



Annual Report 2023

Serve the City ABSL

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Content

Foreword	4
2023 Highlights	6
What Has Been Done	10
<i>Asylum Crisis in Belgium</i>	10
<i>Food Outreach</i>	14
<i>Winter Distribution</i>	26
<i>Education</i>	28
<i>Unprivileged Children</i>	32
<i>Rendez-vous Solidaires in Wavre</i>	34
<i>Supporting Partner Organisations in Leuven</i>	35
<i>Sustainability</i>	36
<i>Events</i>	38
<i>STC European Forum</i>	41
Volunteering As A Force	42
ServeNow	47
Corporate Volunteering	48
Financial Report	52
Governance	56
Looking Forward	58

Foreword

Better together!

2023 was a very intense year for our teams, filled with both challenges and rewards. The support and solidarity displayed by Serve the City's volunteers across our various projects was astonishing. We've seen teams grow, bonds being forged, and our impact expanding. We are extremely proud of all our teams who mobilised their efforts in Leuven, Wavre and Brussels. Hundreds of volunteers rally every week to connect with others and build bridges, whether through homework clubs, afternoon games, or football tournaments, fostering social cohesion. This is a heartening fact that gives cause for hope.

Unfortunately, 2023 was also marked by the prolonged asylum housing crisis, resulting from Belgium's non-reception policy toward asylum seekers, in complete disrespect of the Belgian laws. The poor management of this crisis by the Belgian authorities placed our core team and project leaders in a state of urgent necessity, requiring us to address the immediate needs of the moment while maintaining and developing our regular projects and leading corporate volunteering activities. Our teams were on the ground, supporting people forced to sleep in squats or on the streets.

The strengthening of our volunteer community has shown the enormous power of collective action, without which we couldn't have faced those challenges. The number of volunteers stepping up in these critical situations was extraordinary. Thanks to them, and without realising it, we reached a new plateau of normal activity, growing and scaling up on all levels.

"The number of volunteers stepping up in these critical situations was extraordinary. Thanks to them, and without realising it, we reached a new plateau of normal activity, growing and scaling up on all levels."

We have so much and so many to be grateful for, including:

Our Amazing Volunteers: They are the force for change, demonstrating that we can take things into our own hands to transform ourselves into more conscious, compassionate, and proactive individuals. This personal and transformational experience ripples out, positively impacting our society.

Our Project Leaders: These super volunteers are our eyes on the ground, carrying our values and spirit to a constant flow of new volunteers. Without their watchful steering, our projects couldn't grow or be sustainable.

Our Non-Profit Partners: Collaborating with them strengthens us as we face the heartbreaking reality of the beneficiaries we serve. Together, we are more effective and resilient.

Our Corporate Partners: Their trust has helped us increase our impact on beneficiaries, address our financial needs, and foster our values among a larger group of citizens, instilling the idea of social responsibility among their employees.

Our Supporters and Sponsors: Their generous contributions have been essential in enabling us to expand our reach, enhance our projects and make a difference for our beneficiaries' life. We are deeply grateful for their commitment to our mission; their unwavering support has been key to our success.

One thing is clear: whatever we do, we do it better together! Our collective efforts have made a

significant difference. Beyond our achievements, the distress of those living rough remains. So, we look forward to continuing this journey of growth, compassion, and service in the coming year. Together, we can achieve even more.



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink.

Nathan Torrini
Executive Director



2023 Highlights

We mobilised a total of



4,160

regular and corporate
volunteers

who dedicated



27,734

hours to help

at



52

projects in Brussels,
Leuven & Wavre

Our activities targeted **6** Sustainable Development Goals



We collaborated with



43

companies for corporate
volunteering events

We cooked



209,159

meals with
Community Kitchen

We distributed



2,168

winter care bags

We gave



1,786 hours

of tutoring & classes
to children and adults

We collected



+€12,000

worth of Christmas presents
for 400 children in need

We distributed



+180,000

of the meals made by
Community Kitchen

We served



+21,000

breakfasts to asylum
seekers

We made



9,232

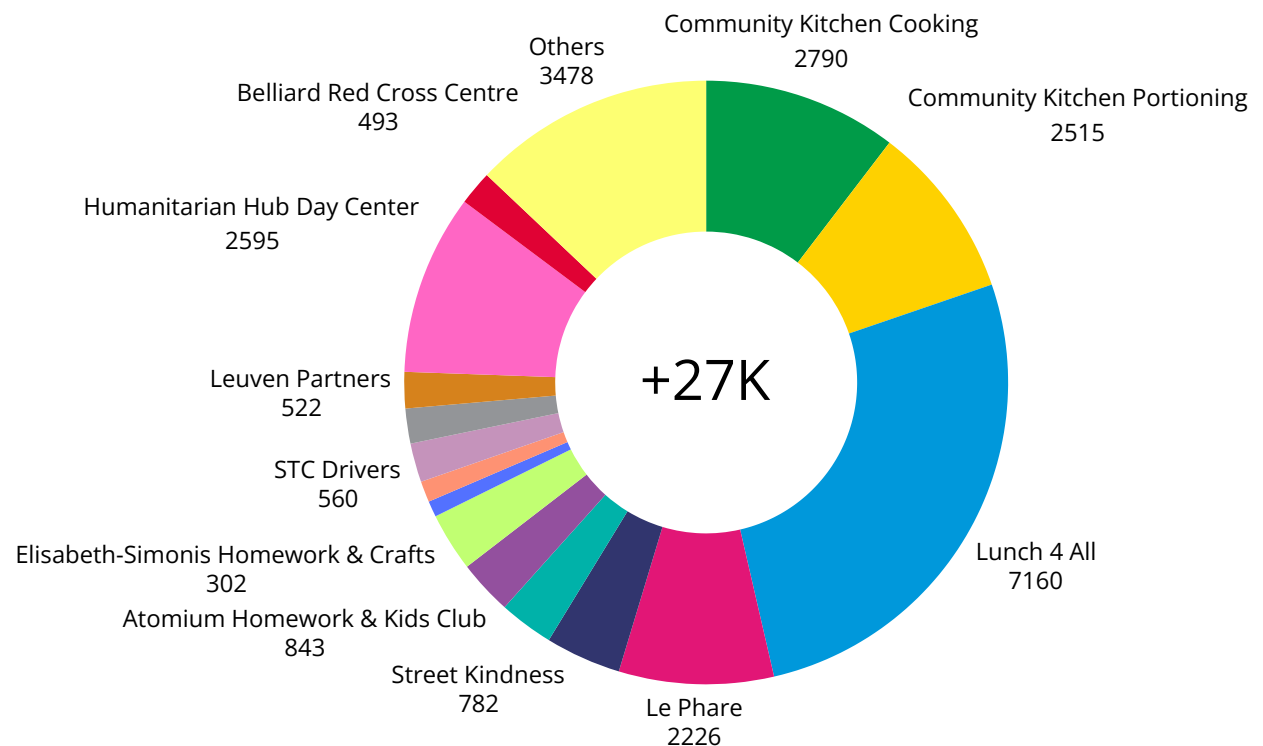
care bags containing food and
hygiene products for the
homeless

Hours of Volunteering per Project

Total hours worked: 27,734

Volunteer Project Name

- Lunch 4 All
- Community Kitchen Cooking
- Community Kitchen Portioning
- Le Phare
- Solidarity Breakfast
- Street Kindness
- English 4 Refugees
- Atomium Homework & Kids Club
- Josaphat Homework Club
- Elisabeth-Simonis Homework & Crafts
- STC Drivers
- Point 32
- Leuven Partners
- Humanitarian Hub Day Center
- Belliard Red Cross Centre
- Others





What Has Been Done

Asylum crisis in Belgium: Emergency Response

From January to September 2023, we continued addressing the escalating asylum housing crisis that had unfolded in the second half of 2022. An exceptional mobilisation took place alongside our regular food outreach projects, such as Lunch 4 All at the Humanitarian Hub and Solidarity Breakfast at Pachéco. Belgium's ongoing failure to provide adequate accommodation for hundreds of asylum seekers resulted in numerous migrants continuing to endure life on the streets of our capital. Consequently, a considerable number took refuge in the now unfortunately renowned "Palais des Droits" building in Schaerbeek. Throughout its use, Serve the City extended assistance by offering essential supplies, including food, care bags, clothing, and blankets.

Despite the involvement of many organisations, the situation within the building became very precarious due to overcrowding, as it housed over 1,000 asylum seekers and homeless individuals, leading to rapidly deteriorating sanitary and safety conditions. In response, regional authorities ordered the evacuation of the premises in mid-February, and



pledged to secure alternative accommodation for the displaced occupants.

The evacuation process, initiated on February 14th, demonstrated the lack of effective coordination by the authorities, resulting in a disregard for the basic needs of the hundreds of individuals who were gathered within an imposed security cordon in front of the building. Recognising the urgency, we engaged in negotiations to gain access to the site, promptly stepping in to supply and distribute essential provisions such as food and water to alleviate the hardships faced by those compelled to wait on the streets. By the end of the evacuation on the afternoon of February 15th, merely 300 individuals found refuge in a government-provided emergency shelter, leaving several hundred on the streets. As the authorities had sealed the building and prohibited its access, these individuals were left exposed, with no idea as to where they would spend a cold winter night, covered in nothing more than the clothes on their backs.

