A well known saying states that “business as usual” leads to rigidity and decline. In modern times innovation is a must. This wisdom is also applicable to Close the Gap.

More and more it became evident that the original business model of Close the Gap, over the years implemented very successfully, had to be reviewed and adapted to recent developments in Africa. The traditional formula of sending preowned high quality refurbished computers to developing and emerging countries to bridge the digital divide had to be extended with initiatives in the field of transfer of digital technologies in the largest sense of the word.

Two novel and significant developments were launched in 2017, namely the introduction of Close the Gap’s new strategy with the Leap2 Innovation Challenges and the launch of the unique Belgian Digital 4 Development platform (D4D-Be), after a public call for proposals awarded to Close the Gap and Agoria by the Belgian Development Cooperation.

In 2017, our team has also been investigating opportunities to invest and support. African tech entrepreneurs to further boost digital solutions at a scale-up stage of development. Close the Gap has been in contact with many innovative and promising entrepreneurs, who confirmed the need for impact investment in the nascent Tech industry in Africa. To be a professional impact investment player, Close the Gap will continue to reinforce its position and competences in the sector through partnerships. All this work, and initiatives, demonstrate the strengthening of Close the Gap’s position as a Digital 4 Development expert leveraging our network in the Private and Public/Non-Profit sector.

Further well-reflected and clearly oriented initiatives are envisaged for 2018 transforming the organisation into Close the Gap 3.0. In this context I can already mention the D4D-Be events, such as the Silicon Savannah Mission to Kenya in March 2018. And after the success of the first Leap2 event, the team of Close the Gap is also excited about the upcoming innovation challenges: Kenya in June/July 2018, Uganda in April/May 2018 and Nigeria in October/November 2018. In the beginning of 2018, three board members, Mr. Willem Lageweg, former Executive Director of MVO Nederland, Michel De Brauwer, Chairman of the Pietercil Group N.V, and Guido Vandervorst, Managing partner Innovation Deloitte Belgium, have decided to make their position available. I want to thank them for their long-lasting and much appreciated dedication. Their precious expertise and insight have contributed largely to the growth and prosperity of Close the Gap.

In terms of asset donations, Close the Gap received a record high of 118.996 assets, which is the highest number of donations ever received in Close the Gap’s existence. I consider this as a true success for ICT4Development.

Finally, as chairman of Close the Gap, I would like to express my sincere appreciation and thanks to all our sponsors and strategic partners, to our partners in Africa, to the members of the Board and last but not least also to all the committed members of our staff for their continued efforts to maximise the day-to-day activities of Close the Gap in Europe as well as in the developing and emerging countries where we are active.

Prof. em. Dr. Wim A. G. Blonk
Chairman of the Board
Close the Gap

Close the Gap has been successfully operating for 14 years following a steadily growing path with one and unique mission in mind: Bridging the digital divide in developing and emerging countries to make impact. Since 2004, we reached more than 3 million beneficiaries. This happened mainly thanks to our outstanding leadership team composed by its board members and executive management, the hundreds of reliable partners, clients and donors, and Close the Gap’s dedicated operational team.

As part of our DNA, Close the Gap is continuously looking to improve its impact. We are therefore working on the following new approaches:

1. Close the Gap Hubs in Africa: To emphasize its impact, Close the Gap wants to concentrate its activities in Africa (where the impact actually happens). This implies an increased presence in Africa taking the form of local social enterprise (for-profit) hubs (that include collecting end-of-use ICT material, refurbishing, distribution, e-waste management activities, etc.)

2. Access to Impact Investment: Close the Gap is committed to support starting African Tech Entrepreneurs solving societal issues, through improving the access to impact first investments. Months of intense research have confirmed real market needs to financially support early-stage scale-ups in Tech 4 Development. Close the Gap will develop further competences, expertise and credentials in Impact Investing in Africa. We are in discussion with renowned Fund Managers for potential collaboration and identifying the most adapted way forward.

Close the Gap will continue to focus on its core activities of refurbishing and distributing pre-owned high quality ICT material, as well as on the many new and diversified initiatives, such as the implementation of Digitrucks, the Leap2 Innovation Challenges, the access to Impact Investment Strategy referring to existing initiatives and coordinating the D4D-Be platform (Kindling.be). All contributing to make an impact that matters, aligned within Close the Gap’s purpose. More than ever, we believe that access to digital solutions is a key enabler for people in developing and emerging countries to improve their lives and realize their full potential.

Olivier Vanden Eynde
Founder & Managing Director
Close the Gap
2013/2
The Close the Gap Foundation is launched to support initiatives in sustainably bridging the digital divide.

2013/1
President Obama visits a Close the Gap computer lab at the Desmond Tutu HIV Foundation in South Africa.

2012/2
Desmond Tutu refurbishes Close the Gap’s 250,000th computer asset.

2012/1
Close the Gap formally launches NGO spin-off WorldLoop to provide sustainable e-waste recycling solutions in Africa.

2009
Launch of Close the Gap’s PC Solidarity programme to bridge the digital divide in Belgium in the presence of King Philippe of Belgium (at the time Prince).

2008
Close the Gap formalises local Service Partner programme to support beneficiary projects with IT installation, maintenance and training.

2007*
Close the Gap celebrates its 50,000th donated computer asset in the presence of Archbishop em. Desmond Tutu.

2003
Start-up of Close the Gap as a student “mini-enterprise” at the Solvay Business School of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

2014
Close the Gap celebrates its 10-year anniversary in the presence of Desmond Tutu, launching the ICT4D Alliance.

2015/1
Close the Gap’s first digitruck, powered by Arrow Electronics, arrives in Africa to bring ICT literacy to orphans near Mt. Kilimanjaro, Tanzania.

2015/2
Close the Gap, together with Deloitte University Europe, the Middle East and Africa (DU EMEA) hold first ever Entrepreneurship Boot Camp in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

2016
His Majesty King Philippe of Belgium refurbishes Close the Gap’s 500,000th donated computer at Arrow Value Recovery’s Mechelen facility.

