

# Annual Report New Silk Roads Foundation 2020

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The year 2020 was unique and unprecedented for everyone all over the world due to a pandemic that affected all of us in more than one way. The values of the silk roads of the past have gained even more value in this year full of disruptions: trust, connectedness and international solidarity. All our projects, advice and support are inspired by these values and we can be proud of what has been achieved. We made decisive progress as a guide to see the world differently, even more different than it already looks due to the challenging economic, (geo)political and societal context that will continue in 2021 and much longer than we would like to see.

We are pleased that we continued to develop various projects to support our partners in their international, social and creative business. Our main current projects will be explained in this annual report, but we like to highlight the Vertical Atlas and the Future Thinking School because it shows our progress so well.

The Vertical Atlas is a new atlas to help us navigate the digital geopolitics of the world today. It is currently finalized by a diverse group of more than 50 international designers, artists and thinkers from over 20 countries. The first confidential drafts are very promising.

The Future Thinking School organizes future thinking masterclasses focused on imagining alternative futures and giving training on specific future thinking skills, such as signal identification, back casting, foresight, and scenario-building. The first pilot was successfully launched in Tunis and we can't wait to see the follow up!

On a more organizational level we continue to further professionalize our governance. Formalizing policies, unifying our contract models and optimizing our finance report systems are just examples of our ongoing progress in this respect.

For 2021 we would love to get rid of the context of the pandemic, but for now it seems we are just dealing with that context for even longer. For New Silk Roads the prospects have a far more happier note: our projects continue fully Corona-proof and our new visual identity and accompanying website is planned to go live in Q1 already.

A warm thank-you to everyone who helped make 2020 a good year for New Silk Roads. We are deeply grateful to our team of directors and consultants, all editors, artists, thinkers and all business and social partners for working closely together and for their enormous commitment and contribution.

February 2021,  
Board of New Silk Roads Foundation  
Dorothe Bongaerts-Stubbé  
Boudewijn Niels

# About New Silk Roads

New Silk Roads is your guide to seeing the world differently. We offer fundraising support, project management and strategic advice to social enterprises and organisations from Amsterdam to Tunis and from Istanbul to Shanghai.



## Mission

New Silk Roads is your guide to seeing the world differently, uncovering opportunities yet to be imagined, and building what is into what can be. Together, we create contemporary maps to navigate towards new horizons.

New Silk Roads was founded in 2009 by a collective of international thinkers and doers to offer fundraising, strategic advice and project management to social enterprises and organisations around the world. Our work is guided by the values of the silk roads of the past: trust, connectedness and international solidarity. Our partners are international civil society organisations, social enterprises, private foundations, donor agencies, investors and creative agencies.

Since 2009 we have implemented various projects, ranging from fellowships, trade missions, business coaching to publications. We have raised funding for our partners from international donors such as Sida, Dutch MFA, Swedish Institute, The European Union.

# Services

We are a team of historians, linguists, futurists, economists, philosophers, curators, researchers, anthropologists, and academics across three continents.

## We provide the following services:

- Fundraising, including proposal development, writing applications, editing, mapping funding opportunities and selecting suitable partners. So far we raised over EUR 30 million for our partners.
- Strategy, business coaching and consulting, change management and international partnerships.
- Project management, including organising international conferences, fellowships, Futures Masterclasses and matchmaking visits across continents.

# Overview projects 2020



New Silk Roads

# Vertical Atlas

**Partners:** Het Nieuwe Instituut

**Made possible by:** Hivos Digital Earth, Stimuleringsfonds

## Introduction and highlights

Vertical Atlas is a new atlas to help us navigate the digital geopolitics of the world today.

*Vertical Atlas* is a compelling and groundbreaking publication that changes the ways in which the geopolitics of technology are discussed today. It is currently being made by a group of more than 50 international designers, artists and thinkers from a broad range of disciplines spanning over 20 countries from all continents.

