu Water and Sanitation Company (KIWASCO). The goal is to mentor five water and sanitation companies in Kenya to improve access to water and sanitation services for 250.000 underserved people in low-income areas. Simavi is involved as a partner, taking the lead on capacity building around Gender and Inclusion and the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation.

Patrick Mwanzia, Simavi's regional representative for Africa: 'Simavi provided training to the staff of the five mentees on the human rights to water and sanitation and what is needed to fulfill these. We unpacked the AAAAQ normative criteria focusing on accessibility, acceptability, affordability, availability and quality of services, and the principles underlying engagement with communities, such as non-discrimination, accountability and meaningful participation. In 2024, we have seen the implementation of these criteria and principles in various pro-poor policies, strategies and plans, resulting in positive and sustainable change.'

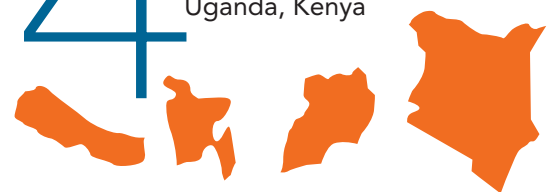


# 2024

We are proud of our numbers

5 PROGRAMMES  
IN 4 COUNTRIES

Nepal, Bangladesh,  
Uganda, Kenya



28,569  
SUPPORTERS

of Simavi made a financial contribution to our work

14,100  
PEOPLE



got access to safe drinking water

We worked together with 17 LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

119

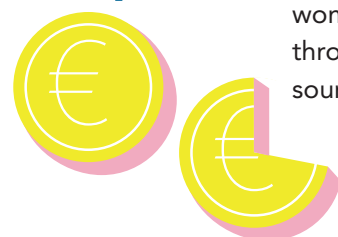


local government officials received a training.

For every euro invested through the Water Justice Fund, an

ADDITIONAL 0,72 EURO

was secured by women's groups through local sources of funding



12,214  
MOVIES

about powerful women were watched during HER Film Festival,



317  
PARTICIPANTS

decided to become a structural donor of Simavi

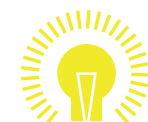
Water by Women in Nepal reached

1,545  
PEOPLE

with awareness sessions and

393,270  
PEOPLE

through awareness campaigns



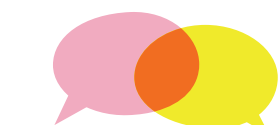
2,518  
PEOPLE

got access to safe sanitation



2,147

meetings and coaching conversations were organised as part of the Water Justice Fund programme, capacitating



37,445  
PEOPLE

In Uganda, WASH, Learn & Share constructed rain-water harvesting tanks, a latrine block for girls and handwashing facilities in

5

PRIMARY SCHOOLS REACHING 3,254 PUPILS



209,465  
PEOPLE  
(107,280 WOMEN)

benefited from



climate change adaptation initiatives

29

WASH Committees and WASH Clubs were formed through the Sarwacha programme, and

7,421  
PEOPLE

attended awareness sessions



61,000

STOP SEKS  
VOOR WATER

SIGNATURES

were collected for our Stop Sex for Water petition addressed to the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation

2,703 PEOPLE

did a training on WASH, climate or menstrual health

AMONG THEM

1,860  
WOMEN



# What programmes did we work on in 2024?

Simavi works together with women and girls in Africa and Asia on equality and climate justice. On clean drinking water and safe toilets for all. We work in close collaboration with civil society organisations and provide technical support to partners. In our programmes we focus on local solutions to tackle the climate and water crisis.

## Water by Women

**Location** Nepal  
**Period** Three years (2022-2025)  
**Donor** Made Blue  
**Consortium partner** SEBAC Nepal  
**Goal** To ensure access to inclusive, sustainable and resilient WASH facilities and services.

## WASH, Learn & Share

**Location** Uganda  
**Period** Three years (2024 - 2026)  
**Donor** Made Blue Foundation, Wandelen voor Water. several Dutch Foundations  
**Country partners** Caritas Fort Portal - HEWASA, JESE (Joint Effort to Save the Environment), WASEU (Water and Sanitation Entrepreneurs Association Uganda)  
**Goal** Ensure sustainable access to clean water, safe sanitation and hygiene education in 18 schools and 36 surrounding villages in Uganda. By implementing innovative solutions, encouraging community involvement and empowering local entrepreneurs, we aim to achieve the SDGs related to safe water and sanitation (SDG 6) and gender equality (SDG 5). Create lasting impact by addressing the root causes of water scarcity and poor sanitation, contributing to better health, education and well-being for all.



Violet Kasembo (front right) is a pupil of the Kyamatanga Primary School in Uganda.

PHOTO: HUSSEIN SHARIF

▲ **Children's parliament**  
 Enhancing citizen participation is an important aspect of the WASH, Learn & Share programme. School pupils are given the chance to be part of a so-called 'children's parliament', a programme where they are invited to speak in front of the local council about the WASH issues they face at school and at home. Through schools' WASH-clubs, children

are selected to speak to local officials. Violet Kasembo (12) is a pupil at the Kyamatanga Primary School in Uganda. Her school is getting its own WASH Club soon, and she cannot wait to join. She thinks it would help her advocate for her rights and needs but also help with her confidence as she would have a place to practice public speaking and learn how to become a real changemaker.

## Children are taught how to test water for contamination

### Sarwacha

**Location** Nepal  
**Period** Three years (2023-2026)  
**Donor** Dopper  
**In-country partners** ENPHO, Biruwa  
**Goal** Ensure that all people living in Changunarayan municipality have sustainable and equitable access to safe water supply and sanitation services. This will lead to an improvement in overall health and well-being, specifically for women and other underrepresented groups.



PHOTO: PRAMIN MANANDHAR

### ▲ Water monitoring training in schools

Many of the water supply systems in Changunarayan have a high risk of contamination with E. coli bacteria. Because water supplies are often interrupted and inadequate, families are drinking contaminated water, often without being aware of the poor quality

of the water and the associated risks. The Sarwacha programme facilitated trainings on testing water quality, including in schools. At the Shree Bagehni School in Changunarayan, Children are taught how to test water for contamination and are given the opportunity to voice their needs and concerns to water-user committees.



PHOTO: SHIRISH BAIRACHARGA

It takes Kesari BK an hour to fetch water at the water source down the hill.

### Water Justice Fund

**Location** Bangladesh, Kenya, Nepal  
**Period** Eight years (2022-2030)  
**Donor** Dutch Postcode Lottery and other donors  
**Strategic Partner** Women Win  
**In-country partners** NIA (Kenya), Uttaran (Bangladesh), Sahakarmi Samaj (Nepal)  
**Goal** Women drive water justice by locally-led adaptation actions, strengthening climate-resilience, and realising their right to water and sanitation.

### ▲ Water access on top of the hill

In Banglachuli, Nepal, nine households atop a hill lacked access to a new water system due to high water pump costs. With support from the Water Justice Fund, the Ujjwal community group partnered with local CBO Samaj Bikas Sanjal to expand the system. A €3,000 grant helped extend the pipeline, but additional funds were needed for a water pump

and tank. Receiving the funds encouraged them not to give up on their efforts to build the water tank on top of the hill and they decided to extend their lobby for financing. The local CBO helped to arrange meetings with local government officials, and they agreed to contribute financially. The community contributed labour, and now a water tank and pumps provide running water to each household, transforming access for all.



## WASH SDG

**Location** Bangladesh, Nepal, Uganda (Ethiopia, Indonesia, Tanzania and Zambia through partners )  
**Period** Six years (2017–2022) + 15 months extension until March 2024  
**Donor** Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
**Consortium partners** SNV, Plan International Netherlands and WASH Alliance International (WAI) partners Simavi (consortium lead), Amref, Akvo, RAIN (Aidenvironment), WASTE (via Nedworc-STIP), IRC, Wetlands International, PRACTICA Foundation and RUAF (Hivos)  
**In-country partners** All partners from the Bangladesh WASH Alliance, Nepal WASH Alliance and the Uganda WASH Alliance.  
**Goal** Sustainably improve the water, sanitation and hygiene situation for all by ensuring local civil society organisations and communities can advocate for the realisation of their right to water and sanitation, and work with the duty bearers and service providers to improve the quality-of-service provision and the governance of the sector.

### ▼ Endterm review

After 7 years, the WASH SDG programme came to an end in March 2024. We are proud to have been in the lead of this important programme. In the Endterm Review it was concluded that the WASH SDG programme has been successful in achieving its stated objectives and delivered on all its commitments. The WASH SDG programme's goal to sustainably improve access to, and use of, safe drinking water for at least 450,000 people, sanitation for at least 2 million people and improve the hygiene behaviours of 1.6 million people has been more than accomplished.



The Suryamukhi community group from Nepal meets to discuss their water issues.

## Lessons learned

# Making locally led adaptation truly locally led

Simavi is committed to making the principles of locally led adaptation the red thread in its work. A complex process filled with challenges, surprises and pitfalls.

Access to water and sanitation is highly impacted by climate change. Local communities, and especially women and girls, find themselves at the forefront of the climate crisis. However, currently less than 1% of climate financing reaches the marginalised communities that are the most vulnerable to climate change. Women, who are key players in adaptation, still have a very limited role in decision-making processes around climate adaptation. In 2024, we further explored how we can make locally led adaptation work for them.

### Empowering those left behind

The 8 Principles for locally led adaptation (LLA) were announced at the 2021 Climate Adaptation Summit in the Netherlands. Since then, they have been endorsed by more than 130 organisations, including Simavi and the

Dutch government. The LLA principles are an elaboration of the broader locally led development paradigm, and directly relevant to Simavi's programmes. The principles outline what is required to address the imbalance of power, inadequate access to finance and inequitable distribution of funding for climate adaptation.

Locally led adaptation means that local actors have decision-making power in planning, implementing, and monitoring and evaluation, and can play an essential role in achieving successful and sustainable adaptation. Simavi aims to identify the communities that are systemically left behind, and not only provide them with adequate financial means, but also empower them to realize their own solutions for climate-adaptation.