2017/1
Close the Gap and Agoria are awarded the Belgian Digital 4 Development platform project initiated by Minister De Croo.

2017/2
Close the Gap launched Leap2, which is part of its new strategy and supports young African entrepreneurs developing digital solutions that tackle societal issues. Read about it on page 23.
WHAT WE DID IN 2017

IN 2017

WHAT WE DID IN 2017

FACTS & FIGURES 2017

IN 2017

SINCE CLOSE THE GAP STARTED IN 2004

ASSET TYPE ...

Smartphones & Tablets 26.96%
Notebooks 25.05%
PC 21.13%
Printers 5.40%
Monitors 5.06%
Servers 1.96%
Other 15.06%

AND ASSET REUSABILITY

21% Recycled
79% Reused

BENEFICIARIES
3,032,218 since the start

In 2017, Close the Gap received a record high of donations: 118,996 assets were donated.

REMEMBER, CLOSE THE GAP IS ALSO COLLECTING MOBILE DEVICES!
Pilot LEAP2 Innovation Challenge

During the month of June, Close the Gap partnered with Nailab and 1% Club to host the first LEAP2 Innovation Challenge in Nairobi, Kenya. During the early stages of the challenge, participants explored their innovative business cases as part of a training and co-creation workshop conducted by experts. After an entire month of crowdfunding, which concluded on 4th July, all 10 innovators pitched their “digital solution to societal issues” in front of an international panel of jurors. In Kenya, the LEAP2 Innovation Challenge award went to Ebursary, an online platform incorporating smart tools and search capabilities to create a centralised platform serving both students and organisations.

29TH JUNE

Bike to Close the Gap

On 29th June, more than 120 cyclists gathered for our good cause at the Paterberg hill. Bike to Close the Gap is a non-competitive sporting event. All participants cycled for a common goal: raising funds to provide access to ICT for disadvantaged children and young adults, both in Europe and in developing countries. This 7th edition was co-organised and co-sponsored by Close the Gap, DNS Belgium and GUIDO and raised a total of € 96,750.

APRIL

Mission to Tanzania

Last April, Close the Gap’s Head of Projects Peter Manderick travelled to Tanzania not only to support the training on thin clients, but also to visit some partners and projects. A thin client is a lightweight computer that depends on another computer (its server) to fulfil its computational role. One of the stops made by Peter was at the orphanage in Neema, home to Close the Gap and Arrow Electronics’ first digitruck. Peter met with Mandy Stein, Founder and Executive Director of Neema International, who explained the progress of students and the positive results of the digitruck (read more about the digitrucks on page 21). This mission to Tanzania was also an opportunity to visit a project that is very close to Close the Gap’s heart: Msandaika Lions Deaf Centre. Close the Gap’s Chairman, Prof. Wim Blonk has been supporting this project for more than 10 years.

22ND - 26TH MARCH

Strategic partner trip to Kenya

From 22nd March to 26th March, Close the Gap and more than 20 of its partners travelled to Nairobi, Kenya, for a learning journey around Digital 4 Development & Innovation. They visited one of Close the Gap’s service partners, Computers for Schools Kenya (CFSK), the WEEE centre (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Centre) and the UN campus in Nairobi. The visit to two hospitals on the second day, hosted by Marleen Temmerman, member of Close the Gap’s Board of Recommendation, showed the importance of ICT 4 Health and the need for technology in the health sector. Afterwards, the group attended the inauguration of the computer lab at Uhuru Secondary School. This visit showcased how giving children access to a computer can transform their education and how much happiness and joy it can bring.

EVENTS IN 2017

TOTAL CYCLISTS: 124
TOTAL NUMBER OF LAPS: 2300
MOST LAPS - WOMEN: Marian Vermote of Worldline with 22 laps
MOST LAPS - MEN: Bert De Bisschop of Worldline with 31 laps

JUNE - JULY 2017

Mission to Tanzania

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28TH NOVEMBER

VUB Social Entrepreneurship

Last November, Close the Gap’s Deputy General Manager and Operations Director Inge Knapen was a guest speaker at the VUB Social Entrepreneurship Fair, organised by the VUB Chair for Social Entrepreneurship. The main goal of the event was to share ideas on how to build a sustainable future. Inge Knapen spoke about how Close the Gap aims to bridge the digital divide between developed and developing countries by supporting local projects and supplying donated out-of-date IT equipment.

The VUB Chair for Social Entrepreneurship was founded in 2015 by Close the Gap, together with Solvay Business School (VUB), Wolters Kluwer Belgium and Euroclear. This chair aims to provide support for research on social entrepreneurship.

16TH DECEMBER

Women Power in Tech

On 16th December 2017, about 15 women in tech from Nairobi’s private sector engaged with Berber Kruimel from Rabobank and Inge Knapen from Close the Gap to exchange ideas, experiment, and to network. This Women Power in Tech event was co-hosted by Timeless Women of Wonder (TWOW). Close the Gap has been a long-standing partner of TWOW. The event was all about empowering the participants as women and creating a sense of community.

SEPTEMBER 2017

Launch of Digital 4 Development Platform (D4D-Be)

Initiated by the Belgian Development Cooperation, the Digital 4 Development platform was launched in September 2017. This 18-month project is coordinated by Agoria and Close the Gap. The ultimate goal is to build a bridge between the Belgian private sector and the development sector in realising the Sustainable Development Goals and to create new partnerships.

20TH NOVEMBER

D4D-Be kick-off

On 20th November 2017, public authorities, companies, NGOs, civil society organisations, academic institutions and research centres met in Brussels to give the Belgian Development Cooperation a digital impetus. The goal was to increase the effectiveness of projects in the South with digital technologies such as blockchain and big data. The purpose of the kick-off meeting was not only to inform people about the Digital 4 Development platform, but also to spark partnerships between private sector companies and actors in development cooperation. The event, therefore, also included a best practices panel and a series of 15 pitches from both civil society and private sector companies.

