

#  June 2022

# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Before writing you about the key events for fiscal year 2021, it is my duty to inform you that this “Letter from the President” refers to a “short” fiscal year: the Board decided late 2020 to align our fiscalyear 2021 with the calendar year which means that fiscal year 2021 only covers **9 months**, namely from April to December 2021. When you read the report, please be aware that comparisons may not be entirely proportional. As from fiscal year 2022, fiscal and calendar year will thus be aligned on a 12-month basis.

Covid made 2020 into a year of total “virtuality” for United Fund for Belgium. 2021 brought us the first signs of the new reality:we have remained mainly virtual when it came to our daily operations, but we had one “hybrid” Board Meeting in September last year! The good news is that 2022 seems to allow us to reactivate many in person activities.

Unfortunately, in July 2021, the Walloon Region was hit by massive rainfalls followed by disastrous floods. We thus instantly launched a special “SOS Floods”Campaign supporting our Associations in their effort to restore their operations as well as to adapt to the new normal. This urgent campaign turned out to be a financial success: we raised 213k€ in a very short period, supporting **9 special ‘SOS Floods’ projects.**

On the contrary, our autumn activities were again limited to our Golf Tournament and several digital events, which once again turned out to be well attended but financially very poor. Needless to say that we continue learning dailyon how to navigate this never ending Covid pandemic and the new normal it has generated. I can now confirm to you that as an organization, we definitely have withstood this brutal storm. Once again, our donors, our Board and our Executive Team have performed superbly in these very, very difficult circumstances.And last year’s quotefrom Churchill who said: “Difficulties mastered are opportunities won”is still very valid and I believe we have continuedto be as close as we can to our beneficiary organizations and donors and have continued to lay the foundation for more opportunities.

During the Campaign 2021, United Fund for Belgium has **financed projects** for **519k€** distributing that amount to **50 different charity projects** from associations across the whole country, including the **9** projects supported as part of the “SOS Floods” campaign. Please remind yourselves of my introductory note: this covers only a 9-month period.

As importantly, we have continued to diversify our sources of funding. **Corporate donations 526k€** (vs 598k€ in a 12-month 2020) remain of course the single largest component and remained very healthy this year. They were reinforced by very successful **in house-campaigns** at some of our donors **77k€** (the highest amount ever) and sustained **individual gifts 16k€**.

Covid-19 continued to hit us particularly hard in the profitsfrom **sales & fundraising events** with a total amount of **49k€**. The merchandise sales activities, such as the Dandoy Speculoos at St Nicolas& the Galler chocolatewere still successfulwith an amount of **21k€** but when it comes to other events (**28k€**), the situation was dramatical.

Fortunately, donations helped us to cover **operational costs** for **46k€** and/or build up the Martin Kallen Fund.

As a result of all this, **total contributions** reached **717k€** (vs 845k€ in a 12-month 2020) this year, lower than last year but we can consider this as a success in these very difficult Covid-19 conditions and on a 9-month basis.

As mentioned before, this year, **donations collected** via the corporate & individual fundraising campaign will be distributed to **50** different charity projects across the whole country.

I have the pleasure to share with you that our efforts to professionalize and digitalize our operationsare reaching the end and I want to thank all of those who have made this possible through 2 years of hard work in exceptional circumstances.

We have started this new fiscal year2022 with a different mindset:we are ableto holdsomeserious “live” activities given the improvement in the Covid-19 situation. The team is determined to be closer than ever to our current communities, so that together we can continue supporting social integration in Belgium, a need that is better understood by us all than ever beforeas this painful period in our history as human societies seems to slowly move into an endemic phase.

This year 2022 is an exceptional year as we celebrate our 50-year existence. The unique success that United Fund for Belgium has achieved over those 50 years is, however, owed mainly to our **donors** and to the many **volunteers** who help and have helped our cause (including the members of the Board Committees and my colleagues in the Board of Directors). As President, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of them and invite all of you to join us in these celebrations particularly our Gala Dinner to be held on June 16th. Hope to see many of you there.



Dirk Luyten

President

United Fund for Belgium