

# Strategy Plan 2021-2025

(Beleidsplan 2021 – 2025)

## Contents

<b>1 - Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
Origins	3
Statutory Goals	3
Results	3
<b>2 - Activities 2016-2020 (short review)</b>	<b>4</b>
First five years	4
<b>3 - Activities envisaged 2021-2025</b>	<b>5</b>
Strategies	5
Current Projects	5
<b>4 - Organisation and Governance</b>	<b>10</b>
Board	10
Director	10
Oversight	10
Volunteers at HAN	11
Privacy policy (AVG)	11
Risk management	11
<b>5 - Finances</b>	<b>13</b>
Budget	13
Payments and Monitoring	13
Relation expenditures and overhead costs	14
Financial accounting	14
<b>6 - Fundraising</b>	<b>15</b>
Activities	15
Donors	15
Reporting	15
<b>7 - Cooperation with partner NGOs</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>8 - Communication with stakeholders</b>	<b>17</b>
Facebook	17
Website	17
<b>9 - Caveat</b>	<b>18</b>

## 1 – Introduction

### Origins

Human Aid Now (HAN) is a grassroots charity registered in the Netherlands and recognized as ANBI. Founded in September 2016 to support refugees in Northern Greece, its original name was Human Aid in Greece (HAIG). It changed its name in 2019 as its mission expanded to Serbia, France, Bosnia, Belgium and the Netherlands.

Human Aid Now is a purely humanitarian organisation. We do not take any political standpoint about the migration crisis. We work with passion and respect. We endeavour to deliver our services whilst preserving as much as we can the dignity of the people we help, and acting in the most sustainable manner possible.

### Statutory Goals

Human Aid Now aims to facilitate humanitarian aid for refugees, by providing

- food
- medical care
- clothes (and shoes, blankets, hygiene items) and
- enhancing safety, shelter facilities and information (concerning asylum procedures, family reunification and legal questions).

### Results

Originally, HAIG concentrated on providing basic humanitarian aid to refugees in transit, carried out by volunteers. These volunteers often only stayed for one or two weeks. To provide more continuity and enhance their efficiency, the Help a Hero-Programme has been developed for long-term volunteers since 2018, matching them to donors to fund some of their personal costs of living (to a maximum of €500/ per month), enabling them to stay, as well as supporting their projects, advising them upon request and connecting them to other experts and suppliers. The latest step is setting up a 'Grassroots Academy', to further professionalize grassroots humanitarian aid. It will provide access to knowledge, experiences and training to a larger group than just our heroes and connect them to a network within and outside the grassroots sector. For specific details on the various projects, see below.

## 2 – Activities 2016-2020 (short review)

### First five years

Initially, HAIG and later HAN provided Emergency Response: food, clothes, tents, blankets, hygiene items, medicine, legal information together with mental support to refugees in refugee camps in various countries. Efforts were made to encourage Dutch students to volunteer in the camps and to raise funds. As the Help a Hero-Programme evolved, various Heroes and their projects were supported. During the covid-pandemic lockdowns, bringing food, clothes and medicine to Brussels, Paris, Calais and Dunkirk was not possible anymore. The focus remained on supporting the projects in Greece, as well as intensifying support in Amsterdam for groups of predominantly undocumented people, urgently in need of food and hygiene items.

## 3 – Activities envisaged 2021-2025

### Strategies

From the outset, Human Aid Now has been providing the most basic necessities to refugees who have no access to regular support. Therefore, HAN is continuously operating in fluid situations, often also politically sensitive ones. This requires a hands-on approach, adapting on the go, doing whatever is possible whilst maintaining the highest standards of transparency and integrity.

HAN only acts on urgent humanitarian needs, with respect for the local context. If the safety of volunteers is threatened, the line is drawn.

Wherever possible, the beneficiaries themselves are involved with full responsibilities, for example cooking, translating, being a liaison with other refugees, and informing them. This gives these refugees a sense of purpose and an opportunity to develop themselves.

If a humanitarian situation truly improves, an exit strategy is drawn up and followed.

For the coming years, the endeavour is to increase focus, enhance both efficiency and competences of volunteers, and in general to search for ways to scale up, share knowledge and continue cooperating with other humanitarian NGOs in the field. As situations evolve, we envisage shifts, notably in Amsterdam, where needs are expected to gradually diminish when the lockdown is over.

### Current Projects

In a nutshell, HAN is at present supporting three projects in Greece, including some of their long-term volunteers through the Help-a-Hero programme; coordinating a big covid-related food project in Amsterdam; and setting up the Grassroots Academy (working title).