'When we talk about locally led, we talk about the importance of allowing communities to take charge of their own development. This means that instead of outsiders coming in and telling them what to do, people should be empowered to make decisions and take action based on their own knowledge and experience', explains Simavi-director Dienneke van der Wijk.

### Simavi's Water Justice Fund

In 2024, the LLA principles were most prominently implemented in Simavi's Water Justice Fund. This programme aims to empower women and communities to become climate resilient. By providing direct and easily accessible climate-funding to local women groups they are able to realise their own climate solutions.

One of the LLA principles is to devolve decision-making to the lowest level. That is why the ideas and the initiative for proposals for funding would ideally come directly from women's groups most affected by the climate and water crisis. This can be challenging, as not every programme area has an existing community framework, such as women's groups, through which the proposal can be facilitated. Therefore, our approach had to be tailored to the local context.

In Kenya for example, where the practice of forming women's groups to tackle local challenges is widespread,

our partner NIA (Neighbours Initiative Alliance) sent out a call for proposals at the county-level and community-centred via public spaces such as churches and community centres. Existing women groups were able to reply to the call for proposals to receive support.

In Nepal and Bangladesh, our partners started out by visiting communities to discuss and identify the problems that they were facing. Based on these discussions, our partners encouraged the women to mobilize by forming a women's group. These women's groups could then collaboratively decide on suitable action. In Bangladesh, for example, one of the women's groups decided to start a mass petition towards their government action for rainwater tanks (read more on page 20).

### Traditional methods

In all countries, it proved crucial to work with partners that are local to the areas and understand the local dialect and culture. Not only were calls for proposals announced and accepted in the local dialect, but they could also be made verbally, so that language and illiteracy were not obstacles to participation. While this was a new way of working, also for some of our partners, it enabled us to break down barriers and make the whole process more locally led.

'We received a lot of support from NIA about how to apply for a grant. They even discussed different strategies to tackle our water problems with us. In the end, we decided to use the money we received to build an earth pan, a traditional method of collecting excess rainwater which the community could use all year round', says Lilian Kiriash, member of the Miton women's group in Kalioki, Kenya.

### Necessary for climate justice

The adoption of locally led adaptation principles by the entire international development sector won't happen overnight. Simavi wants to show that it's crucial and possible to make climate financing inclusive and locally led. By empowering communities to realise their own solutions, they will be able to become the driving force for positive change and improve access to water and sanitation for their own and other communities. Simavi will continue to support women and girls on the forefront of climate action, and build a powerful movement to make safe water, toilets, and equal chances available for all. •



1. Call for locally led solutions from women-led groups
2. Co-designing support aligning with local level planning
3. Review of applications led by community peer panels

4. Technical Support for communities
5. Discussion with local governments
6. Grant Disbursement and Implementation
7. Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Sharing





▲ Photographer and visual storyteller Sacha de Boer spoke to the room about her travels for Simavi and the special women she has photographed. She shared the message to invest in female leadership, because often they already know the solutions to the water crisis.

## HER Film Festival 2024

# Connecting women through stories

On March 8, International Women's Day, two hundred inspiring women were invited for a special dinner in De Duif in Amsterdam. It was the official opening of the fourth edition of HER Film Festival, the online film festival organised by Simavi and film partner Cinetree. An evening filled with moving speakers and inspiring meetings.



▲ Nearly 200 women (and a few men) came together in De Duif for an evening filled with inspiring speakers, music and many lasting encounters.



◀ This year, HER Film Festival celebrated the power of stories and how they can connect and empower women, a message demonstrated on stage by Cinetree founder Hanna Verboom and Simavi's Sabine Brusse – who opened the film festival together.



▲ Simavi's Sabiha Siddique had travelled from Bangladesh to attend the dinner. She moved the room with a story about the life of a woman in Bangladesh, who battles daily with the impact that climate change and the water crisis have on her life.



PHOTO: CHLOE LEENHEER



▲ Throughout the evening, the programme of HER Film Festival 2024 was announced, and short impressions of the films were shown.  
◀ Special guest of honor, Princess Laurentien van Oranje (standing to the left of Hanna Verboom) closed the evening with a message about resilience and hope. She is active in empowering women in difficult circumstances in the Netherlands.



## WASH, Learn & Share

# School as a starting point for better water and sanitation services

Empowering students to advocate for their own WASH needs and make a real impact on their schools and communities, that is the aim of Simavi's WASH, Learn & Share programme. 'Hopefully it will give me more time to study harder.'

Only two bathrooms for hundreds of pupils and no drinking water at school. It is the reality for more than 50% of school-going children in Uganda. That's why from 2016 until 2023, Simavi worked in schools across Uganda to provide them with safe water and accessible toilets under the WASH & Learn programme. In 2024, we continued these efforts with the WASH, Learn and Share

programme. The programme takes schools as a starting point for health and well-being for whole communities. By listening to the needs of students and helping them advocate for their rights to water and sanitation, they can become changemakers.

### Children's Parliament

'There is only one block of toilets for all the girls in the school, so we all must line up and wait a long time to use the bathroom. It does not have doors so there is no privacy at all. This is especially hard when I have my period.' Cecilia Kebirungi is 12 years old and struggles a lot because of the lack of toilets at school. She attends Kinyankende Primary School, one of the many schools that lack water and sanitation services. This has negative effects on the school performances of students, especially the girls.

'Sometimes, the school needs to close because the toilets are broken', her classmate Evelyne Kabalodi (12) explains. Other times, she misses school because there is no water, and she is thirsty. 'I want to become a nurse when I grow up, but I cannot always attend class, and I have missed my exams. I worry my grades are not good enough.'

The WASH, Learn & Share programme aims to use sustainable and locally led solutions to tackle the water and sanitation problems at schools. An important element of the programme is enhancing citizen participation. 'School pupils are given the chance to be part of a so-called 'children's parliament', a programme where they are invited to speak in front of the local council about the WASH issues they face at school and

**'I fear for the safety of my daughter and myself'**



Cecilia Kebirungi and her mother Veronica Katusabe.



Evelyne Kabalodi sometimes misses school because there is no water.

### IMPACT FACT

**In 2024 WASH, Learn & Share facilitated the rehabilitation of 6 community water sources, reaching over 3,596 people**

at home. Students do not only learn skills such as public speaking and leadership through this programme, but it also boosts their confidence to be listened to and taken seriously by people in local government', programme officer Diana Kazooba explains.

### Involving parents and communities

The programme does not stop at the schools: parents are encouraged to get involved with the programme. They are invited to the schools to discuss and learn about WASH solutions. At the Kinyankende Primary School, parents discussed how to improve the water gravity flow scheme in their village. They also received training about how they can best advocate for their needs to the local government.

Cecilia's mother Veronica Katusabe is on the local council for the Mugusu Sub County. While she advocates for other people's needs, she does not have access to some basic services herself. 'We have a toilet outside, but at night it is dangerous. I fear for the safety of my daughter and myself, so we go in a bucket at night.'

On the community level, the WASH, Learn & Share programme also works together with local entrepreneurs. During a hackathon, teams of entrepreneurs brainstormed together on solutions for water problems. Many of these solutions start in schools but can also scale up to communities. For example, one entrepreneur started a fecal sludge management cost-recovery scheme together with local pit emptiers. They work together to keep school latrines clean for a small contribution, something that did not happen before.

### WASH clubs

Cecilia has joined the WASH club at her school. Evelyne hopes to be able to join soon. This club gives the girls the ability to learn not only practical knowledge about WASH, but also about their rights and health. Some members of the WASH club also got to be part of the children's parliament. Soon, their school will get new toilet blocks. Cecilia is looking forward to spending less time waiting for the toilets. 'Hopefully, I will have more time to study harder but also do things I enjoy, like sports and drama.'

Her mother Veronica also continues to work hard on a better life for her daughter. 'We have set up a tap water scheme with an umbrella organisation in the community. The few households that can afford water from the tap distribute it to the other households for a bit of money. That way we don't have to walk to the river.' •





Women from the Water Lily women's group fetching water.

PHOTO: OSCAR SEIJENS

## Water Justice Fund in Bangladesh

# Finding strength in solidarity

Together they are strong, the women of Balli Union have discovered. With a mass petition for rainwater tanks, they gained access to water and confidence in their collective power. It showcases the impact of the Water Justice Fund in Bangladesh.

Nazmun Nahar is the leader of a small local women's organisation. She was asked by Simavi's Water Justice Fund to invite women in the Sathkira region to submit proposals to collectively address their water problems. Bringing these women together was the first step.

As a local resident Nahar (40) is all too familiar with the effects of climate change in southern Bangladesh. Her dream is a future where not only her own family but the whole community has access to safe water, toilets and a better life. 'I believe cooperation is the key to tackling problems', she says.

### Impact of climate change

In Balli Union she began by identifying the women who bear the brunt of climate change. The community is plagued by a lack of drinking water, decent toilets and by constant floods. But when Nahar brought the most affected women together, they didn't have too much faith. They had heard empty promises before. But Nahar was determined. The goal of the Water Justice Fund

is not only to provide grants for locally led adaptation. But also, to elevate women to positions where they can actively influence policy and take decisive action, fostering their leadership and agency.

After several visits to Balli Union, Nahar managed to win the confidence of thirty women. The start of the Water Lily Women's Group (Shapla Mohila Dol) - as they decided to call themselves - was a reality. Just as three other women groups in the area supported by Nahar's organisation.

### Guidance and information

Nahar: 'Each women's group elected a steering committee consisting of a chairperson, a secretary and a treasurer. The group meets every week to talk to each other about the challenges they face. There is always someone from our team to provide guidance and information on topics like climate change, and government resources available to them.'

For example, the women did not know that they are entitled to

a small financial contribution from the government during their pregnancy. Nahar proudly notes: 'One of the women recently managed to apply for this benefit.'

### Mass petition for rainwater tanks

The women's biggest victory came when they decided to draft a petition to claim a government scheme for subsidised rainwater tanks. A scheme they had never heard of before. In practice the money ended up mostly with wealthier households and with people with the right connections.

