

Vétérinaires  
Sans Frontières



---

# Annual report

---

2024

---

VÉTÉRINAIRES SANS FRONTIÈRES  
NETHERLANDS

---

MEMBER OF VSF INTERNATIONAL







Millions of people in Africa depend on their livestock. Vétérinaires Sans Frontières-Netherlands (VSF-NL) implements projects in Malawi. Through our projects, we improve animal health, which also enables us to improve people's health. We do this in cooperation with local people, to ensure that our projects have a long-term impact.

One of the concepts used is training Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) since 2012 in Malawi. They help farmers to keep their herds healthy. Thanks to training, equipment and animal health care, small-scale farmers can produce sufficient food for themselves and for the market. As a result, these farmers can build a better and more secure life for themselves.

In March 2022, we also began our mission to eliminate rabies in Malawi. So far, we've been able to vaccinate over 100,000 dogs and cats! But our approach goes beyond just vaccination. Together with the local community, we work to raise awareness and promote prevention. Children are a key target group in this effort, as they are often in close contact with dogs and frequently take care of them.

[www.dierenartsenzondergrenzen.nl](http://www.dierenartsenzondergrenzen.nl)

---

## CONTENT

03	<b>Foreword</b>
04	<b>Healthy animals, healthy people, healthy planet</b>
06	<b>Malawi</b>
09	<b>South Kivu</b>
10	<b>What we do in the Netherlands</b>

---

## FOREWORD

Dear reader,

Looking back on this past year, I feel a deep sense of pride and hope. While global news was often troubling, sorrowful and uncertain, and support for the Global South increasingly questioned, our small organisation continued to grow with strength and optimism.

In 2023, we began developing a strategic plan outlining our vision for the next six years. By mid-2024, this plan had taken shape. We are ambitious: we aim to expand by strengthening our current projects and focusing more on an integrated approach—one that considers animals, supply chains and people. While Malawi remains our focus, we hope to gradually expand our geographical reach within the country. We believe that this targeted approach will allow us to make the greatest impact on the health and wellbeing of livestock and their smallholder farmers.

Our former coordinator, Iris Geerts, launched this process with tireless dedication and used it as an opportunity to onboard her successors, Simone Vuijk and Marlijn Kroezen. Thank you, Iris! Simone and Marlijn now form our new coordination team. Two veterinarians who have quickly learned the ins and outs of fundraising, website building and communication. In 2024 they have already proven themselves to be invaluable to VSF-NL.

The results speak for themselves: our rabies vaccination campaign manages to vaccinate more dogs each year, thanks to the continued support of the Edgar & Cooper Foundation. In 2024, over 59,000 dogs were vaccinated against rabies, bringing the total number of vaccinations to over 100,000.

With support from the AFAS Foundation, we were able to start strengthening the supply chain. Food products now stay fresh longer, an enormous benefit to farming households: healthier food, increased income and reduced food waste. We are also consciously placing more focus on women, as their roles within families are often vital. We're grateful for this new partnership, not only for the financial support but also for being a valuable sparring partner.

Our long-standing Dutch partner, St. Anna Advies, quite literally went the extra mile for us this year by walking the *Nijmegen Vierdaagse*. Thank you, Quintie and Roeland!

I'm especially proud of our student branch: VSF-Student. An active association of veterinary students who, despite today's challenging academic environment, are dedicated to supporting VSF-NL. They raise funds through long-standing initiatives like the Run for Rabies and Vaccinate for Africa campaigns. Just as important is their work in awareness-building: through their educational programme, they teach school children in playful, creative ways about farm animals and the farmers who care for them in the Global South.

Proud and hopeful. 2024 was the first year in which we no longer received financial support from VSF-Belgium. In this first fully independent year, we managed to grow in exactly the way we envisioned, despite the many global uncertainties. All our projects were strengthened and expanded, and the prospects for 2025 are promising.

I am convinced that we've achieved this together: students, coordinators, donors, partners in Malawi, and our board—people who have chosen to work toward a cause we deeply care about. We let go of the distractions of the day and focus on what truly matters. I am grateful that all of you support local farmers in Malawi through VSF-NL, and I look forward to continuing this path together in 2025.