In response to this dire situation, some of our team coordinated with Community Kitchen to deliver hot meals to those temporarily accommodated in hotels.

On another front, we followed groups of asylum seekers setting up an impromptu camp by the canal, in front of the Petit Chateau. Within a few hours,

A beautiful show of humanity and collaboration

"Two of us from the Serve the City team went to the IBIS hotel in Sint-Pieters-Leeuw to coordinate an emergency food distribution to those who were being temporarily housed in this hotel. There we were met with a volunteer who had already very kindly driven 80 meals from the Community Kitchen in her own car. As we arrived around 7pm the police were trying to coordinate with the hotel staff to assign those waiting outside in the cold to the hotel rooms. Inside, there was a crisis meeting happening between the local commune and various organisations to discuss the next steps. We tried to begin distributing food as soon as possible, knowing that some of these people hadn't eaten since 8am. There was push-back over concerns that a distribution could cause additional chaos but, after some insistence, we were allowed to distribute food to those who were already in assigned rooms. As we were offloading meals from the car, the people in the line recognised the Serve the City vests and came and helped us with the offloading. The beneficiaries also helped us while we were distributing the meals inside."

They told us how many of them were in the room, where to find others... It was an extraordinary example of humanity and collaboration. Even the policemen that were around were surprised by how orderly and organised the distribution was happening, and we could feel the tension in the room decrease."

Jo Lane

Office & Administrative Assistant



volunteers rallied in Brussels to answer the emergency call for help launched by a variety of organisations and citizen initiatives. Together, they brought enough warm clothes, blankets, tents, and essential supplies to provide protection for more than 300 people. In addition to these donations, our volunteers also made a difference by offering transportation to safe locations. Over the next few weeks, they also helped us provide a daily breakfast for the camp and serve hot drinks. These were particularly appreciated after a night spent in a freezing tent alongside the windy canal. We saw many of these protection seekers at Lunch 4 All as well, where we were able to check in with them. Our presence and support in this camp lasted until early March when police forces dismantled it.

From March-September, as smaller groups were repeatedly moved between various squats and buildings around Brussels, Serve the City and its volunteers continued organising food outreach, and donations of supplies to provide basic support.

In reflecting upon the immense challenges faced during the asylum crisis from January to September 2023, Serve the City experienced a profound contrast in emotions. The unwavering dedication of our volunteers, who tirelessly responded to the urgent needs of asylum seekers, brought us an overwhelming sense of gratitude. Their collective

transformed desperate days into powerful demonstrations of solidarity.

As we witnessed the disheartening evacuation process in mid-February, the authorities' inadequate coordination and lack of consideration for the basic needs of the displaced individuals left us astounded and discontented. For our team members, the memories of the chaos and despair during the evacuation continue to linger, reminding us of the urgent need for compassionate and effective government intervention. It is beyond frustrating to know that, despite the authorities' promises, hundreds of people were left without proper accommodation, forced to endure the cold winter night with no resources.

The immense gratitude we feel towards our volunteers is immeasurable. Their commitment and compassion serve as a beacon of hope, emphasising that collective efforts can indeed make a difference.

"The unwavering dedication of our volunteers, who tirelessly responded to the urgent needs of asylum seekers, brought us an overwhelming sense of gratitude. Their collective efforts transformed desperate days into powerful demonstrations of solidarity."





What Has Been Done

Food Outreach

Food outreach remained at the centre of our activities in 2023, witnessing a significant expansion in our impact across our main food distribution channels: **Lunch 4 All, Le Phare, Solidarity Breakfast and Street Kindness.**

Our organic collaboration with Community Kitchen

Our partnership with Community Kitchen remains steadfast and stronger than ever. Established in 2019, the organisation has significantly expanded its operational capacity in response to the growing demand for meals from our projects and their various partnerships. They play a crucial role in providing hot meals for our projects, such as Lunch 4 All and Le Phare as presented below. An impressive 209,159 meals were prepared at Community Kitchen for our projects in 2023. In addition to our regular projects, they have been essential in our efforts to address the asylum crisis in 2023 by preparing the 9,341 meals we distributed to various locations, including squats and impromptu camps.



We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude and deep appreciation to the coordinators and project leaders at Community Kitchen: Akkara, Aline, Gayl and Nezka. Your commitment, dedication, and professionalism have been invaluable.



Lunch 4 All

Together with Community Kitchen, we increased the number of meals provided to the Humanitarian Hub where an average of 430 beneficiaries per distribution receive a hot healthy meal prepared by Community Kitchen, along with additional provisions such as fruit, a bottle of water and a waffle that we provide. Our joint effort in funding the food costs, combined with their culinary expertise and our logistical coordination, ensured a steady and fluid execution of this initiative. The HUB complemented our combined work by providing hot beverages at the Hub, where these meals are distributed twice daily by various organisations.

An example of a perfect partnership

"The Community Kitchen works in close partnership with Serve the City (STC). Almost everything we do depends on them in some way. They inform us where and when meals are needed, for example at the Humanitarian Hub or various other asylum centres or squats housing people with no reliable access to food. On the basis of this information, we prepare on average 5000 meals per week. STC handles the transportation and distribution of many of our meals. They 'hosts' our cooking and portioning projects on their serveNow app. Through this app we receive a constant stream of volunteers who we depend on for our work.

STC also shares with us the costs of preparing our meals. We receive a lot of donated produce but still have to buy huge quantities of vegetables, beans and rice, pasta and couscous each week! We are in constant contact with the STC team, dealing with the day-to-day logistics of our joint projects and planning together how we can best serve our community in Brussels. Our relationship is based on trust, which follows from our shared mission and values. I would say we are an example of a perfect partnership!"

Gayl Russell

Partner & Coordinator at Community Kitchen



Our involvement in this project saw a big surge, starting the year managing five meal preparations and concluding in December with eleven out of fourteen. In 2023, in collaboration with Community Kitchen, we delivered over 180,000 hot meals, an increase of 80,000 from 2022.

These 180,000 meals need to be cooked, portioned, brought to the Hub and then distributed. This is an enormous operation for two small organisations. This sadly needed, but remarkable, feat was made possible through the dedication of 1,155 volunteers, who signed up to 6,296 different shifts.

What a Lunch 4 All distribution entails



3

Cooks at
Community Kitchen

+1 Project Leader



10

Portioners at
Community Kitchen

+1 Project Leader



1

Driver to bring the
food at the HUB



10

Distributors
at Lunch 4 All

+1 Project Leader

STC Logistics Team

To oversight and coordinate them all



















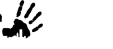















































Moreover, a significant portion of our efforts is dedicated to fundraising to sustain food outreach projects such as Lunch 4 All. By the end of 2023, sustaining one month of food distribution at the Hub entailed a cost of €22,000 for both STC and Community Kitchen together, amounting to a total of €240,000 per year for this project alone.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to our wonderful project leaders, Alison, Kat, Victoria and Mahmoud, for their commitment and dedication to this project. Their involvement has been crucial in welcoming over a thousand volunteers and enabling us to make a significant impact on our beneficiaries through this vital distribution.

A Week of Food Distribution at the HUB

		Cooking	Portioning	Driving	Distributing
Monday	Lunch				
	Dinner				
Tuesday	Lunch				
	Dinner				
Wednesday	Lunch				
	Dinner				
Thursday	Lunch				
	Dinner				
Friday	Lunch				
	Dinner				
Saturday	Lunch				
	Dinner				
Sunday	Lunch				
	Dinner				

Key:	 Serve the City	 HUB Humanitaire
	 Community Kitchen	 Union Help
	 Amitié Sans Frontières	 CuisTots Solidaires



Le Phare

Hosted in a Salvation Army building, Le Phare is a project we have been running since 2007. In a welcoming space in the city centre, Le Phare provides a convivial setting where homeless and underprivileged individuals can gather to enjoy a nourishing meal and share a good time with both beneficiaries and volunteers, breaking down barriers and fostering connections despite diverse backgrounds.

In partnership with Community Kitchen, we provide our beneficiaries at Le Phare a breakfast and a hearty meal with soup, salad, dessert, and beverages. The project runs twice a week, providing 90 to 120 meals per service, totalling 9,810 meals over the course of the year. In 2023, 648 volunteering slots were filled at this project by a core of enthusiastic and committed volunteers.

We would like to thank Barbara and Eirwen, our project leaders, for their dedication and commitment in keeping this project active and thriving over the years. Their continuous efforts have been essential in ensuring its ongoing success and impact on our community.



Solidarity Breakfast

Solidarity Breakfast remains an important initiative, serving an average of 150 to 200 beneficiaries per breakfast (with sandwiches, fruit, tea, coffee and waffles) twice a week in front of the immigration office, where asylum seekers go through their stressful administrative procedure.

