



Annual Report 2024



Serve the City ABSL

227-229 Avenue de la Couronne, USquare, Building D
1050 Brussels
Belgium

02/734 35 02
hello@servethecity.be
www.servethecity.be

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Foreword

Resilience in Action

As we look back on 2024, we are overwhelmed by challenges we faced, triumphs we celebrated, and the unwavering spirit that carried our community forward. It was a year marked by both extraordinary growth and urgent need. With 1,428 regular volunteers and 1,697 corporate volunteers, all stepping forward to support our mission, Serve the City Brussels found itself at a crossroads—our small team was tasked with coordinating more than ever before, and our capacity to respond was stretched thin. But even in the face of growing demands, the heart of our work remained focused on community, on building connections, and on offering hope where it's needed most.

The refugee crisis across Belgium deepened in 2024, exacerbating the suffering of thousands. Asylum seekers, many of whom arrive with nothing but their hope for a better future, continue to face a harsh reality. The Belgian government has neglected to address the welcoming of asylum seekers, leaving vulnerable men, women, and children with little support. In Brussels, this situation has pushed many to the streets, amplifying the urgency of our response.

Every day, we witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by those seeking asylum, as well as the lack of adequate political will to resolve the crisis.

Together with the Humanitarian Hub and other non-profit organisations, we found ourselves stepping in where the system falls short—offering not just food and care, but a sense of human dignity that was otherwise missing. But our work isn't just about meeting immediate needs; it's about restoring humanity.

We found ourselves stepping in where the system falls short—offering not just food and care, but a sense of human dignity.

Despite these tough circumstances, I am so proud of what was accomplished in 2024 by our Serve the City volunteers, leaders, and coordination team. The year

brought some incredible initiatives that reminded us of the power of human connection. One such initiative was our football program in Wavre, where asylum seekers, refugees, and local volunteers came together on the field. This simple act of playing football not only promoted inclusion but also bridged cultural divides, fostering a sense of belonging for those who often feel like outsiders.

Another standout project was our collaboration with TADA, where young volunteers from our Street Kindness program joined forces to distribute food and engage in meaningful conversations with homeless people. These moments of genuine connection reaffirmed that even amidst hardship, small acts of kindness can create lasting change. They reminded us that it's not just about providing physical support, but about building communities where people are seen, heard, and valued.

We also faced a monumental change ourselves—our move to Usquare in October. This was a huge step in our growth as an organisation, but it came with its own set of challenges, particularly with our

already packed schedule. Yet, despite the chaos of this transition, I couldn't be more proud of how our team adapted and pushed forward.

As we step into 2025, we do so with a deep sense of purpose and a renewed commitment to the communities we serve. While the challenges are great, the resilience we see every day in our volunteers, partners, and the people we serve reminds us that together, we can create a future where compassion, understanding, and solidarity are at the forefront of everything we do.



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink.

Nathan Torrini
Executive Director



2024 Highlights

We mobilised a total of



3,125

regular and corporate
volunteers

who dedicated



32,969

hours to help

at



41

projects in Brussels,
Leuven & Wavre

Our activities targeted **6** Sustainable Development Goals



We collaborated with



40

companies for corporate
volunteering events

We cooked



280,379

meals, most of which were done
with Community Kitchen

We gave



862 hours

of tutoring & classes
to children and adults

We made



9,552

care bags containing food and
hygiene products for the
homeless

We directly distributed



118,045

of the meals at our Food
Outreach projects

We released



ServeNow 3.0

including a new web app

Volunteering to Build Community

All Over Belgium

Football matches in Wavre

In 2024, one of Serve the City Wavre's standout initiatives was a vibrant football project created in partnership with BelRefugees. More than just a game, it offered residents of temporary housing a safe space for connection, joy, and belonging. Over five lively events throughout the year, 100 to 120 participants—beneficiaries of BelRefugees' programs—joined in friendly matches that promoted teamwork, physical activity, and lasting social bonds.

Behind the scenes, 41 dedicated volunteers made it all happen, stepping in as players, referees, organisers, and drivers. Their tireless support ensured smooth coordination and helped remove barriers to participation.

But the real magic happened after the final whistle. Players, volunteers, and spectators gathered to share snacks and stories, transforming the pitch into a space of genuine community and trust. Through sport, Serve the City Wavre helped strengthen community cohesion—one meaningful match at a time.



Sitting lunch at Le Phare

Le Phare is one of Serve the City Brussels' longest-running projects in collaboration with the Salvation Army. More than just a meal service, it has become a space where genuine community flourishes. The Tuesday sit-down distribution, in particular, has played a vital role in building relationships based on dignity, respect, and shared experience.

During the COVID pandemic, the project shifted to a take-away format, which, while necessary, limited opportunities for connection. Reinstating the sit-down meals in 2024 was a milestone—each week, around 100 beneficiaries now gather not just to eat, but to be seen, heard, and welcomed. Volunteers, many of whom have served for years, create a warm, inclusive atmosphere where trust and friendships grow.

While the distribution remains take-away on Fridays, volunteers take pride in preparing beautifully packed meals, drinks, and snacks. Through these efforts, Le Phare provides more than nourishment—it builds lasting relationships and a deep sense of belonging for all involved.