— **Eveline Mus**

*Chair of VSF-Netherlands,  
May 2025*

---

**“In 2024, over 59,000 dogs were vaccinated against rabies, bringing the total number of vaccinations to over 100,000.”**



# Healthy animals, healthy people, healthy planet

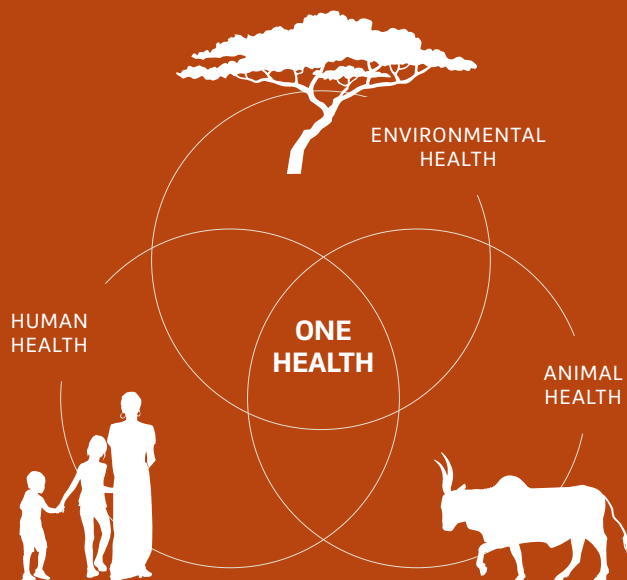
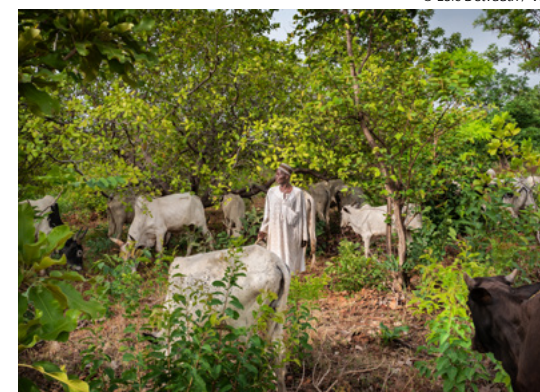
## An international network

We are a member of the network Vétérinaires Sans Frontières International (VSF-International). This network consists of twelve different non-profit organisations in Europe and North America. Together, we are committed to improving the living conditions of smallholder farmers worldwide and strengthening local initiatives in the field of animal health and animal welfare. Within the network, we exchange knowledge and combine resources to make the greatest impact. In 2024, we:

- The collaboration between VSF-International and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) was extended for another two years. This partnership focuses on developing guidelines and training curricula for so-called “Community Animal Health Workers” or “CAHWs”. In 2024, the Competency and Curriculum Guidelines for CAHWs were published.
- VSF-International actively advocated for the importance of CAHWs at major international events; World Veterinary Association Congress in Cape Town, the AITVM-STVM Conference in Montpellier and the 91st General Session of the WOAH in Paris. These events highlighted the crucial role of CAHWs in delivering animal health care in remote areas, their contribution to the One Health approach, and their importance for sustainable development and resilient communities. These efforts underline VSF-International’s commitment to recognising CAHWs as vital links in animal healthcare.

