ZOA’s vision for the period 2015-2018

By 2018 ZOA wants to be:

• present in rural and urban areas in fragile contexts that are affected by conflicts and natural disaster;
• a recognised expert in working along communities to attend to their needs;
• successful in actively mobilizing our constituency;
• known for adhering to the highest professional standards of quality, accountability, sustainability and the responsible use of resources;
• a preferred partner of local and (inter)national governments, organisations, donors and the private sector.
Who we are - our drives and values

Why we serve
Inspired by our Christian identity and the biblical message of reconciliation and restoration of a broken world, we serve those affected by violent conflict and natural disasters. We do so by contributing to realising signs of hope and restoration.

We see this coming about where people can once again experience peace, justice and mutual trust, and where they can regain personal dignity and confidence.

We act in line with, and contribute to the biblical perspective of God’s Kingdom, which is to advance reconciliation and restoration to its full potential, as visible signs of God’s call to do justice and be faithful to those who need our support.

ZOA’s mission
In a world full of conflict, injustice, poverty and disaster, ZOA supports those who suffer because of violent conflicts and natural disasters in fragile states, irrespective of race, gender, ethnicity, religion or age.

Through our long-term commitment, we attend to the needs of those we serve, at different stages, from relief to recovery, in a variety of sectors. By working alongside communities, we contribute to signs of hope and restoration, and we ensure people’s dedicated participation in rebuilding their lives so as to have a lasting and sustainable impact.

We also call on our constituency and partners worldwide to take responsibility and become involved.

ZOA’s key values
In all that we do and at every level of the organisation, ZOA’s staff is united worldwide by a set of common values, to which we strive to adhere in our attitudes, words and deeds:

- human dignity
- faithfulness
- stewardship
- justice

ZOA works to ensure positive change at community level to realise dignified and resilient lives for the people we serve.
The context in which we operate

The world is changing in a rapid and unprecedented manner. We see an overwhelming scale of natural and human-made disasters, increasing vulnerability, accelerating connectivity, more problematic operating environments, and an increasingly constrained funding landscape.

Moreover, complex global challenges such as large scale demographic shifts, increasing pressure on water, food and energy, major health epidemics, poverty, and climate change, result in migration, massive urbanization, food insecurity, scarcity of natural resources, more natural disasters and cross-border conflict.

This is particularly the case in fragile states which are more vulnerable to internal and external shocks than more stable countries.

The aid these fragile states receive is shrinking and there is limited access to alternatives, making external (financial) assistance increasingly relevant. The support that can be provided by external actors such as ZOA is, however, highly dependent on the revenues procured. With funding from traditional donors declining and with the rise of new players competing for funds, the issue is becoming more complex. A drastic rethinking on how to raise revenues is needed.

Opportunities are found in both the private sector and with new (institutional) donors. Through partnerships that focus on impact, rather than fundraising, new funding sources may be unlocked. Technological advances support these developments by reducing costs, speeding up learning and knowledge sharing, providing platforms to directly engage and connect with people, and improving transparency.

Moreover, an important shift is taking place in the location of the people ZOA wants to serve. Today over half of the world’s 10,5 million refugees reside in urban settings. The number of refugees and Internally Displaced People (IDPs) living outside of camps is rapidly increasing. They seek more and more refuge in urban centres in order to find safety and self-reliance.

These developments change the rules of the game for the sector, demanding a broader agenda, adjusted approaches and innovative solutions. Adapting to these new realities around us is key for ZOA in order to provide the most opportune support for the people we serve. We believe it is possible to come up with effective and efficient approaches that respond adequately to their needs.

This Strategic Plan builds on our current approach and is mindful of lessons learned thus far, but also outlines a more flexible, innovative and open focus that allows ZOA to adjust to the changing circumstances.
Our work

ZOA can respond on the basis of a dual mandate, providing both relief and (early) recovery to the people we serve.

We apply several criteria when deciding whether or not to work in a specific country or area:

- ZOA works in countries affected by fragility, with a special focus on countries with 'conflict-related fragility'. ZOA can also respond to needs that result from natural disasters in either conflict affected or non-conflict affected areas;

- ZOA serves 'people who suffer', including refugees, IDPs, returnees, host communities and affected households, focusing specifically on the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized within society;

- The number of people affected should be at least 100,000 at country level, and 25,000 for a specific area;

- ZOA wants to be of added value in order to have an impact for positive change.