20TH NOVEMBER

Close the Gap at CIODay2017 in Amsterdam

Speaking in Amsterdam on 20th November, Deputy General Manager and Operations Director Inge Knapen, together with Roy Budjahawan, Head of ING Microfinance, addressed an audience of 550 CIOs on issues relating to banking solutions. CIODay2017 was the largest gathering of CIOs in Europe. One key idea of the evening was banking the unbanked through innovation, focused on fintech solutions for Africa. In other words, the topic was closely connected with one of Close the Gap’s new strategies for 2017: the Leap Innovation Challenges. In fact, the second Leap challenge focuses on fintech solutions in Kenya, where entrepreneurs are striving to find digital solutions for local problems concerning financial issues.

18TH - 24TH DECEMBER

Close the Gap on “De Warmste Week”

“De Warmste Week” is the Flemish charity event of the year and organised by Studio Brussels radio station. It took place the week before Christmas and “warmste” refers to “most generous”. Their slogan even says “everybody cares for everybody”. During this week, everybody was invited to organise a fundraising action to benefit their chosen charity. Close the Gap was also registered this year, thanks to its new partnership with Teamleader. The initiatives organised by Teamleader’s employees for “De Warmste Week” raised more than €6000, enabling the installation of at least 3 computer classes in Africa and impacting nearly 1000 students.
Close the Gap provides high-quality refurbished IT equipment for social and educational projects in developing countries, acting as an end-to-end logistics manager that coordinates the many partners active in the supply chain to ensure the IT projects are implemented successfully. This includes monitoring the refurbishment process, transport, export/import process, distribution, installation and maintenance, and local collection and recycling.

*since Close the Gap started in 2014

- **700,000+** IT assets collected
- **3,000,000+** beneficiaries
- **450+** companies involved in donations
- **25** local service partners
- **2500+** tonnes of e-waste collected
- **300+** tonnes hazardous waste spared
- **450+** companies involved in donations
- **25** local service partners
- **700,000+** IT assets collected
- **3,000,000+** beneficiaries
- **2500+** tonnes of e-waste collected
- **300+** tonnes hazardous waste spared

"ICT should no longer be a luxury good for the happy few, but a commodity for everyone, including those at the base of the pyramid... the other five billion persons in this world. This is what Close the Gap is all about.”

ARCHBISHOP EM. DESMOND TUTU
Nobel Peace Prize winner 1984
In these type of projects, the donor supports the entire chain, from donation of equipment, refurbishment, export and installation, all the way through to sustainable end of life recycling.

### Belgium

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<tr>
<th>PROJECT NAME</th>
<th>NO. ASSETS</th>
<th>SECTOR</th>
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### Democratic Republic of the Congo

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<td>VLIR-UOS</td>
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### EAC

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### South Africa

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### Suriname

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<td>Education</td>
<td>VLIR-UOS</td>
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### Tanzania

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<tr>
<th>PROJECT NAME</th>
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<th>SECTOR</th>
<th>ADOPTER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Vlaamse Gemeenschapscommissie (Flemish Community Commission)

The Vlaamse Gemeenschapscommissie (VGC) is a body that supports and develops a Dutch-speaking network in Brussels. Its aim is to provide everyone in Brussels with better schools, education, more cultural leisure time activities and proper care. In 2007, VGC supported a project with schools in Suriname for which Close the Gap delivered IT hardware. A collaborative agreement between VGC and the ministry of education, science and culture of Suriname guarantees that the equipment will be used in the schools of three selected districts: Paramaribo, Marowijne and Saramacca. In total, 315 desktop sets have been sent. These desktops reached 25 schools and several local offices of the educational administration of the three districts.

### buckle up.

The Brussels-Capital Region and the Vlaamse Gemeenschapscommissie created a cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture of Suriname in the spring of 2017. As in Brussels, I visited schools in Suriname. The need for decent ICT material was immediately apparent. Back in Belgium, we found in Close the Gap a suitable partner to improve ICT activities in Surinamese schools. Thanks to Close the Gap’s experience and professional approach, we were able to donate more than 100 computers to schools. This way, students gain access to the digital world.”
The following projects were also supported in 2017, receiving less than 20 assets:

Democratic Republic of the Congo
- ARTSEN ZONDER VAKANTIE
- KANANGA
- KOLWEZI
- ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF MILWAUKEE
- BELGIUM
- BS HENDRIK CONSCIENCE SCHAARBEEK
- CARITAS
- KON. PALEIS
- RATATOUILLE – D'BROEJ VZW
- UNIVERSIDAD CENTRAL DE LAS VILLAS
- VZW JAKOEBOE
- WITH THEM VZW

Kenya
- CHILD & YOUTH FINANCE INTERNATIONAL
- VZW HELP KAKUMA

Indonesia
- HELLO KARIMUNJAWA

Papua New Guinea
- KIKORI HOSPITAL

Switzerland
- MAISON DE LA FEMME

Tanzania
- MOSHI LION’S CLUB
- MSANDAKA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

Zimbabwe
- MVURWI SCHOOL PROJECT

Suriname
- STICHTING D’ONS

Togo
- TOUCOUTOUNA

Haïti
- VERELDouders VZW

01 WHAT WE DID IN 2017

ITI VYOMBO & ITI SAINT FRANÇOIS: BTC (ENABEL)

In 2017, Close the Gap supported two technical institutions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo with IT equipment. These institutions are ITI (Institut Technique Industriel) Vyombo and ITI Saint François. This support is made possible by BTC (now Enabel). The donated equipment (44 desktop sets, 4 printers and 8 notebooks) is being used in the ICT classes of local schools.
Close the Gap is not only active in developing and emerging countries, but also in Europe. European countries also need support with ICT education to provide the most vulnerable communities with better opportunities in the job market, through access to ICT.