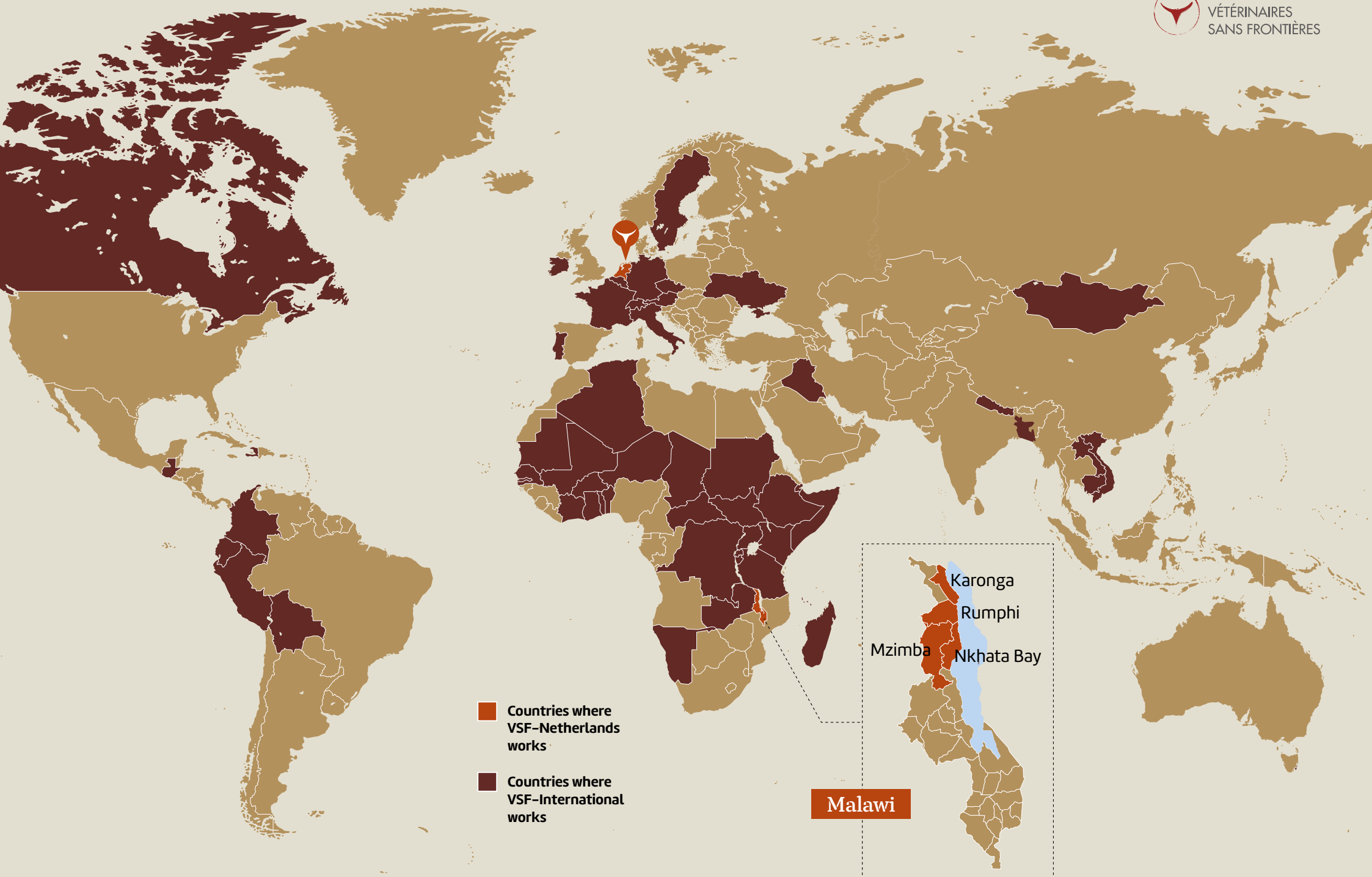
- A multi-day general assembly was organised with VSF-International members in Brussels, to share updates on each other’s work and to learn from one another.
- Improved collaboration among members of the VSF network:
  - Every three months, online thematic meetings are held with VSF-International members. VSF-NL participates in the Communications & Fundraising working group and the Rabies working group.
  - The Communications & Fundraising working group meets in person once a year to develop a joint campaign and to exchange knowledge and experiences related to fundraising.

© Loïc Delvaux / VSF



‘One Health’ is a cooperative approach focused on a healthy and sustainable relationship between animals, humans and their environment. We believe that this is of utmost importance for establishing optimal conditions for health and wellbeing for everyone.

[www.vsf-international.org](http://www.vsf-international.org)





01.

# Malawi

The experiences of farmers' families and dog owners in Malawi show that improving (access to) animal health services has a huge impact on animals and the entire community. On the following pages, you'll find stories and results from our work in 2024.





## Training animal health workers

There is a shortage of veterinarians in Malawi. When an animal gets sick, the farmer often does not know what to do. If the animal dies, a source of manure, food and income is lost. That is why we train **Community Animal Health Workers**, or “CAHWs”, who keep animals healthy in their own communities. They provide information to farmers about housing, nutrition, reproduction and health. For example, vaccination and deworming campaigns are also organised in cooperation with the Malawi government. In this way, animal production increases and small-scale farmers can produce enough food for themselves and the market.

The CAHWs are selected from their own community and then trained to ensure that they can take care of the animals themselves. During the training, various theoretical lessons and practicals take place. The CAHWs then accompany an Assistant Veterinary Officer from their own region to put their knowledge into practice. This also contributes to a good relationship between the various veterinary (para) professionals and the government. Every month, animal health workers provide information about animal diseases in their environment, so that it can be used in the government’s monitoring programs.

To ensure the quality of services and keep knowledge up to date, we regularly organise **refresher trainings** for CAHWs. These trainings help them apply new insights and techniques, and strengthen their skills so they can continue to effectively contribute to the health of livestock in their communities.



© VSF

## Sustainable Progress

Livestock are of great importance as a source of food and income, helping to reduce poverty and food insecurity. Several studies have shown that households with different livestock species are more resilient to drought, floods and economic shortages than households without livestock. Despite livestock being vulnerable to hazards, it increases the resilience of vulnerable households.

