



Annual report 2020
Stichting “Climbing the right tree”

1 February 2021
Diana van der Stelt



Creating career perspective for your Africans with information technology

Climbing the right tree was established in 2017 in the Netherlands as an ANBI under Dutch law.

Our foundation has the aim to support:

- Integrated programs to transform education in West Africa
- Training and job market programs for youth from underprivileged families.

We are working in close collaboration with Maxim Nyansa IT Solutions Foundation in Accra, Ghana. This foundation is an NGO registered under Ghanaian law and takes care of the executions of the projects that are being financed by our foundation. “Climbing the right tree” can also decide to collaborate with other partner organizations with a similar goal.

Our foundation engages in various activities to achieve its mission as a support organization in the Netherlands
We collect slightly used hardware from businesses and organizations in the Netherlands and ship them to Africa
We mobilize ICT professionals as volunteer trainers for professional ICT training programs in West-Africa.
We raise funds
We collaborate with various partners (NGO's, government, educational organizations)
We do PR activities to support our cause.

Board

The board of “Climbing the right tree” consists of the following volunteer members

Klaas Brongers	President
Diana van der Stelt	Secretary / Office director
Julie Bissonnette	Treasurer



Volunteers

We are a charity that is working with 100% volunteers, all passionate professionals who love to give their skills, time and energy to work on the same goal. We do that in international teams, together with our partner foundation in Ghana. We have four dedicated teams.



Logistics team

A logistics team of 6 people, including a collection manager in Oudewater, collects computers with a van, cleans and packages them and loads them into containers to Africa. Team members have been recruited in collaboration with the two Veenendaal volunteer platforms “Veens Vrijwilligers” and “Netwerk voor jou” and are often people who have challenges to enter the job market. Frequently they find their way to a paid job after working with us for a number of months.

Despite lockdown measures and office restrictions, we managed to ship two 40 feet containers full of hardware to Ghana and one container of school furniture.



Professional ICT Trainers

In 2020 a total of 20 ICT professionals were actively involved in training young IT graduates in Ghana, in particular in the field of data science and network security, via “Climbing the right tree”. A team of Data scientists from KPMG and Cap Gemini and various experienced software developers helped us to update our curriculum for our specialization boot camps in data science and software development that have started February 2020 and carry out a full 5 months program. Two professional SCRUM trainers of CONCLUSION travelled to Ghana to assist our program. In March 2020 we had to go virtual and used webinars. In Q3 and Q4 a full network security bootcamp was carried out, involving various webinars by experts from the Netherlands.

PR and communications team

Since 2020, we are part of an international team for the purpose of PR. This is a virtual team with volunteers from all countries where Maxim Nyansa IT Solutions, our mother organization in Ghana, is active. Depending on the activities and grant applications that are being executed, members of these teams collaborate on various tasks online.

This team of 15 volunteers consists of text writers, graphic designers and digital marketers, some of them in the Netherlands and others in Ghana, Belgium, Burkina Faso, The Gambia and Sierra Leone.

The team was very successful in its social media strategy, with a campaign to present the Maxim Nyansa passionate professionals – our volunteers from all over the world. A bilingual professional new website was built to cater for Maxim Nyansa’s international expansion.

Fundraisers and ambassadors

Four senior Dutch fundraisers/ambassadors assist the board in getting support from donor organizations and businesses. In addition we have created an international fundraising team that, similar to the PR and Communications team, works virtually from the various countries with Maxim Nyansa projects. Here too, 5 of the members are from the Netherlands “Climbing the right tree”. We have developed a strategic collaboration with various Dutch NGO’s with a similar mission, who also raise funds and have their projects executed by our professional team in West-Africa.

This team was also very successful. Despite the pandemic – and many charities closing down temporarily OR shifting their funds to health related projects – the income of the foundation increased by



Our facilities in Veenendaal

We are located in Veenendaal, where we have an office, a workshop and a warehouse. These facilities have made it possible for us to scale up and streamline our processes. The building is located in Oost-Veenendaal and also hosts ICT-Valley, the branch organization that unites the 300 ICT companies in the region of Veenendaal, Ede, Wageningen en Gelderse Vallei.

In 2020 we have started a strategic collaboration with this branch organization as its charity partner.



Our strategic targets for 2020 have been largely met - and more!