**IT skills education**

**Adopter**: DNS Belgium

**BeCode**

BeCode is a free coding school based in Belgium, which was developed by a group of people, companies and associations passionate about technology and convinced that every motivated person must have the opportunity to learn to code and find a job. BeCode offers six-month training programmes to get the ‘students’ ready for the professional job market.

As part of the partnership and support for BeCode, Close the Gap provided all the IT equipment needed by the coding schools, with the support of DNS Belgium.

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**WeGoSTEM**

**Adopter**: Telenet

In 2017, Close the Gap supported a project adopted by Telenet and launched by Dwengo vzw and SheGoesICT. This WeGoSTEM project reached 5000 students in more than 100 schools across Belgium. The students from the fifth and sixth grade (elementary education) were encouraged to discover their talent for science and technology in a creative way. The project aimed to spark interest in developing their own projects centred around STEM (science, technology, economics, mathematics), for example by building a drawing robot or coding a computer program. Students were assisted by their own teachers and by passionate IT professionals.

**Education**

**Adopter**: Proximus

GoodPlanet Project

GoodPlanet Belgium’s mission is to build a sustainable society by undertaking positive actions and sharing expertise. GoodPlanet develops and supports projects, training and teaching packages on all sustainability themes - consumption and waste management, energy and climate, mobility, nature and biodiversity, coexistence, food and water. Together with Proximus, the organisation has developed an inspiring collaborative effort to support schools with ICT. GoodPlanet collects used phones in its partner schools and in exchange the schools earn a certain number of points. These points can then be exchanged for IT assets. And this is where Close the Gap steps in – as the provider of IT assets.

---

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GoodPlanet Project

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**Sector**: IT skills education

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**Sector**: IT skills education

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**Adopter**: DNS Belgium

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Digital 4 Development Platform (D4D-Be)

Initiated by the Belgian Development Cooperation (DGD) and set in motion by the Deputy Prime Minister Alexander De Croo, the Digital 4 Development platform was launched in September 2017. This 18-month project is coordinated by Close the Gap and Agoria. The ultimate goal is to build a bridge and create new partnerships between the Belgian private sector and the development sector in realising the Sustainable Development Goals.

In order to nurture potential partnerships, Close the Gap’s programme includes a mix of offline events that offer, on the one hand, face-to-face networking opportunities and, on the other hand, explore different collaboration methodologies. The latter is supported by an online platform for knowledge sharing and collaboration. Known as “Kindling.be”, this online platform was launched on 20th November 2017. It features best practices, new opportunities, partners (people and organisations) and collaboration workspaces. Kindling.be’s goal is to help organisations be informed, inspired and collaborate on Digital 4 Development.

In June 2017, Close the Gap partnered with Nailab and 1%Club to pilot its very first LEAP2 Innovation Challenge in Nairobi, Kenya. From a pool of 42 strong applicants, 10 successful innovations were selected to take part in the innovation challenge. Upon completion of a one-day workshop held in June, professional coaches empowered participants with knowledge and tools to launch crowdfunding campaigns to support their business cases over the course of a month. The crowdfunding campaigns concluded on 4th July, when innovators could pitch their business solutions to societal issues to potential investors, in front of an international panel of jurors consisting of social entrepreneurs, impact investors and leaders from the corporate world, including Managing Director and Founder of Close the Gap Olivier Vanden Eynde.

Close the Gap matched the crowdfunding targets of all 4 finalists once their campaigns had reached 50% of their initial targets. The LEAP2 Innovation Challenge award went to Ebursary: an online platform that incorporates smart tools and search capabilities to create a centralised platform serving both students and organisations in Kenya and across Africa.

The goal of the LEAP2 pilot programme was to provide a digital platform to launch young entrepreneurs in the tech sector and highlight the wide-scale accessibility of digital solutions and their ability to address societal issues.

The second innovation challenge, which was launched in November 2017 and will continue in 2018, focuses on fintech solutions.

OLIVIER VANDEN EYNDE
Founder and Managing Director
“[These innovations help us realise the Sustainable Development Goals. In many areas we see that Africa is leapfrogging]“

NEW PROJECTS
Since the beginning, Close the Gap has practiced a zero-waste-to-landfill policy for all the assets that have been donated to the organisation. In many of the regions that receive IT assets from Close the Gap, there is a lack of local awareness, legislative framework, technical know-how and a financial mechanism to treat potentially hazardous material properly.

That is why in 2012, Close the Gap, strongly supported by Recupel, launched WorldLoop to train its service partners to also offer e-waste collection services. The aim is to ensure the zero-waste-to-landfill policy is applied right to the end of an asset’s second life in developing countries. Friends of Close the Gap and Strategic Partners can support the sustainability of Close the Gap’s projects by participating in the e-Resource Certificate Programme and offsetting their donation.
Close the Gap would not exist without the strong, supportive and dedicated commitment of its partners in industrialised, emerging and developing countries. Each partner contributes in their own way to help bridge the digital divide.

PETER BRICKLEY
Chief Information Officer, Coca-Cola European Partners

“We are delighted to work closely with Close The Gap. Our partnership enables us to find a secure and meaningful destination for our old IT equipment and support social and educational projects in developing countries.”
Friends of Close the Gap are companies or organisations that help Close the Gap by donating their decommissioned ICT equipment. Today, Close the Gap receives computers from companies internationally. Through its refurbishment partner, Close the Gap is able to receive equipment from companies all over the world.

Donors in 2017

Alpro & Realdolmen

“At Alpro, sustainability and economic growth go hand in hand. By putting our healthy, sustainable and innovative plant-based foods into the mainstream, we are creating shared value, helping both society and our company to thrive. That’s the core of our vision on sustainability: we want to be part of the solution.

The ICT department at Alpro had been looking into donating used IT assets for some time, and after some research we discovered Close the Gap. As sustainability is one of the key principles at Alpro, it was an obvious choice to work with Close the Gap. 2017 was our first year of working.”