Since 2021, VSF-NL has partnered with the Centre For Community Empowerment Initiatives (CCEI) and Wilde Ganzen on sustainable livestock projects in Malawi. The Livestock For Empowerment project reached 19,875 farmers in 2022. In 2023, we conducted additional research in Mzimba North, where 72% of the 101,740 households keep livestock but face low productivity and limited resources. That’s why we developed a new project: *Strengthening Capacity in Animal Production and Health for Enhanced Livelihoods*. With this, we aim to address challenges along the chain from production to sale of animal products. Our goal is to give more families the opportunity to meet the WHO’s recommended daily intake of milk and meat.

With support from the AFAS Foundation, the project officially launched in September 2024 under a new name: Herds for Empowerment (H4E). The core activities remain the same, now with a stronger focus on increasing the role of women in livestock farming. Through targeted training and support, women are actively involved in decision-making, farm management, and improving food security in their communities.

### Results of the H4E Project in 2024

- A total of 488 dairy farmers have been identified (342 women and 146 men) who will receive training in improved livestock management and the efficient use of crop residues as animal feed.
- Two solar-powered milk cooling units have been installed at the milk collection groups in the villages of Chipunga and Kapacha.
- Purchase of two chaff cutters for processing crop residues into animal feed. This includes machine demonstrations and training sessions.
- Preparations have been made for large-scale awareness sessions for government staff and CAHWs on the responsible use of antibiotics to combat antimicrobial resistance.
- A site has been designated and officially approved for the construction of a local meat selling point. Local butchers and community members will contribute to the construction, supply of materials and future maintenance of the selling point.



**80%**  
of the population  
depends on small-scale  
agriculture and animal  
husbandry



**264,969**  
animals helped  
in 2024



**41,949**  
households  
have received direct  
support through livestock,  
veterinary services,  
training, and more.

## What is rabies?

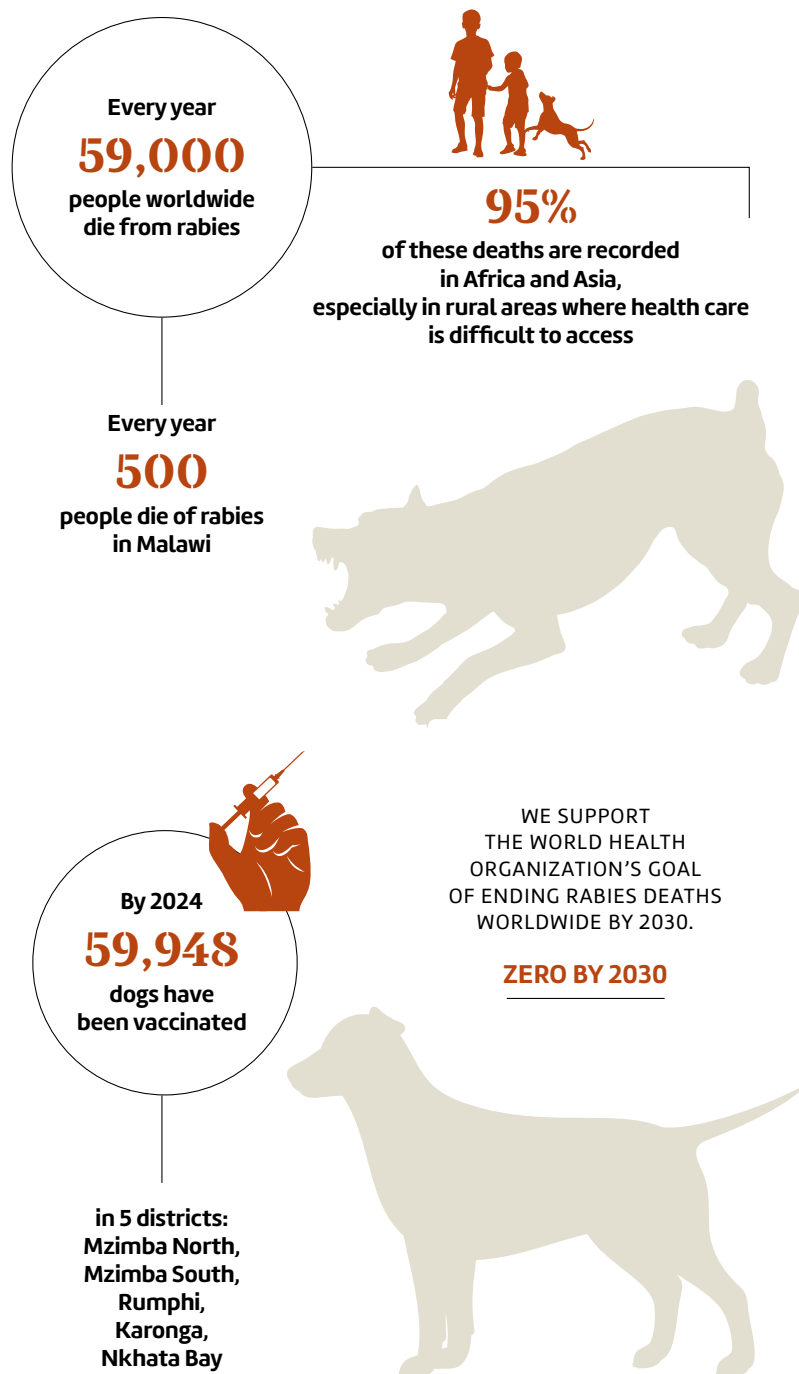
Rabies is one of the most life-threatening and infectious diseases on earth. It is **99.9% fatal** and **100% preventable**. Rabies not only occurs in animals, but humans can also be infected with the rabies virus after being bitten by an infected animal. The virus mainly affects underprivileged populations and 59,000 people worldwide die from it every year, 60% of whom are children under the age of 15.