The digital reality we find ourselves in is increasingly complex. Geographical maps only yield limited agency as tools for navigating this reality. They do not account for new folded, fractal borders that are created in cyberspace and do not show how national digital borders materialize at odd places in the world such as cobalt mines in Congo, that are owned by Chinese state run companies, or Amazon-owned cloud servers located in Singapore. At the same time, states are increasingly morphing into non-local platforms (like-E-stonia) and cloud platforms themselves are taking over traditional roles of the state, such as cartography (Google) and identification (Facebook, Google). If maps are tools to aid in navigation, new kinds of mappings are needed. These mappings must account for current global techno-political realities as well as alternative technological and cultural histories, they must explore multiple perspectives that embrace different meanings in different zones of the world. Vertical Atlas emphasizes the need for alternative and accessible contemporary mappings. Humans require relatable interfaces that trigger more than only their cognitive capacities. Here, the merging of language, art and design can provide us with approaches and leads that aim to achieve just that.

In the period of 2020 the editorial team created the following editorial logic for the book:

The editorial logic behind *Vertical Atlas* is the one of the gradient – from the human scale to the global scale, running from user to the cosmos. Mimicking the familiar digitized movement of ‘zooming out’, the one known to any Google Maps user, the book accompanies the reader from the smartphone, to cloud platforms and states, to extraction of rare materials and satellite sensing, all the way to the very worldviews that shape the way we look at technology, or the cosmotechnics. As the editorial logic is built around a zoom out, and drawing parallels with vision and cartography, it brings two core concepts to the foreground: focus and resolution.

As mentioned, *Vertical Atlas* brings in multiple focuses by contributors from around the world. Breaking down the problematic, yet all too common, logic of universal and linear technological

development, it aims to shift focuses to regions, actors and especially voices that do not fit the universal narrative, but rather challenge and repurpose it for a more plural vision of digital technologies. Resolution is important because the same place, phenomenon or event looks different at every level of the zoom gradient. Although different resolutions can be at odds with one another, that does not mean they are not all true at the same time. Changing scales, the pictures we get of similar locations and times drastically change, telling us stories of clash of corporate, user and state sovereignties, of connections and disconnections.

Ultimately *Vertical Atlas* is a visual book, with new and original artworks, photo series and contributions by leading artists and texts by prominent writers and thinkers.

## Highlights

- Expansion of the editorial team to embrace more diversity and gender balance. The editorial team has been expanded from 4 editors, Klaas Kuitembrouwer, Benjamin Bratton, Arthur Steiner and Leonardo Dellanoce by hiring exceptional professionals from journalism and the arts: namely Nanjala Nyabola, Mi You and Amal Khalaf. Moreover Hannah Adlide joined the team taking on the role of editorial assistant.
- Graphic design. During the period, graphic design studio Catalog Tree was hired to design the book. Catalog Tree is a renowned studio with great expertise in map making and data visualization.
- Contributions. 18 authors have been commissioned during the period. 7 artists were commissioned and more than 12 internationally recognised artists agreed to republish their work in the book