Street Kindness with youth

Street Kindness has become a cornerstone project of Serve the City Brussels, evolving from an occasional initiative into a weekly outreach taking place every Saturday. This consistency has transformed the project into a vital bridge between volunteers and the homeless community, fostering dignity and human connection through simple yet meaningful acts—sharing food, drinks, and essential items. Volunteers are encouraged to engage in conversations during these distributions, creating a space where both they and the beneficiaries feel seen, heard, and valued.

In 2024, Street Kindness deepened its community impact through two exciting collaborations. One was with TADA, an organisation supporting youth from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. On four Saturdays, around 25 TADA students participated in distributions, preparing and handing out lunch bags alongside Serve the City volunteers. This partnership has been transformational, offering youth firsthand experience in compassion, responsibility, and social engagement.

Another significant partnership was with the International German School of Brussels. Recognising the value of the project, the school integrated Street Kindness into its 2024/2025 curriculum, involving all 5th to 9th graders. Ten classes of around 20 students each now participate annually. The school further supports the initiative by funding lunch bags and purchasing trolleys and vests. This collaboration not only enriches students' education but also nurtures a future rooted in empathy and civic responsibility.



What Has Been Done

Brussels

Our highlight

Move to Usquare with UPS's support

One of the biggest changes of the year was our much-needed office relocation. Our team had grown so much that we were bursting at the seams, sometimes even sharing a desk between 3 people! In October 2024, we moved into a new, larger space within the Usquare complex. This move not only provides us with more office space but also places us within a vibrant community of NGOs, small businesses, arts organisations, and the VUB and ULB. Usquare is a creative, sustainable, and innovative hub that places community at the core of its operations, and we're excited to be part of it.

Despite the temporary disruption, the move was impressively completed in just three days, thanks to the amazing support of our volunteers. They came in full force to help with packing, moving, and cleaning, ensuring everything went smoothly. A huge thank you to UPS for providing two trucks and drivers to help us transport everything from our old office and

storage spaces. We also want to thank De Maalbeek for lending us part of their storage space near Place Van Meyel, which was crucial during 2024.

The decision to move came after months of research, as the need for a bigger space became increasingly urgent in early 2024. Our new office now has room for all our materials, volunteers, and interns, and Serve the City International has a dedicated office in the space. We're excited about the opportunities this move will bring and look forward to continuing to grow and collaborate within the vibrant Usquare community.

Our challenge

Facing a growing base of volunteers and beneficiaries

In 2024, Serve the City Brussels experienced a significant increase in both volunteer engagement and demand for humanitarian support. With 1,428 regular volunteers and 1,697 corporate volunteers participating throughout the year, our small staff

team faced mounting coordination challenges. At the same time, the growing number of beneficiaries—particularly those affected by the worsening asylum crisis—placed even greater pressure on our emergency response efforts. Despite the clear urgency, there remains a troubling lack of political will to address the refugee situation, leaving grassroots organisations like ours to fill critical gaps.

The launch of a collaboration with the new Red Cross Center, Belliard, in May 2024 introduced additional responsibilities, including cooking, driving, and coordinating distribution shifts, stretching our resources further. Meanwhile, other major projects, such as the distributions at the HUB, have reached a stable yet intense level of activity, keeping us in a constant state of emergency. This combination of rising need and limited capacity underscores the ongoing challenges we face in responding with humanity and efficiency amidst a deepening crisis.

Project highlights

Hama 4

Hama 4 is a renewed Serve the City project, now led by Victoria—also a leader of Lunch 4 All. Every Wednesday afternoon, volunteers visit the Hama 4 centre, a vibrant home for older people with intellectual disabilities. Welcomed by both residents and staff, volunteers offer something special: friendship and connection beyond the daily routine. While the centre is full of activity and care, some residents no longer have family visits, making these weekly encounters something to look forward to. Volunteers walk with them, share stories, play games, or simply enjoy each other's company. These moments bring joy, variety, and a sense of being seen and valued.

Hama 4 isn't only about addressing loneliness, but about building relationships and celebrating each person's unique presence. In a world that often moves too fast, this project offers a chance to slow down, connect, and remind each other that friendship and presence matter.



Victor du Pré

Victor du Pré is another Serve the City Brussels project that has seen periods of pause and revival—but now, it's finding renewed strength. A pillar of the project since 2013, Erbin now shares leadership with Leila, a passionate former Serve the City intern. Together, they bring new energy and vision to this meaningful initiative.

Victor du Pré is a shelter for women, including mothers with children, who are facing precarious situations, often as a result of abuse. Once a month, Serve the City volunteers visit to organise joyful, engaging activities for the children. While the kids play, laugh, and connect, their mothers are given a rare and precious gift: time—whether to rest, breathe, or enjoy a peaceful moment. With a more regular rhythm of volunteering now in place, the project is becoming a reliable source of light and support for women rebuilding their lives, one moment of care and connection at a time.

What Has Been Done

Leuven

Our highlight

First project leader training

On March 12, Serve the City held its first-ever official project leader training in Leuven, marking an exciting step forward in expanding our presence in the city. With nine enthusiastic participants, the training aimed to grow our base of local project leaders—an essential step towards launching regular volunteer projects.

It was inspiring to see members of the Serve the City community come together, united by a shared vision of service and connection. The session provided them with tools and insights for leading projects, as well as a space for meaningful discussion about how to develop and grow the movement in Leuven.