## Our rabies project

Rabies is recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD); a disease that, despite its high mortality rate, is often overlooked in international health programs. In Malawi, poverty is widespread and more than 500 people die from rabies each year, with 99% of infections originating from dogs. That's why we started a large-scale vaccination project in 2022 in Mzuzu, Northern Malawi. By vaccinating dogs, we aim to stop the transmission of rabies and thus contribute to the WHO's goal of ending rabies-related deaths worldwide by 2030.

We have already vaccinated a total of 100.000 dogs! In 2024, **59,948 dogs** and **2,105 cats** were vaccinated against rabies in five districts in northern Malawi. With this, we exceeded the WHO-recommended vaccination target of 70% in most areas. In Mzimba North, even 81% of the dog population was vaccinated. In addition, we organized **21 awareness campaigns** in 9 regions, reaching more than 6,000 people. We also trained **1,331 dog owners** in responsible pet ownership, and developed and distributed information materials about rabies and vaccination.

Despite these successes, there is still work to be done. In total, 3958 dog bites were registered in 2024 in the five districts where we operate. In only 27 cases were samples tested, of which 11 were positive for rabies. This highlights the importance of continued efforts in vaccination and awareness.



## Only together we can stop rabies

The implementation of the rabies project in 2024 was made possible in part thanks to our largest donor, the Edgard & Cooper Foundation. Collaboration remains essential for the successful execution of the project. In 2024, we worked closely with our partner organization CCEI, the Malawian government, and the Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC). Through GARC, we make use of the digital **Rabies Vaccination Tracker**, which allows us to accurately register all vaccinations. In addition, GARC supports us in developing, monitoring, and evaluating the projects.

This collaboration and joint effort have not only resulted in high vaccination rates and increased awareness about rabies in northern Malawi, but also in policy-level recognition: our partner organization CCEI was appointed as a member of the **National Rabies Task Force** of Malawi. An important step towards sustainable rabies control across the whole country.

Various awareness campaigns also took place, supported with educational materials in local languages and training sessions for dog owners. Community leaders, schools and churches played a crucial role in spreading information about rabies and the importance of vaccination.

Together with the community, we are building a future without rabies – Zero by 2030.



© Stella Steenberghe / VSF



02.

# South-Kivu

Democratic Republic of the Congo



In 2024, the project “Operationalising the One Health approach in South Kivu through local veterinary services”, implemented by VSF-Belgium in collaboration with its local partner, was successfully completed. VSF-Netherlands played a key role in this project by raising funds.

## About the project

The project was carried out in the region around Kahuzi Biega National Park, an area where many people live in poverty and where pressure on natural resources is high. The intensive contact between people, (domestic) animals and wildlife brings significant health risks. In this vulnerable ecosystem, an integrated approach to human, animal and environmental health was adopted, in line with the One Health principle.

In 2024, the project area saw outbreaks of, among others, Rift Valley fever and Monkeypox. Thanks to the strengthened animal health network and the establishment of local One Health committees, swift intervention was possible. Local veterinarians and medical personnel worked closely together to detect, report, and combat zoonotic diseases—those that can be transmitted between animals and humans. In the health zone of Miti-Murhesa, the epicentre of the Monkeypox outbreak, over 3500 cases were reported. Thanks to rapid referral to treatment centres, further spread was largely prevented.