Stad Mechelen

In 2017, the Belgian city of Mechelen joined the list of over 300 donors to Close the Gap who create social impact by giving their used computer assets a second life.
STRATEGIC PARTNERS

Strategic Partners not only donate computers but they also help Close the Gap on a day-to-day basis by providing equipment, financial or in-kind donations and/or e-resource contributions or through project adoptions. Close the Gap collaborates with corporate and non-profit partners and network organisations.

Acerta is a leading human resources services provider in Belgium that specialises in consultancy, the digitisation and organisation of administrative processes for payroll, social security, child benefit and branch procedures. Acerta supports Close the Gap by offering social secretariat, payroll services and training.

Air France and KLM Royal Dutch Airlines have strategically supported Close the Gap across all its operations, including donating IT assets and e-waste offsetting, and cargo transport for donated computers on a standby basis to selected destinations. Close the Gap also participates in the KLM TAKES CARE programme, which generates publicity for ICT for Development and Close the Gap’s mission through Air France-KLM channels, including in-flight promotional films, articles in its magazines, sharing information on their corporate website and through social media. The group also initiates special campaigns, takes part in fundraising activities and makes it possible for their passengers to donate air miles to Close the Gap.

The Executives’ Circle was founded with the purpose of gathering the foremost business leaders and intellectual elite within an exclusive forum that addresses today’s key management, leadership and societal challenges. Close the Gap engages with the Executives’ Circle network to drive shared-value initiatives.

Arrow Electronics is a global provider of products, services and solutions to industrial and commercial users of electronic components and enterprise computing solutions, providing specialised services and expertise across the product life cycle.

Arrow Value Recovery, part of Arrow Electronics, is a worldwide provider of IT asset disposition (ITAD) solutions designed to deliver data security, efficiency and value. With specialised expertise in the reuse of IT equipment, Arrow enables organisations to uncover hidden value and increase sustainability at the end of their IT product life cycle. Arrow has worked to refurbish more than 600,000 computer devices donated to Close the Gap, giving the equipment a second life in support of essential programmes facilitated by Close the Gap.

BNP Paribas Fortis Foundation supports Belgian-based projects that help to integrate children and young people facing difficulties through training and promoting employee engagement. Thanks to the support of the BNP Paribas Fortis Foundation and in conjunction with ICT donations from the BNP Paribas Fortis bank (Friend of Close the Gap), Close the Gap is able to deliver hundreds of assets per year to organisations that support the social integration of vulnerable children.

CharITy, founded by ICT Media, aims to involve the Dutch IT community in CSR projects. Using the intrinsic value of networks, ideas, knowledge, expertise and partnerships, the foundation strives to contribute more than just what is offered by their own corporate (marketing communication) funds within existing CSR initiatives or projects.

CSR Europe is the leading European business network for Corporate Social Responsibility, acting as a platform for those businesses looking to enhance sustainable growth and contribute positively to society. Close the Gap engages with the CSR Europe network to drive shared-value initiatives.

Computer Task Group is an IT solutions company active in North America and Europe that specialises in services which improve the management and delivery of both business and IT projects. Computer Task Group manages all the network services of Close the Gap.

In collaboration with Rabobank, Dell supports Close the Gap’s computer donation and e-waste offsetting programme by purchasing e-resource certificates.

* See page 24.
The auditing and consulting firm Deloitte is an important and long-time loyal supporter of Close the Gap, helping to guarantee the transparent and professional use of funds raised through sponsors and donors. Deloitte Belgium assists Close the Gap with external audits, tax advice, accounting, legal services as well as business development. In 2016, Deloitte Belgium sponsored a Digitrack. Deloitte Sociétés Européennes (SE) is a European Deloitte organisation that enables Deloitte companies in Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, Central Europe and Luxembourg to collaborate on various issues, including corporate social responsibility.

Deloitte University Europe formalised a partnership with Close the Gap in 2014 to bring entrepreneurial training to Close the Gap’s service partners in Africa.

Design is Dead is a cross-disciplinary creative agency of craftspeople with keyboards. Delivering solid strategies, out-of-the-box concepts and highly addictive visual eye candy is what they have been doing since 1998. “We don’t just execute your briefing. We blow your mind.” Design is Dead is the brain behind Close the Gap’s communication strategy and branding material, and designs the activity report.

DHL commits its expertise in international express, air and ocean freight, road and rail transportation, contract logistics and international mail services to its customers. DHL accepts its corporate social responsibility by supporting climate protection, disaster management and education. DHL puts its knowledge at Close the Gap’s disposal by offering training on customs formalities and by advising Close the Gap’s partners abroad about the import process.

DNS Belgium is a non-profit organisation founded by Agoria, BELTUG and ISPA, and its mission is to register .be domain names, make the Internet more accessible and encourage its use. This also means helping to close the digital divide among disadvantaged groups as well as stimulating the digital economy. DNS Belgium is involved in voluntary work for projects in Belgium and was an early adopter of Close the Gap’s e-waste offsetting programme now operated by WorldLoop. DNS Belgium continues to support Close the Gap’s service partners in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania through co-funding, enabling these service partners to support more IT labs in schools and run more Close the Gap pilot projects.

DNS Belgium

DNS Belgium is a non-profit foundation that promotes and deploys the concepts of business excellence “to meet or exceed the expectations of all their stakeholders.” EFQM uses its knowledge and expertise to help Close the Gap develop its internal capabilities and improve its overall performance. EFQM also connects Close the Gap to members of its network to drive shared-value initiatives.

EFQM

Emakina is a full-service digital native agency. Every day new digital tools are opening up new ways of expression for brands. Native to this world of complexity, Emakina fuses imagination and innovation and orchestrates relevant points of convergence to build brand experiences that engage consumers. Emakina designed Close the Gap’s website.

Essent/RWE is the largest energy company in the Netherlands and also operates in Germany and Belgium. As a long-time supporter of Close the Gap, Essent/RWE is continuously looking for opportunities to continue its strategic partnership.