This milestone event signals the beginning of something promising: a more structured, consistent presence in Leuven, built on strong local leadership. We look forward to seeing the energy from this training spark future initiatives in the city.



Our challenge

Becoming a 'sustainable city'

As Serve the City looks to grow in Leuven, we're working toward reaching the 'sustainable city' stage—developing regular, impactful projects supported

by a local network of volunteers. Leuven already has a well-established ecosystem of volunteer organisations, which presents both opportunities and challenges. One key difficulty has been identifying unmet needs where our volunteers can make a meaningful contribution, while also complementing, rather than duplicating, the efforts of existing initiatives.

Another challenge lies in finding local volunteers willing to take the next step—moving from occasional participation to leading and sustaining regular projects. Without a strong local leadership base, managing and coordinating activities remotely from Brussels has also proved difficult.

Despite these challenges, we remain committed to building a Serve the City presence in Leuven that is collaborative, community-driven, and responsive to real needs. Our recent training is a hopeful first step in laying the groundwork for long-term impact in the city.

Project highlights

Buren Zonder Grenzen

In Leuven, one of our key partnerships in 2024 has been with Buren Zonder Grenzen, an organisation dedicated to supporting people in need through the distribution of essential goods. Serve the City volunteers helped to sort through a steady stream of donated items. While the bulk of donations included furniture, volunteers also handled toys, household items, and other essentials.

These behind-the-scenes efforts played an important role in ensuring that donations were quickly and efficiently organised for distribution to individuals and families in need. The partnership not only gave our volunteers a tangible way to contribute, but also allowed us to support the work of a trusted local organisation already deeply rooted in the community.

This collaboration reflects our broader goal in Leuven: to engage in meaningful service while building bridges with existing networks—amplifying collective impact through practical support.

Vluchtelingenhuis Leuven

In 2024, Serve the City began a new partnership with Vluchtelingenhuis Leuven, a home that provides temporary accommodation for refugees as they transition to more stable housing. Our volunteers have already contributed by cleaning up the garden and supporting the upkeep of the house.

This partnership has allowed us to offer meaningful, practical help to a small group of refugees, providing them with a welcoming environment during their stay. By engaging directly with the residents and improving their living conditions, our volunteers have been able to make a positive impact, even in small but meaningful ways.

As we continue to build relationships with local organisations like Vluchtelingenhuis Leuven, we remain committed to supporting refugees and helping them feel a sense of belonging during their transition. This collaboration is another step toward building a sustainable network of support for those in need in Leuven.



What Has Been Done

Wavre

Our highlight

First volunteer barbecue

In August 2024, Serve the City Wavre hosted its first-ever Volunteer BBQ, bringing together 20-25 participants for an afternoon of food, fun, and community. This event provided an opportunity for volunteers to relax, connect, and celebrate the work they've done throughout the year.

The BBQ not only allowed participants to enjoy a well-deserved break but also fostered a sense of camaraderie and appreciation within the Serve the City Wavre team. It was a chance to reflect on past projects, share experiences, and strengthen bonds within the local volunteer community.

This successful event marks a positive step in building a strong, engaged network of volunteers in Wavre, and we look forward to making it an annual tradition to further cultivate a spirit of unity and appreciation for those who join us.

Our challenge

Recruiting new volunteers

One of the ongoing challenges for Serve the City Wavre is recruiting new volunteers. While the project has strong ties to the Bierges church, it can be difficult to attract individuals outside of this existing community. The need for broader outreach and more diverse volunteer involvement is becoming increasingly apparent.

To address this, there is a clear need for a dedicated leader who can focus on volunteer recruitment and engagement. By developing targeted strategies to reach new people and encourage wider participation, Serve the City Wavre hopes to build a more sustainable and inclusive volunteer base. This will be essential in ensuring that the projects continue to grow and have a lasting impact on the community.



Project highlights

Point du Jour

Another successful and regular project in Wavre is the social activities organised with the residents of La Cloisière, managed by Point du Jour in Bierges. In 2024, 41 volunteers participated in four events, spending quality time with the residents.

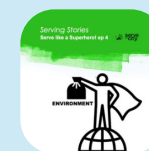
The volunteers engaged in various activities, including playing board games and sharing moments of fun and laughter, creating a warm and inclusive atmosphere. These interactions have helped foster a sense of community and connection, enriching the lives of the residents while strengthening the bonds between volunteers and those they serve.

This ongoing collaboration highlights the importance of creating spaces for social engagement and is a valuable addition to Serve the City Wavre's regular projects.



Aer Aqua Terra

Serve the City volunteers continue to support Aer Aqua Terra in their mission to clean the River Dyle. This initiative not only helps preserve the local environment but also strengthens community ties by bringing people together for a common cause. Through regular clean-up efforts, volunteers actively contribute to maintaining the beauty of the river while fostering a sense of shared responsibility for the environment. This ongoing collaboration is an important part of Serve the City's commitment to both environmental sustainability and community engagement.



Hear more about this project on **Serving Stories!**

<https://www.servingstories.net/2024/12/05/environment-clean-up-city/>

What's Been Done

Events

Second-hand English Book Sale

Serve the City's second-hand English Book Sale takes place four times a year—twice at Vineyard Church Brussels and twice at the Stonemanor British Store. We are thankful for the ongoing support from UPS, who generously stores our books and handles the logistics of transporting them to and from the venues. We also appreciate the 112 volunteers who gave their time to support the events, contributing to their success and ensuring everything ran smoothly.