#### Help a Hero-Programme

As described above, the Help a Hero-Programme was set up to allow experienced volunteers to commit to a longer stay (of at least 6 months and possibly several years), live and work on-site on a full-time basis, and take a leading position within the projects, providing basic humanitarian necessities. Several Heroes have started their own project (Justyna, Hope, Sophie and Michael) and have been able to do so, thanks to HAN's support. Heroes are admitted into the Programme either upon their own request or sought out by HAN. Heroes coordinate other volunteers, cooperate with complementary NGOs working in the field, and safeguard

#### Stichting Human Aid Now

Chamber of commerce: 66805759 / IBAN: NL64 ABNA 0479 7172 73 / BIC: ABNANL2A  
Baambrugse Zuwe 157, 3645 AG Vinkeveen The Netherlands

continuity, efficiency and expertise in the projects. They are requested to submit monthly reports and receipts of all expenditures financed through HAN. Besides receiving a monthly reimbursement for costs of living (to a maximum of € 500), the Heroes have regular -(bi-)monthly and if necessary, even weekly- contact with their contact person on the HAN Board. HAN thus aims to provide personal support and advice, making use of the Board members' own experience in the field and leveraging their network, as the situation demands. The Board is responsible for setting up a match and for reporting back to the Heroes' donors. Until now, a Code of Conduct was not yet drawn up, but the Board aims to do so in 2021. In the context of developing a Grassroots Academy (see below), feedback is being collected on the experiences and needs of the Heroes (past and present), as HAN continues to develop as a learning organisation. This will undoubtedly lead to new developments in the coming period.

### **Wave Thessaloniki, Greece**

Wave Thessaloniki has been set up for the most vulnerable refugee groups, people left out of the system and/or in transit, who cannot stay in camps and live in the streets. The Wave team serves over 10.000 hot meals per week and equips newly arriving people with essential supplies like shoes, warm clothes, drinking water and hygiene items. HAN also covers the costs of the premises, vehicle, cooking material and miscellaneous items like face masks and gel. Wave Thessaloniki consists of an independent group of volunteers, several of whom are very experienced and supported through the Help a Hero-Programme: Hope, Justyna until May 2021 and Isa during a few months in 2021. Isa formerly worked as a Hero with CollectiveAid near the Serbian-Hungarian border. The flat they rent also houses short-term volunteers.

### **Mobile Info Team Thessaloniki, Greece**

The Mobile Info Team (MIT) consists of some ten to fifteen (legal and translator) volunteers from across Europe. They deliver legal information to over 10,000 refugees weekly through regular social media posts, visits to camps and visits to refugees on the street. MIT focuses on helping obtain the right documents for asylum procedures and family reunification cases, mostly for unaccompanied minors in Greece. MIT also has a daily hotline service where asylum seekers can request tailored assistance for their asylum questions. Its coordinator and founder Michael has been in Greece since 2016 and is supported through the Help a Hero-Programme. Community volunteer translators are also supported, thanks to individual donation commitments. And finally, items such as mobile phones and laptops have been covered through the programme.

### **Stichting Human Aid Now**

Chamber of commerce: 66805759 / IBAN: NL64 ABNA 0479 7172 73 / BIC: ABNANL2A  
Baambrugse Zuwe 157, 3645 AG Vinkeveen The Netherlands

### Med'Equaliteam Samos, Greece

The camps in Samos are home to over 5.000 residents, whilst only being fit to hold 650. Most refugees sleep in makeshift tents in the hills surrounding the camp. Diseases and infections, such as scabies, are rampant in the camps and previously, there was no primary health care.

As coordinator for DocMobile in Greece, Sophie identified the medical needs in Samos. In July 2018, with support from HAN, she founded the Med'EqualiTeam for Samos and established a free clinic, open six days a week, where she and her team help on average 2.500 patients a month. So HAN provided initial seed-money for this project, but now provides less than 10% of the financing.

Sophie is supported through HAN's Help a Hero-Programme. Jeanine, a Dutch doctor, has been temporarily supported during a short period in 2021, to coordinate the project whilst Sophie was back in France. Another volunteer of the Med'EqualiTeam, Megan, receives a monthly reimbursement through HAN and medicines are financed, too.

With refugees from Syria, Iraq, Iran, but also from Eritrea, Somalia and Afghanistan and Africa, communication can be an issue. On average five to eight refugees are available to provide translation services.

### Grassroots Academy (working title)

Since 2019, HAN has been reflecting on how to increase impact, notwithstanding the relatively modest means at HAN's disposal. Based on the current grassroots landscape, long term volunteers in grassroots humanitarian aid need easier access to organizational tools and personalized support. Project continuity and knowledge transfer are great challenges. Long-term volunteers are often highly motivated, well-educated individuals without previous work experience. They need to develop project management skills and a relevant network.