Given the dire situation faced by asylum seekers in 2023, our team of volunteers demonstrated remarkable dedication, often going above and beyond their regular morning shifts to serve at other locations. This led to the establishment of an asylum seeker crisis response group, which emerged from the Solidarity Breakfast volunteer team. Using the logistical and organisational resources of Solidarity Breakfast, we provided breakfast at various sites, with the most challenging and largest being the encampment opposite the Petit Château.

Throughout 2023, over a hundred volunteers woke up at dawn to show their support for asylum seekers in need, with a total of 600 shifts being taken up. Together, they helped serve more than 21,000 breakfasts. We are very grateful for their help and for the impact they allowed us to have in alleviating some of the suffering of our beneficiaries. Additionally, we would like to thank Daniela, Mercedes, and Philip, our project leaders, for their

steady dedication to this beautiful project.

Lastly, we express a special thanks to our former project leader, Lucinda, who dedicated a lot to Solidarity Breakfast and led it from the launch in 2015 until early 2023. Her unwavering commitment and hard work have been invaluable in shaping the project's success.

" Projects like Solidarity Breakfast are about demonstrating to beneficiaries that there are people who care. People who are willing to devote their time to show them that while we may not be able to provide them with a home or their papers, we can offer them a comforting breakfast before they face a challenging interview. "

Anna Gheysen

Volunteer Manager & Project Coordinator



Serving Story

Daniela

Daniela has been volunteering with us since December 2021, engaging in various projects such as tutoring kids at Josaphat Homework Club and participating in food outreach initiatives like Lunch 4 All, Solidarity Breakfast, and the Emergency Help group during the asylum crisis. She has become a pillar of the Solidarity Breakfast project, taking on the role of project leader in March 2022. Alongside her fellow project leaders and regular volunteers, Daniela has significantly contributed to the stability and success of this beautiful endeavour.

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“I have been volunteering my whole life. When moving to Brussels, Serve the City was the first organisation that popped up when googling – and all the processes and signing up for projects was very smooth! What convinced me about the Solidarity Breakfast project was the convenient times before starting a day of work. Starting your day with a good deed is a great motivator!”

On some mornings the demands are huge. It can be disheartening to see the huge, unmet needs of marginalised groups in Brussels – Europe’s capital. Adding a bit of relief to the people’s daily burdens feels good, though the shifts, together with all the preparations and cleaning up after as a project leader, can be a lot. Luckily, we have a great network of committed volunteers!

A lot of people are regulars and while it can get busy, we often have time for a small chat. They know they can count on us providing breakfast and we try to meet their needs (like hygiene products or special clothing items) whenever we can. Despite being in difficult life situations, many people are really grateful and express their gratitude. And who doesn’t like to wake up to a warm cup of tea or coffee? It is the provision of these small things that many of us take for granted that makes Solidarity Breakfast special.

Every breakfast is a positive experience. Unfortunately, the situation of asylum seekers forced to sleep in the streets (our main “customer” base) is a systemic problem that needs a systemic solution. So, whenever we, together with other organisations, can interact with the authorities to convince them to take action – even very small steps like installing water taps to improve the situation, it is a success.”

Daniela L.

Project Leader at Solidarity Breakfast





Street Kindness

Our Street Kindness project also saw a significant increase in activity in 2023. Twice a month, a dozen volunteers gather in our offices to make up an average of 70 food bags, each containing water, a piece of fruit, a treat, and either a hot meal, fruit salad, or sandwiches. The volunteers then divide into two teams and venture into the city via different routes to distribute these bags to homeless individuals, along with hot drinks and various other essential supplies.

This initiative is impactful for the beneficiaries because it offers them a sense of acknowledgement, often lacking in their daily interactions. Rather than simply providing food, we take the time to engage in conversation with them, identifying their individual needs, and doing our best to address them if we can in our next outreach. For our volunteers, this food outreach project is more immersive and transformative than others, as it involves meeting the less privileged where they are, allowing volunteers to establish meaningful connections with the beneficiaries.

Originally launched in 2008 and held 2 to 4 times a year during our Big Volunteer Day, the project transformed in October 2022 when its two project leaders, Andrea and Natalia, took on the challenge to transition it to a bi-monthly schedule. They brilliantly rose to the challenge together with many volunteers, conducting 35 street distributions (16 with regular volunteers, 19 with corporate volunteers) throughout 2023, distributing over 2,200 lunch bags to those in need. We want to express our deepest gratitude and appreciation to Andrea and Natalia, whose dedication and leadership have propelled our Street Kindness project to a new height in 2023 and continue to do so.

”

" Sometimes, the people we meet on the streets ask us for clothes, socks, or a backpack. For me, it's always been motivating to see that even if we can't do the impossible, we get close sometimes. Searching for ways we can help is something I find really motivating. But also, how can I motivate others to help? Because this is big. We can only do it together. Without the volunteers, my children's school, and my colleagues in the background, the project wouldn't be what it is right now. And Natalia does the same. When she sees people in need of something, she asks her friends, 'Okay, there is somebody who needs a size 43 pair of shoes,' and she collects donations from her friends. So, we try to help however we can outside the project, and of course, we also need volunteers on the ground. "

Andrea P.

Project Leader at Street Kindness



What Has Been Done

Supporting other NGOs in food outreach

Assisting other organisations in achieving their objectives is one of our missions. We support them either by providing food for distribution or by sending volunteers to aid in their initiatives. Here are some of the ways we supported them in 2023:

L'Olivier

L'Olivier is a service providing social and legal support to migrants in distress in Brussels. They run a foodbank once a week on their premises, distributing non-perishable food items, bread, fruit and vegetables to around 45 families a week. In 2023, we helped them by sending volunteers daily to assist them in their distribution.

Cuistots Solidaires

Cuistots Solidaires is another highly active organisation in Brussels, dedicated to providing meals at the HUB and breakfast services at Pachéco, for homeless individuals, transmigrants, and asylum seekers in Belgium. We helped them by sending volunteers to assist them in serving breakfast at



Pachéco, on Wednesday and Thursday. Together with Community Kitchen, we also provided the meals that Cuistots Solidaires distributed on Wednesday lunchtimes at the Hub. In 2023, this amounted to an impressive total of 20,342 meals. Our dedicated volunteers, involved in cooking, portioning, driving, and distributing, participated in 815 shifts throughout the year.



Additionally, they support vulnerable families and young individuals by funding emergency hotel stays through fundraising efforts. As the Samusocial and Red Cross reception centres are saturated, many families with young children arrive at the Hub hoping to find a housing solution. Cuistots Solidaires help them in such emergency cases, and from September to December 2023, we supported their cause by financing 96 boxes of bananas. These were

distributed alongside their Wednesday and Thursday meals at the Hub. This in-kind donation allowed them to allocate the funds they would have used to buy bananas towards 60 nights of emergency accommodation for families and individuals facing harsh winter conditions.

Petites Soeurs des Pauvres

Petites Soeurs des Pauvres is an inspiring order of nuns who enable 100 elderly on low incomes to live in their residence in the Marolles. They provide housing, meals, craft activities and occupational therapy.

In 2023, we helped them daily by mobilising volunteers to assist them in serving breakfast and dinner to their residents. On a more regular basis, we donate lunch bags prepared during corporate volunteering activities.

Point 32

Point 32 is a space in Brussels centre where homeless and underprivileged people can find a place to rest or receive hot drinks, soup and sandwiches. We mobilised volunteers to help them with meal preparation, room service and cleaning.

Poverello

Poverello is an organisation located in the Marolles, fostering the development of society's most disadvantaged members, notably by offering a convivial space and a social restaurant. We started collaborating with them in September 2023 and mobilised volunteers to help them with meal preparation, room service and cleaning.

Belliard Red Cross Center

The Belliard Center serves as an emergency shelter for homeless individuals and those seeking international protection in Brussels, offering accommodation for up to 100 single men. In 2023, we supported them by sending our volunteers to assist with their breakfast, lunch, and dinner distributions.

BELRefugees

BELRefugees is a citizen refugee support platform. In Brussels, we supported their food outreach project in 2023 by directing some of our volunteers to work in their kitchen.

What Has Been Done

Winter Distributions

The first quarter's campaign

We began 2023 with a generous donation from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in January. They provided us with 100 hats, 100 scarves, 100 gloves, 100 jackets, and 100 sleeping bags, totalling €10,750 in value.

This donation significantly benefited our Street Kindness project, where we walk the streets of Brussels with trolleys full of food and supplies to support the homeless as best we can. January 2023 marked the transformation of this project from a quarterly to a twice-a-month initiative. This substantial donation felt like a positive omen and was greatly appreciated by our beneficiaries.

Any items not distributed in January were given to asylum seekers who found themselves on the streets after the evacuation of the "Palais des Droits" squat in February 2023 during the asylum crisis. Our gratitude and appreciation go to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for helping us start the year in such an impactful way.

The last quarter's campaign

In October 2023, we launched a campaign with the goal of collecting 2000 winter care bags through both financial and in-kind donations. Thanks to the generosity of individuals, schools, churches, and various organisations, we successfully reached our target.