Altogether, the sales raised an impressive €22,931—equivalent to 220 meters of books sold. This year marked our highest total ever, with one sale alone raising over €7,800.

20km of Brussels

Serve the City had a strong presence at the 20km of Brussels. Once again, a team of five participants competed in the handisport category. In total, 26 Serve the City runners joined the event,



alongside 145 Toyota Motor Europe runners.

This was the second year Serve the City had its own tent, thanks to the generous support of TME. The event was not only a fun and active way to engage with the community but also a successful fundraising opportunity. TME raised over €1,000, contributing to the continued growth and impact of Serve the City's initiatives.

Barbecues in Brussels & Wavre

Serve the City organised two summer barbecue parties to celebrate our achievements with our volunteer community in Brussels and in Wavre.

The Brussels barbecue saw over 100 people in attendance, coming together to enjoy good food, conversation, and celebrate the year's successes. In Wavre, more than 20 volunteers joined the gathering, creating a smaller but equally meaningful occasion to reflect on the impact of their efforts.

Project Leader training

In 2024, Serve the City invested significantly in strengthening its leadership support by organising two Project Leader training sessions in Brussels and one in Leuven. The Brussels sessions, which gathered 15 participants, went beyond core values to tackle city-specific challenges such as burnout among volunteer leaders, legal responsibilities, and even the fight against human trafficking. These additions reflected a growing awareness of the complex realities Project Leaders face in an urban context. Meanwhile, Leuven hosted its first, more general training for nine participants, offering a solid foundational experience.

Another notable highlight was the first-ever 'Achievement Time' held on June 15, where 16 Project Leaders came together to celebrate milestones, share experiences, and set future goals in a collaborative environment. Two thematic workshops also enriched the year: one on asylum seeking in Belgium, held on May 15 with L'Olivier and attended by about 25 people, and another on

September 17 addressing trauma behaviour in children, led by psychologist Anky De Frangh and attended by 20 participants.

Serve the City also emphasised ongoing support through regular check-ups and strategy meetings with Project Leaders, fostering a sense of collaboration, recognition, and shared ownership of each project's direction and impact. This holistic approach reflects our commitment to sustainable and responsive leadership development.

Volunteer celebrations & concert

Serve the City organised two volunteer celebrations in Brussels to honour and thank our dedicated community. The first event, held in March, welcomed over 70 participants, while the second, in December, saw more than 160 attendees.

The December celebration was particularly successful, featuring a live concert by 'Thomas Gar the Band', which added an exciting element to the evening. This event also served as a housewarming



party, marking Serve the City's move to our new office at USquare.

Pub quiz

Serve the City organised three pub quizzes at the Black Sheep in Flagey to raise funds for our projects, and the events were a great success.

Over 60 teams participated and €3,525 were raised to support our ongoing initiatives.

International Highlights

European Forum in Berlin

Serve the City Belgium had the opportunity to participate in the Serve the City European Forum 2025 in Berlin, an enriching experience for our team. The event provided a fantastic opportunity to connect or reconnect with city leaders and volunteers from 29 different cities.

In addition to 'building bridges', the main theme of the forum, two other important topics were prominently featured: human trafficking and climate action. Two external speakers led highly insightful sessions on these issues, providing valuable perspectives and deepening our understanding of these critical challenges.

The forum was a catalyst for the city exchanges that have developed since. Six members of our team in Brussels, along with one representative from Wavre and one from Leuven, attended. They all left motivated and inspired to strengthen our local efforts and expand our international connections.



ServeNow for emergency response in Spain

Following the devastating floods in the Valencia region of Spain, the ServeNow team—led by Jeremie Malengreaux and supported by the Toyota Mobility Foundation—worked tirelessly to deliver a dedicated Spanish-language version of the app. This emergency-ready version featured a simplified setup, compliance with local regulations, and enhanced capacity to manage a massive influx of volunteers. The enhanced version also introduced better cache management and gave project leaders and managers greater autonomy.

Although the app wasn't deployed during the floods—as the crisis had ended by the time updates were completed—the effort was far from wasted. The process significantly strengthened our ability to respond to future emergencies with greater speed and efficiency. These improvements have since been integrated into the core ServeNow platform, making it more robust and better equipped to mobilise volunteers on the ground during future crises.