Up until now, HAN has been helping a limited group of volunteers with 1-1 guidance concerning obstacles of this sort. In 2020, HAN started to explore how to enhance and increase its impact. From this, the idea of the 'Grassroots Academy' arose. With this concept, HAN aims to create a digital centre of knowledge, providing a platform for training, supporting volunteers, peer-exchange, sharing expertise and good practices, thus helping more people and doing it better; in fact, enhancing the impact of the whole grassroots humanitarian aid community.

As a first step towards the development of this concept, HAN participated in a competition initiated by the DCHI (Dutch Coalition for Humanitarian Innovation), the Accelerator Challenge, aimed at finding, developing and scaling innovative solutions and developing new business models for humanitarian aid. HAN made a

### Stichting Human Aid Now

Chamber of commerce: 66805759 / IBAN: NL64 ABNA 0479 7172 73 / BIC: ABNANL2A  
Baambrugse Zuwe 157, 3645 AG Vinkeveen The Netherlands

video pitch and won the first prize, worth € 10.000. This enables HAN - supported by DCHI - to set up the Grassroots Academy.

Currently, the project is in its initial research phase. Catarina, trained in Design Thinking, joined HAN to outline and lead the development of the 'Grassroots Academy'. As part of the innovation process, she has conducted interviews with past and present Heroes, to get feedback on their experiences, additional support or empowerment they may have needed/need, and how that could have been/be arranged. She is also compiling an overview of potential partners in the field and establishing strategic partnerships and collaboration opportunities.

So far, we have identified several needs such as the need for self-management tools, support in team development, conflict resolution, fundraising and networking. Above all, such information needs to be easily accessible for the key coordinating volunteers, supporting them without infringing on their dealings with urgent matters.

This exciting new project may entail developing content and software, as we explore where the added value can be greatest.

### **Food project Amsterdam, the Netherlands**

Since September 2016, HAIG and later HAN has been providing food and other basic needs items on a weekly basis to small groups of undocumented refugees in Amsterdam. Due to the corona-pandemic, the needs increased steeply, as thousands of undocumented families who used to sustain themselves through the parallel economy (cleaners, nannies, etc) lost their income from one day to the next. The same fate hit a number of people 'with papers', who for various reasons did not qualify for regular food aid from the Food Banks, although they had sorely insufficient means of subsistence. Since March 2020, we have been cooperating with several other NGOs, churches, and citizen-initiatives to deliver a weekly food package and basic hygiene items to 2.800 families, reaching approximately 10.000 people and involving 30.000 kg of food each week. We receive donations in kind from several big producers and buy the remainder of basic food staples, hygiene items and diapers for the babies in bulk at a great discount, thanks to our contacts with wholesale suppliers. We deliver to organisations in the communities, whose volunteers compile and distribute the food and hygiene packages. HAN does the fundraising, coordination and project management, bulk buying, organizing logistics, volunteers, administration and reporting back to the donors.

This food project is financed by private social funds, as well as the city council of Amsterdam and two local councils (stadsdelen West and Nieuw West). There has been complementary cooperation with Dutch Red Cross since the beginning of the project and the city's local teams (MaDi's) are increasingly involved.

#### **Stichting Human Aid Now**

Chamber of commerce: 66805759 / IBAN: NL64 ABNA 0479 7172 73 / BIC: ABNANL2A  
Baambrugse Zuwe 157, 3645 AG Vinkeveen The Netherlands

The dire covid-situation has made visible groups who had hitherto remained under the radar and who do not have access to regular facilities. It is not yet clear whether HAN will remain involved after the pandemic, for example in strengthening those grassroots organisations which support undocumented families and by exception also others who fall through the cracks of the system, by providing expertise on how to set up and sustain specific projects to address their basic needs. The fact that these formerly 'invisible' people have been helped throughout the pandemic -and the innovative cooperation between all the donors involved- has heightened awareness of problems previously undisclosed; that in itself is a valuable side-effect.

## 4 – Organisation and Governance

### **Board**

The Board at present consists of three members with the respective positions of Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. Collectively, they are responsible for the long-term vision, strategic planning, budgeting and running of HAN as organisation. According to the present Statutes, their terms are indefinite. The aim is to install four-year terms and a maximum of three terms, the next time the Statutes are changed (once both the requirements of the WBTR and the upcoming law concerning Digital Meetings are finalized by the Dutch government). Meanwhile, the Board maintains a high standard of integrity and complies with the regulations concerning conflicts of interest. Decisions need to be backed by at least two out of three members, but they are usually taken by common consent. There is frequent contact between the Board members and with the Director, as well as with the Heroes and volunteers working on the Grassroots Academy and Social Media. Board members are volunteers too, and are not entitled to any financial compensation. HAN's own functioning, both internal and external, is evaluated by the Board at least once a year.