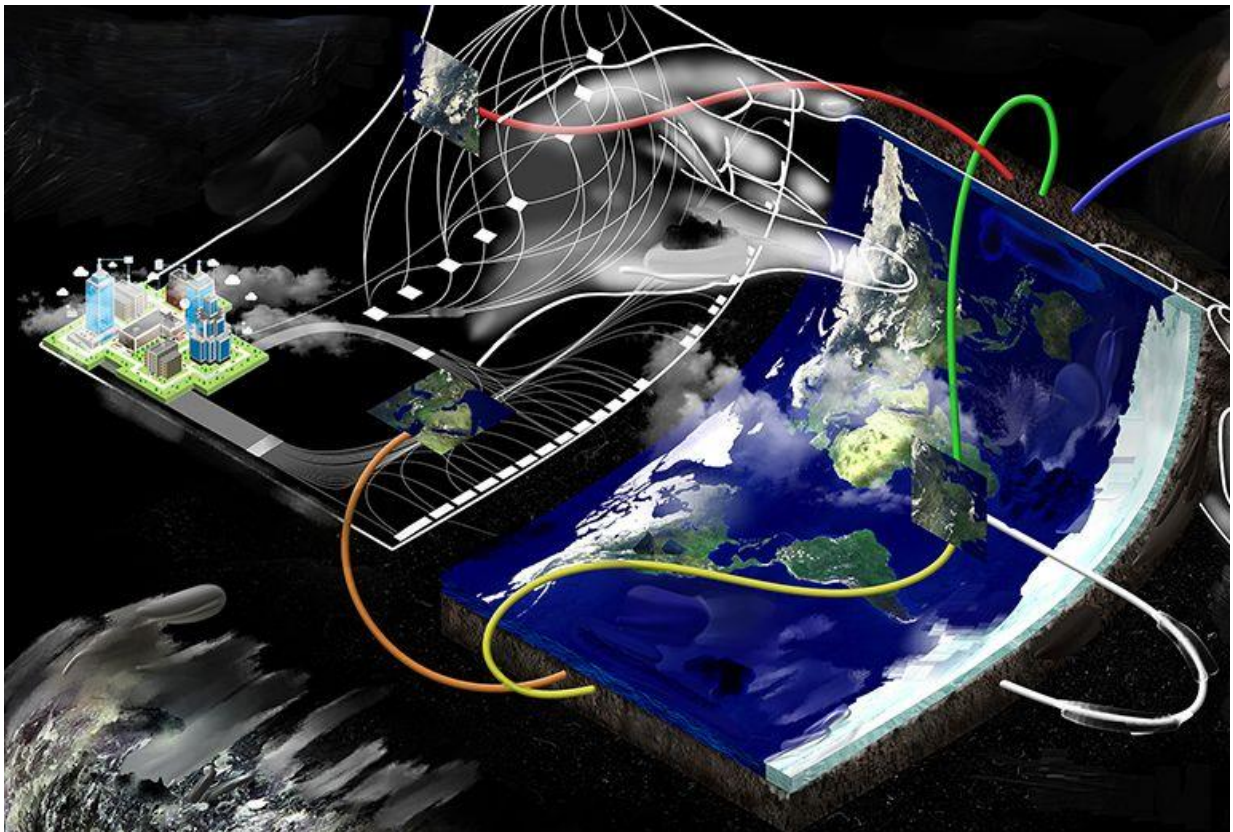
## Activities and results

Objectives	Activities 2020	Results achieved 2020
<p>Makers reach a wider and more diverse audience with their cultural and media productions</p> <p>Makers participate in linking and learning and experimentation.</p>	Hiring 3 new editors	Completed: Najala Nyabola, Mi You, Amal Khalaf
	Hiring editorial assistant	Completed: Hannah Adlide
	Hiring copy editor	Completed: Tamar Shafrir
	Hiring graphic design studio	Completed: Catalogtree
	Commission n. artists	Yes in process, 7 artists done
	Commission n. authors	Yes in process, 18 authors done
	Acquire image rights	Yes in process, 12 images so far
	Find a publisher	Pending
	Hire a marketing specialist	Pending

### 3. Describe conclusions or lessons learned.

In 2020 the work focused on expanding the editorial team, streamlining the work of the 8 team members and producing most of the book. Currently, we are working towards March as a deadline to have the PDF of the book.

Lessons learned: we hoped to have a confirmed publisher by the end of 2020. Although we reached out to several potential publishers, the self-funded nature of the book, set the process of publishing down an unexpected path - publishers require an almost final version of the book, including design before making a decision to distribute and publish the book. For this reason, we focused the work on finishing the book and continue the conversation with publishers then.



# Future Schools

**Partners:** Bluefish (pilot in Tunisia)

**Made possible by:** Hivos

## Introduction and highlights

The future is born in the imagination of individuals. But many people, when faced with the prospect of the future, feel powerless. They feel the future simply overcomes them. The Schools challenge people to think how things could be different. We encourage people to jointly imagine alternative futures and to acknowledge and question their own role within this future.

New Silk Roads offers futures thinking masterclasses focused on imagining alternative futures. Through coursework, hands-on activities, and key expert interventions, course participants acquire specific futures thinking skills—such as signal identification, back casting, foresight, and scenario-building—and apply these skills to a selected topic of focus. Through collaborations with artists and content creators the stories about preferred alternative futures will be communicated to a wider audience. These courses are offered to experienced professionals including private sector representatives, academics, researchers, government officials, creatives, and other relevant experts.