ServeNow

Release of 3.0

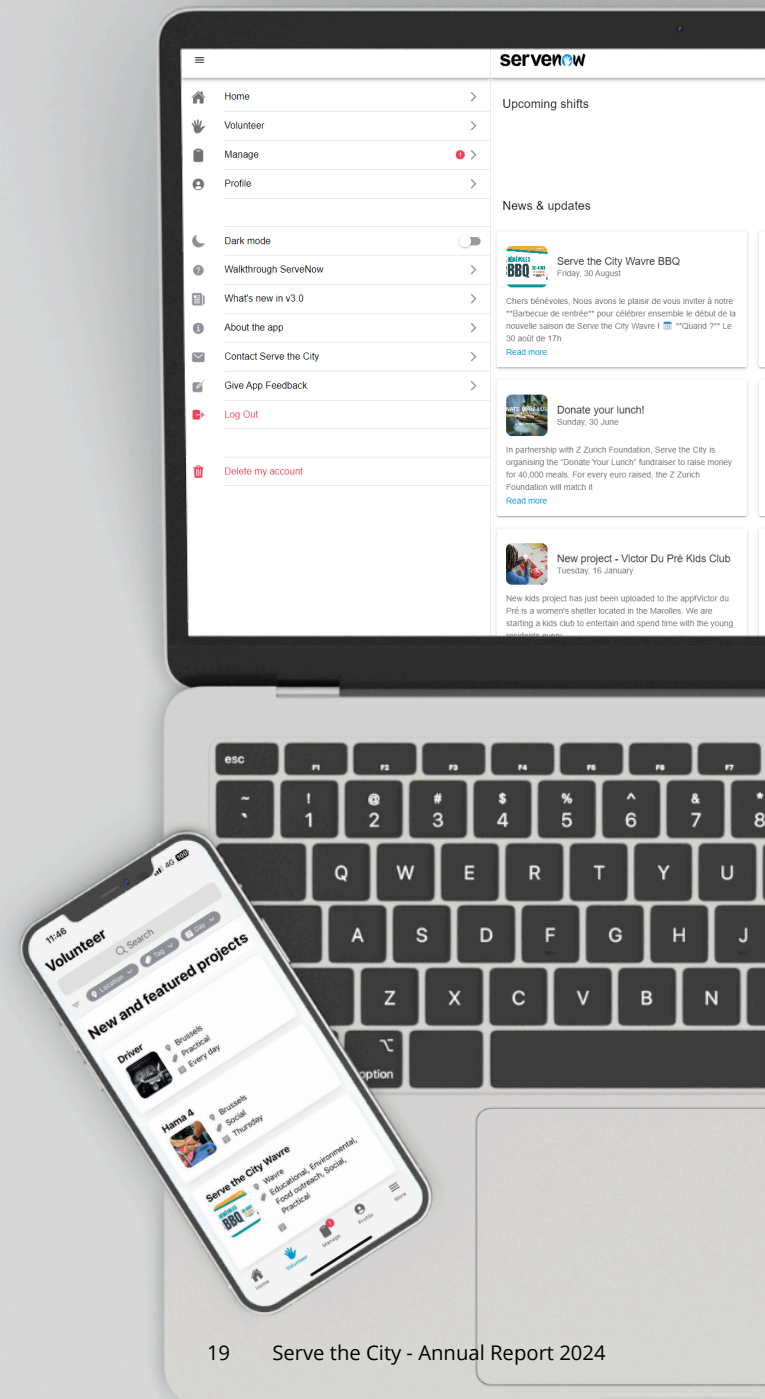
ServeNow version 3.0 was released with a host of significant improvements and new features, marking one of the most important updates of the app. One of the key additions is the web app, which was introduced in response to feedback from many volunteers who wanted no-phone access to the platform. In addition, version 3.0 became the first to allow users to filter projects by city, tags, and days, making it easier to find relevant opportunities.

A major highlight of this release is the complete rewrite of the app's API, which was rebuilt from scratch using new technology. This overhaul resulted in better performance, improved scalability, and the ability to handle a growing user base. Additionally, the Salesforce package was reworked, and significant improvements were made to the backend to ensure stability and efficiency.

This update was made possible through the support of the Toyota Mobility Foundation and the National Bank of Belgium, who enabled us to work with professional companies to implement these complex changes. The release of version 3.0 was crucial in

in laying the foundation for future updates, specifically enabling ServeNow to support multiple languages in its system. This version served as a bridge to ServeNow 4.0, which was launched in January 2025 and could finally offer multilingual capabilities for users around the world.

While version 3.0 brought many exciting new features, it also focused heavily on improving the app's speed, stability, and bug fixes. The updates made the platform more reliable and user-friendly, which is essential for managing volunteers during critical moments. With these enhancements, ServeNow is better equipped to support a larger, more diverse user base and respond effectively to future crises, offering a more accessible and efficient platform for volunteers worldwide.



Corporate Support

Empowered by Collaboration

In 2024, Serve the City strengthened its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) collaborations, expanding our impact through meaningful actions. These partnerships brought vital resources and reinforced a shared commitment to dignity, inclusion, and collective care.

Forty companies partnered with us, engaging volunteers in 92 hands-on activities supporting our mission to make cities more compassionate. Two new initiatives—Treats 4 the Streets and Lunch Bags—offered teams the chance to prepare fresh meals for people experiencing homelessness.

Among our most notable contributors, UPS and Toyota Motor Europe stood out for their exceptional volunteer engagement. UPS provided volunteer drivers and trucks for our office move and second-hand book sales, and hosted a volunteer day where 32 employees prepared 300 fruit salads. Toyota not only offered financial support but also mobilised the most employee volunteers and donated hundreds of quality t-shirts distributed through our outreach projects.

Trane Technologies, the Z Zurich Foundation, and the National Bank of Belgium made a strong impact through financial and campaign-driven contributions. Trane donated €45,000 for food outreach and children's education, and mobilised 49 employees to prepare 1,375 lunch bags. Z Zurich's Donate Your Lunch campaign raised €50,000—matched by the foundation—while the National Bank's Essential Care Bags campaign contributed €8,000, also matched. These contributions supported both material needs and project operations.