Additionally, the Z Zurich Foundation generously matched our efforts by donating €30 per bag, resulting in a substantial €60,000 contribution. We are immensely grateful for their financial support for this ambitious campaign.

The 2000 winter kits we assembled each contained a pair of gloves, a hat, a scarf, and a pair of socks. We distributed these kits at the end of November and throughout December, when temperatures dropped to -10°C. These kits made a significant impact not only on our beneficiaries but also on our volunteers. Addressing food insecurity is challenging enough, but seeing people endure freezing conditions is truly heartbreaking.

The winter kits were warmly welcomed by everyone and complemented our Solidarity Breakfast, Lunch 4 All, and Street Kindness projects.



Additionally, we shared some kits with Cuistots Solidaires, an organisation aiding the same population groups as we do, and with Casa Tamam, a temporary accommodation facility for migrants and asylum seekers.



What Has Been Done

Education

Children hold a special place in our hearts. They represent the future and deserve every opportunity for a bright beginning. Many of the young beneficiaries of our educational projects are refugees and faced traumatic situations from a very young age. In 2023, we worked to improve their lives through our weekly homework tutoring sessions and educational excursions.

Homework tutoring classes for kids

We have three educational projects in partnership with Samusocial. In the three centres where we were active in 2023, 92 volunteers led a total of 888 hours of homework tutoring.

"With the kids, the barriers break down very quickly. They immediately make you feel at home, treating you like a friend from the moment you arrive. You just want to go back and see them again. It's the same for them - if a volunteer they know isn't there for a session, they'll ask, 'When are



they coming back?' They really expect volunteers to be there and miss them when they're not. It's the kind of connection that makes you want to return. Also, you can see how much they struggle with their homework, and knowing they don't get support elsewhere, you want to help them. For many of them, this one evening per week is the only time they can get support."

Wiktoria Cacace

Logistics & Event Support Coordinator

These weekly homework tutoring projects support kids by helping them catch up on their schoolwork, practise reading, and improve their language skills. These projects foster connections and friendships between volunteers and children. Volunteers provide academic support and homework assistance that the children may not receive elsewhere. Many are still learning the language. For volunteers, the projects offer a sense of purpose, and very often a different perspective on life. Indeed, the children's resilience and happiness despite their challenges is inspiring.

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"At the Samusocial Laeken centre, we encountered two young Afghan girls, aged eight and ten, who had never attended school. They didn't even know how to hold a pen. Our focus is on helping them catch up because, upon arriving in Belgium, they're legally required to attend school, but they often face language barriers. It's really hard for these kids. Volunteers work to help them bridge the gap, catch up as much as possible, do extra work with them, and just getting them to speak the language. They absorb knowledge like sponges, they learn so fast, especially the languages. In just two months, many could hold a proper conversation with us. Often, the ones that were the shyest at the beginning become the ones who are the first into the room, running to you and first to open their books.

If you go long enough to these projects, you can see that you're making a difference in these children's lives. When you see a kid going from this shell of a human to this happy kid, the transformation is really nice to witness. Many of our young beneficiaries have endured incredibly difficult experiences, yet they still radiate happiness. It really puts things into perspective. Even if I'm feeling down, seeing how happy these children are, despite their challenging journeys, reminds me that I can do the same. I can put a smile on my face, even if it's just for the two hours we spend together."

Anna Gheysen

Volunteer Manager & Project Coordinator

Educational trips

In 2023, Serve the City Belgium received a donation of 13,000 EUR from Trane Technologies to support educational trips for the kids in various centres where Serve the City is active. Thanks to their generous support, we organised several educational trips for children and their families and will organise more of them in the coming year.

We were able to organise two trips to the Technopolis science museum in Mechelen, where children engaged in interactive science experiments. The first one took place in July, accommodating 32 attendees (children and accompanying adults) from the Samusocial Koekelberg centre. The second took place in November and saw 88 participants (children and accompanying adults) from the Samusocial Gulledelle (now Josaphat) centre. Complementing our efforts, the International German School of Brussels prepared and donated 140 lunch bags for the participants of these trips.

A second educational trip was organised in November to visit the Sea Life aquarium in Blankenberge, where 46 people (children and accompanying adults) from the Samusocial Koekelberg centre learned about marine life through presentations and exhibits.



These trips provided opportunities for children to explore new environments, learn through hands-on activities, and spend quality time with volunteers and their families.

English and French classes for adults

We also provided English and French language classes for adults at the HUB and the Belliard Red Cross centre for refugees. These classes play an important role in facilitating integration and communication for newcomers to Belgium. We've witnessed remarkable progress among participants over time, with many becoming confident in their newfound language skills.

These educational opportunities not only enhance participants' chances of finding employment, but they also serve as meeting opportunities with volunteers from different horizons for a group that often feels isolated from the wider society. In 2023, 142 volunteers dedicated a total of 898 hours to tutoring adult newcomers ranging from 15 to 70 years old.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to our project leaders who generously volunteer their time and energy to our educational initiatives, making a profound impact on both children and adults in their learning journey.

We extend our gratitude to Tim from Atomium Homework Club; Wiktor, Eda, and Sarah from Elisabeth-Simonis Homework & Crafts; Mireille and Flavia from Josaphat Homework Club; Erica and Donna, from English 4 Refugees; and Mireille from Cours de français au Hub.

"Some of our Ukrainian students initially arrived in 2022, and by the end of 2023, I witnessed remarkable progress. I recall some who couldn't speak a word of English when they first came. And, by the end of the year, I was able to hold conversations with them, which was very rewarding."

Anna Gheysen

Volunteer Manager & Project Coordinator



What Has Been Done

Unprivileged Children

In our commitment to supporting underprivileged communities, we organised a variety of events and initiatives tailored to foster creativity, environmental awareness, and a sense of belonging among children from immigrant families facing adversity. From the fun Easter egg hunts enjoyed by 180 children to engaging gardening sessions, interactive workshops on our solar system, and crafting bird feeders, these activities provided memorable experiences for the younger communities we serve.

One such initiative is our annual Christmas gift collection and fundraising drive, where people have the opportunity to donate money or purchase gifts for certain children across the 10 centres we are involved with. This year, thanks to the generosity of our donors, we distributed hundreds of gifts to children from various centres and shelters. Each gift, carefully chosen to be new and high-quality, aimed to provide a personalised and meaningful Christmas experience for children who may not typically receive such gifts.

We are immensely grateful to the many individuals who contributed to providing Christmas presents for our young beneficiaries: 37 people donated money



for presents, 44 people and 5 companies brought gifts themselves. St Anthony's Parish also placed an Angel Christmas Tree in their church with cutouts of angels representing 180 children's names and ages for the church members to select an angel and contribute a present, helping us to reach the 400 gifts we needed in total. Special thanks to Anna from our team and the volunteers that helped her handle the logistics of wrapping 400 personalised gifts and in dispatching them to ten different centres.

Additionally, our tradition of St. Nicolas' visits to these centres served to enrich the cultural experiences of the children we support. Through our partnership with UPS, children received chocolate gifts and learned about Belgian traditions, such as St. Nicolas, in a fun and engaging manner. These initiatives not only bring joy to the children but also help them connect with their local classmates' culture and feel included in their community. We express our deep appreciation to UPS for their constant support, as their generous donations made St. Nicolas celebrations particularly special for 200 children.

We also want to express our gratitude and appreciation to all the project leaders who have been essential in our children's projects, dedicating themselves to bringing joy to the lives of our young beneficiaries. Special thanks to Siobhan from

Atomium Kids Club; Wiktorina, Eda, and Sarah from Elisabeth-Simonis Homework & Crafts; Mireille and Flavia from Josaphat Homework Club; Sara and Alba from Foyer Selah; and Erbin from Victor Du Pré Kids Club for their commitment and loving kindness.

Seeing the joy on the kids' faces when they open their gifts is truly priceless. Some jump around excitedly, some show off their gift to their friends and start playing together, some come hug you to say thank you, and every year there are at least a few tears.

Sometimes it feels like the level of excitement is the same for the kids and the parents - they will get out their phones and record as their child excitedly tears through the wrapping paper to get to their gift. Whether they stay with the group and watch their kid play with their gift, or leave to enjoy it privately, there is always a warm smile and big thank you.

Cat G.

*Volunteer at Atomium
Homework Club*



What Has Been Done

Rendez-vous Solidaires in Wavre

In Wavre, we mobilised volunteers in February, April and October 2023 for the Rendez-vous Solidaires supported by a network of local parishes. These big days of volunteering begin with a friendly gathering in the morning, before volunteers are split into groups among the various organisations or initiatives offering activities.

We organised and coordinated a very successful football tournament that brought together 70 players, including local young people and young refugees from BelRefugees collective housing. The event concluded with a festive and convivial afternoon celebration. Prior and following the tournament, many volunteers provided transportation for the participants, ensuring they got back to their schools or homes safely.

The variety of practical activities offered to our volunteers ranged from:

- cleaning up the River Dyle with the organisation Aqua Terra ;
- playing board games with elderly residents of the Point Du Jour nursing home in Bierges;

- meeting with the residents of L'Arche in Bierges, a community for people with disabilities;
- preparing and distributing lunch bags for people living on the streets of Louvain-la-Neuve, with the organisation Un toit, un cœur;
- accompanying the residents of Horizon Neuf, a network of services for people with disabilities, on a visit to the Domaine de Han sur Lesse;
- and more...