### **Director**

HAN has one Director who works in close collaboration with the Board and oversees the execution of all the projects according to the Budgets approved by the Board, pays the reimbursements and receipts, does the coordination and administration and prepares funding applications, the financial accounts and reports to donors. The Director maintains a high standard of integrity and complies with the regulations concerning conflicts of interest. Throughout the Amsterdam food project, the Director maintains close contact with the wholesale suppliers and food producers, donors, grassroot organisations distributing the food packages and hygiene items, the volunteers, other organisations such as the Red Cross and the MaDi's. The Director also maintains contact with the Heroes in Greece, alongside their contact person on the Board. The Director takes part in the development of the Grassroots Academy and is aware of the work pertaining to Social Media. The Director is a volunteer and is not entitled to any financial compensation. The Director participates in the yearly evaluation of HAN's own functioning.

### **Oversight**

HAN does not have a Supervisory Board ('Raad van Toezicht'). HAN is a relatively small organisation, the contacts are both direct and regular, including all directly involved in the organisation, the Heroes and their projects, the main donors and

the grassroots organisations HAN cooperates with. The Board and Director keep the Founder updated and he reaches out within his network to support new developments. HAN has considered appointing Ambassadors; this may materialize in future to highlight the projects and generate further support.

## **Volunteers at HAN**

In 2020, Google Ads awarded HAN publicity space, worth € 10.000 a month maximum. HAN is providing content to use this space for an awareness-enhancing and fundraising campaign. Amin, with graphic talents and Social Media experience, is developing the format and design. As this unfolds, results will be monitored and evaluated to achieve maximum impact.

Catarina, involved in designing the Grassroots Academy (see above), is also directly involved in the core organisation at present.

About 200 volunteers participate in the Amsterdam Food project each week, and hundreds more in our Heroes' projects.

## **Privacy policy (AVG)**

Following the Privacy Policy regulations implemented throughout Europe in 2018, HAN has drawn up a Privacy policy, published on its website [www.humanaidnow.org](http://www.humanaidnow.org). This is evaluated yearly and updated when necessary.

## **Risk management**

The risks to be mitigated are relatively limited. Expenditures are kept strictly in line with the budget, which in turn is based on available funds (committed and received). HAN has practically no overhead costs and no employment relations. HAN has a simple archive system and does its administration with an accounting package, generously donated by a social fund; this avoids mistakes which could arise in administration done by hand. HAN does not keep any sensitive private information concerning its beneficiaries.

One of the main risks HAN identifies is the personal one. HAN's Director is crucial to the Amsterdam food project, and likewise each Hero is crucial to their respective projects. Up until now, each time a Hero leaves, they have been able to ensure adequate succession.

Risks HAN has practically no influence on, constitute the fluid context in which NGOs helping refugees have to work. This makes the challenges of building sustainable projects even bigger. They start as informal pioneering initiatives and some over time evolve and need a different kind of support. Hence too the



exploration, how best to support such a process, for example through the Grassroots Academy.

Finally, a drop in donations would also immediately affect HAN's work. HAN aims to keep close contact with (potential) donors, is transparent in its reporting, keeps its own overhead costs low, and supports an efficient addressing of basic humanitarian needs. This ensures donors get value for their contributions.

## 5 – Finances

### **Budget**

In 2020, 99% of the funds received by HAN were raised for specific projects, including 80% for the Amsterdam food project, which arose as an emergency response to the lockdown situation which made some 10.000 people dependent on food aid. In other words, when HAN identifies an opportunity to respond in a humanitarian crisis, it draws up a plan, makes a call to action, approaches donors and volunteers, and then finalizes the budget and takes on expenditures to the extent that committed funds allow. In the course of 2021 as the lockdown measures end, the Amsterdam food project is expected to phase out. The refugee situation in Greece is volatile, so it is impossible to plan ahead for years, although obviously the intention is to provide humanitarian services as long as they are needed and allowed. The Heroes are usually involved from anywhere between six months to several years. HAN generally commits to six-months periods of support. The Grassroots Academy is in its initial phase and it is still too early to determine what budget it will require.

Given these fluid situations, it is not possible for HAN to make a long-term budget. In each concrete situation, HAN's budget is very precise, is communicated to (potential) donors, is reported on afterwards and aims to maximize the benefit for the refugees in need of basic humanitarian assistance.