Other companies also stepped up: Caterpillar donated clothes, and Pfizer provided non-perishable food used in our meal programs.

Most volunteers mobilised: TME

Our partnership with Toyota Motor Europe grew stronger in 2024, solidifying their role as one of Serve the City's main supporters. Their commitment enabled 34 activities with TME groups, involving 357 volunteers who prepared 11,166 bags, distributed 17,704 meals, and served 850 fruit salads—positively

impacting hundreds of vulnerable neighbours across Brussels.

TME also continued its collaboration through the Best Retailer in Town programme. Six activities brought together 491 volunteers from four countries to assemble 2,268 care bags.

Biggest event: EGG

One of the biggest activity of the year was our exciting collaboration with the event company EGG, bringing together 180 participants for a large-scale volunteer initiative. Held in the Jardin d'Hospice in Saint Catherine, this impressive gathering focused on creating impact in just a few hours—assembling 500 care bags, 500 lunch bags, and preparing 500 fruit salads.

It was a titanic operation that required the full mobilisation of the Serve the City team and the use of our vans to ensure smooth logistics. The items prepared during the event were distributed to three partner organisations.



40

Companies



92

Events organised



24,045

Lunch and care
bags packed



1,697

Corporate volunteers
mobilised



14,681

Meals served



3,450.5

Volunteering hours
completed



Financial Report

Many Small Donations Make a Big Difference

2024 was a year of growth, consolidation, and significant investment for Serve the City. Our overall income rose, in part due to increased program activity, but this was accompanied by higher operational costs. A regional subsidy via the Humanitarian Hub, primarily allocated for Community Kitchen, was administered through our organisation to support joint initiatives. Additionally, we started Services to Nonprofits—again, largely in support of Community Kitchen—and assumed responsibility for delivering meals to the Red Cross center, Belliard, along with managing other logistics. While both streams increased our revenue, they also brought considerable financial commitments.



Support from individual donors remained a vital source of strength in 2024 and was even more significant than shown in direct donation figures. Many generous contributions came through campaign-driven initiatives—such as Donate Your Lunch—recorded under fundraising events. Thanks to their commitment, we expanded our efforts and successfully launched two impactful matching campaigns: Donate Your Lunch with the Z Zurich Foundation and Essential Care Bags with the National Bank of Belgium.

While we did not receive new European Solidarity Corps (ESC) funding in 2024, the program remains active and valuable, and we submitted applications to extend its support. Notably, for the first time, we started the year with allocated funds, primarily used to sustain ESC and support the development of ServeNow, our digital volunteer engagement platform.

Significant investment in ServeNow, thanks to the support of the Toyota Mobility Foundation and the National Bank of Belgium, temporarily increased our

Project Support expenses. These costs are expected to normalise in 2025. However, Project Support also grew as a result of the expansion of our nonprofit services and increased outreach to vulnerable groups, particularly through food-related initiatives.

Internally, 2024 marked a year of structural consolidation. After years of rapid growth, it became necessary to adjust staff responsibilities and salaries to match our expanded operations. Once again, we closed the year with a financial surplus. With 2025 expected to bring financial challenges and a continued need to strengthen our team, the surplus will likely be used to support sustainable operations. As our fixed costs increase, we are also exploring ways to grow our financial reserves.

Throughout the year, strong support from corporate partners—including Toyota Motor Europe, the Toyota Mobility Foundation, the Z Zurich Foundation, Trane Technologies, and the National Bank of Belgium—was instrumental in helping us deliver lasting impact across Brussels.

Donate Your Lunch

Serve the City's Donate Your Lunch campaign made a meaningful impact in 2024, raising €100,000—half from generous individual donors and half through a powerful matching contribution from the Z Zurich Foundation. The Foundation's commitment to doubling every euro donated significantly amplified the campaign's reach and effectiveness.

More than 400 individuals participated, many contributing modest amounts. Their involvement proved that small donations—when combined—can drive substantial change. Several companies also joined the effort, showing that impactful giving is accessible to all.

These donations supported Serve the City's core food outreach programmes—Lunch 4 All, Dinner 4 All, and our collaboration with Community Kitchen—providing consistent, nourishing meals for vulnerable people across Brussels. This campaign not only raised critical resources but also demonstrated the strength of community solidarity.

Essential Care Bags collection

The Essential Care Bags campaign, supported by the National Bank of Belgium (NBB), was a powerful demonstration of generosity and solidarity in 2024. Through a combination of employee donations and corporate matching, the initiative raised over €16,000—more than €8,000 contributed directly by staff and the rest matched by NBB to double the impact.