On December 18, 2020, we convened a one-day pilot course in the fundamentals of futures thinking which focused on the question “What If Waste Did Not Exist? Imagining the Future of the Tunis Medina in 2020.” This futures thinking pilot course utilized a combination of lectures, interactive games, hands-on activities, and artistic activities to compel a diverse group of participants to collectively imagine preferred futures for waste management in the Tunis medina. During this course, participants learned the basic principles of futures thinking and began developing specific futures thinking tools such as thinking skills, such as signal identification, back casting, foresight, and scenario-building. This course was conducted in a mix of French and Tunisian Arabic. This class convened 17 mid-career actors with decision-making or strategic roles related to the issue of waste management in the Tunis medina. Attendees included private sector representatives, academics, elected officials, artists, members of civil society, researchers and municipal government employees, over half of which were women.

## Activities and deliverables

Objectives	Deliverables	Activities	Results 2020
		<i>Directions: Name the key actions to be implemented.</i>	<i>Directions: List the results you achieved.</i>
Objective 1: Bring together stakeholders (social entrepreneurs, future thinkers, academics, CSO etc) in a think tank setting to: <b>Explore possible future scenarios for the economies and societies of Egypt and Tunisia.</b>		A. Research and benchmark design. B. Research on methodology and structure for courses.	A. Research and benchmark design completed. B. Research on methodology and structure for courses, first draft developed to test during Pilots.
		A. Development of school mission. B. Learning objectives. C. Internal and external communication plan.	A. School mission completed. B. Learning objectives set.
		Conduct a target group needs assessment, on the basis of surveys and target group interviews, to determine course targeting, packaging, and outreach strategy and targets	Target group needs assessment completed, 26 responses. 57.7% women and 42.3% men participated. 8 interviews with well known futurists completed, including 4 women.
		Development of course themes and selection of knowledge partners.	Course theme and knowledge partners selected for Pilot Tunisia and will be evaluated after Pilot.
		Test assumptions and develop M&E structure	M&E structure developed, test during Pilot Tunisia.
Objective 2: Bring together stakeholders (social entrepreneurs, future thinkers, academics, CSO etc) in a think tank setting to: <b>Build</b>		Delivery of the first pilot course in Tunisia and/or Egypt,	Pilot Tunis, 18 December, Dar Ben Gacem. What If Waste Did Not Exist? Imagining the Tunis Medina in 2050 The Fundamentals of Futures Thinking

innovation networks to prepare for future challenges.			Masterclass, 17 attendees of which 10 women and 7 men. Participants were from the following sectors: private sector, civil society, public sector, creative sector, startup scene. Furthermore, there were four makers involved, of which one woman.
	17 individuals representing a social enterprise, BDSO, employability hub or another organisation in Tunisia.	Set up masterclass/intensive course/study group in Egypt and/or Tunisia both online and offline yearly between 2021 and 2022, and develop the school activities for each year.	

## Conclusions and lessons learned

Target group needs assessment:

- The responses of the 26 participants were very personal and diverse. Some important outcomes and insights, however, can be shared:
  - The majority of the participants did not hear about future thinking before but were all interested in learning more about future thinking.
  - The skills the participants want to take away from a future thinking course confirm the importance of learning such skills. Find a selection of the answers below:
    - Ability to raise my kids in a better world. Capability of knowing my history and understanding/analysing my current situation and expectations for the future.
    - Improve my organization and my creative thinking abilities.
    - Greater sense of direction for the future.
    - More ability to turn conceptual ideas into reality and more controllable elements in my life.
    - Revisiting/ Rethinking my decisions about the future is a huge takeaway for me from such a course.
    - Great sense of direction and increased critical thinking.
    - Improve the resilience of my business.

- Greater sense of direction in my personal life, increased ability to develop a more resilient business model, be a better creative thinker and a better understanding of what works or might work.
- To have a better understanding of how to be part of creating the future.
- A framework to make difficult decisions about my future and the future of my friends, family, and my company. A network of people I can trust and consult in making these kinds of decisions.
- Shareable knowledge, sustainable life skills, hope/ assurance of the future, self-confidence.