The Gilles Foundation was established in 1991 with private funds from shareholders of ETAP to support small-scale economic initiatives that increase the autonomy of local populations. The Gilles Foundation is supporting Close the Gap’s service in DRC to collect and dismantle e-waste.

The Gilles Foundation

Grant Thornton provides quality accounting and business advisory services. Grant Thornton has committed its expertise to ensure the transparency of Close the Gap’s finances through its extensive annual external auditing contribution.

Grant Thornton

IMS is a Luxembourg-based network that assists organisations in their commitment to corporate social responsibility by enhancing dialogue with their stakeholders. Close the Gap works with the IMS network to drive shared-value initiatives.

IMS

KBC Bank & Insurance is a Belgian universal multi-channel bank that focuses on private clients and small and medium-sized enterprises. KBC has been a long-time supporter of Close the Gap and is not only one of Close the Gap’s largest donor organisations, but it also works with Close the Gap to provide banking services.

KBC Bank & Insurance
Liberty Foundation supports social projects financially. With support from the foundation, Close the Gap has been able to set up a revolving fund to pre-finance computer deliveries to Close the Gap's service partners in the East African community. Close the Gap uses this fund to finance shipments to our partners in Kenya and Tanzania.

PROXIMUS

Proximus is the largest telecommunications company in Belgium. In 2016, Close the Gap delivered almost 400 computer assets to non-profit organisations and schools selected by Proximus.

THE RABOBANK GROUP

The Rabobank Group is an international financial services provider operating on the basis of cooperative principles. It offers retail banking, wholesale banking, asset management, leasing and real estate services. Its focus is on all finance services in the Netherlands and on retail and wholesale banking, and food and agriculture internationally. In 2001, Rabobank started an important partnership with Close the Gap. In the beginning of 2016, this partnership had reached the milestone of more than 20,000 computer assets shipped to educational institutions in East African communities. Rabobank took their commitment to invest in society to the next level by also supporting sustainable takeback of ICT assets in East Africa through Close the Gap's e-Resource Certificate Programme.

REALDOLMEN

Realdolmen is one of the largest ICT companies serving the Benelux region, offering integrated ICT solutions such as infrastructure, applications and communication for the entire ICT life cycle from the design phase through deployment and maintenance to recycling. Realdolmen provides IT donations and raises awareness about Close the Gap through its customer base and network.

NILEDUTCH

NileDutch is one of the 25 largest container shipping companies in the world, focusing on the links between (West) Africa and the rest of the world. NileDutch supports Close the Gap with logistical shipping support for beneficiary projects in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. NileDutch also contributes to Best-of-2-World activities by supporting WorldLoop with the transport of e-waste from Africa back to Europe for proper treatment.

OUT OF OFFICE

Out Of Office develops and introduces, both nationally and internationally, future ways of working in order to improve business by enabling flexibility, freedom, informal communication and interaction, innovations and knowledge sharing, collaboration, creativity and innovation. Because the way we do our work is changing, Out Of Office developed and implemented a new way of working for the Close the Gap team through an open-office concept that stimulates interaction and collaboration, information and knowledge sharing, creativity and innovation.

MICROSOFT

Microsoft develops, manufactures, licences and supports a wide range of products and services predominantly related to computing through its various product divisions. Close the Gap has been working with Microsoft for years to bring high-quality software solutions to beneficiary projects in developing countries.

THE SAS INSTITUTE

The SAS Institute is a leading provider of business analytics software and services, and the largest independent vendor in the business intelligence market. In addition to financial support, SAS developed a tailor-made reporting tool for Close the Gap.

MEDIATAAL

Mediataal is a storytelling company that uses film as its medium. No matter how well-made and professional a film is, a good story is fundamental to delivering a strong, credible message. Mediataal has helped Close the Gap’s storytelling through the production of numerous videos and testimonials.

MVO NEDERLAND

MVO Nederland is the Centre of Excellence for Dutch companies that are striving for corporate social responsibility. Close the Gap engages with MVO Nederland's network to drive shared value initiatives.

REYNAERS ALUMINIUM

Reynaers Aluminium is a leading European specialist in the development and marketing of innovative and sustainable solutions for aluminium windows, doors, curtain walls, sliding systems, sun screens and conservatories. It is driven by energy efficiency and the willingness to take responsibility for the environment.

PROXIMUS

Proximus is the largest telecommunications company in Belgium. In 2016, Close the Gap delivered almost 400 computer assets to non-profit organisations and schools selected by Proximus.
Sidius is a specialist in the selection and recruitment of top-level assistants, personal, executive and management assistants, for various managers, departments (sales, marketing, human resources, legal, finance, etc.), office managers, personnel/HR managers and payroll/recruitment officers, event organisers and telephonists/receptionists. Sidius supports Close the Gap by offering its recruitment services.

THE VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT BRUSSEL

The Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Brussels’ Flemish university, welcomes more than 14,000 students every year. It is through the support and expertise of the VUB that Close the Gap was founded. The VUB provides Close the Gap with logistical assistance by offering office space. Additionally, the office costs of telecommunication and postal services are partly sponsored by the VUB.

THE TELENET FOUNDATION

The Telenet Foundation supports social projects that promote digital inclusion. In 2016, Close the Gap delivered computers to projects which were selected through the foundation. Moreover, Telenet hosts Close the Gap’s e-mail.

UMICORE

Umicore is a global materials technology group. It focuses on application areas where its expertise in materials science, chemistry and metallurgy makes a real difference. Umicore provides recycling and disposal services to Close the Gap’s sister organisation WorldLoop, facilitating environmentally sound and closed-loop recycling in WorldLoop’s operations. Since 2013, Umicore has been donating computers from its organisations worldwide to Close the Gap and offsetting its donation.

VLIR-UOS

The Flemish Interuniversity Council for University Development Cooperation (VLIR-UOS) supports research and higher education institutions in the South through partnerships with Flemish universities and higher education institutions. VLIR-UOS guarantees sustainability by providing ICT maintenance and training for local staff.