With a 90 per cent subsidy, households like those in Balli Union can obtain such a water tank. By collecting and storing rainwater, an entire family is assured of clean drinking water and women do not have to make long trips to the river or other water sources. Additionally, having access to clean water significantly reduces the risk of waterborne diseases such as diarrhoea, dysentery, and skin diseases for their children.

Most of the women in the Water Lily Women's Group had never been to a government office before. To make their voices heard, they decided to write an official application together and collect signatures. Armed with these documents, they visited not only

the union office, but also the upazila (district) office and met with representatives of the Department of Public Health and Engineering (DPHE).

This was new for many government officials too. They had never experienced anything like this before. But the visits were successful. The women were assured that they were eligible for the water tanks. And tenacious as they were, the women kept making visits until everyone in the group got a rainwater tank.

### Gaining strength together

Ruma Parvin (35) is a member of the women's group. 'We were always unaware of our rights. But now we have gained strength together. A single branch may break quickly, but a whole bunch is very strong. How quickly we managed to solve this problem gives a lot of hope for other problems we have.'

Nahar tells how proud everyone feels. 'These women never imagined they would have the opportunity to speak with powerful people from the government, let alone have these people listen to them and help them. This was only possible because they worked together.'

'Even their husbands - who initially thought all those meetings were a waste of time - are now enthusiastic and proud of their wives', says Nahar. The women have also decided to start saving together, putting in a small amount every month.

Meanwhile, the Water Lily Women's Group already has new plans. The women have prepared a new mass petition asking for government support to build better toilets. The sixteen other women's groups in Bangladesh supported by the Water Justice Fund have also done so. The latrines that many households currently have are regularly flooded and often have neither walls nor doors. But because there is limited budget for sanitation in Bangladesh, this is a more difficult task.

Nevertheless, the first success has been achieved. The local government has submitted a budget request for sanitation facilities to the district, something that has not happened before. And the women of Balli Union are determined to continue their advocacy and remain consistent in their efforts to tackle their challenges head on. •

'These women never imagined powerful people, listen to them and help them. This was only possible because they worked together.'

Nazmun Nahar



Nazmun Nahar



Ruma Parvin

### IMPACT FACT

In 2024 the Water Justice Fund facilitated 2.147 meetings and coaching sessions with women's groups.



# Stop Sex for Water

## Campaigning in the Netherlands and beyond

From music festivals to the global stage of Miss Universe: in 2024, the Stop Sex for Water campaign travelled from the Netherlands to Mexico and Tanzania thanks to new partnerships.



Tessa Le Conge en Sabine Brusse at the launch of the Stop Sex for Water campaign.

In 2024 Simavi started a collaboration with EARTH Water, Miss Universe of the Netherlands and Miss Beauty of the Netherlands. These new partnerships allowed Simavi to spread the call for water justice for women and girls wider and louder than ever before. By involving the girls who participate in the elections, we reach a young audience with whom we would otherwise not come into contact. The candidates play an active role in this. They organise fundraising campaigns, share their stories on social media and participate in events that draw attention to the water problem.

### 100% sex free water

Our longterm partner EARTH Water supported Simavi with this campaign. EARTH Water is a social enterprise that donates all its profits to projects that provide sustainable water solutions in water-scarce areas. In 2024 Simavi and EARTH Water collaborated on a special product: 100% Sex Free Water. 'With this collaboration, we wanted to trigger people. Our 100% Sex Free Water drink cartons that we distributed on music festivals, are a conversation starter. Hopefully, people will start thinking about what sex-free water actually is and why that is not always a given', says Henk Witteveen, the founder of EARTH Water. 'We want to create awareness that many women and girls do not yet have access to safe drinking water and in the worst case even pay with their physical integrity.'

### Water on music festivals

Throughout the summer, the brightly colored drink cartons could be found at several musical festivals in the Netherlands, including The Crave in The Hague and Boothstock in Rotterdam. Here, 100% Sex Free Water was served at all festival bars, as a reminder for visitors that sex-free water is not a given everywhere. To further engage festivalgoers with our campaign, and to collect signatures for our petition, Simavi enlisted the help of the 'Washmen'. These young men or women approached visitors to ask if they could wash their hands. During this intimate, funny, sometimes confrontational experience, festivalgoers were made aware about sextortion for water and how this impacts women and girls.

### Simavi on the Miss Universe stage

In 2024 we also received support from the candidates of Miss Universe and Miss Beauty of the Netherlands. For the first time, Simavi was the official charity supported by the organisation of Miss Beauty of the Netherlands. This collaboration with an organisation that values female leadership and encourages young women to get involved with charity, helped us reach a new, younger audience. The contestants play an active role in this. They each organised fundraising campaigns and participated in events to raise awareness for the water crisis. Not only did these young women raise 21.000 euros for Simavi's water projects, but they also used their voices and platforms to contribute to a future where everyone has access to water.

Tessa Le Conge is the director of Miss Beauty of the Netherlands. 'We are first and foremost an organisation for and by women. We give girls throughout the Netherlands the tools to bring out their own power and develop themselves optimally. Of course, Simavi stands for women's empowerment and fights for the health, safety and wellbeing for women worldwide. I think that is a perfect fit.'

### An international stage

The message of the Stop Sex for Water campaign was not only shared on the Dutch stage of Miss Beauty, but the Dutch finalist for the international Miss Universe pageant took our story to the grand finale, in Mexico. This honor went to the 27-year-old Faith Landman, who was crowned Miss Universe of the Netherlands. As Miss Universe of the Netherlands, Faith wanted to continue to campaign for Simavi on and off the stage. The story of Simavi resonated with Faith personally. Her grandmother is from Tanzania, a country where many people struggle with access to water. In the

'Many women and girls do not have access to safe drinking water and in the worst case even pay with their physical integrity.'

Henk Witteveen, founder of EARTH Water



summer, she travelled there at her own expense to meet women and girls, as well as some of Simavi's local partners and visit water projects. For Faith it was an inspiring visit: 'When I visited my grandmother's village, I was confronted by the inequalities and obstacles women and girls face. But I also saw how access to water can give them equal opportunities. It was inspiring to meet young girls and see their resilience to face their future with a positive attitude.'

### Continuing collaborations

With her determination, commitment and extraordinary story, Faith Landman symbolises a new generation of Miss Universe contestants: women who not only shine on stage but also fight for a better future for others. In 2025, the finalists of Miss Universe and Miss Beauty of the Netherlands will once again commit themselves to Simavi and the Stop Sex for Water campaign. •



## Special Rapporteur willing to help 61.000 signatures to stop sex for water

Being extorted to have sex in exchange for drinking water. It happens, and it is unacceptable! On 11 December, Simavi delivered this message to Pedro Arrojo-Agudo, the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights to water and sanitation, in Geneva.

In 2024 Simavi asked the Dutch public to sign its petition Stop Sex for Water to make an urgent appeal to the UN Special Rapporteur on water and sanitation, Pedro Arrojo-Agudo. And many answered the call: more than 61.000 signatures were collected.

As a result of increasing water scarcity and a lack of water supplies, women are being pressured to have sex in exchange for water. Simavi wants to draw attention to this terrible human rights violation. As a Special Rapporteur Pedro Arrojo-Agudo is able to hold governments accountable for human rights violations. International



Special Rapporteur on water and sanitation, Pedro Arrojo-Agudo

recognition of this problem is also important for local partners and women's organisations wanting to raise this subject - which is often very sensitive or flatly denied. On 11 December Simavi's lobby & advocacy officer Esin Erdoğan travelled to Geneva to speak not only with the Special Rapporteur on water and sanitation, but also with staff members of the Special Rapporteur against violence against women and the Special Rapporteur on climate change.

Pedro Arrojo-Agudo welcomed Simavi's efforts. 'I give full support to you as an organisation and to your work on this topic. Just the fact that women and girls must walk long distances or wait in long lines for water is already breaking the human right to water and sanitation. And we know that women and girls especially are faced with the risks and the assaults.'

Arrojo-Agudo was moved by the filmed testimonies by women and girls in Kenya. 'It is hard to imagine that women and girls have sex in exchange for drinking water, but it is happening, and it is terrible.'

'Not having water and not having a toilet at your home, exposes women and girls to risks. We know that. We know that fetching water over long distances is a risk. We know that it is not easy and safe for women to find a place outside their house to go to the toilet. It is something that I denounce, and I thank everybody who signed the petition and support the demand to stop sex for water.' 'What I can do as a Special Rapporteur is making this problem more visible, enabling conversations, and when we have documentation on specific cases address these with the national government with an allegation letter. You are the engine that is pushing this. I have the possibility of helping.'

The same offer was extended by the Special Rapporteurs against violence against women and on climate change, providing new opportunities to fight sextortion in the years to come. •



Sandra van Soelen presents at the World Water Forum

## Defending civic space

# Amplifying voices of those left behind

In 2024, Simavi attended the 10th World Water Forum in Bali with a specific goal in mind: amplifying the voices of those systematically left behind by the water sector. An important mission in a time when civic space is under attack.

The World Water Forum is the largest international water sector gathering in the world. Thousands of politicians, experts, scholars, and entrepreneurs participate in sharing knowledge, experiences, and practices regarding a wide range of topics related to water. But painfully, marginalised and disadvantaged groups – who are most affected by the lack of water and sanitation – are still often uninvited during these conferences, despite having a wealth of knowledge about how best to address their own issues. That's why during the World Water Forum, projects lead Sandra van Soelen and MEAL-advisor Sabiha Siddique presented four sessions to share experiences and learnings from our programmes in working with vulnerable communities and advocated for their inclusion in future conferences.

### Stifling counter-voice

While the conference went on inside, unrest erupted at the People's Water Forum, hosted close by. The People's Water Forum is a counter forum, open to those who had not been invited to the

World Water Forum, including many water activists and civil society organisations. This countermovement has existed for twenty years and is usually able to operate without much trouble. However, in Bali, they were thwarted and intimidated even before the start of the Forum. Venues didn't want to cooperate with them, attendees were held hostage in their hotel for days without food. And when the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Water and Sanitation, Pedro Arrojo-Agudo, wanted to speak with them, he too was stopped.