#### Pilot Tunisia Monitoring and Evaluation:

The pilot evaluation process is currently ongoing. However, we can ascertain some preliminary outcomes based on several completed M&E metrics to date. Based on pre-and post-surveys, attendees reported the following based on their participation in the pilot course:

- Increased familiarity with futures thinking principles and key concepts
- Increased ability to identify the key drivers (i.e. signals) and transformational forces underlying these signals which shape future outcomes
- Increased a) understanding of select futures thinking tools (i.e. signal identification, back casting, foresight, and scenario building) and b) capacity to apply these tools when imagining preferred futures for a particular topic or area of concern (ex: the future of waste management, the future of Tunisia, etc)
- Increased feelings of agency in shaping their personal futures, the future of their community, and the future of their country
- Increased connections with empowered stakeholders working on waste management, including people that they did not previous know

#### Areas for Improvement:

- New Silk Roads found that it was difficult to introduce futures thinking concepts, futures thinking tools, and opportunity to practice these tools in just one day. However, the full-length courses will take place over several days, allowing attendees more time to absorb futures thinking concepts and practice these skills.
- New Silk Roads will incorporate artists and creatives more directly in the full-length schools and provide more opportunities for them to assist in developing and implementing activities.

# Photos

Photo credits: Khalil El Moujahed



# Future Prototypes

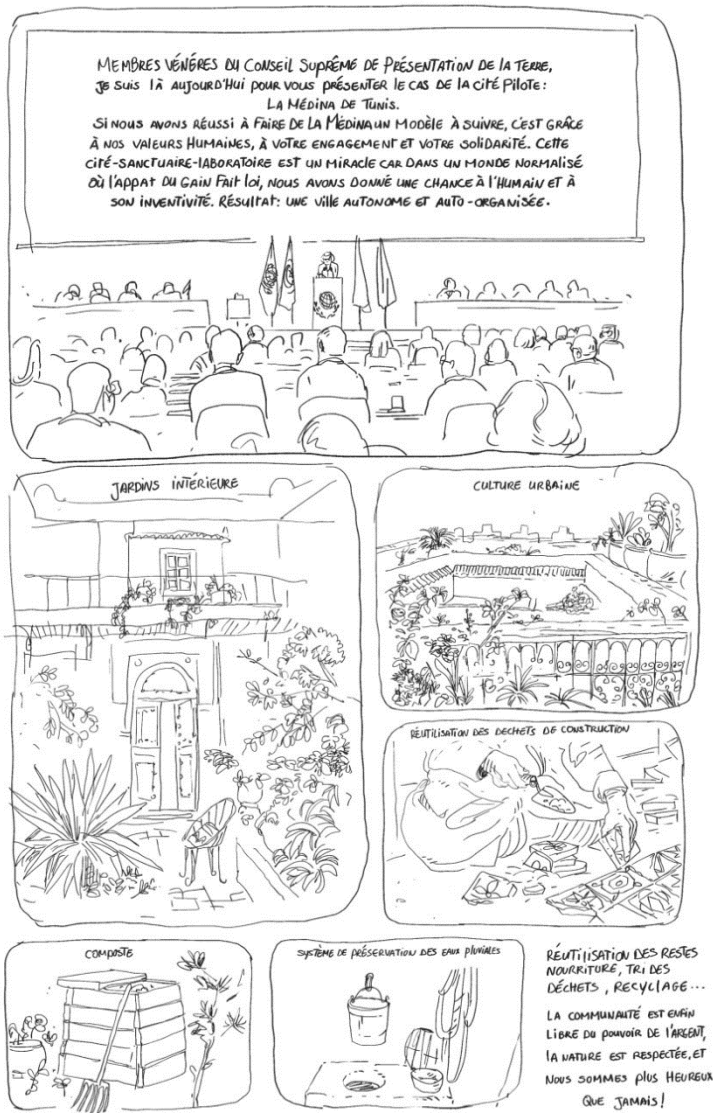
Visualization of three different scenarios for the future Medina, by creatives Abir Gasmi and Kamal Zakour.