In total, 20 veterinarians and 390 animal health workers received training in animal disease detection and infection prevention. Ecoguards and healthcare providers also received protective equipment and training, partly in collaboration with *Médecins du Monde*. A key milestone was the development of the Animal Health Surveillance Platform, which enables direct and continuous monitoring of animal diseases. This project contributed not only to addressing acute health crises, but also to the sustainable development of an integrated health system in South Kivu.

03.

# What we do in the Netherlands



In the Netherlands, we raise awareness about sustainable livestock farming and food production. We also focus on fundraising and strengthening our network. Our student branch, VSF-Student, organizes various campaigns and activities. In 2024, VSF-NL also finalized its multi-year strategy. On the next page, you can read more about the course we've set for the coming years.

## Pathway to Impact: Our 2030 Vision

### Strategy VSF-NL 2024–2030

In 2024, we developed a multi-year strategy aimed at increasing our impact and strengthening our organization. The strategy was created in consultation with the board and with support from our colleagues at VSF-Belgium. The vision remains unchanged: **healthy animals, healthy people, healthy planet.**

We aim to be a robust yet flexible organization, focusing on veterinary projects that make a real difference for communities in Malawi. Local needs are central: we work in a demand-driven way, with the community and for the long term. This is how we build strong, resilient communities, step by step. In addition, we are working towards a stable financial foundation, with a mix of private donations, support from companies and funds. This allows us to carry out long-term projects with lasting impact.





© VSF-Netherlands

### Three strategic pillars

- **One Health as a foundation**

We place the One Health approach at the heart of our work: people, animals and the environment are inextricably linked. Our projects focus on zoonoses, food safety and climate-smart livestock farming. This includes rabies prevention and support for farmers and animal health workers through training on food quality and responsible use of medicines.

- **Sustainable local impact**

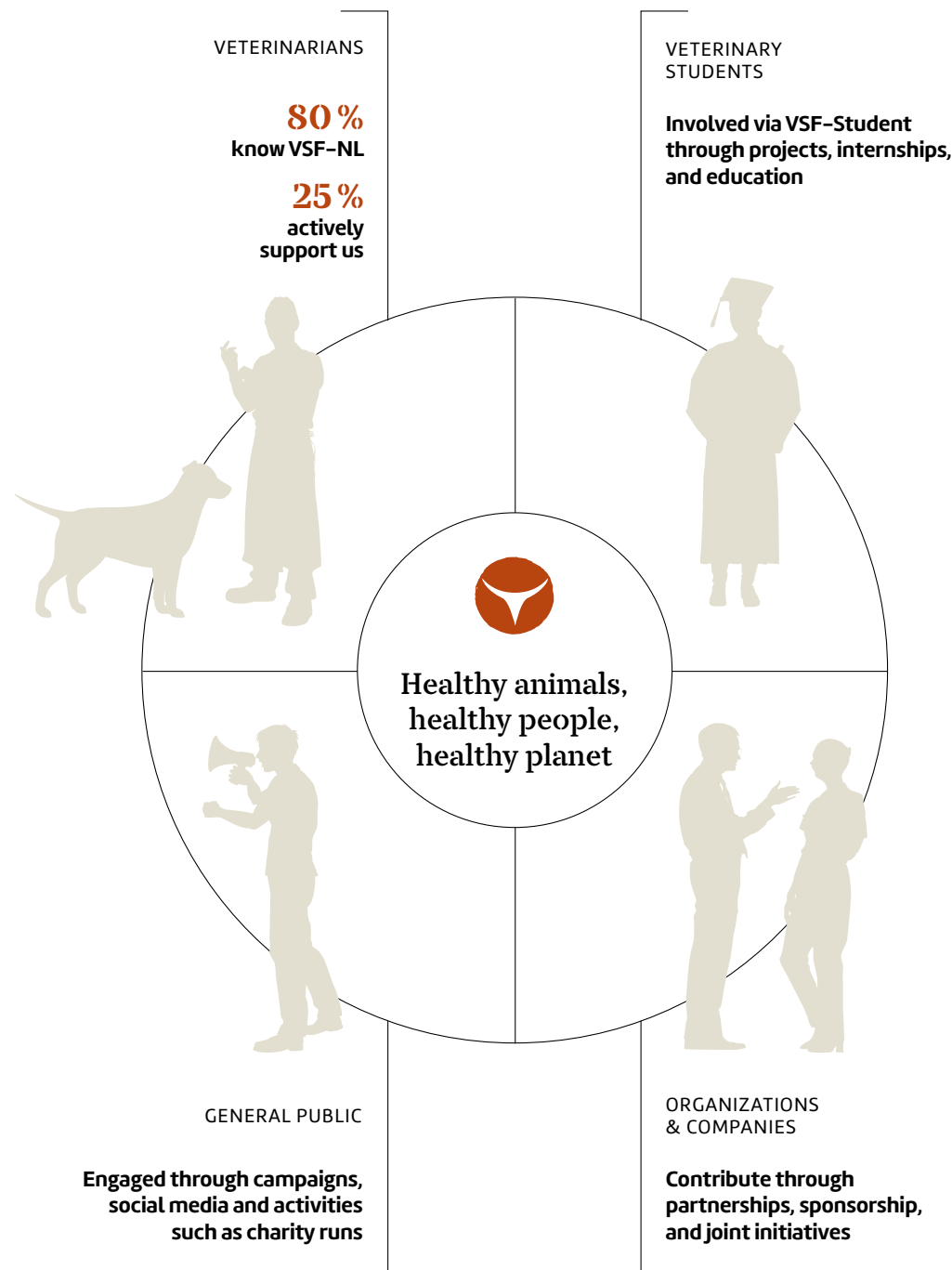
Together with our partner organization CCEI, we are working on long-term improvements. Local community animal health workers are trained and supported, and we are working towards official recognition of their role by the Malawian government. This promotes local ownership, continuity and structural change, essential conditions for long-term sustainable impact.