### A key role for Simavi

Simavi was present at the World Water Forum while the events at the nearby People's Water Forum took a turn for the worse. Sandra van Soelen ended up playing a key role when she managed to put the special rapporteur in contact with the Dutch delegation, including Dutch Water Envoy Meike van Ginneken. 'Meike van Ginneken spoke with the Indonesian authorities and raised the issue during the sessions in which she was a speaker. The Spanish and French

delegations also contacted the Indonesian government. The next day, the people who had been held hostage were released. If the Indonesian authorities wanted to stifle critical voices, they achieved the opposite,' concludes Van Soelen.

**'If the authorities wanted to stifle critical voices, they achieved the opposite'**

### Leaving no one behind

The developments at the People's Water Forum underscore the importance of Simavi's efforts to amplify the voices of those left unheard. While we were able to successfully convey that message inside at the World Water Forum, the events outside show that it remains crucial to safeguard the civic space for everyone to express themselves and listen to those often unheard. •



# Jane Nyamwamu, project manager at NIA: 'Participatory peer learning empowers women groups to fight for water justice'

She is witnessing the beginning of a powerful movement. Jane Nyamwamu is project manager at NIA, Simavi's partner for the Water Justice Fund in Kenya. 'Participatory peer learning is paving the way for broader coalitions advocating for water justice.'

Jane Nyamwamu works as a project manager at Neighbours Initiatives Alliance (NIA). NIA is a development organisation based in Kajiado County working with pastoral communities. NIA was established in 1996 and is specialized in facilitating community empowerment, mainly through capacity strengthening and knowledge transfer, influencing and brokering useful linkages. NIA is a longstanding partner of Simavi and co-developer of the Water Justice Fund.

So far 23 women groups in Kajiado County have received a grant through the Water Justice Fund. Nyamwamu knows all about the difficult water and climate situation in the area. 'Fetching water from a borehole often takes up most of the day for women and girls because they have to walk all the way, wait till the men have watered the livestock, then wait in line with all the other women before they can return with their heavy load. Especially when in periods of drought boreholes dry up, women need to walk even further to the remaining waterpoints.'

## Mutual learning and engagement

The Water Justice Fund supports women groups to realise locally led solutions to water and climate challenges through participatory grant making. But there is more to the programme. Creating spaces for ongoing mutual learning and engagement creates an opportunity for women groups to play a role in defining what success looks like. And it makes women part of the participatory monitoring and learning. In Kajiado County women groups visit each other's projects, share ideas and results through WhatsApp and mentor other groups.

'Sharing experiences and solutions is something that is an integral part of the Water Justice Fund', tells Nyamwamu. 'We support participatory peer learning because it empowers women's groups to actively engage in addressing water justice issues.' One way of supporting participatory peer learning is by organizing training sessions, where different women groups come together to discuss their challenges, ideas and successes. Nyamwamu recalls a session organised by the Naishorua Self Help Group and attended by nine other women groups. The session focused on how they could advocate for environmental conservation and the importance of protecting water catchments, as well as raising community awareness about the Sand Conservation and Quarrying Bill of 2024. 'This is necessary in this area due to massive sand harvesting that is destroying water catchment, leading to drying of rivers and lack of retention of water in the rivers.'

## Proposal writing

Another way that women groups learn from each other is by becoming each other's mentors, explains Nyamwamu. Experienced groups provide guidance to newer ones, creating a supportive environment. 'For example, Naishorua Self Help Group, along with Engape and Miton Women Group, assisted other groups in proposal writing for the Water Justice Fund. This mentorship enables newer groups to understand the Water Justice Fund and put forward relevant fundable proposals.' Even if they do not get funded by the Fund, it can still serve as an eye opener on how they can navigate challenges more effectively, is her experience.

Peer learning does not only happen at meetings but is also facilitated by digital platforms. WhatsApp groups have proven to be an effective method of keeping in touch with each other. Women share pictures and videos of what they are doing. Nyamwamu: 'Groups use them to motivate themselves. If other women groups are doing well, it inspires them.' The WhatsApp groups also prove to be useful to ask questions to other group members. 'Women learn from each other about proposal writing.'



'Fetching water takes up most of the day for women and girls.'

Jane Nyamwamu

Experiences with peer learning have been encouraging, says Nyamwamu. 'Women's groups have reported significant improvements in their confidence and skills.' An example is the Miton Naasisho Women Group. 'Before they submitted their proposal for support, they visited Naishorua to learn on how the tokenized water system functions. This visit gave them the courage to reach out to the Water Justice Fund themselves and undertake their project on constructing an earth pan.'

## More impact through peer learning

She is convinced that peer learning significantly contributes to the success of women's groups. 'By enhancing their knowledge and skills, by fostering a sense of solidarity, and by stimulating innovation. By learning from one another, these groups can implement more effective projects and strategies, making their efforts more impactful.'

The Water Justice Fund cultivates a culture of teamwork and mutual support, enabling those directly affected by water challenges to develop effective strategies and advocate for their rights, says Nyamwamu. 'Women's groups have successfully lobbied for policy changes in water conservation, and the connections established through peer learning have paved the way for broader coalitions advocating for water justice. This collaborative effort marks the beginning of a powerful movement among these women's groups.'

## IMPACT FACT

In 2024 the Water Justice Fund facilitated 26 learning sessions with women's groups



Jane Nyamwamu meets women at a waterpoint in Kajiado county.



## The Sarwacha programme

# Bringing communities, the government and the private sector together in Nepal

Families in the fast-growing municipality Changunarayan in Nepal lack safe drinking water. The goal of the Sarwacha programme, supported by Simavi's long-term partner Dopper, is equal and sustainable access to safe drinking water for all 60,000 residents. And becoming a blueprint for strengthening water systems.

Sarwacha means 'the highest' in Nepali. Because that is the goal of the programme: to achieve the highest possible when it comes to water-safe municipalities. What makes it special is that it brings together local governments, the private sector and the community. It is about empowering the local community, particularly women and marginalised groups, to actively participate in decision-making processes and income-generating activities related to water and sanitation. The private sector is seen as a valuable partner, providing financing mechanisms, technical expertise, and support in infrastructure development.

The official kick-off of the Sarwacha programme with the municipality of Changunarayan and our partners ENPHO and Biruwa took place on 15 September 2023. One of the first successes was the municipality's commitment to contribute 20 per cent of the total project budget. In the months after the kick-off, baseline surveys were conducted at over 600 households, 20 water user committees, 18 elementary schools and 16 secondary schools. In total, 9 thousand residents will directly benefit from the programme.

### IMPACT FACT

In 2024 in the Sarwacha programme area 6.600 people got access to safe drinking water

### Water quality monitoring

Merina Maharjan, programme officer at ENPHO and Bivor Maharjan, young expert programmes at Simavi and programme officer at ENPHO, both work with the community and the municipality. They tell that over the last year many training sessions were provided to municipal focal persons and water user committees on water quality monitoring and promoting safe water practices.

'We also collaborated with the municipality on drafting WASH regulations. Equally important was our work with communities, schools and health professionals because reaching our goal is impossible without their cooperation, knowledge and ownership. A good example are the activities in schools. Children are testing the water quality in their schools to identify contamination. They use this information to advocate to water user committees and even present their issues to the municipality.'

### Inclusion of marginalised groups

At the community level, ENPHO is setting up Self Help Groups for women, open to everyone, including marginalised groups such as the Dalit and the Sukumbasi. The women's groups that the Sarwacha programme is working with, are given the opportunity to test the water quality and have proven very eager to use this information to pressure water user committees into addressing their issues. Merina Merhajan: 'We aim to register these groups with the municipality so they can apply for funds, and we are exploring ways to provide them with opportunities to generate some income from their activities.'

At the municipal level, the goal is to ensure the monitoring mechanisms specified in the national WASH Act are implemented by the local government. Bivor Maharjan: 'That's why we are developing monitoring guidelines and advocating for a monitoring body in the municipality, supported by a mini lab for water testing. A mechanism for systematically handling complaints will strengthen the governance of water user committees and empower water users. Finally, involving the private sector can help to offer better services to the communities and to match public funds for water and sanitation.' •

The women's groups test the water quality and use this information to pressure water user committees into addressing their issues.



### The story of the Sukumbasi: no registration, no water

Sita Tamang has a problem. She is considered a 'Sukumbasi'. It's a word that is used in Nepal for landless migrants and means something like squatters. The word is often used as a swear word and many Sukumbasi face discrimination and exclusion. Sita Tamang is one of them. Sita is a 44-years old single mother and has two daughters and a son. She works as a day labourer in the fields during sowing time and harvest time. As there is not always work, it is often difficult to make ends meet.

Even though Sita has lived all her life in a house on the outskirts of Changunarayan, she was not officially registered with the municipality. Because of that she has always had few rights as an 'illegal' resident without land rights in the municipality. An application for a water connection years ago was unsuccessful. But recently she managed to obtain a citizenship card.

For Sita Tamang, a water connection is a

dream, just like registration papers for her children: 'We are happy to live here, but access to water is very important.' To get water, Sita collects rainwater during the monsoon. On other days, she depends on a spring near the river. Walking back and forth takes her an hour. 'It is difficult, especially in the rainy season when it is slippery on the hills. As a result, I am late for work. Sometimes I don't have enough time to fetch water, and we are thirsty in the evening. Sometimes we buy bottled water then, but it costs 50 rupees [35 cents; ed].' With water in the house, Sita would choose to start working in the fields as early as 6am so that she can rest during the hottest hours of the day, and then continue working. Sita hopes that through the Sarwacha programme her issue will be raised with the municipality. 'It is important that they know about our situation and hopefully they will listen to us.'



PHOTOS: PRAMIN MANANDHAR

Sometimes I don't have enough time to fetch water, and we are thirsty in the evening.

Sita Tamang





Merlijn Ooms from the Postcode Lottery during a visit to Simavi's Water Justice Fund programme in Kajiado, Kenya.

