

Identity declaration

How Christian faith relates to our
inspiration, organisation and work

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace
Where there is hatred, let me bring love
Where there is offence, let me bring pardon
Where there is discord, let me bring union
Where there is error, let me bring truth
Where there is doubt, let me bring faith
Where there is despair, let me bring hope
Where there is darkness, let me bring your light
Where there is sadness, let me bring joy

O Lord, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console
to be understood as to understand
to be loved as to love
for it is in giving that one receives
it is in self-forgetting that one finds
it is in forgiving that one is forgiven
it is in dying that one is awakened to eternal life



1. Our core inspiration

In ZOA, our Christian faith has always been our deepest source of inspiration and motivation.

The sense of calling that moved the early founders of ZOA into action in 1973, still lies at the heart of the organisation today. We believe in the biblical message of reconciliation and restoration of a broken and unjust world, with God reconciling to Himself both humans and creation as a whole.

As a humanitarian organisation, inspired by our Christian faith, we stand by people affected by conflict or disaster, the poor and most vulnerable, irrespective of their ethnicity and nationality, their gender, sex and age, their religion, qualities and (dis)abilities, or any other distinctive feature.

In the Articles of ZOA, our identity basis has been summarised as: “The foundation takes the Bible as its ideological basis and understands the gospel as it is professed in the Apostles’ Creed.” In sharing that confession, we feel connected with Christians in the Netherlands and around the world, coming from different cultures, traditions and denominations. We believe Christian organisations like ZOA have a specific mission and responsibility to embody Christian faith, hope and love by standing with people in vulnerable positions and supporting them in regaining hope and in taking good care of our planet.

It is this inspiration and motivation that gives us hope when we are confronted with injustice, human suffering and setback. And we thank God for His blessings and for using ZOA to be a blessing to others.



2. Who we are

Our Christian faith shapes our identity in terms of values, relations, and culture.



2.1 Values

Inspired by and in accordance with our Christian identity, we share a number of core values that guide our relations and actions, both internally and externally. Given the different contexts in which ZOA operates, we acknowledge and accept that not all staff will identify themselves with the Christian identity of the organisation. However, we do require all staff to commit to and uphold ZOA's values.

We value people

All people are made in God's image and we therefore place people at the centre of our work. We treat people with respect and dignity, irrespective of ethnicity, gender, religion, age or any other distinctive feature. We stand with people, acknowledge their potential and support them in their search for living dignified and peaceful lives and in regaining hope for the future.

We are faithful

We want to bring lasting change and are committed to staying when the initial crisis is over. Even when local

circumstances are challenging, we seek to reach out to the most vulnerable. We recognise the role and capacity of local actors and seek to collaborate with them. Being aware of our temporary role and presence, we are committed to investing in strengthening local civil society.

We are good stewards

We utilise the resources entrusted to us in the best possible and most responsible way. We are efficient, effective, transparent and accountable to those we support and those who support us. We are committed to contributing to environmental sustainability and we encourage the people we serve to do the same.

We serve with integrity

We hold ourselves to the highest standards of personal and organisational integrity. We are open and honest in the way we deal and communicate with our stakeholders. We treat people with respect and speak the truth in love to one another.

2.2 Relations

Our Christian identity guides our relations with different stakeholders.

Constituencies

Shared identity plays a significant role for most of our growing and diverse constituencies in feeling represented by ZOA in their commitment to support communities in need. ZOA was started and has been supported by Christians from a variety of predominantly protestant churches. Members of different denominations of protestant churches make up a significant part of ZOA's constituency in the Netherlands, which we cherish. At the same time, the identity scope of our constituencies has broadened and we warmly welcome everyone who wants to support us in the realisation of our mission.

Staff

Shared identity is an important binding factor in teams and influences staff behaviour and decision making in daily practice. In safeguarding the Christian identity of the organisation, guiding principles for staff commitment to ZOA's identity are:

- All staff are required to commit to and uphold ZOA's core values.
- Expatriate staff are expected to agree with and actively support ZOA's Christian identity.
- Unless not permitted by law or not considered appropriate given the local context, ZOA will seek to recruit staff that wholeheartedly subscribe to ZOA's Christian identity and inspiration. This applies even more to staff in senior management positions.

ZOA acknowledges that staff in general and staff in senior management positions in particular play a key role in setting an example in applying ZOA's identity in the daily interaction with programme participants and other stakeholders. At the same time, we acknowledge the diversity of religions, cultures and traditions in the countries and areas where we operate and seek for connection and exchange across differences. This diversity is reflected in the composition of our teams.

Following the example of Jesus, we promote servant leadership. As such, all staff and volunteers are equally valued and are encouraged to contribute to the realisation of ZOA's mission on the basis of their unique talents and experience.

We also aim to express our Christian identity in the way we care for staff. ZOA attaches great importance to staff care. Given the stressful nature of our work and the context in which we operate, we underline the need for regular personal attention, supportive work relations within teams and for mutual care and prayer. Our faith also is an important source of comfort and hope in the situations of suffering and despair that staff are regularly confronted with.

Programme participants

Inspired by our Christian faith, we reach out to people in need, irrespective of their ethnicity, gender, religion, age, or any other distinctive feature. In doing so, we are guided by our core values. In engaging with programme participants, we aim for relations characterised by equality and accountability.

Partner organisations

We recognise the primary role and capacity of local actors in all matters affecting their lives, and seek to support them. Being aware of our temporary role and presence, we are committed to investing in strengthening local civil society. Whereas effectively supporting communities affected by conflict or disaster is primary determinant, irrespective of their religion, we support and work with organisations that actually represent such communities and share our vision and values.

2.3 Culture

Our identity is reflected in our organisational culture.