- **Building together**

We aim to expand our activities within Malawi. By 2030, we aim to collaborate with at least three professional partners and one university in Malawi. In the Netherlands, we continue to invest in awareness and collaboration with, among others, students, veterinarians and educational institutions.

### In the Netherlands...

In the Netherlands, we continue to invest in awareness, engagement and support. We focus on four target groups: veterinarians, veterinary medicine students, organizations/companies and the general public. This creates a solid foundation of future ambassadors, volunteers, and donors. By working together, learning, and inspiring, we make impact possible—also from the Netherlands.





© VSF

In the Netherlands, VSF-NL employs two coordinators. Marlijn Kroezen works two days a week as general coordinator and is responsible for day-to-day operations and communications. In addition, she consults with the board and VSF-Student. Simone Vuijk is the coordinator for projects and partnerships and dedicates 1,5 days a week to communications and fundraising for the projects in Malawi. She works closely with our partner organisation CCEI as well as with key partners and donors. The coordinators make important decisions in consultation with the board of VSF-NL.

## The Organisation

The board sets the direction of the foundation, defines new strategic plans and supervises and gives guidance and feedback to the coordinators. The coordinators are responsible for internal and external communication, fundraising, and (financial) administration.

The board members of Vétérinaires Sans Frontières-Netherlands in 2024:

- **Eveline Mus**, chair
- **Janke Maat**, secretary
- **Sarah Farrand**, treasurer
- **Simone Vuijk**, general board member
- **Marlijn Kroezen**, general board member



© VSF International

## We engage veterinarians, veterinary medicine students, and the broader public through various initiatives.

In 2024, we actively involved multiple target groups in our mission. Through campaigns like **Vaccinate for Africa** and **Run for Rabies**, we raised awareness and collected funds for our projects. In addition to our loyal supporters, new groups also took action for VSF-NL in 2024. For example, several participants joined sponsored walks such as the *Nijmeegse Vierdaagse* and various marathons, raising money for our work in Malawi.

Together with students and researchers from Wageningen University & Research, we organised the *Pastoralists Film Festival*, entirely dedicated to the theme of pastoralism – nomadic livestock farming. The festival offered a unique opportunity to highlight the lives, challenges, and resilience of pastoral communities. It served as a valuable platform for knowledge exchange and to spotlight our shared vision on One Health.

## A word from VSF-Student

VSF-Student has been the student branch of VSF-NL since February 2019. The VSF-Student board consists of five veterinary medicine students and includes five committees: Project Committee, Education Committee, Run for Rabies Committee, Vaccinate for Africa Committee and Activities Committee. These committees are responsible for organising events and campaigns, giving educational lessons at schools, and collaborating with other organisations that work on projects related to animal health. The student board is based at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in Utrecht and follows the mission: **“Healthy animals, healthy people, healthy planet!”**

In 2024, VSF-Student was involved in many activities! On March 5, the Half-Yearly Donor Meeting took place, where we looked back at the past six months and ahead to the upcoming half year. During this meeting, our chair changed, and we welcomed a sixth board member: the internal affairs commissioner.