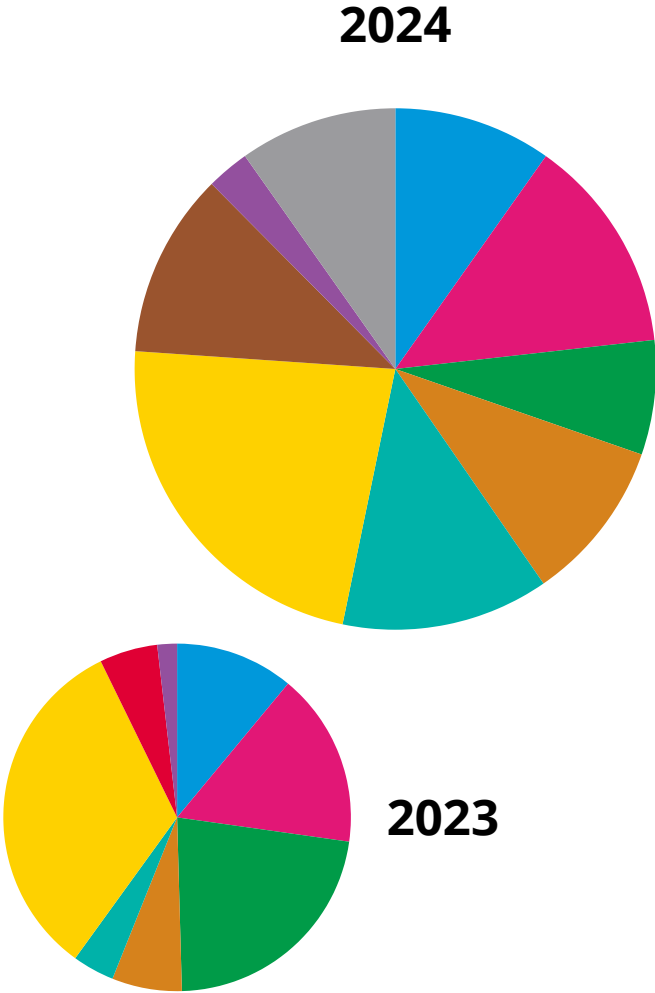
Employees were invited to contribute over several months, and in October, NBB hosted a full-day event at their premises to boost engagement. Drinks were sold during the event, with all proceeds added to the campaign total—highlighting the creative ways staff supported the cause. Over 100 NBB employees participated in the initiative.

The Essential Care Bags, filled with items of clothing such as shirts, socks, and underwear, were distributed to people experiencing homelessness during the colder months—providing comfort, dignity, and warmth when it was needed most.



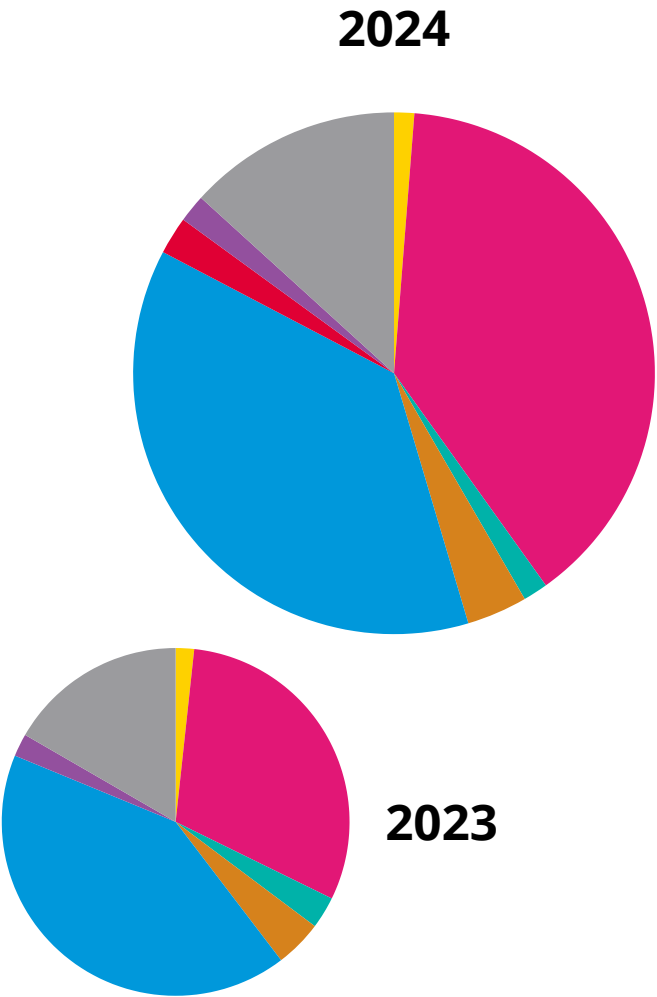
Income

	2024	2023	YoY
Individual Donations	95 663	76 531	+25.0 %
Private Foundations & Grants	181 016	172 567	+4.9 %
Corporate Donations	77 421	95 003	-18.5 %
Subsidies & Support	98 252	45 163	+117.6 %
Corporate Volunteering	223 020	218 453	+2.1 %
Services for NGOs & Other Sales	111 963	9 219	+1111.5 %
European Solidarity Corps	0	37 538	N.A.
Fundraising Events & Campaigns	67 491	27 091	+149 %
Other - Sub-rent, VAT returns	25 811	12 733	+102.7 %
Previous Year Allocated Funds	95 545	0	N.A.
Total	976 182	694 298	+40.6 %



Expenditure

	2024	2023	YoY
Administration	11 597	9 799	+18.3 %
Project Support	360 928	175 191	+106.0 %
Communications	14 246	17 065	-16.5 %
Rent - Offices and Activities	34 872	25 225	+38.2 %
Program Coordination & Staff	346 297	238 519	+45.2 %
European Solidarity Corps	21 688	0	N.A.
Other	15 958	12 134	+31.5 %
Next Year Allocated Funds	123 131	95 545	+28.9 %
Total	928 717	573 478	+62.2 %



Governance

With Greater Capacity...