These one-off days present opportunities to explore various initiatives and organisations active in this region, fostering the growth of volunteer communities around them. This marks the second year we've organised these Rendez-vous Solidaires, as we started in 2022. Reflecting on how our current weekly projects in Brussels began with similar big volunteering days, we are eager to see where this momentum will lead us in the future.

Our thanks go to George, Luc, and Rose for coordinating and organising these events, and for their invaluable contribution to fostering a growing volunteer movement in Wavre.



What Has Been Done

Supporting Partner Organisations in Leuven

In Leuven, we have been collaborating with local organisations, supporting them in their projects by mobilising volunteers. A variety of practical activities were offered such as:

- cooking for Buurtwerk t' Lampeke;
- donation sorting with Buren Zonder Grenzen and Huis van het Kind Leuven (project Kirikou);
- environmental awareness through clothing swap with MAAKbar, city clean-up actions with Bin Your Butts Leuven and the city of Leuven;
- home Renovation project for the marginalised community with Minder is Meer;
- supporting a fundraising event for Vluchtelingenwerk during their big Refugee Walk of the year and Mobile School;
- serving meals and meeting with elderly residents of the Seniorama centre;
- and more...

In 2023, 69 volunteers were mobilised, collectively offering 522 hours of their time across 140 shifts. We express our gratitude to our incredible team in Leuven, Gabbie, Nata, Eric, Gonzalo, Isabel, Ron, Maiko, and Kashif, for leading and supporting our growing community of volunteers in Leuven city.

"The projects Serve the City manages are so diverse, and last week I was volunteering at the Wereldfeest, listening to live music and chatting with attendees whilst helping the event run smoothly. However, my most memorable experience was with Minder is Meer, a local organisation helping people who need support with home renovations – they provide financial advice and building work for people whose homes are unsafe to live in. While we deconstructed the house's kitchen and bathroom (a lot of fun in itself!), we were with the homeowner who was incredibly grateful, and I could see the effect our work was having on the life of this member of the community."

Isabel D.

Project Leader for STC Leuven



What Has Been Done

Sustainability: From Vision to Action

On an international scale, Serve the City upholds a vision and a roadmap dedicated to fostering environmental projects and policies in all cities. While tangible outcomes may take time to materialise, our commitment to nurturing the environments in which our beneficiaries reside remains at the forefront of our discussions. For us, serving our cities extends beyond caring for their inhabitants; it also involves preserving the environment as well.

At a national level, we've implemented several measures to reduce our environmental impact. We've made conscientious decisions in organisational management, such as choosing a green, 100% Belgian energy supplier, since 2021. In our activities, we've embraced sustainable practices, like opting for organic and fair wear t-shirts and using recycled or biodegradable packaging for our food outreach.

In 2023, we've taken the following actions to uphold sustainable practices as an organisation and support our vision:



Reducing our Controllable Environmental Footprint

In the realm of energy consumption, 2023 marked a significant milestone with the donation of an electric van from Toyota Motor Europe, facilitating emission-free trips and local deliveries in our food outreach initiatives. As 99% of our van usage comprises short trips (<2km), an electric vehicle is the most efficient in terms of emissions. Looking ahead, our commitment to sustainability will see the replacement of our combustion engine van with another electric van in 2024, once again thanks to the generosity of Toyota Motor Europe.

During our annual Serve the City Europe forum in Krakow, we looked at ways to reduce our emissions by opting for plug-in hybrid cars, instead of flying our team to Poland. These were kindly lent to us by Toyota Motor Europe.

Additionally, to promote eco-friendly commuting, we've subscribed to Villo, a bike-sharing service, for our employees in Brussels.

Local Environmental Projects

In various local initiatives, our volunteers have actively contributed to environmental conservation. Serve the City Wavre organised several river clean-

ups during the Rendez-vous Solidaires, while Serve the City Leuven collaborated with local authorities to maintain cleanliness at festivals and events.

In Brussels, we contributed to the cleanliness of various public spaces. At Parc Parmentier, we assisted in clearing weeds, improving access during winter, cleaning playground areas, and sorting the composting area. Additionally, we organised cleaning walks along the route from the North Station to the Humanitarian Hub, a crucial pathway for migrants in Brussels.

Local Partnerships and Sustainable Practices

Furthermore, our shift to a local supplier for food outreach needs in Brussels not only resulted in cost savings and reduced delivery distances but also supported a small-scale enterprise in the commune of Etterbeek. Touched by the impact our food outreach projects have on people on the streets, FreshMed demonstrated their support for our cause by offering exceptional prices, and even treating us to our end-of-year team meal. Lastly, our collaboration with Paul's Patisserie since November 2023 has enabled us to repurpose unsold goods, reducing waste and providing delicious treats to our Solidarity Breakfast beneficiaries every Monday.



Community Garden

Our community garden initiative, launched in 2022, continued to flourish in 2023. Volunteers tended to the garden, cultivating a variety of vegetables like courgettes, tomatoes, and salads, which were then supplied to the community kitchen. Not only did this project foster camaraderie among volunteers and neighbours, but it also served as a platform to experiment with circular economy principles by redirecting our harvests to our food outreach projects.

What Has Been Done

Events

Second-Hand English Book Sale

In 2023, we organised four book sales: at Stonemanor Everberg in June and September, and at Vineyard Brussels in February and November. The partnership with Vineyard Brussels began this year, and their spacious and welcoming church allowed us to host indoor events, reaching community members closer to the capital.

We also continued our partnership with UPS, which generously provided us with free storage space at their warehouses, saving us approximately €3,500 per year.

Our book sales in 2023 were a great success, raising over €21,500.

We extend our thanks to the hundreds of people who donated or purchased books, totalling 215 meters in length, and to our incredible partners: UPS, Stonemanor, and Vineyard Brussels.



Pub Quiz

In 2023, we organised four pub quizzes at the Black Sheep, in Brussels. Our quiz masters showcased their creativity with engaging and challenging questions, testing the knowledge of 97 teams in total. These events not only provided great fun but also helped us raise over €5,500 to support our projects.

20 km of Brussels

In May 2023, 15 individuals participated in the Brussels 20km run, alongside 94 runners from Toyota Motor Europe. All of them proudly wore our t-shirts and raised a total of €1,826 of funds for Serve the City. Beyond the financial support, the race provided a great opportunity to increase Serve the City's visibility and promote our activities. It was also a fun and rewarding event for our runners, offering them the added bonus of running for a good cause.





What Has Been Done

STC European Forum

In October 2023, we attended Serve the City's European Forum, themed 'Better Together,' hosted by the STC Krakow team. STC International organises these Regional Forums annually to allow project leaders, core team members, and city leaders to connect, share, and be inspired by one another. This four-day-long event brought together 63 participants from 15 cities across Europe, including 10 members of our Belgian team. Highlights included several workshops, an afternoon of local volunteering opportunities, two external training sessions, and plenty of regional networking fun!

The forum workshops focused on three of STC's shared social concerns: refugees, human trafficking, and the environment. Participants exchanged program ideas and strategies in each area, noting cultural differences in local approaches and emphasising the importance of forming strong local partnerships to support STC's work on the ground, both technically and financially.

External training sessions were provided by the Center for Creative Leadership on 'Leadership Skills' and 'Strategic Networking'. These sessions aimed to help city teams develop their team alignment skills and build their organisational capacity.



Volunteering as a Force

Honouring Our Volunteers

At Serve the City, our focus has consistently been on a transformational approach to volunteering, not a transactional one. A good relationship between project beneficiaries and volunteers is of great importance to us, and thus, caring for the volunteers is as essential as caring for our beneficiaries. Maintaining successful and sustainable projects takes more than assembling a handful of people and getting the job done. So, in 2023, we provided three main categories of events destined to celebrate, train, or support our volunteers.

Volunteer Celebration

Serve the City always strives to build community among its volunteers. The celebrations we held in April, July, October, and December 2023 brought them together in our office. The big BBQ we organised on the square Van Meyel was another memorable celebration. We love meeting our volunteers, thanking them for their service, and



their service, and raising awareness about Serve the City's other initiatives. From their feedback, we know that they enjoy meeting other volunteers from other projects building connections, and sharing experiences about the different projects they participate in.

Project Leader Training

Our project leaders play a crucial role in running Serve the City's projects. Their training is a key element in preparing them to oversee initiatives aligned with the organisation's values. In the March Project Leader Training, we ensured that our new leaders felt well prepared, understood our relational approach, and had the chance to talk about the challenges they may encounter while volunteering. The training typically encompasses multiple aspects, including organisational relationships with our partners, value-based leadership, and the emphasis we put on both beneficiaries and volunteers.

Workshops

Last year, two additional workshops offered project leaders further resources on relevant topics, such as the asylum process and human trafficking in Belgium. We hope to organise more of these events in the future.