#### IMPACT FACT

Through the Water Justice Fund in 2024 41 adaptation grants for a total of 105,000 euros were distributed directly to women led groups to support locally led solutions to water and climate challenges

Jonne Arnoldussen (NPL):

# 'Simavi's strength lies in community empowerment'



It was great news for Simavi in 2024. The Water Justice Fund received almost 1.5 million euro from the Dutch Postcode Lottery. On top of that the Lottery continued to support Simavi with 1 million euro of unrestricted funding. Jonne Arnoldussen is Managing Director at the Dutch Postcode Lottery: 'It's about trust and empowerment.'

**The Dutch Postcode Lottery supports organisations with flexible, unrestricted long-term funding. Can you explain the philosophy behind this?**

Jonne Arnoldussen: 'Absolutely. The philosophy is about trust and empowerment. We believe that organisations like Simavi know best how to allocate resources to achieve their goals. By providing flexible, long-term funding, we enable them to plan ahead, innovate, and respond to both ongoing and acute challenges as they arise. Thanks to the lottery players we are able to give our partners the freedom to do what they do best without being bogged down by restrictive funding conditions.'

**You have worked for the Dutch Postcode Lottery for almost seven years. What motivates you the most?**

'I believe in the strength of civil society. A thriving civil society is indispensable in functioning democracies. We as a lottery are there to support all kinds of local and private initiatives that are trying to make the world a better place. I chose to work in this sector because I wanted to make a tangible difference in the world, but also because I like to work in a business minded environment.'

'From the organisations I've worked with, I've learned the importance of resilience, adaptability, and the incredible impact that dedicated people can have. Personally, I hope to contribute by fostering these relationships and ensuring that we continue to support innovative and impactful initiatives.'

**The Dutch Postcode Lottery supports many organisations in the Netherlands. What is your view of Simavi and the programmes we work on?**

'I have a lot of admiration for Simavi, and the work being done. What really stands out to me is your holistic approach to health and well-being, particularly in how you integrate water, sanitation, and hygiene with gender equality and community empowerment. It's inspiring to see how these programmes are not just about providing resources, but about creating sustainable change by involving and empowering local communities.'

**What do you see as Simavi's strengths and weaknesses?**

'One of Simavi's strengths is definitely this integrated, community-focused approach. As for areas of improvement, like any organisation, there's always room for improvement when it comes to capturing and communicating impact. The impact Simavi is making is significant, especially in improving health outcomes and empowering women and girls, which has a ripple effect on entire communities.'

**In 2024 Simavi received a generous amount of extra funding for the Water Justice Fund. Can you explain why you honoured Simavi's application?**

'The decision to fund the Water Justice Fund was driven by Simavi's strong track record and the compelling vision that was presented for addressing water inequities. We were impressed by the innovative approach and the potential for significant, sustainable impact.'

**What are your expectations for this programme?**

'Our expectations are high; we believe it can drive meaningful change in water access and management, particularly for marginalised communities. What excites me most is the potential for this fund to not only improve water access but also empower women and their communities to advocate for their rights and drive systemic change.'

**In the current political climate, the role of the Dutch Postcode Lottery seems more important than ever for the development sector. How do you see this?**

'The Dutch Postcode Lottery definitely plays its part in the development sector by providing flexible funding that allows organisations to innovate and respond to emerging challenges. In the current political climate, where funding can be uncertain and priorities can shift rapidly, our role becomes even more important.'

'We aim to be a stable and reliable partner for organisations working on the front lines of development, but unfortunately, this has also become increasingly difficult. For example, we see that the Dutch government has chosen to significantly increase the tax on charity lotteries, and it has become increasingly difficult to advertise our lottery which makes it more challenging to generate revenue for charity. With these challenges we really depend on the network-support of our charity partners as well.'



## Simavi at the UN Climate Summit

# Influencing and collaborating for climate justice

It is hard to measure the impact on international climate negotiations of advocating for climate justice, water justice and gender justice. But the stakes are high, and the role of civil society should not be underestimated. 'Imagine the outcome if we wouldn't be present.'

NGOs, including Simavi, play a vital role during the UN Climate Summits by drawing attention to the most vulnerable groups, such as women and girls and local communities in the Global South. Historically, these groups and communities have contributed the least to climate change but are the hardest hit by its effects. To influence decision-makers, showcase how locally led climate adaptation works and find new partnerships, it is important for Simavi to be close to the action. Esin Erdoğan, lobby and advocacy officer at Simavi and in

2024 for the second time one of the two Dutch NGO delegates, coordinated the preparations for COP29 by the International Climate Coalition (ICC), a group of Dutch development and climate NGO's. 'We started immediately after COP28 ended.' Several important decisions had to be made in November 2024 in Baku. One of the top priorities was setting a new long-term goal for international climate finance, the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG). The previous goal was to mobilise \$100 billion annually for climate action in developing countries from 2020 onwards, a figure that was only met once in those five years and has proven far from sufficient.

### Fair finance target

'It felt like a bad omen that at COP28 states were making pledges towards the Loss & Damage Fund that was agreed on, but in the end didn't put their money where their mouth was. For the new climate finance goal, parties started dragging their feet in setting a realistic and therefore ambitious new target even before the COP29 started', Erdoğan says.

A fair finance target, according to scientists and activists alike, requires at least \$1.3 trillion annually to support developing countries in their transition to sustainable energy and climate adaptation. And the emphasis must be on grants over loans to prevent countries from falling further into debt.

In the course of 2024 Erdoğan and her colleagues from the ICC spoke to as many decision makers on climate from the Netherlands and from the European Union as they could. 'We organised talks, did presentations, wrote a joint position paper, sent letters to ministers, spoke with the Dutch minister, and talked to journalists about it.'



Members of the International Climate Coalition meet the Dutch minister of Climate, Sophie Hermans (center). To her right Esin Erdoğan from Simavi.



As the closing ceremony is delayed while delegates revise the new text, members of civil society demonstrate in the corridors.

'We organised talks, did presentations, wrote a joint position paper, sent letters to ministers, spoke with the Dutch minister, and talked to journalists'

### Gender equality

At the Climate Conference in Bonn in June Erdoğan lobbied to ensure that addressing gender equality was not neglected but incorporated in the text on climate adaptation. In October Simavi was part of a small group of NGOs invited to inform Dutch Members of Parliament on climate justice prior to a political debate on the EU COP29 position.

During COP29, which was held in Baku, Erdoğan closely followed the negotiations in her role of observer, advocate and advisor to the negotiators. 'What you do is that you spend all day listening to the negotiations and analysing with other observers what exactly is happening. We advise negotiators based on our expertise and give feedback on how their progress – or lack of it – is received. It motivates them when they know pressure is mounting.'

Unfortunately, the outcome of COP29 was hugely disappointing. The parties agreed to a mere 300 billion dollars per year in climate financing by 2035. 'Taking inflation into account, an amount of 300 billion dollars is no improvement on the amount agreed in 2015. While the climate problems have become much more serious in the meantime. Moreover, a large part of it consists of loans. While many developing countries are already drowning in debt.'

### The lobby continues

That's why the lobby continued after COP29. During the debate with the climate minister a motion was passed asking the government to ensure that climate finance will not further increase the debt burden of low-income countries. 'The future of billions of people is at stake', says Erdoğan. 'If climate-vulnerable countries are not enabled to adapt to climate change, to repair damage and to take the step towards a sustainable future, the effects will be incalculable.'

After the failure of Baku, hope is pinned on COP30, which will be organised in Belém in 2025. Brazil has a greener reputation than the 2024 host country 'oil is a gift from God' Azerbaijan and is determined to make it a historic climate summit. 'The preparations start now. Let us do everything we can to prevent a second Baku.'



## Our people

# Making maximum impact with an international team

Our diverse and international team works every day to maximise the impact of our programmes, together with partners in the countries we work in.

Our colleagues work across the world and are based in six countries. In 2024 nine consultants of our programmes team were located in Bangladesh, India, Kenya, Nepal, and Uganda. They play a key role in the implementation and coordination of our programmes. Our office in the Netherlands is staffed by a dedicated

team of 24 people (December 2024). The staff based in the Netherlands consist of support staff (HR, finance, assistants), and the fundraising and engagement team alongside a small section of the programmes team. The leadership team, consisting of three cluster leads, is based in the Netherlands.

PHOTO: JEROEN VAN LOON  
Veerle Ver Loren van Themaat (left) and Pragati Bajracharya (2nd to the left) listen to Lydia Lepapa (2nd to the right) from the Naisharua Women's group in Kenya.



Our staff turnover was 42.5% with 6 new employees (4 in the Amsterdam office and 2 in the country offices). The staff turnover can be partly explained by the closing of a number of programmes and a restructuring process in the Netherlands. 11 employees in the Netherlands left Simavi due to the restructuring process, and 11 employees abroad left due to the closure of programmes. The average sickness absence rate at our office in Amsterdam was 15.4%.

### How do our employees feel?

To promote employee engagement and colleagueship we organise activities including weekly global catch up on Mondays, workouts, an annual yearly team-outing and lunch/coffee breaks, as well as end of year festivities. We also have a hybrid work policy. Employees can come into the office for two days (or more) and can work from home the rest of the week. This improves their work/life balance, according to the results of our Employee Satisfaction Survey.

Simavi's Employee Representative Body (ERB) consists of three elected employees, who are based in the Netherlands. The ERB flags and discusses issues that are important to Simavi and its employees and shares them with the management on the employees' behalf. The ERB met six times in 2024. The ERB raised the issue of how to better include Simavi's colleagues abroad with the team and our work policies, as much as possible under the options available to Simavi.