European Solidarity Corps

2024 marked the first full year of Serve the City's participation in the European Solidarity Corps, following the grant's acceptance in 2023. We welcomed our first two long-term volunteers, who committed to 12 months of full-time service (28–30 hours per week), bringing fresh energy and enthusiasm to our team.

Lorenzo joined us in April as our Food Ambassador. His role focused on supporting Serve the City's food outreach projects, both in the field and behind the scenes. From logistics to direct support, Lorenzo has become an important link in our food-related initiatives.

Also arriving in April, Aguineth took on the role of Volunteer Ambassador. With a special focus on engaging and recruiting volunteers, she actively contributed to our communication efforts—especially through our social media channels—helping spread the word and spirit of volunteering.

Both volunteers have become deeply embedded in the day-to-day operations of STC and in the wider volunteer community. They've also taken part in various seminars organised by the Bureau International de Jeunesse (BIJ), further enriching their experience and development.

At the end of the year, we also confirmed a third ESC volunteer, Alice, who began her role as Education Ambassador in January 2025.

This first year has been a wonderful success, highlighting the value of international solidarity and the power of youth engagement in community service.



Read about **their experiences** at
<https://www.servethecity.brussels/stories/>

Article 60

In July 2024, Serve the City launched a new Article 60 contract in partnership with the Commune of Uccle and the CPAS, as part of a professional reintegration program. Through this initiative, we welcomed Gebregziabher to our logistics team—a valuable addition whose support has already made a significant impact on our daily operations.

The Article 60 contract provides individuals with opportunities to gain meaningful work experience and reintegrate into the workforce, while also supporting the mission of non-profit organisations like ours. The contract spans between 15 to 18 months, allowing ample time for skill development and contribution to the team.

This collaboration not only strengthens our logistics capacity but also reflects our ongoing commitment to social inclusion, empowerment, and solidarity. We are proud to play a role in creating pathways back into employment while furthering our community impact.

...Comes Greater Care

GA & Board

Serve the City's General Assembly and Board continued to play a key role in guiding the organisation's mission and growth in 2024. The Board—composed of Sam, Carlton, Alison, and Laura—provided strategic oversight and support throughout the year.

The General Assembly, made up of 20 to 25 dedicated members, gathered to reflect on important questions around governance, development, and the future direction of Serve the City. These meetings sparked valuable conversations about how to adapt to our growing volunteer base, strengthen our internal structures, and ensure long-term sustainability.

Together, the Board and Assembly remain essential pillars of our work, helping to uphold our values while steering Serve the City toward deeper impact in our communities.

Wemanity pro-bono training

In 2024, Serve the City began a meaningful collaboration with Wemanity to support the growth of our team and organisation. The partnership launched just before summer with two full-day workshops led by professional trainers, focusing on introspection, strategic planning, and team development. These sessions helped us define short-, mid-, and long-term objectives and prompted important conversations on how to grow as individuals and as a unified, impactful organisation.

This training marked more than a team-building effort—it launched an internal process of reflection on how we work, manage our time, and structure our teams, especially as we've grown rapidly in recent years. It encouraged us to rethink our internal organisation and lay the groundwork for more sustainable practices.

Aligned with this approach, we also initiated more regular check-ups and follow-ups with Project Leaders. These meetings allowed us to identify

challenges, co-develop action plans, and ensure leaders feel supported and heard. This shift brought a more strategic and collaborative dynamic to our leadership culture.

The Wemanity workshops were delivered pro bono, offering immense value to our development journey. As Marie put it, "It helped to define where we are and where we would like to go."



Looking Forward

Goals Accomplished

2024 has been a year of exciting progress and growth, with many significant goals achieved. While we are proud of what we've accomplished, it's also been a time of relentless work and focus, leaving little room to fully enjoy our successes.

- The groundwork for ServeNow's multilingual launch, set for January 2025, is now complete, along with the release of the ServeNow web version.
- We've expanded our projects beyond Brussels, particularly in Wavre.
- We have taken important steps to improve the support for our project leaders with regular check-ups and follow-ups.
- A new operational space at Usquare was found, providing us with a larger area where we could develop in-house projects and beginning our path toward becoming a Volunteer Community centre.
- Additionally, we've begun collaborating on new sustainable projects, such as the Aer Aqua Terra river cleaning initiative in Wavre.



Short-Term Goals

- Co-organise the STC International Forum in Brussels, celebrating Serve the City's 20th anniversary.
- Increase involvement in Usquare.
- Improve the organisation of our new location both for optimised office work and better project logistics and support.
- Restructure the team for future development.
- Launch the new website for unified communication.
- Expand the volunteer orientation through starting in-person sessions.
- Launch ServeNow multilingual for better inclusion of our diverse volunteers.
- Increase monthly donor base by 20%.

Mid-Term Goals

- Explore the possibility of creating a Volunteer Community Centre, which envisions a multifaceted facility that seamlessly integrates our offices, dedicated project spaces and extensive storage facilities.
- 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), public speaking events, and partnerships to create a strong, diversified and unified volunteering community.
- Train and extend our network of project leaders
- Increase our research for subsidies and stable funding opportunities.
- Continue to grow our monthly financial support.
- 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 wellbeing 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 more 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, to 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).