The Community Aspect of Volunteering

The community aspect of volunteering is a cornerstone of Serve the City's ethos. Volunteer communities foster a sense of belonging, connection, and shared purpose among volunteers, addressing human needs beyond just completing tasks. While individual motivations to volunteer can vary, the community aspect of volunteering caters to these diverse needs while also benefiting our organisation. It plays a key role in the sustainability of our projects and long-term volunteer engagement.

We encourage the formation of small volunteer communities centred around specific projects, with our project leaders serving as the core and connecting link. This approach not only makes the projects more sustainable by fostering a sense of belonging and teamwork but also enriches the volunteer experience. As these communities grow, we see wonderful dynamics emerge beyond the projects themselves. Volunteers often come together for social activities like pub quizzes, share meals after a day of volunteering, and build lasting friendships. This sense of camaraderie and mutual support strengthens both the individual volunteers and the overall impact of our initiatives in ways that



can be difficult to measure but are nonetheless important on a human level. "Everyone serving" is another essential aspect of our volunteer communities and part of our vision. One of our mottos is "Cross the Line," which means reaching out to those who are more vulnerable, often invisible, or left unattended in our society. We aim to blur these lines until they disappear by also offering volunteering opportunities to those who would usually be considered the beneficiaries of our projects.

Our belief is that by integrating beneficiaries into our volunteer teams, we create a more inclusive and empathetic community. This approach not only empowers those in need by giving them a sense of purpose and belonging but also enriches our volunteer base with diverse perspectives and experiences. By fostering a spirit of mutual support and collaboration, we break down social barriers and build stronger, more resilient communities where everyone can contribute and grow.

In 2022, we took a significant step in this direction with the Trampoline project, which aimed to foster the social integration of isolated immigrant women through volunteering. In 2023, we saw some of our volunteers make progress with their asylum applications due to the friendly relationships they had built with local volunteers. These bonds opened doors for them to find housing, secure work or

residency permits, and obtain jobs that would have remained out of reach if they had not got involved with the living fabric of community. This demonstrates the power of volunteering as a force for change and a solution to many societal issues such as isolation, exclusion, and precarity. Once again, whatever we do, we do it better together.

"We can really see that each project has its own unique community. It's like each one is a little village with its own way of doing things. One clear example of a strong community is the Atomium Homework & Kids Club project. There, people are willing to go above and beyond for the project. For instance, spending a day cleaning the centre isn't exactly fun, but people showed up and cleaned because they care about the project and the kids. This sense of community has truly been fostered over time. Even after the project moved, people are now commuting an hour, whereas it used to take just five minutes because they believe in it."

Anna Gheysen

Volunteer Manager & Project Coordinator



Street Party at Laeken

In September 2023, we helped the Samusocial refugees centre of Laeken, where we run our Atomium Homework & Kids Club project, to organise a street party to help integrate with the new neighbours after their relocation. The centre had moved to a new location in May, and the arrival of 350 people, including 80 children, brought a lot more activity in the otherwise quiet neighbourhood. The street party aimed to introduce the neighbours to the centre's families and children. The centre's families cooked and provided food from their home countries, while the organisation helped with entertainment like a bouncy castle, cotton candy machine, toys, face painting, and chalk for the children.

The party was a real success in facilitating interaction between the neighbours and the centre's families and children.



ServeNow

Since its launch in October 2020, the ServeNow application has played a pivotal role in scaling up and managing volunteers and projects, effectively helping STC to adapt to the increasing numbers of volunteers. Its impact extends across everyone involved in our activities, including volunteers, project leaders, partners, permanent staff, and project beneficiaries. ServeNow's swift functionality has been instrumental in our consistent efforts to expand our projects and streamline the workload for project leaders and core team members. This efficiency has been a driving force behind the continued growth of STC these last three years.

In 2023, ServeNow boosted STC's volunteer project capacity, engaging a total of 1,808 unique regular volunteers and facilitating an impressive 11,360 shift registrations, resulting in a cumulative 27,734 hours of dedicated work!

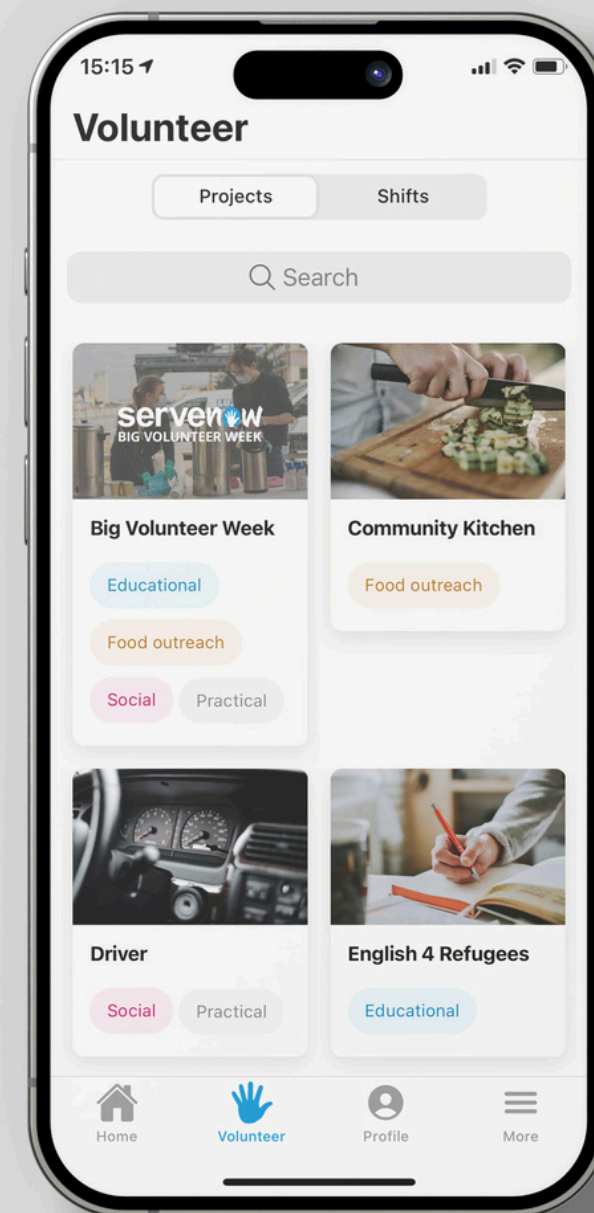
Behind the scenes, a lot of effort was put into securing grants for the continued development of the app. With the combined support from UPS and the Toyota Mobility Foundation, we crafted a roadmap for 2024 developments. These enhancements encompass a completely rewritten, faster, more efficient backend, multilingual support, an improved filtering system, and a browser-accessible version

(PWA). These upgrades collectively contribute to an enhanced user experience and increased accessibility.

Another milestone achieved in 2023 was the establishment of a legal framework between STC Belgium, International and other STC chapters regarding the implementation of ServeNow within the STC network. Addressing licensing, responsibilities, GDPR compliance, and privacy policies, this framework is crucial. ServeNow currently operates in Belgium, France, and Ireland, with plans for future expansion. We extend our gratitude to the law firm Morisson Foerster for their generous support in writing these documents.

Additionally, 2023 welcomed Nicolò Cauli, an intern from the Eurodyssey programme, who joined the team to assist Jeremie Malengreaux in the ongoing efforts to maintain the app and promptly address any emerging bugs. Together, they contribute to the continued success and impact of ServeNow in serving communities.

While from an end-user perspective, 2023 was a quiet year for ServeNow with only the introduction of version 2.1, it was an important year for paving the future of ServeNow. We look forward to seeing it unfolding in 2024.



Corporate Volunteering

A Win-Win Situation for All Involved

This year marked a significant success in corporate volunteering. A record number of 43 companies asked for our help to organise volunteer events for their employees. Notably, Toyota Motor Europe provided substantial support, contributing to 58 volunteering activities and mobilising 804 volunteers throughout the year, solely from their company. The impact of these corporate partnerships is evident.

Corporate volunteering initiatives exemplify a win-win scenario for all involved parties. Beyond the impressive numbers outlined on the next page, the true impact is felt on a human level.

For participants, engaging in corporate volunteering activities fosters a deeper understanding of social issues and facilitates meaningful connections with beneficiaries. These experiences transcend workplace dynamics, allowing colleagues to interact in a different context and forge deeper bonds.

For beneficiaries, the positive impacts are manifold, ranging from access to essential resources to the sense of inclusion and support from the community.



For our organisation, the ripple effects of corporate volunteering extend far beyond the immediate events organised and their outcomes. Financially, the revenue generated from corporate volunteering events provides vital and sustainable funding, enabling us to sustain our projects independently. Also, many corporate participants are inspired to become regular volunteers and even enthusiastic ambassadors. Some go above and beyond, organising fundraisers within their companies or personal networks to support specific campaigns.

"Over the past three years, FTI Consulting's partnership with STC Brussels has been a profoundly enriching experience for our team. The corporate volunteering opportunities, particularly the Street Kindness initiative, have enabled our people to connect with the community and give back in meaningful ways. Through our pro bono projects with STC we also use our professional skills to provide tangible support to their organisation. This partnership perfectly aligns with the firm's values and our Corporate Citizenship program, reinforcing our commitment to corporate social responsibility and enhancing our team's sense of purpose."