VINTAGE PRODUCTIONS

Vintage Productions is a pan-European communication agency. “One should not only focus on the differences between people but look for commonality and similarity.” This quote, from Theodore Levitt, serves as the guiding principle of what Vintage stands for as a communication agency.

1% CLUB

1% Club is an organisation that builds do-good crowdfunding platforms to kick-start interesting and impactful initiatives. 1% Club and Close the Gap started collaborating in 2016. Together, we boost innovative digital solutions to create an impact LEAP for societal challenges.
When refurbished ICT equipment is ready for projects, Close the Gap tries to work through local businesses as much as possible. These organisations become Close the Gap’s local Service Partners, who work as intermediaries between Close the Gap and beneficiary organisations. They know and understand the local problems and challenges and have expertise in local project management.

Service Partners are an important aspect of quality assurance as they are responsible for preparing the local infrastructure. They make sure that donated devices have a secure location and all the necessary utilities, such as electricity, Internet connections if available, etc. They are also responsible for the distribution and transport of computers to the beneficiaries, installation and maintenance of ICT equipment, training project managers/teachers/users and finally, taking back the ICT equipment for proper recycling once it reaches its end-of-life state.
Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) play a crucial role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and have been transforming societies over decades by contributing to economic growth, bringing new ways to deliver education, healthcare and government services as well as creating a global information society. ICT is seen as an enabler for global economic and social development, since it has the potential to work as a catalyst for the three pillars of sustainable development: economic development, social inclusion and environmental protection.

For more than a decade now, Close the Gap has been working on bridging the global digital divide, facilitating access to ICT in the sectors of education, healthcare and economic transformation of developing communities. Close the Gap believes in the power of Information and Communication Technologies to provide opportunities for everyone, contribute to the economic growth of developing countries, and improve the lives of people living in poverty. ICT is seen as an enabler for economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection.

**GOAL 4 - QUALITY EDUCATION**

Education is one of the most powerful instruments for reducing poverty and inequality and plays a foundation for sustained economic growth. Yet many children in developing countries lack access to quality education and knowledge. Bridging the digital divide and providing access to IT equipment is the key driver for improving the educational and economic prospects of a country in today’s modern world.

**GOAL 5 - GENDER EQUALITY**

Access to ICT for women empowers them to stand up for their rights and demand equality.

**GOAL 8 - DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**

Digital skills are a primary requirement for most jobs. Children with access to ICT at school learn valuable IT skills that improve their chances in the job market, which in turn stimulates the economy.

Close the Gap has been recognised as a United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) signatory, is a member of the United Nations Alliance for ICT and Development (UN GAID) and the United Nations Department of Public Information (UNDPI). In addition, Close the Gap has a permanent Youth Representative who represents the organisation at the United Nations headquarters in New York.

The United Nations Alliance for ICT and Development (UN GAID) was launched in 2000 by Kofi Annan to facilitate and promote integration through a platform for an open, inclusive, multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral policy dialogue on the role of information and communication technology in development.

The United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) is an initiative for businesses to align their strategies and operations with universal principles of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption, and take actions that advance societal goals such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals, with an emphasis on collaboration and innovation.

UNDP & FORDHAM UNIVERSITY

Close the Gap is a member of the United Nations Department of Public Information, which helps non-governmental organisations to disseminate information to the public about the United Nations. Close the Gap has a unique partnership with Fordham University, New York, which selects a master’s student each year to be the Youth Representative for Close the Gap at the United Nations in New York. For the 2017 academic year (September to June), Oruada Oruada represented Close the Gap.

ORUADA ORUADA
UN Youth Representative for Close the Gap

“The experience at Close the Gap as the NGO Youth Rep to the United Nations Department of Public Information was a great international exposure. During my time at the UNDPI I participated in committee and subcommittee meetings, events and also presented on how Close the Gap is achieving the SDGs. Working in this multicultural environment made it possible to network with other Youth Reps from all over the world. The most enjoyable part of being a Youth Rep was being the liaison between Close the Gap and the UNDPI/NGOs. I am grateful for this opportunity and honoured to be part of an organisation changing the lives of the developing world by bridging the digital divide.”
Close the Gap has demonstrated over the last decade its ability to fulfill its mission with clear and tangible impact and hard deliverables, without relying on a traditional donor-driven and grant-money structure. A healthy, innovative, well-balanced and leading social business model has enabled Close the Gap to simultaneously fulfill its commitments to its partners on the ground in Africa, whilst maintaining a solid financial position to further grow and innovate.

**Profitable results in 2017**

While our organization has been able to realize a positive (economical) result for the financial year 2017, note the accounting result shows a loss of € -229,635.48. This is purely due to a technical accounting reason. During the Annual General Meeting in 2017, it was decided to donate the 2016 financial year result (see the last item “withdrawals from allocated funds”: € 436,721.05 on page 47) to the Close the Gap Foundation. This donation was accounted as a cost in 2017 and thus deducted from the 2017 result.

The “economic” profit for the 2017 financial year is therefore equal to € -229,635.48 + € 436,721.05 = € 207,085.57.

**Close the Gap foundation**

Part of the innovation agenda is the ever-growing entrepreneurial context in developing countries. The steady rise of general recognition for social entrepreneurs positively changing the ecosystem is increasing. Hence, the Close the Gap Foundation has been established to support the road ahead for Close the Gap Int. vzw, its mission and its partners. The Close the Gap Foundation will have a bigger role to play in the near future concerning our joint mission to bridge the digital divide. It enables Close the Gap to further innovate and start new pilot projects.
AUDITOR’S REPORT

Grant Thornton

Close The Gap International vze

Philaert 2
1060 Brussels
Belgium
Tel: +32 2 654 35 77
Auditor’s report on the financial period ending 31 December 2017

Grant Thornton

For the period ended 31 December 2017

To: The Board of Directors

We have audited the financial statements of Close The Gap International vze, which present a true and fair view of the financial position as at 31 December 2017, the profit or loss for the period then ended and the cash flows for the period then ended, in conformity with the applicable accounting framework, namely Belgian Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (Belgian GAAP). In our opinion, the financial statements do not contain any misrepresentations and are free from material misstatements.