And HAN closely monitors all commitments of both donors and HAN, keeping a monthly record of the budgetary status of all projects and the organisation as a whole.

### **Payments and Monitoring**

All payments are done according to a simple principle: they must follow from the accorded budget, based on the funds actually committed and received. For the Heroes' costs of living, the receipts are checked by the responsible Board member and then paid by the Director, thus following the 4-eyes principle. For the Grassroots Academy, the same holds. For the projects, only the Director reviews the bills and receipts (these involve medical supplies, large quantities of food and other items clearly related to the project's budget). For the Amsterdam food project, some payments for the wholesale suppliers must be drawn directly from the bank account because of the discounts involved. The orders themselves are in line with the budget and the payments are checked on a weekly basis immediately following the delivery by the Director. The Director gives a monthly financial update to the Board concerning all payments and the Treasurer can check all payments any time.

## **Relation expenditures and overhead costs**

In principle, HAN is committed to keeping acquisition and overhead costs below 10% of incoming funds. In practise, HAN is very proud of the fact that so far, those costs have been kept under 1%, which means that over 99% of the money donated has been spent on-site for the projects providing basic necessities such as food, clothing, shoes, tents, blankets and legal and medical services, with all the work being done by volunteers.

## **Financial accounting**

During the early years, the income and expenditures were relatively modest, so the Board drew up an Annual Financial Report and published it on the website but did not have an external check done. In 2021, due to the scope and reporting requirements of a donor, an external accountant will check the books of the Amsterdam food project.

## 6 – Fundraising

### Activities

To raise funds, HAN has developed a broad palette of activities: benefit dinners and events, funding appeals (through mailings, Facebook and the website), presentations for interested companies, and funding applications to donor-organisations. Due to the lockdown measures during the pandemic, live events and presentations were not possible during 2020 and the first half of 2021. The focus is now on the Google Ad campaign and funding applications. When the situation allows, live events will be resumed. HAN is open to developing new ideas on sustainable funding or generating income during the coming years, whilst remaining focused on our humanitarian mission.

### Donors

HAN's activities are supported by a broad kaleidoscope of people and organisations: private donors, businesses, churches, social funds ('vermogensfondsen') and local government authorities (city of Amsterdam and stadsdelen West and NorthWest). Regular contact is maintained, also concerning dilemmas and challenges encountered. And of course, all the volunteer-work and contributions in-kind must also be mentioned here. The projects in Greece partially raise extra funds for their activities themselves.

### Reporting

Transparency is a key value for Human Aid Now. We report on each cent that is spent and we are always very happy to inform donors on projects they support. The big donors check our expenditures in detail. We maintain the highest standard of accuracy, because we value their trust and believe that this is the best way to ensure support for our work, to the benefit of our beneficiaries.

## 7 – Cooperation with partner NGOs

To increase the efficiency and scope of our humanitarian aid, our projects often work in close collaboration with like-minded NGOs. In Greece, this is done informally. In Amsterdam, there is close collaboration with the Amsterdam Red Cross as well as the Wereldhuis, migrant churches and citizen-initiatives such as Stap Verder and Volksbond. The Grassroots Academy, at present in an initial phase, is reaching out to partner NGOs for collaboration. We greatly value such cooperation and it is essential to our way of working.

## 8 – Communication with stakeholders

### Newsletter and mailing

Several times a year, we send a Newsletter to people who subscribed. At the end of the year, we send a Christmas mailing.

### Facebook

We regularly post updates on our activities on Facebook. This provides information to beneficiaries, volunteers, donors and other people who are interested in our activities.

### Website

On our website ([www.humanaidnow.org](http://www.humanaidnow.org)), we publish basic information concerning HAN's mission, activities - including recent updates, the strategy plan, annual reports - including a concise statement of income and expenses, the privacy policy, many of our donors, and contact details of the Board members and Director. Thus, we aim to comply with the ANBI-regulations and be transparent to all our stakeholders and all others who are interested in our work. We are always open to receiving extra questions or suggestions.

## 9 – Caveat

As situations change, our priorities may evolve; as explained above, looking (too far) ahead is not possible. Given the fact that we work in situations of crisis and provide basic humanitarian aid, this agility and flexibility, combined with the sustainability and professionalism of being an NGO, actually constitute our strength.

And as long as humanitarian needs are not seen as basic human rights which are a collective responsibility, we do depend on the generosity and commitment of donors, grassroot organisations, volunteers and people with a big heart to make our work possible. We are thankful for all those who share a sense of basic responsibility and common humanity, for there can be no doubt about the necessity to act.

Human Aid Now,  
Amsterdam 2021-06-16