Mireia Quingles

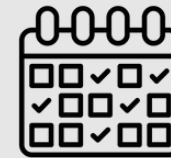
Senior Director - Strategic Communications

FTI Consulting



43

Companies



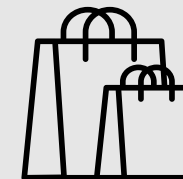
110

Events organised



2,352

Corporate volunteers mobilised



32,218

Lunch and care bags packed



4,878

Hours contributed individually

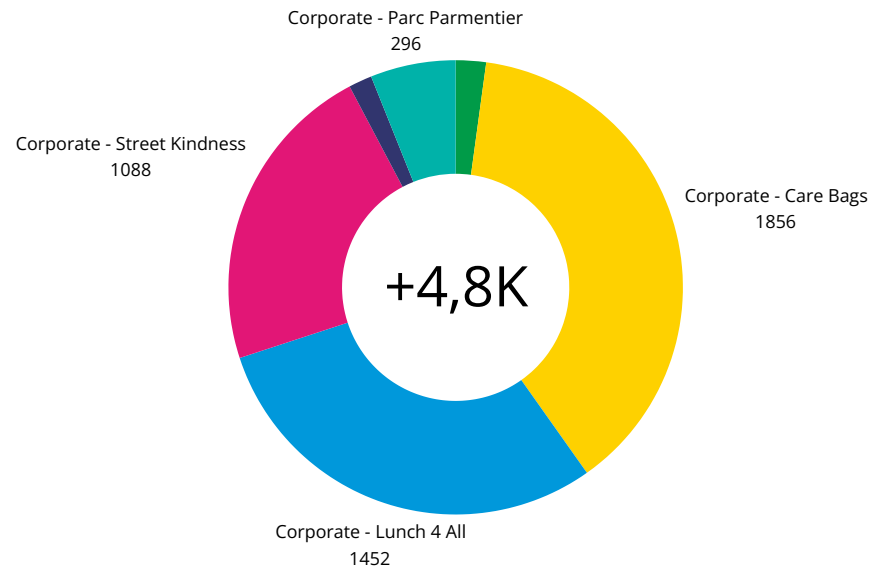


24,862

Meals served

Hours of Corporate Volunteering

Total hours worked: 4,878



Volunteer Project Name

- Corporate - Lunch 4 All
- Corporate - Community Kitchen
- Corporate - Care bags
- Corporate - Street Kindness
- Corporate - Cleaning Walks
- Corporate - Parc Parmentier



"It has been an absolute pleasure working with Serve the City. It's been a win-win building stronger teams and communities together."

Kylie Jimenez - Former SVP People, Technology and Corporate Affairs and Chief DE&I Officer - Toyota Motor Europe

TOYOTA

Bloomberg

F T I
CONSULTING

TRANE
TECHNOLOGIES



ZURICH

**Russell
Reynolds
ASSOCIATES**

EBA CLEARING

HOTEL AMIGO
BRUSSELS

CHANEL

K&L GATES

d'side

OLIVER WYMAN

SCIEX

Crowell

BRIDGESTONE

ThermoFisher
SCIENTIFIC

BlackRock

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Steptoe

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Interpretation

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of Advertisers

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Clarivate

EASYFAIRS

SEW
EURODRIVE

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Financial Report

Year of growth

2023 was a positive year for Serve the City Belgium, particularly as a result of generous donations from companies and individuals alike. We also benefitted from the continued involvement of our volunteers across the country.

Financial and practical support exceeded expectations; in-kind donations included an electric van given by Toyota and the provision of additional storage space by De Maalbeek, for instance. Our beneficiaries also took advantage of €8,000 worth of chocolate chips by Barry Callebaut, as well as clothing donated by Bridgestone and educational trips for children funded by Trane Technologies.

Funding increased considerably thanks to various grants and donations, allowing us to pursue additional projects and provide flexible and high-quality aid. This was particularly so during the asylum housing crisis we faced at the beginning of the year. Key contributions included:

- Toyota Mobility Foundation's support for ServeNow development in 2024,

- support from the King Baudouin Foundation towards our food outreach projects and more,
- Trane Technologies financial support of our food outreach programs and educational trips,
- the extension of the Maribel Social support to 1 FTE (Full Time Equivalent),
- the matching gift from the Z Zurich Foundation for our campaign "Winter Care Bags"

Late subsidy payments and a welcomed flood of December donations meant that we recorded an unexpected surplus.

European Solidarity Corps

In 2023, we secured a significant €46,930 grant from the European Solidarity Corps program, awarded by the Bureau International de la Jeunesse (BIJ). This two-year funding will support the participation of three international young people in our programs.

Following confirmation in July, we finalised administrative procedures and initiated efforts to

welcome two volunteers for a year-long placement in 2024. In 2024, we will focus on securing the third volunteer for the 2025 placement.



The driving force of volunteering

Toyota Motor Europe (TME) donated a Proace EV to Serve the City in January 2023, helping us transport food to our projects as well as clothes and hygiene products to vulnerable people. The delivery of a second van paved the way for an ambitious 2023 across Brussels, with new projects, more meals, and growing numbers of volunteers.

This very generous donation was timely, allowing us to effectively respond to the asylum housing crisis of February and March 2023. Our efforts during this crisis would have been severely hampered without the second vehicle.

Toyota Insurance Service (TIS) treated us by covering the insurance costs of this new vehicle, while Toyota Belgium (TBEL) decided to support the maintenance costs. Additionally, upon the delivery of our new electric van, TME's Value Chain department generously filled it with practical donations, which were later distributed to our beneficiaries.

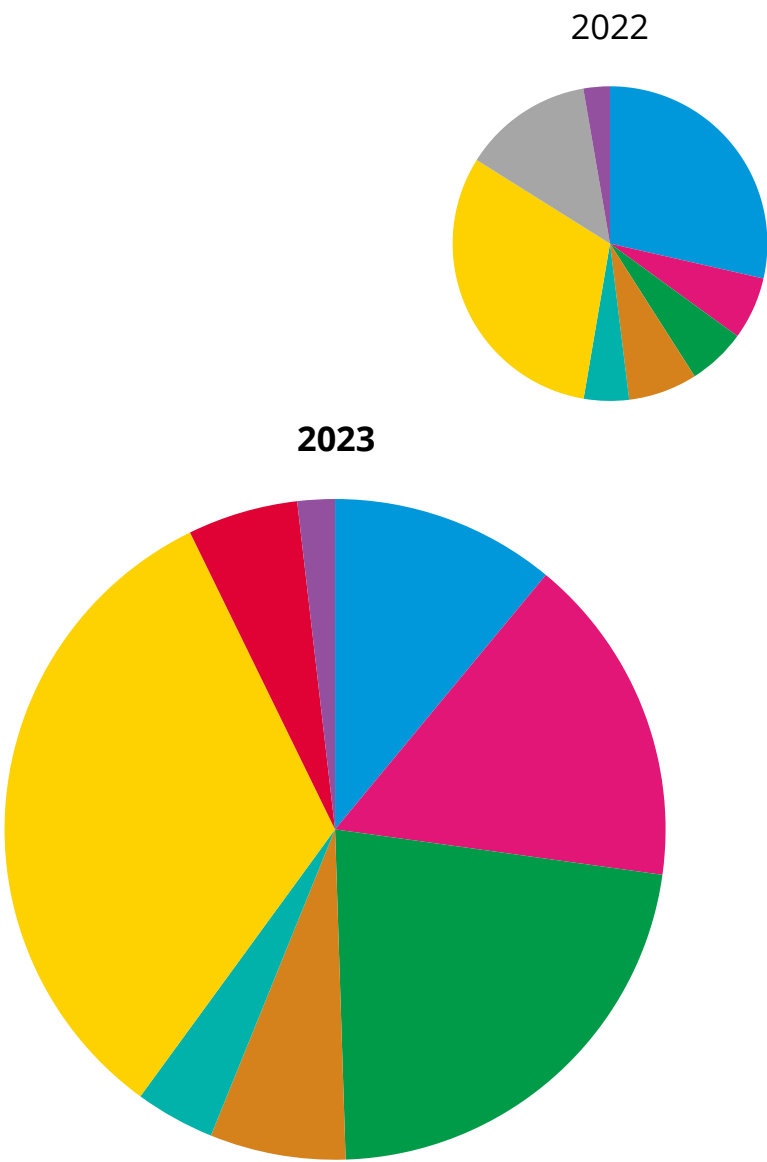
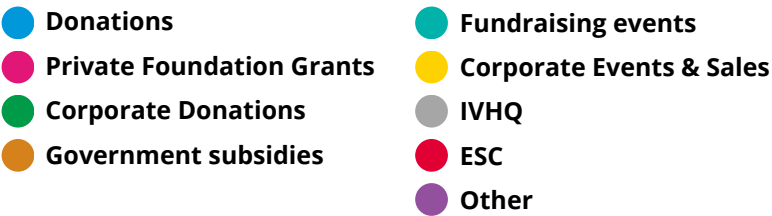
In conclusion, we have been incredibly fortunate to receive extensive support from Toyota Motor Europe (TME), Toyota Insurance Services (TIS), Toyota Mobility Foundation (TMF), and Toyota Belgium (TBEL). Their contributions have included financial support, donations in kind, vehicle loans, the donation of an electric van, its insurance, its maintenance, and corporate volunteering contracts. This collaboration with Toyota-related companies and foundations truly exemplifies the brand's motto of "delivering happiness to all people." It is clear that these words are backed by meaningful actions. Their unwavering support has significantly enhanced our ability to serve the community and make a positive impact. Our Toyota partners have our heartfelt gratitude for living up to their promise and helping us deliver happiness to those in need.