Our target for 2020 was to establish and grow Climbing the right tree further as a reliable foundation in the Netherlands with a solid support base of individuals and organizations forming a healthy base for the future of the foundation in the next 5 years. We were foreseeing the following three growth paths:

Expansion to other countries: Based on the fact that our mother organization in Ghana Maxim Nyansa IT Solutions Foundation, has won the “Fire Africa Award” we were expecting interest from other countries to start branches.

Results were beyond expectation:

- A fully operational partner NGO in Hasselt, Belgium: GHANA4U

- New branches opened in Burkina Faso and The Gambia

- New branches under construction in Sierra Leone, Nigeria, South- Africa.

Logistics center in Veenendaal: Our target was to expand our center in Veenendaal and have a strong collaboration with partners in the region. To create a valuable volunteer working place for people in the region who want to increase their career opportunities, while we are helping businesses to take charge of their social responsibility.

Results were delayed considerably because of the pandemic

- An expanded and nicely setup office and logistics center at Grebbeweg

- Our own branded van for hardware collection

- A strategic partnership with ICT Valley branch organization

- Most network and media opportunities were cancelled because of COVID

Scientific evidence on the impact of our interventions: We wanted to continue our collaboration with universities in the Netherlands and to create a method to prove the effectiveness of our projects.

Results were beyond expectation:

- Internship of 2 ICT students from Christian University Ede helped with the scale up of our logistics process with various digital transformation tools.

- Internship and bachelor thesis of a Development studies student from the WUR

- A research master thesis developing an impact assesment methodology with the University of Utrecht (Business informatics, ICT4Development).

- An international project creating interactive teaching materials for the new Maxim Nyansa digital library with 12 students of Educational College de Driestar in Gouda.

All reports from these projects can be found on

[Publications – Maxim Nyansa IT Solutions](#)



Our community grows steadily, but we have been facing losses too

Since we opened a first office in Veenendaal in August 2018, we have seen a steady growth of the number of people who come and work there and enjoy being part of our team. They are youth who are getting job experience before reintegration, as well as “new comers”. Qualified professionals who have joined as part of their integration to the Dutch job market after a career in another country. Multiple students do internships and thesis work with us and become part of our multicultural Maxim Nyansa Family.

In addition, the passionate professionals who join us in the various volunteer teams are very happy to be part of our Maxim Nyansa family. An internal report confirmed that the work and social culture of our international organization is very good. Spontaneously, these volunteers bring their friends and colleagues, talk about us during parties and on social media.

We also faced sad set backs.

Not only did our highly appreciated president of Maxim Nyansa, Samuel Waterberg, pass away after a visit to the Netherlands, in March. Our corner stone logistics manager Pim Tibben had to step down because of health issues for half a year. And finally, tragically, our former logistics manager and volunteer trainer, Peter Scheele, passed away just before the new year. The whole pandemic has also been particularly difficult for the logistics team, as this type of work cannot be done from home. Some of our volunteers dropped out in this period.



The COVID Pandemic has delayed our work...and also boosted innovations

We started 2020 very well with the establishment of 2 new international volunteer teams (PR team and Fundraising team) and a growing number of logistics volunteers in Veenendaal. The Rabobank decided to donate us an IVECO VAN to collect hardware. We shipped a 40 ft container and we managed to recruit a large group of volunteers in the Netherlands for a double bootcamp: for the first time Maxim Nyansa was going to run a 4 months double bootcamp for both software development and data science. We were able to fill that roster with multiple volunteers while catering for trainees from Ghana, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone and The Gambia.

Three students started research projects and internships with us in the first quarter.

Early March, we were unfortunately forced to close our doors for 12 weeks because of the pandemic, just after the tragic death of our president of the board in Ghana, Samuel Waterberg, who got the virus in the Netherlands and passed away 2 weeks later in Accra.

Multiple tickets to Ghana were cancelled, programs moved online and handed over to Ghanaian professionals who stepped in wholeheartedly and did a very excellent job. Our fundraising flow also slowed down considerably. Many boards of donor organisations delayed or shifted their complete budget to crisis interventions related to the pandemic. Hardware collections stopped for about three months too.

Various large media exposures in the Netherlands that were planned slowed down or were postponed to 2021. Network opportunities in the Veenendaal region were down to zero.

None of these setbacks were going to stop us!

We decided to relaunch an old project proposal for a digital library to give access to quality open source learning materials for African school children, school teachers and ICT professionals. That plan received funding almost immediately and we were able to fund both the software development and the employment of a professional digital librarian in Ghana to manage that platform. A beta version is now live and is already receiving a lot of interest internationally.