### Networked organisation

Simavi uses a cluster-based structure in a networked model with strategic partnerships and the ambition to Shift the Power. This networked way of working

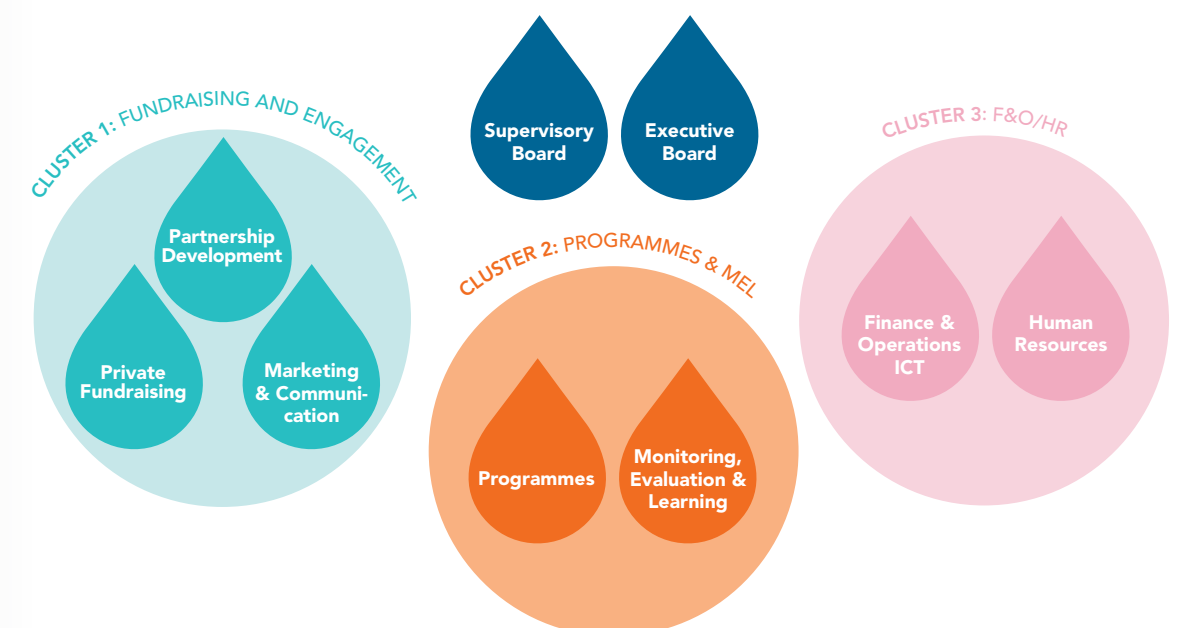
Our ambition is to have decision making across all levels of the organisation.

means that every employee is expected to work in collaboration with others on issues related to their role, matching their talents and expertise with the needs of the organisation. The ambition is to have decision making across all levels of the organisation. This organisational model empowers our staff and allows for more flexibility and rapid response. For Simavi, Shift the Power means shifting the leadership to women and girls themselves, and towards employees and partner organisations in the countries where we work.

### Volunteers and interns

People who work at Simavi on a voluntary basis for at least four days per month are offered a volunteer contract that sets out their rights and obligations. We make verbal agreements with all other volunteers. Interns are given a chance to learn valuable skills for their future employment. For Simavi this is also a part of contributing to qualitative work being conducted in the development sector.

Both interns and volunteers are highly valued, and all our clusters greatly enjoy working with the volunteers and interns who support us. They help us achieve our ambitions and are an important part of the Simavi team. •





# Where does our money come from and how do we spend it?

How does Simavi generate the income to successfully implement programmes and other activities? And how much was spent on our objectives? What are our fundraising priorities? How do we build long-term relationships with our donors? And what were the challenges we faced in 2024? An overview.

In 2024 Simavi generated an income of €8.3 million. Income from individual donors amounted to €3.2 million. This income was generated through a diverse fundraising programme including revenues from legacies and bequests. Revenue from lotteries, companies and non-profit organisations amounted to €2.2 million, €0.8 million higher than expected. Government subsidies, which include grants from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the EU, made up €2.9 million of our income.

### 2024: Fundraising in a rapidly changing world

2024 was a year in which we achieved many successes related to our fundraising. We launched successful campaigns, engaged new supporters, and saw more people embrace our mission. We also doubled our online income. Despite these achievements, making impact is a continuous and ever-changing task, and we are always on the lookout for new opportunities.

In 2024, the Dutch government announced budget cuts for international development. This forced us to think outside the box to diversify our funding and look for new partnerships to achieve our mission. Luckily, our loyal supporters are committed to our mission and continued to generously support us in 2024. Because of this shift in funding, it became even more urgent to remain visible for other perspective donors and make sure we realise our mission to increase access to water and sanitation for women and girls. We do that through the following fundraising strategies.

### Our four main fundraising priorities in 2024 were to:

- diversify our donor base
- explore new types of partnerships
- increase revenue from our Dutch constituency by intensifying our relationships with individual donors, the Dutch private sector and Dutch foundations
- increase our income through online channels

### Continued partnership with Postcode Lottery

In 2024 we received €1.000.000 from the Postcode Lottery, an increase of the structural support with 100.000 euro, as a token of their support to our mission. The funds we receive from the Postcode Lottery each year make a vital contribution towards realising our mission and developing new programmes. Additionally, in February 2024, we received an extra €1.5 million for our Water Justice Fund. We are grateful for the Postcode Lottery's continued trust and support in us.

### Our business partners' continued commitment

In 2024, we received €741.000 from our corporate and business partners. We are grateful for the contributions and the trust they have placed in us to build on these collaborations in the coming year.

In collaboration with our strategic partners, we were able to continue our work to provide as many people as possible with safe drinking water. In 2024 we continued our partnership with Dopper, a key partner with whom we have worked on multiple projects since the founding of Dopper, 15 years ago. Together, we have provided thousands of people in Nepal with access to safe drinking water and proper sanitation. In June 2023, we launched Sarwacha, an initiative focused on creating water-safe communities in the Changunarayan Municipality. Over the past year, we have made considerable progress by identifying key stakeholders and engaging them in the project. This has helped establish practical pathways to ensure the initiative's sustainability even after it concludes in 2026. The dedication of Dopper's team, including their CEO Virginia Yanquilevich, during their visit to the project in November 2024 was inspiring and reinforced the strength of this partnership.

In 2024 we continued the multi-year collaboration between Made Blue and Simavi with the WASH, Learn & Share programme in Uganda. The programme started in 2024, and we have already supported 6 schools to improve their water and sanitation facilities as well as start WASH-clubs for pupils. We are proud to partner with Made Blue, a company that integrates social empowerment into its core values. Their commitment ensures that access to clean water remains a priority, helping us reach more communities and create lasting impact.

We also received €240.000 from the ASML Foundation for our continued support for women and girls. We want to thank them for this generous contribution which allows us to invest in high quality programmes.

### New partnerships

In 2024 we built on ongoing efforts to strengthen the role of companies in creating global water solutions. It has been inspiring to see the energy and commitment from our partners as they join us in this mission. We saw the beginning of a partnership with Miss Beauty of the Netherlands and Miss Universe Netherlands. Their teams and the contestants of Miss Beauty and Miss Universe brought much enthusiasm and dedication to our shared goal of ensuring clean water and safe sanitation for all. Their support is a testament to how businesses can drive meaningful change.

We also continued our partnership with Earth Water, a collaboration that combines creativity and shared purpose. Together, we are reaching new audiences through campaigning on festivals and spreading the message about the importance of access to clean and safe water.

In 2024 we organised two mudflat hikes for water. An edition for private individuals, as well as a *Business Mudflat Hike*, which brought together professionals from various sectors for a unique, three-day, 40-kilometer adventure. These hikes took participants from the top of the province of Groningen to the stunning Dutch island of Schiermonnikoog. This challenging yet rewarding journey not only raised awareness for Simavi's work but also fostered a deeper connection with nature and the importance of water in our lives.

These partnerships and events highlight the vital role companies play in advancing global water solutions. We look forward to building on this momentum as we continue our work.

### INCOME (X 1,000 EURO)

| FROM:   | Actual 2024  | Budget 2024  | Actual 2023   |
|---|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Private individuals                                     | 3,201        | 2,350        | 1,731         |
| Companies   | 741          | 495          | 388           |
| Lottery organisation                                    | 1,208        | 900          | 900           |
| Government subsidies                                    | 1,221        | 1,130        | 3,610         |
| Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs for alliance partners | 1,710        |              | 8,832         |
| Other non-profit organisations                          | 263          |              | 220           |
| Income from delivery of products/services               |              | 26           |               |
| <b>Total Income raised</b>                              | <b>8,344</b> | <b>4,901</b> | <b>15,681</b> |

### Contestants of Miss Beauty of the Netherlands and Miss Universe Netherlands protest against sextortion in Amsterdam







Meeting at the Teylers Museum for our most loyal donors

## > Engaging our supporters

In 2024 we engaged more than 94,000 supporters, of which 29,000 supporters made a financial contribution to our work. Gross turnover from private donors has slightly increased to approximately 1.8 million euros.

Individual donors are of immense importance to Simavi. The financial support given by our supporters in the Netherlands funds a large part of our daily work. We are proud and happy to rely on the support of the people that believe in our way of working. But their engagement means more than just that; they also strengthen our visibility and are a powerful voice in spreading the message.

We are pleased to see that our renewed approach to Direct Mail is delivering the desired results. In 2024, we achieved our target income of €700,000 through Direct Mail. Since 2021, we have deliberately reduced the volume of physical mailings to shift our focus toward online donations. Our strategy aims to increase response rates and receive higher donation amounts by sending out physical mailings more selectively while simultaneously strengthening our online communication with donors. This not only reduces costs but also minimizes our environmental footprint by lowering paper consumption. In the coming years, we will continue to invest in the further digitalization of our program to build on this positive development.

On November 13th, we held our annual meeting for our loyal donors. In the beautiful Teylers Museum in Haarlem, we welcomed over 80 guests. The day was filled with interesting talks on the Water Justice Fund and the future outlook of the programmes, and of course our accomplishments, which are realised thanks to our loyal donors. After an exciting quiz and story of a field visit, the day finished with a museum visit.

## Growing our structural donor base

In 2024 we welcomed more structural donors to our supporter base, and we will continue to invest in persuading people to make a long-term financial commitment. Our strategic shift should result in growth in our financial and supporter base within the next couple of years. As a result, we will build a healthier and more committed relationship with the people that support our mission with their money, their voices and their time. By the end of 2024, we reached almost 9,500 structural supporters.