Financial Report

Revenues

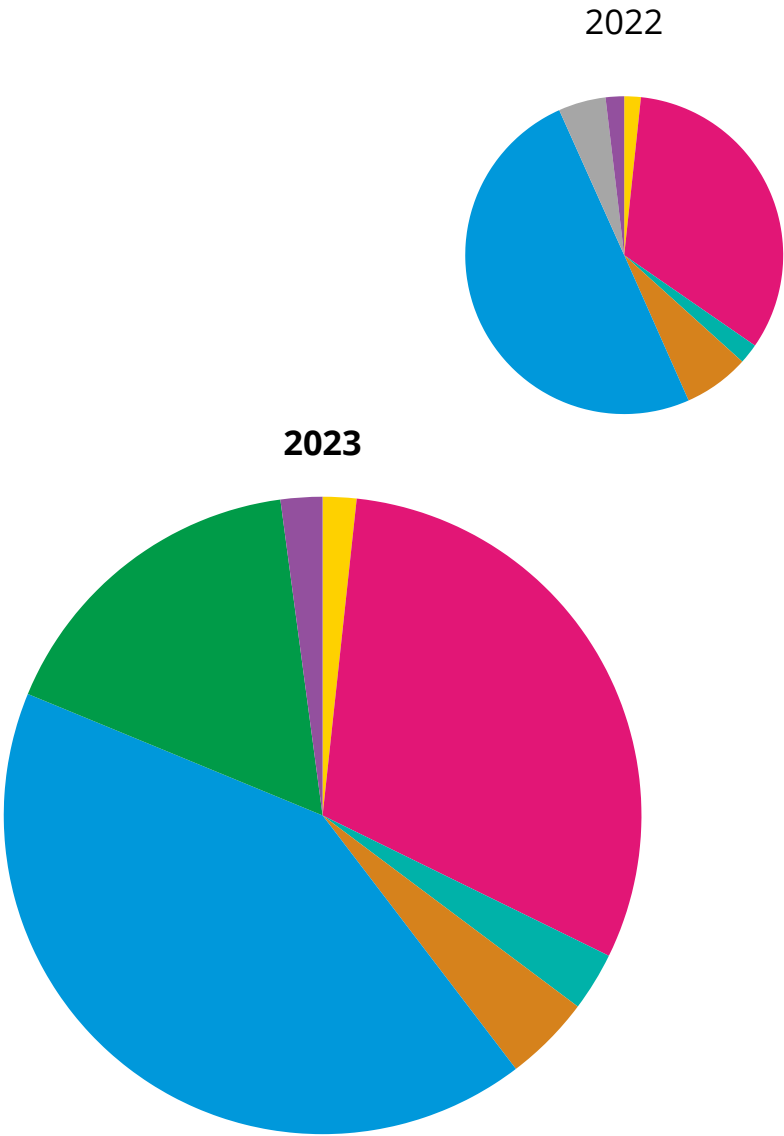
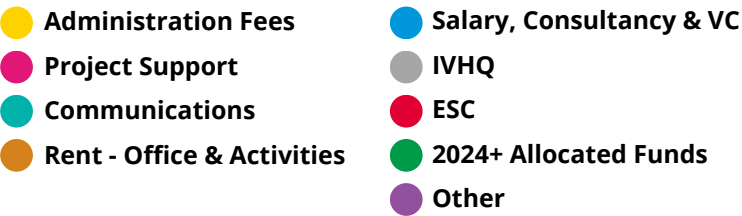
	2023	2022	2022 vs 2023
Donations	76,531.28	112,853.40	-32%
Private Foundation Grants	112,566.73	25,413.10	343%
Corporate Donations	155,003.30	23,588.61	558%
Government subsidies	45,162.82	28,000.00	61%
Fundraising events	27,091.40	18,299.51	48%
Corporate Events & Sales	227,671.53	123,391.71	85%
IVHQ		52,817.15	
ESC	37,538.40		
Other	12,733.17	10,730.12	19%
Total	694,298.63	395.093.60	76%



Financial Report

Expenditure

	2023	2022	2022 vs 2023
Administration Fees	9,798.54	5,993.95	64%
Project Support	175,191.25	117,302.90	49%
Communications	17,065.12	7,294.30	134%
Rent - Office & Activities	25,224.84	23,799.55	6%
Salary, Consultancy & Volunteer Compensation	238,518.48	177,771.05	34%
IVHQ		17,173.21	
2024+ Allocated Funds	95,545.13		
Other	12,134.40	6,689.19	81%
Total	573,477.76	356,024.15	61%



Governance

In 2023 the board of directors worked with the executive team to crystallise a vision for where we want to be by 2030, Belgium's 200th anniversary. One of our projects for 2024 will be fleshing out a strategy for achieving that vision.

We were also thrilled to welcome two new members to the board – Alison Accarie (Treasurer) and Laura Jouveaneau (Secretary). Johan Bennett stepped down from the board and joined our General Assembly.

Laura and Alison spent their early months getting up to speed with governance procedures and protocol at Serve the City Belgium. Alison has taken on budget and accounting oversight, while Laura has been using her legal experience to review insurance and volunteer safety—as well as generally keeping us organised.

STC Belgium

Board



Samuel Ray
Board Chair



Laura Jouveaneau
Secretary



Alison Accarie
Treasurer



Carlton Deal
Founder

Executive Team



Nathan Torrini
Executive Director



Marie Bennett
Director of Human Resources



Jeremie Malengreaux
Director of Finances, Technology and Innovation

Operations Team



Joanna Lane
Office & Administrative Assistant



Anna Gheysen
Volunteer Manager & Project Coordinator



Wiktoria Cacace
Logistics & Event Support Coordinator



Gema Suárez
Corporate Relations & External Communications Manager

Interns & volunteers

Bertor Haramategeko
Catherine Mallet
Ibrahima Barry
Ilaria Cusato
Joseph Deliyanakis
Leila Zitouni
Ludovica Bigoni
Neeshma Shibu
Nicolò Cauli
Cathy Indenge

How STC works



Looking Forward

Short-Term Goals

- Launch new unified website for Serve the City Belgium.
- Launch ServeNow with multi-lingual support, web support, reimagined filters and more.
- Consolidate the partnerships in place, including food distribution partners, to improve the communication, the logistic flows and better answer the current needs in the city.
- Focus on city growth outside of Brussels, amongst others by allocating more staff resources to the development of partnerships, recurring volunteering opportunities and building volunteer communities.
- Prioritise care and curriculum development for our project leaders and volunteers.
- Find a new space to host our operations



Mid-Term Goals

- Open a Volunteer Community Centre, which envisions a multifaceted facility that seamlessly integrates our offices, dedicated project spaces and extensive storage facilities. This innovative space will not only cater to our growing team but also foster collaborations with partner NGOs, providing a diverse range of services to our beneficiaries and the community.
- Develop and grow the Belgian Serve the City network, including STC Brussels, STC Leuven and STC Wavre, to increase our range of action into the whole of Belgium.
- Further raise awareness about volunteering, through our volunteering events (Big Volunteer Days and Big Volunteer Week), public speaking events, and partnerships to create a strong, diversified and unified volunteering community.
- Train and extend our network of project leaders.
- Increase our search for subsidies and stable funding opportunities.
- Resume and further develop our environmental and sustainable projects, including looking at ways we can make some of our projects more environmentally friendly.
- Brainstorm and develop programs to foster our goal of everyone serving and lever the power of volunteering to ignite a self-transformation journey.

Long-Term Goals

- Generate recognition and acknowledgement of the societal value of volunteering and how crucial it is for the well-being of our society.
- Underpin Serve the City Belgium as a well-established and resilient structure, with stable funding sources, capable of responding quickly and efficiently to the needs of vulnerable people in the whole of Belgium.
- Facilitate a well-trained community of volunteers and project leaders, who understand the needs of those we serve and who can respond to these needs in an efficient and kind manner.
- Redesign all our projects to be 100% sustainable and environmentally friendly.
- Continue to live out our values while serving people in need, to inspire individuals to make a difference and spread kindness, transform entire neighbourhoods through volunteering, and build bridges between groups of people.
- Develop a sustainable network of 5 Serve the Cities in Belgium, with recurring volunteer opportunities, stable and sufficient income streams, and stable core teams (5S vision).