We also decided to work hard on our further professionalism in PR and fundraising and produced:

- A charity partnership concept for ICT companies and other businesses

- Multiple professional PR materials, brochures

- A cool new bilingual international website

- [Maxim Nyansa IT Solutions – The best of two worlds](#)

- A professional process flow for hardware collection

- CBF accreditation (expected to be finalized Q1 2021)

- A multi annual fundraising plan.

Just before the Netherlands went back into a lockdown and 2nd wave of Corona, we managed to ship another container full of hardware.



Performance indicators 2020

KPI	What has been done.	Result
Raise 80.000 for 40 IT professionals to be trained in specialisation bootcamps of 4 months	Ca. 40.000 was raised, only 50% of the financial target. Q1-Q2 15 trainees did bootcamps in software development and data science, 14 graduated. Q3-Q4 10 trainees participated in a single bootcamp in network security A 3 week entrepreneurship training has been funded but had to be postponed to 2021 because of COVID restrictions.	75%
Raise 25.000 EUR for school projects Maxim Nyansa	Mostly achieved via fruitful collaboration with various other NGO's, like Go Ghana, Ghana4U and Macina Foundation funding various joint projects.	100%
Explore and pilot Maxim Nyansa in two new West African countries	Explorations have been executed and exchange of trainees has started. New branches in Burkina Faso and the Gambia, preparations for Nigeria, Sierra Leone and South Africa ongoing.	150%
Ship 4 40 feet containers	2 40 feet containers shipped with hardware 1 40 feet container shipped with school furniture	75 %
60 volunteers in The Netherlands	Achieved, but we need more continuity and expansion in the logistics team.	100%
Root logistics center in Veenendaal	ICT Valley has adopted us as their charity partner in their board meeting in August. We have enlarged our office workshop and warehouse and branded it nicely, but we have not been able to meet the financial target and reach out to local businesses. We got a very affordable van with a grant from the Rabobank and branded it.	75%
Collaboration with Universities and educational colleges.	Various internships, exchange projects and theses with 2 universities and 2 educational colleges in the Netherlands. An impact assesment methodology has been developed by the University of Utrecht master student Maarten Smulders. A first presentation was done at the AFRICA KNOWS conference December 2020.	200%
2 important media exposures in the Netherlands	Various events were postponed to 2021 including a large conference of KNVI in June. As an alternative, our PR team did an excellent soical media campaign about our passionnal professionals. Our director Stanley Dankyira is now famous on national radio show Peace FM "After Church Show"	100%



Formal

Stichting “Climbing the Right Tree” was established on 13 November 2017 and has been registered at the Kamer van Koophandel under number 70071454. We have acquired ANBI status as a charity approved by the Dutch tax authorities.

An independent financial audit committee has audited our financial administration and annual accounts and has approved it. The board of our foundation has formally decided on the annual report and financial report in its meeting of 13 May 2021.



Annex 1 Donations in kind – volunteer input

As indicated in this annual report, “Climbing the right tree” is mobilizing a considerable amount of volunteers to run its operation and to produce support for its mission. This annex describes and quantifies this input. Volunteers can declare their costs. The logistics manager receives a modest volunteer allowance. These donations in kind have **not** been incorporated in EUROS in our financial annual accounts.

In 2020 the following hours were dedicated to the cause of “Climbing the right tree”:

Role	Hours	Weeks	#Persons	Total Hours
Director/board secretary	20	40	1	800
PR and fundraising manager	20	40	2	1600
Logistics manager	20	40	1	800
Internal auditor/fundraiser	10	20	1	200
Logistics volunteers	10	20	6	1200
Other board members	2	40	2	160
Other PR team/ambassadors	2	30	4	240
Interns ICT CHE	20	20	2	800
Research project student master	40	40	1	1600
Research project student bachelor	40	10	1	400
Bootcamp coordinators	10	5	4	200
Total			25	8000

The following donations in kind have been incorporated in our financial annual accounts:

- Hardware donations at market value as slightly used economically depreciated goods
- Commercial services such as webinars and training programs by professionals and learning materials that are normally copy righted – at market value.

Our volunteers have a very broad profile:

- Professionals who decide to dedicate part of their time to our mission
- Newcomers with an academic background who work with us during their integration into the Dutch society
- People with a distance to the job market on social welfare benefits
- Students who do projects with us as part of their academic program
- 2/3 is male
- Age varies from 18 to 70 years
- Education level from vocational to post-academic

In African countries the work of Maxim Nyansa is also largely carried out by volunteers. These international hours have not been incorporated in this report.