We have also audited the Board of Directors’ statement on the basis of continuity of the Group’s operations, which is a management representation and is presented together with the financial statements for the period then ended.

Close The Gap International vze is a not-for-profit organisation, whose main objective is to improve the lives of children in developing countries by stimulating sustainable social and economic development. The Group’s activities are supported by the sales of personal and promotional products, the proceeds of which are used to fund the Group’s activities.

The Group’s financial statements are prepared in accordance with Belgian Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (Belgian GAAP) and International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adopted by the European Union.

The financial statements have been prepared on the historic cost basis, except for the presentation of financial instruments at fair value through profit or loss. The Board of Directors adopted this accounting policy for all financial years.

By adopting the historic cost basis, we have avoided stating the financial position of the Group in the official currency of the country of its establishment.

We have also audited the Board of Directors’ statement on the basis of continuity of the Group’s operations, which is a management representation and is presented together with the financial statements for the period then ended.

We believe that the financial statements and the statement of continuity of the Group’s operations provide a true and fair view of the financial position of the Group as at 31 December 2017 and the profit or loss for the period then ended.

We have performed our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs). We believe that our audits provide a high degree of assurance that the financial statements and the statement of continuity of the Group’s operations are free from material misstatement.

We have also audited the Board of Directors’ statement on the basis of continuity of the Group’s operations, which is a management representation and is presented together with the financial statements for the period then ended.

We believe that the financial statements and the statement of continuity of the Group’s operations provide a true and fair view of the financial position of the Group as at 31 December 2017 and the profit or loss for the period then ended.

We have performed our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs). We believe that our audits provide a high degree of assurance that the financial statements and the statement of continuity of the Group’s operations are free from material misstatement.
## FINANCIAL REPORT

### ASSETS

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL ASSETS</td>
<td>3,762,226,98</td>
<td>4,473,972,35</td>
<td>4,329,442,85</td>
<td>5,172,550,84</td>
<td>6,067,882,42</td>
<td>5,533,038,34</td>
<td>5,574,901,51</td>
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### LIABILITIES

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<tr>
<td>TOTAL LIABILITIES</td>
<td>3,762,226,98</td>
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### INCOME STATEMENTS

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<tr>
<td>Income from current assets</td>
<td>1,818,71</td>
<td>6,019,67</td>
<td>20,634,23</td>
<td>34,185,49</td>
<td>25,330,32</td>
<td>42,012,78</td>
<td>55,998,83</td>
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<td>Financial charges</td>
<td>-5,255,77</td>
<td>-4,433,30</td>
<td>-2,858,74</td>
<td>-1,157,91</td>
<td>+1,441,04</td>
<td>-1,517,04</td>
<td>43,85</td>
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### BALANCE SHEET

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<td>CURRENT ASSETS</td>
<td>3,717,646,79</td>
<td>4,428,720,36</td>
<td>4,292,091,72</td>
<td>5,124,722,57</td>
<td>6,209,113,42</td>
<td>5,517,578,36</td>
<td>5,559,033,89</td>
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<td>Stocks</td>
<td>3,000,00</td>
<td>12,000,00</td>
<td>0,00</td>
<td>0,00</td>
<td>0,00</td>
<td>0,00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plant, machinery and equipment</td>
<td>35,577,31</td>
<td>33,235,31</td>
<td>37,351,13</td>
<td>47,826,27</td>
<td>58,745,20</td>
<td>15,460,18</td>
<td>15,887,62</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good purchased for resale</td>
<td>1,00</td>
<td>1,00</td>
<td>1,00</td>
<td>1,00</td>
<td>1,00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goods purchased for resale</td>
<td>1,00</td>
<td>1,00</td>
<td>1,00</td>
<td>1,00</td>
<td>1,00</td>
<td>1,00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Machinery</td>
<td>19,040,65</td>
<td>15,601,59</td>
<td>18,185,33</td>
<td>20,710,47</td>
<td>22,454,81</td>
<td>2,932,00</td>
<td>2,208,00</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL ASSETS</td>
<td>3,762,226,98</td>
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<tr>
<td>Result on ordinary activities</td>
<td>1,423,871</td>
<td>1,728,487</td>
<td>1,403,105</td>
<td>1,284,988</td>
<td>1,353,285</td>
<td>1,916,770</td>
<td>1,457,542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions, donations, grants, etc</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>267,788,08</td>
<td>320,370,70</td>
<td>388,286,95</td>
<td>341,277,01</td>
<td>209,394,32</td>
<td>238,918,15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Note:** The above table provides a summary of financial statements and assets/liabilities for the years 2011 to 2017. Detailed financial information is available in the full report. The report includes detailed sections on assets, liabilities, income statements, and balance sheets along with financial ratios and figures. The data is presented in a structured and clear format to facilitate easy understanding and analysis.
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Founder and Managing Director

MRS. INGE KNAPEN
Operations Director and Deputy General Manager

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Head of Projects

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Personal Assistant to Olivier vanden Eynde

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Strategic Advisor

MS. JULIE DE BERGEYCK
D4D-Be Project & Communications Manager

MR. DIDIER APPELS
Strategic Partnerships

KIND COLLEAGUES WHO LEFT US IN 2017:
Emilia Ackerman, Annelies Desmet, Aurely Luzolele, Isabelle Servant, Barbara Toorens, Sam Van Dyck

OUR INTERNS IN 2017:
Ludovica Bosi, Josefien Branson, Liuba Karamanova, Milika Nation

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Account number - 001-4128329-85
Bank - BNP Paribas Fortis
IBAN code - BE89001412832985
SWIFT/BIC - GEBABEBB
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