Our implementation strategies
ZOA makes use of the following implementation strategies:

- Capacity development
- Lobby & advocacy
- Service delivery
- Analysis, research and innovation
- Awareness raising
- Dialogue and social integration
- Partnerships and cross sectoral linkages

In our relief interventions, we work to ensure lifesaving humanitarian response. At the same time, we focus on initiating more lasting interventions.
Our approach

ZOA’s work is characterized by a long-term commitment to the people we serve. We are faithful to the women, men, girls and boys we support and stay with them until they are ready to walk on their own again, as to ensure a lasting and sustainable impact.

This is also reflected in the guiding principles ZOA adheres to, which are:

• inclusion
• ownership
• participation
• accountability and transparency
• sustainability
• do no harm

Our cross-cutting issues

ZOA pays specific attention to two cross-cutting issues:

- **Gender.** ZOA aims to promote equal rights and opportunities for both women and men and address specific gender-related needs.

- **Disaster Risk Reduction.** ZOA aims to mainstream DRR to strengthen individual’s and communities’ resilience to future disasters and safeguard results against future hazards and shocks.
ZOA has a hybrid decentralized organizational model through which we are locally present and have our own implementation capacity on the one hand, and work through local partners on the other hand.

As a civil society organisation, rooted in the Dutch Christian community, we also call upon our constituency to become involved. ZOA’s loyal constituency supports us with prayer, time and donations. At the same time, we believe we have the responsibility to be a voice for the people we serve in fragile states to the Dutch population. Promoting public awareness and increasing involvement of our constituency with those we serve thus constitutes a crucial aspect of our approach.

A final characteristic of our approach is that we focus on outcome results by looking beyond the immediate needs of our target group and focusing on the underlying and root causes.

ZOA works in both rural and urban areas, at local level, alongside the people we serve. By focusing our attention at household and community level, we place our target group at the centre of our programmes.

Our work at community level is facilitated by our local presence. This enables us to have direct contact with the people we serve and hold solid knowledge of, and sensitivity to the specific context, culture and dynamics between the actors present. It also gives us the flexibility to resort to our own implementation capacity in case no suitable partner is present.

At the same time, our local presence and operational capacity enable us to work with local partners which we strengthen and build their capacities, while also learning from their insights and experiences.

To increase the sustainability of our support, find complementarity and maximize our impact, we actively collaborate with (local) partners. Where possible, we enter into various partnerships with a diverse range of actors, like community based organisations, non-governmental organisations, governments, farmer cooperative, the private sector and knowledge networks.
What we work on

In essence, ZOA works to ensure positive change at community level to realise dignified and resilient lives for the people we serve.

To achieve this, we focus on realizing the following specific goals:

• **Sustainable access to basic services and resources**
  ZOA supports communities in attaining lasting access to basic services and resources for all, through the work we do in our five sectors.

• **Good community governance**
  ZOA supports communities in ensuring good community governance in order to minimize corruption, ensure that all voices are heard and hold decision-makers accountable.

• **Peaceful and stable communities**
  ZOA addresses underlying and root causes of violence and enables communities to resolve their conflicts peacefully.

Our approach requires that we find partners to complement our efforts in the programme areas in which we work, so to ensure a holistic response.
Our sectors

ZOA is aware that, in order to achieve the specific goals, a range of interventions in various sectors could be applied. However, to be effective and efficient, ZOA limits itself to five sectors only:

Livelihood and food security
ZOA focuses on four areas: income generation, market support, agriculture production, and conditions for rural and urban economic development to assist households to find means to provide for their needs.

Water, sanitation and hygiene
ZOA makes use of an integrated approach that takes into account the needs of the different stakeholders, as well as social, economic and ecological factors.

Basic education
ZOA focuses on both formal and informal basic education, including primary education, lower secondary education, functional adult literacy and numeracy and vocational training. We consider our work in education to contribute to the work we do in other sectors.

Peacebuilding
ZOA applies a conflict transformation approach to transform attitudes, behaviour and (local) causes of conflict, instead of only mitigating or resolving conflicts. We consider it important to address the key drivers of conflict to support communities in being resilient and disengage from wider conflicts.

Shelter
ZOA is engaged in locally appropriate shelter support in emergency situations to provide for more dignified living conditions under these harsh circumstances. ZOA may also provide assistance in repairs to permanent houses.
Why it works

The world around us is changing rapidly, forcing ZOA to continuously rethink its approach, adjust and be flexible and innovative. Our core strengths are highly valuable assets in this respect and help us to approach our work in such a manner that we can ensure the highest quality for the people we serve and be a valuable and reliable partner for our supporters.