Yasmine Essed joined the Mudflat-hiking event

PHOTO: UPNORTH

## Engaging new audiences

Throughout the year we provided opportunities for a broad audience to contribute to and engage in our work, by participating in our campaigns. We invest in attracting a new and younger audience and increasing our supporter base through appealing public campaigns and other engaging activities. Two specific examples are HER Film Festival, and our petition Stop Sex for Water. Both campaigns offer a strong call to action to new audiences: watch films about powerful women / sign the petition to advocate with us for safe drinking water. All participants were also asked to join our movement by making a financial contribution. This resulted in a little more than 1.000 new structural financial relations.

## Walking for Water

Simavi engages children with the urgency of the water crisis, as well as their parents and teachers, through the fundraising event Walking for Water. For over twenty years, Walking for Water has been a leading event that involves primary school children in an educative programme in which they learn about water, followed by a sponsored walking event. In 2024, 2.949 children took part in different school activities for Walking for Water, resulting in Simavi receiving almost €108.000 for our WASH, Learn & Share programme.

## Walking with the Tide

In August, Simavi organised two editions of Wadlopen voor Water: a 3-day mudflat-hiking fundraising event in the Dutch Wadden Sea. Next to the regular edition for private individuals, we organised the first ever business edition of Wadlopen voor Water. 36 people participated in total, resulting in an amazing contribution of more than €56.000.

Despite the added challenge of extreme wind and rain, it was an unforgettable and amazing experience. All the participants were highly enthusiastic about this unique once in a lifetime experience.

## Our income through legacies

In 2024 we received €1,565,448 from legacies. We acknowledge the importance of legacies for long-term sustainability of the organisation and are putting in more efforts to raise awareness amongst donors of this crucial and impactful way of giving. Our thoughts go out to all who passed away in 2024 and contributed part of their legacy to fulfil our mission. As an organisation we want to honour every single person that has passed away leaving their legacy with Simavi, and we are grateful for everyone who has included Simavi in their will. Together with them we share the wish for a world where everyone has access to clean water and a toilet. A world where women do not have to spend several hours a day fetching water and where no girl misses school because she is menstruating. Through donating part of their legacy to Simavi, they pass on life, because water means life.

## Gratitude towards our donors

Dieneke van der Wijk: 'We like to thank our donors. Relationships we have with our donors are deep and warm and without their support Simavi would not have been able to make the impact we made. We work closely together with our donors and supporters to achieve our objective to empower women and girls to be able to enjoy their rights to water and sanitation. We also thank the Dutch Government, Dopper, MadeBlue, EARTH Water, Miss Beauty of the Netherlands and Miss Universe of the Netherlands, the ASML Foundation, The Vallei Stichting and the Postcode Lottery for supporting our programmes. Thanks to the support from our donors we can invest in high-quality programmes, build meaningful partnerships, grow our fundraising and advocate for water justice.'

## EXPENDITURE (X 1,000 EURO)

|   | Actual<br>2024 | Budget<br>2024 | Actual<br>2023 |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Total spent on objectives               | 6,158          | 4,619          | 15,196         |
| Total cost of generating funds          | 1,233          | 1,279          | 978            |
| Total management & administration costs | 604            | 529            | 584            |
| <b>Total Expenditure</b>                | <b>7,995</b>   | <b>6,427</b>   | <b>16,758</b>  |

## How did we spend the money

We are proud of every euro invested in our work. Simavi's result for the 2024 financial year was EUR 426 thousand positive (2023: EUR -1,035 thousand negative), a very positive outcome compared to the budgeted deficit of EUR -1,526 negative. An important reason for this positive result is the better-than-expected income from private individuals, as well as from companies and the lottery organisation NPL. In line with our strategy, we continued to invest in our programmes and in attracting more structural donors.

## Expenditure on our objectives

In 2024 Simavi spent a total of €6.2 million on our objectives, €1.5 million more than budgeted. This was largely due to payments for alliance partners; early 2024 they received delayed payments from 2023.

## Expenditure not spent on our objectives

Simavi needs to invest to generate funds and incurs management and administration costs to ensure its continuity and proper operation. We are committed to strict control of these costs. In 2024 we spent €1.2 million on generating funds and €0.6 million on management and administration costs.

## Accountability

Simavi's accounts for the financial year 2024, which form an integral part of this Impact Report, have been prepared in accordance with the Dutch Accounting Standard for Fundraising Institutions (RJ 650). They were audited by PricewaterhouseCoopers Accountants N.V., who expressed an unqualified audit opinion on Simavi's financial statements. PricewaterhouseCoopers performs no non-auditing tasks for Simavi. Audit reports are discussed by the supervisory board's audit committee in a meeting with the auditors, which is also attended by Simavi's managing director and its director of finance and operations. The supervisory board has approved Simavi's annual report and accounts for 2024 •.





Women collect water at a waterpoint in Kajiado County, Kenya.

## Safeguarding our operations

# How does Simavi manage risks?

As an organisation that encourages innovation and entrepreneurship and depends on subsidies, donations, and partnerships, Simavi encounters risks. Managing these risks is an integral part of our operations.

Simavi employs multiple strategies to protect our mission and objectives from harm. Our risk management framework and guidelines help us systematically assess risks, optimise our decision-making, and safeguard our operations.

### Programmatic risks

Programme implementation is Simavi's core activity. This involves various risks that might jeopardise the execution of programmes or the achievement of outcomes, such as integrity issues, fraudulent partners, substandard partner performance, security threats, activities that are not rolled out according to plan, failure to meet our quality standards, or safety and health incidents. In carrying out our work, we cannot avoid taking risks. However, this is acceptable as long as we are aware of these risks and can manage them without jeopardising our continuity and goals. Overall, Simavi's risk tolerance is moderate. We have implemented several preventive controls to reduce the likelihood of risks occurring and to mitigate their consequences if they do. Examples of these controls include clear internal policies on integrity, compliance, and sanctions, systematic screening of existing and new partners, and a safety and security policy. We continue to work closely with our partners to ensure effectiveness, high performance, and good governance.

### Reputational risks

For an organisation like Simavi, a strong reputation is essential, yet at the same time, it is fragile. Any incident may pose a real threat to Simavi's reputation, affecting our ability to achieve our goals and objectives, and even our continuity.

Traditionally, reputational risks were more related to incidents within programmes. However, as we intensify our fundraising efforts towards individual donors,

the likelihood of reputational risks in this area has increased, requiring extra attention. Simavi addresses this risk by ensuring a swift and satisfactory follow-up to any donor questions, comments, or reports.

### Financial risks

For a fundraising organisation like Simavi, fluctuations in income are the main financial risk, but they are also an inherent reality. Policy changes by governments or major institutional donors, as well as strong competition from other fundraising organisations, may result in less successful applications—although they also create opportunities for new successes.

Simavi mitigates these risks by diversifying its income sources and strengthening its individual donor base. In addition, we make significant efforts to maintain strong relationships with the private sector, institutional partners, and governments, while focusing on delivering high-quality results together with our partners.

### Organisational risks

Simavi is highly dependent on its employees and systems to achieve its goals and objectives. Inherent organisational risks include data security threats, challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified staff, and maintaining well-functioning information systems. Simavi's organisational risk tolerance is low.

### Our financial health

Simavi's financial position is strong enough to ensure continuity, thanks to prudent financial management in previous years and a keen focus on cost-effectiveness. At year-end 2024, Simavi's continuity reserve amounted to €2.106 thousand, exceeding the minimum level of six months' operational expenditure. In 2025, Simavi is projected to have a higher income than in 2024, reversing the trend of recent years and further strengthening its financial position. •



## A key ingredient for impact

# Integrity

Integrity is not just a handbook, a guideline, or a set of rules – it is also an ongoing debate about morals and ethics. The work we do is built on trust.

We use donors' money to carry out our mission, and we are committed to spending it in a fair and transparent way. At the same time, we work with marginalised groups. We must never betray trust or cause harm. All our stakeholders and colleagues must be able to rely on proper conduct, transparency, and accountability.

### Simavi's integrity system

Simavi's code of conduct clearly defines appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. Our integrity system sets out the procedures to be followed in the event of inappropriate behaviour and the proportionate sanctions to be applied in such cases. Simavi has adopted a child safeguarding policy, an anti-fraud, anti-bribery, and anti-corruption policy, a whistleblower policy, and a complaints policy (available on our website or upon request). New employees are introduced to Simavi's code of conduct and relevant policies and procedures. All employees are required to submit a certificate of good conduct (Verklaring Omtrent het Gedrag). Simavi strongly encourages the filing of complaints and the reporting of suspected irregularities and is committed to taking action whenever its core principles are violated or threatened. Our duty is to protect victims, restore justice, and learn from incidents to prevent future violations. To ensure ongoing awareness, integrity issues are regularly discussed in meetings (e.g., within programmes, in cluster teams, and in financial meetings).

Women from the Surjomukhi women's group in Bangladesh.



PHOTO: OSCAR SEUKENS

## Simavi's code of conduct clearly defines appropriate and inappropriate behaviour

### Integrity and dilemmas

We regularly reflect on the challenges we encounter in our work, which often present serious dilemmas. Simavi operates in a variety of countries, including the Netherlands, where local laws and cultural norms may sometimes conflict with our mission, such as achieving gender equality. Patriarchal systems, for instance, often exclude women from certain decision-making processes. We actively discuss these challenges—not only to find solutions but also to equip

our staff with the necessary resources and tools to remain consistent in their day-to-day work.

In 2024, we received one complaint. In line with our complaints policy, the issue was promptly investigated and resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant.

### Corporate social responsibility

When selecting new partners and monitoring our work, it is essential that we share the same values and vision of creating a world that works for everyone. This includes upholding gender equality, LGBTQI+ rights, diversity and inclusion, cooperation among civil society organisations, sound financial management, and sustainability. Sustainability is a core component of our work, in accordance with our Theory of Change. At our office in the Netherlands, we are fully aware of our environmental

responsibilities. We offset the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from our road and air travel through a compensation contract with Climate Neutral Group and monitor the number of flights we take each year. Our office lunches largely consist of organic and Fair Trade-certified products. We use biodegradable cleaning products, separate recyclable waste, purchase green electricity, and use FSC-certified paper for printing, copying, correspondence, and newsletters.