Routines and rituals

Our culture includes customs and practices that reflect our Christian identity and help us staying inspired. As a faith-based organisation, we strive to regularly reconnect with this inspiration and encourage each other to do so.

In all ZOA country organisations, staff teams regularly take time to share some of their motivation and inspiration and how identity plays a role in that. The way this is done varies by country, in accordance with the different local contexts ZOA operates in.

Prayer is important to us. Through prayer we express our dependency on God and ask for His blessing, guidance and protection. As such, prayer can be appropriate during staff meetings, as well as in specific situations of crisis or success or at any other special occasion.

Inclusiveness and appreciation

We nurture a culture of safety and inclusiveness. We acknowledge diversity, be it in terms of religion or in any other dimension. Whereas we value our Christian identity, we want to create and maintain a safe, inclusive and stimulating work environment for all staff, with equal appreciation for the contribution made by each staff.





3. What we do

Inspired by Christian faith, ZOA provides relief and recovery to people impacted by conflicts and disasters, as we envision a world where people have hope and live dignified lives in peaceful communities.



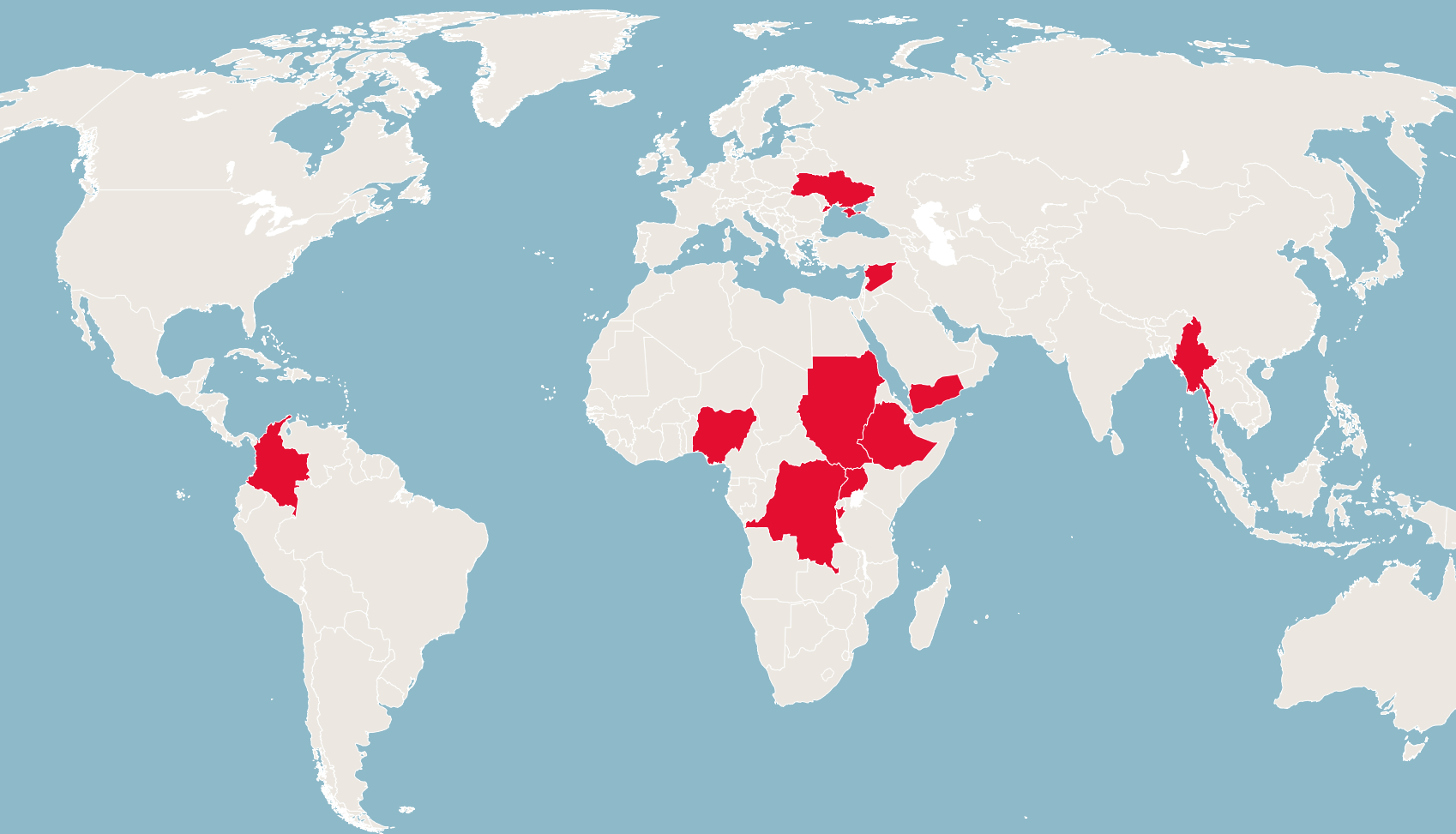
Our work

ZOA has a humanitarian purpose and is not a missionary organisation; hence we are not involved in proselytising, but express our faith in a practical way. Through our programmes, we contribute to upholding human dignity and support people in regaining hope and control and in relating to each other and to their environment.

In providing relief and recovery services, ZOA is committed to common principles applied in the humanitarian sector, such as the Core Humanitarian Principles and basic human rights.

For ZOA, these commitments are grounded in our Christian identity, as that motivates us to see all people as valuable persons, uniquely created by God.

Thus, we show God's love and proclaim signs of the Biblical message of reconciliation and restoration of a broken world being established, of justice being restored and God's creation being protected. We believe in this way our efforts and contributions reflect our Christian calling to be an instrument of God's peace.



We are here

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