On May 15, 69 enthusiastic participants joined the **Run for Rabies**, raising €904. During the week of June 3–16, the annual **Vaccinate for Africa campaign** was held. Together with all those involved, we raised a total of €3,990.50!





© Thomas Cytrynowicz / VSF

After the summer break, VSF-Student attended the freshmen weekend and the introduction day to get acquainted with the new first-year veterinary medicine students. A wonderful opportunity to introduce them to our goals and inspire their involvement.

To raise extra funds for the projects in Malawi, a special **deposit bin** was placed at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. Students and staff could donate their empty cans and bottles here, and together we raised a wonderful amount of €741.32 in 2024! The annual **internship lecture** on September 24th was also a success: around 60 visitors came to hear inspiring stories about veterinary internships abroad. During the Yearly Donor Meeting on October 15th, it was time for some changes within the team. We said goodbye to a few board members and welcomed three enthusiastic new ones.

## 2024 in a nutshell

Below is an overview of the activities that took place in 2024. These include both events organized by VSF-Student, as well as events where the student team was present to provide information, network, and/or raise awareness.

**13-17 February**  
VSF-Student Lustrum Week

**17 February**  
Parents' Day

**5 March**  
Half-Yearly Donor Meeting

**12 March**  
Malawi Storytelling Lecture

**19 March**  
VSF Film Festival

Local Partner



© VSF

Since 2018, we have been working in Malawi with our local partner: Centre for Community Empowerment Initiatives (CCEI). The organisation is led by chairman and programme manager Gilbert Banda. Gilbert brings extensive experience in training animal health workers, gained during his previous work with Heifer and other NGOs in Malawi.

CCEI is responsible for designing and implementing new projects, training CAHWs and integrating them into the existing veterinary infrastructure. The organisation also monitors and evaluates ongoing projects. Approximately 60% of CCEI's time is dedicated to work for VSF-NL. The remainder is spent on other initiatives, with a focus on agroforestry and beekeeping.

From left to right, the student board introduces themselves:  
Lisa van Son, Elisa Villares Asencio, Lara Eleveld, Femke Lenes and Daniëlle Veld.



© VSF







## Contact

### Vétérinaires Sans Frontières – Netherlands

Veerstraat 17-1  
1075 SL Amsterdam  
[coordinator@dierenartsenzondergrenzen.nl](mailto:coordinator@dierenartsenzondergrenzen.nl)

RSIN: 858920463  
KVK: 71964843

DONATE

To our bank account  
**NL67 TRIO 0379 3388 66**

or online  
[www.dierenartsenzondergrenzen.nl](http://www.dierenartsenzondergrenzen.nl)



**24 September**

Internship Lecture

**5 October**

Dog Splash Day – Zeist

**7-11 October**

Open Committee Week

**15 October**

Yearly Donor Meeting

**22-24 November**

Board Weekend

**25 November**

Green Team Symposium

**17 December**

Oliebollen Fundraiser

**13 December**

Syrinx Christmas Concert

**5 December**

Green Barney  
Aeres MBO Barneveld

**2-5 December**

Christmas Card Fundraiser

We have represented ourselves at various events this year, such as the **Wild Wildlife Weeks** at Dieren-Park Amersfoort, the **Veterinary Outdoor Event**, and the **Dog Splash Day** in Zeist. In addition, the education committee provided nine lessons to primary school pupils and one lesson to a secondary school class. In these lessons, we explained more about veterinary medicine in developing countries.

Finally, VSF-Student can proudly say that we have continued working on a beautiful [internship book](#) and an [internship experience book](#), created for (international) students who want to work with animals abroad. In short, we look back on a dynamic and active year for VSF-Student!

Educatie © VSF



Run4Rabies © VSF





© Thomas Cytrynowicz / VSF

Follow us



Facebook: @dierenartsenzondergrenzenederland  
Instagram: @dierenartsenzondergrenzen.nl



VSF INTERNATIONAL  
VÉTÉRINAIRES  
SANS FRONTIÈRES

Vétérinaires  
Sans Frontières  
Dierenartsen  
Zonder Grenzen



covetrus



WILDE  
GANZEN  
KLEIN PROJECT GROOT VERSCHIL

the  
edgard  
cooper  
foundation



AFAS FOUNDATION  
inspireert beter doen