ZOA’s strengths can be summarized as follows:

- Our local presence and own implementation capacity;
- Our flexibility to shift between relief and (early) recovery;
- Our highly committed and motivated staff;
- Our professional set-up with solid and high quality operations and programmes;
- Our ability to constantly monitor and evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of our work;
- Our reputation as a trusted and reliable partner that delivers;
- Our proven expertise to obtain results in fragile contexts;
- Our solid knowledge of the context and culture we work in;
- Our long-lasting engagement with communities;
- Our proven ability to develop capacities of a diverse range of actors;
- We have a strong connection with, and support from our constituency.
To achieve our vision and mission in an effective and efficient manner, ZOA will continue to work within the five sectors and build on its gained expertise.

At the same time, ZOA will broaden the horizon within each of the sectors by, on the one hand, concentrating more on the social aspects, and on the other focusing on relevant issues that originate in the complex global challenges the world faces today.

This strategy period, ZOA will emphasize more on:

- peacebuilding
- economic development
- displaced people in urban settings
- education, awareness-raising and increased involvement of our constituency

Our programmatic targets are:

1 | **Enhanced livelihoods and food security**
Help more people, especially the most vulnerable, to have enhanced sustainable and resilient livelihoods and enjoy greater food security.

2 | **Sustainable access to adequate water and sanitation, and improved hygiene practices**
Ensure that more people, especially women and girls, have increased sustainable access to safe water and decent sanitation, and apply adequate hygiene practices by perfecting our integrated approach.

3 | **Increased transformation of community level conflicts**
Tackle the underlying and root causes of conflict at community level by transforming attitudes, behaviour and (local) causes of conflict and supporting communities in preventing new conflicts from occurring based on a solid and proven peacebuilding approach.

ZOA recognizes and values the capacities of the people we serve and strives to enhance these so they can determine their own strategies to increase their independence and build better futures.
4 | Be active in urban settings
Set up a well-functioning and impactful approach for urban refugees, IDPs and host communities that takes into account their specific needs and circumstances, while building on ZOA’s strengths and sectors in order to support this group and make their voice heard.

5 | Expanded assistance in emergencies
Expand our disaster response capacity to protect the people we serve from destitution and place them in the best possible position to regain their normal life, while also strengthening our position as an effective and reliable emergency relief organisation.

6 | Increased constituency involvement
Facilitate an ongoing and sustainable connection between our constituency and the people we serve by focusing on education and awareness-raising in the Netherlands and strengthen the involvement of our constituency with the work of ZOA.
ZOA’s organisational targets: how are we going to do it

By building on our strengths and addressing our vulnerabilities, ZOA want to become a more knowledge-driven, innovative, open and accountable organisation that provides high quality support and guarantees effective and efficient operations.

Our organisational targets are:

1 | **Improved programme quality**
Continue to improve our programme quality by applying our programmatic approach and invest in improving it, streamlining our policies and procedures, and becoming a better learning organisation - one that consistently monitors and evaluates its work, openly shares knowledge and information, and facilitates and uses innovation.

2 | **Flexible internal governance structure**
Work in a more coherent and integrated fashion with and increasingly flexible core and adjustable shell, using simplified and clear (administrative) policies and procedures, and increased synergy, coherence and exchange between the ZOA offices.

3 | **Strengthened transparency and accountability**
Establish an embedded culture of mutual accountability and transparency throughout the organisation, both towards our internal and external stakeholders.

ZOA stands up for the most vulnerable and marginalized men, women, girls and boys to enable them to take control of their own lives, realize their full potential and improve and strengthen their position.
4 | **Investing in people**
Be an agile, entrepreneurial and flexible organisation with skilled and motivated staff and volunteers that are able to respond, with passion and quality, to the need of the people we serve and the needs of the organisation.

5 | **Funding our ambition**
Find the right financial balance in order to fulfil ZOA’s ambitions, by becoming leaner and more cost-effective, and focus on finding innovative financing instruments and strategies.

6 | **Connecting with others**
Deepen our relationships with new and existing supporters, in the Netherlands and abroad, based on a shared vision, identity and complementarity.

ZOA promotes awareness about injustice and encourages people all over the world to make their voices heard and to speak out against injustice.
We provide **RELIEF** to people affected by conflict or natural disasters | We contribute to a new perspective of **HOPE** in which people work together for a promising future in dignity and mutual trust | Together with the affected communities we work on the **RECOVERY** of their livelihoods

For a 3.5 minute animation video of our Strategic Plan and for the full Strategic Plan, check our website.