### Double check on accountability

The quality of Simavi's operations is safeguarded by an ISO-certified quality management system, which monitors and evaluates our internal processes. This system is embedded in internal manuals that outline the applicable policies, procedures, and processes.

More detailed information can be found in our Declaration of Accountability at [www.simavi.nl/en/governance](http://www.simavi.nl/en/governance). This document also describes Simavi's policy cycle. In October 2024, EIK Certificering BV conducted an external surveillance audit of our ISO 9001:2015 and Partos 9001:2018 certifications. Our certificates were renewed and are now valid until November 2027. The Central Bureau for Fundraising conducted its regular annual review and confirmed that we comply with its standards, extending our official recognition. In addition to external audits, we conducted several internal audits in 2024 to assess our processes and procedures and ensure the proper functioning of our system. The outcomes of these audits were discussed in the management review and addressed accordingly by the respective clusters. •



# Who leads Simavi?

Simavi has a two-tier board. The supervisory board oversees the good governance of the organisation. The managing director, Dienneke van der Wijk, is appraised by the supervisory board. In 2024, we welcomed a new member of the supervisory board, Jochem Schuurman.

The supervisory board serves as the employer and supervisor of the managing director and acts as an advisor to the managing director. The managing director is ultimately responsible for Simavi's strategy and operations, including the decisions made and the results achieved. The supervisory board itself has no managerial or operational tasks.

We are proud to have a supervisory board composed of highly capable individuals, each bringing a unique background and set of talents. Their contributions help our organisation achieve its mission.

**JOYCE BROWNE**  
Vice-Chair (Until December 2024)  
**AREA OF EXPERTISE**  
Global health, maternal health, epidemiology, planetary health, and climate justice  
**CURRENT POSITION**  
Associate Professor, UMC Utrecht



**WILLEM VAN DE PUT**  
**AREA OF EXPERTISE**  
International health development  
**CURRENT POSITION**  
Research Fellow, Institute of International Humanitarian Affairs (IIHA), Fordham University, Bronx, New York; Director, Culture4Change



**OLUTAYO BANKOLE-BOLAWOLE**  
**AREA OF EXPERTISE**  
Organisational and institutional development and organisational growth, leadership development, transformational change in international development  
**CURRENT POSITION**  
Global Director of People and Culture, Tearfund



**ANKJE VAN WERSCH-LENDERS**  
Chair  
**AREA OF EXPERTISE**  
Strategy, international organisation and partnership building, corporate social responsibility  
**CURRENT POSITION**  
Managing Director, MVO Nederland; Supervisory Board Member at Het Groene Brein



**VERA ARNOLDUS**  
**AREA OF EXPERTISE**  
Legal, governance  
**CURRENT POSITION**  
Company Secretary, PharmAccess Foundation



**JOCHEM SCHUURMAN**  
Audit Committee  
**AREA OF EXPERTISE**  
Financial management, financial reporting, risk assessment, due diligence, climate philanthropy  
**CURRENT POSITION**  
Finance Manager at Stichting Springpact / BlueCity / Rechtstreex

## How much does the managing director earn?

Our supervisory board determines the managing director's compensation package in line with the guidelines for directors' salaries at charitable organisations issued by Goede Doelen Nederland.

In 2024, managing director Dienneke van der Wijk received a gross salary of € 101.097. In accordance with the standards set by Goede Doelen Nederland, Simavi does not pay bonuses to its managing director or any other employee.

The managing director has one ancillary position (no remuneration): member of the Supervisory Board of DevPro in Sri Lanka.

Newest member of the supervisory board

**Jochem Schuurman:**

'It is always about impact'

## Why did you decide to join Simavi's supervisory board?

'I had arrived at a point in my life where I was looking for another role in which I could contribute to solving today's challenges. This opportunity at Simavi offered me the chance to apply my knowledge and experience from the past 18 years as a finance professional for a greater purpose. I believe that I can really contribute, especially by playing an advisory role and thinking along with the people who do the hard work.'

## What unique perspective do you bring to the supervisory board?

'Working for the IKEA Foundation, I collaborated with a wide range of mission driven organisations and teams and engaged with a variety of climate related programmes. At Simavi's Supervisory Board, my financial perspective complements the other backgrounds and talents in the Supervisory Board well. For example, other members have expertise in the field of development cooperation, monitoring, learning & evaluation, and legal matters. Together we form a complementary team.'

'In addition to my general role within the Supervisory Board, I am also a member of the Audit Committee. This includes discussing risk management, governance and the financial health of the organisation.'

## What are the most important lessons from 2024 for Simavi?

'Simavi has undergone a major change with the closure of multiple programmes followed by an organisational restructure. This shift was necessary due to broader developments in the sector, both in the Netherlands and internationally. It showed us that existing funding streams will not continue to exist indefinitely. Organisations like Simavi must therefore remain flexible and re-invent themselves to deliver impact in the long term. It is crucial to deal with financial resources consciously



and efficiently, and appreciate the impact on people's lives with each euro we receive from donors and partners.'

'Simavi distinguishes itself with its strong and clear focus on locally led solutions and participatory financing, at the intersection of water and gender equality. From the start, I have been impressed by how Simavi works in coalitions. It is never about Simavi, but always about impact. Through these core strengths, Simavi can position itself well within partnerships and the wider sector of development cooperation.'

## What are you looking forward to in 2025 for Simavi?

'Simavi has taken the first steps in an essential transition to becoming a smaller, more focused organisation. I am curious to see how the organisation will develop further. In my role within the Supervisory Board, I will continue to focus on further refining financial strategies and making deliberate choices to maximise the impact of each euro. 2025 will be a special year, because Simavi will be 100 years old. That is truly a milestone to celebrate! It is important to look back on the enormous impact that the organisation has achieved, but also to look ahead to the future.' •



# The financial outlook for 2025

## Looking forward

Simavi was founded in 1925 by two Dutch doctors with the aim of bringing medicine to Indonesia. In almost a century, a lot has changed. As a development organisation working closely with partner organisations in Asia and Africa on water, climate, and gender justice, we have never been afraid to adjust and innovate. We are constantly adapting to suit the changing landscape of development and the needs and rights of women and girls.

### BUDGET 2025 (X 1,000 EURO)

#### INCOME

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| Income from private individuals           | 6,600        |
| Income from corporate fundraising         | 545          |
| Income form lottery organisations         | 1,285        |
| income from non-profit organisations      | 250          |
| Income from government grants             | 1,110        |
| (of which allocated to Alliance partners) | 710          |
| Other income                              | -            |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>                       | <b>9,790</b> |

#### EXPENDITURE

##### SPENT ON OBJECTIVES

|                                      |              |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| Awareness raising                    | 1,709        |
| Programmes                           | 3,712        |
| (of which paid to Alliance partners) | 710          |
| Advocacy                             | 213          |
| <b>TOTAL SPENT ON OBJECTIVES</b>     | <b>5,634</b> |

##### OTHER EXPENDITURE

|                                   |              |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| Cost of generating funds          | 1,699        |
| Management & administration costs | 667          |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>          | <b>8,000</b> |

|                  |              |
|------------------|--------------|
| financial income | 25           |
| <b>RESULT</b>    | <b>1,815</b> |

##### APPROPRIATION OF RESULTS

|                                  |              |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| - Earmarked reserve for Projects | -240         |
| - Earmarked reserve legacy       | 2,000        |
| - Financing assets               | -11          |
| - Continuation reserve           | 67           |
|                                  | <b>1,815</b> |

### Financial outlook for 2025

In 2024, we put a lot of effort into our ongoing programmes. At the end of March 2024, we closed the WASH SDG programme. Despite its very good results, this programme did not receive renewed funding, and the ensuing decrease in our income has started a period of transition for Simavi. In line with our strategy, we have brought more focus to our organisation by concentrating on three overarching programmes, including the Water Justice Fund, the WASH, Learn & Share programme, and Sarwacha as a project under the Sustainable and Inclusive WASH programme. By building more strategic partnerships, we shift power and leverage our impact.

Financially, 2025 will still be a year of transition. Looking at the great results of our programmes, we continue to invest in our fundraising capacity because we believe in the relevance and potential of our mission. We expect to be able to raise more funds from individual donors, companies, and foundations in the Netherlands. In 2024, we were

We will continue to join alliances and work in partnership with others to increase our impact and become more cost-effective.

Jane Tumuti from the Olepolos Women group, Kenya

PHOTO: JEROEN VAN LOON



informed that Simavi would receive a large legacy of several million euros. In line with our transition plan, Simavi will use these funds over a period of two to three years to strengthen our programmes and fundraising capacity.

We anticipate significantly lower income from government grants due to the changed political climate, not only in the Netherlands but worldwide. We will continue to look for opportunities to join alliances and work in partnership with others to help us increase our impact and become more cost-effective. In 2025, we anticipate spending EUR 5.6 million on our objectives. The costs of generating funds are budgeted at EUR 1.7 million. We anticipate that the transformative change that started in 2023 — with

adjustments to the organisational structure, making our programmes more locally led, lowering our costs, and growing our direct debit base — will remain well on schedule. We are determined to invest as much as we can into our programmes and to ensure that our fundraising capacity is sufficient to continue our programmes in the years to come.

Having trust in the strength of our message and our plan for the future, Simavi's Supervisory Board has approved the budget for 2025. Thanks to the progress made in implementing our transition plan, and in part due to the legacy, Simavi's funding, liquidity, and financial reserves are sufficient to ensure the continuation of our existing programmes and operations in the coming years. •



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KAJIADO



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WATER JUSTICE FUND

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Nia



Nampaso Mekure, from the Naishorua women's group in Kajiado County, Kenya, poses by the water kiosk, which was implemented with support from the Water Justice Fund. The water kiosk reduces the time women have to walk to fetch water. The digitalised system also reduces corruption.