## 1. Neutral scenario:

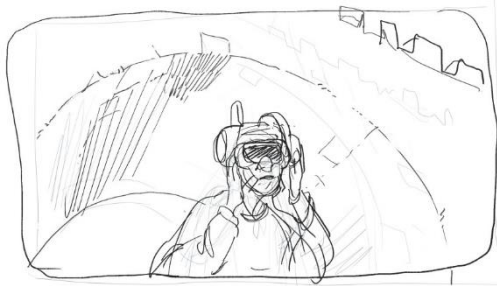




2. Optimistic scenario



### 3. Pessimistic scenario



WELCOME TO VIRTUAL MEDINA  
THE APPLICATION THAT TRANSPORTS  
YOU TO THE OLD DAYS OF THE MEDINA  
MUSEUM



AS YOU KNOW THAT BEFORE BECOMING A  
MUSEUM, THE MEDINA USED TO BE AN  
INHABITED CITY WITH A LOT OF LIFE AND SOUL



HERE YOU CAN SEE AN ARTISAN WORKING  
ON HIS COPPER PLATE



AND HERE, DO YOU SMELL THE DIFFERENT  
SCENES OF AL ATTARINE



THE MEDINA WAS BEAUTIFUL, BUT UNFORTUNATELY THERE WAS ALSO TOO MUCH TRASH AND THE BAD  
SMELL REPLACED THE PERFUMS, SO MUCH SO THAT TOURISTS LIKE YOU DESERTED IT.



# BDSO Trajectory

Made possible by: Hivos

## Introduction and Highlights

The Green Works programme (2020-2023), is committed 1) supports employability hubs to train young people (upskilling) and match them to vacancies (matching) in the job markets; and 2) supports BDSOs to scale startups so that these startups create more jobs (scaling).

Over the course of three years New Silk Roads expects to support 12-15 local BDSOs and employability hubs (hereafter BDSOs). During this first six months of operation New Silk Roads supported 5 BDSOs. These BDSOs received tailored capacity support from a (senior) fundraising consultant. Exact support was determined in coordination with BDSO. New Silk Roads has committed to deliver the following services:

- Proposal development (in other words: writing a grant application together with staff members of the BDSO on behalf of the BDSO)
- Partnership building (in other words: helping the BDSO find regional and European partners and jointly apply for funding in a consortium)
- Intensive fundraising coaching trajectory for dedicated staff member(s). Aim is for this staff member to acquire the relevant skills of the fundraising consultant to be able to develop competitive proposals.

## Activities and deliverables

Objective	Deliverables	Activities	Results 2020
<p>Over the course of three years New Silk Roads will support 12-15 local BDSOs</p> <p>During the first year New Silk Roads will support 6 BDSOs: 4 in category one: established. 2 in category two: growing.</p>	Local BDSOs attract 50% additional funding for programmes in the fields of job training & placement, and enterprise acceleration as compared to Green Works	Proposal development	5 BDSOs supported 7 applications submitted (1 with TCSE, 1 with TCSE and Medangels, 2 with Cloud, 1 with EFE, 1 with Impact Partner). 2 pending applications 1 successful applications Funds raised: EUR 530,000
		Partnership building	2 partnerships formed. 1 between TCSE, Medangels, and MCISE (Morocco) 1 between Impact Partner and New Silk Roads
		Intensive fundraising coaching trajectory for dedicated staff member(s).	<i>Not implemented yet in the first six months</i>

## Lessons learned

- The current approach of responding to open tenders and grant opportunities has brought significant successes and as a result has cemented New Silk Roads reputation amongst (some) Green Works partners. As a next step New Silk Roads' aim is to ensure that fundraising assistance is aligned with the Green Works objectives and sectoral focus (e.g. focusing more on partners' gender components, focusing more on the quality of the created jobs, ensuring that newly developed programmes focus on cleantech and agri-food sectors);
- The Covid19 crisis has significantly complicated New Silk Roads fundraising work. The lack of face-to-face meetings has hampered relationship building with BDSOs. Also most BDSOs had priorities other than fundraising for larger stretches of the year. Being present on the ground has somewhat mitigated these problems in Tunisia, but working in Egypt has been affected more;
  - As a result of the Covid19 crisis, and as already anticipated in the original proposal, New Silk Roads has proposed minor budget adaptations (see attached budget);
- Through 1) an initial needs analysis conducted in July-August, by 2) directly supporting 5 BDOs in fundraising, and 3) by being in regular contact with a number of others, New Silk Roads has developed further going insights into their fundraising needs and constraints of the local Green Works partners. The current goal in 2021 is to translate these into fundraising training sessions (in May and October) and an associated coaching trajectory, to ensure programme development and fundraising skills are transmitted to local staff;
- As a response to the current Covid19 crisis, New Silk Roads aims to ensure that Covid19-resilience is at the heart of any proposal we are developing. As fundraisers we are often better able to gain an overview of and assess successful resilient responses. We will make sure to share these insights amongst GreenWorks partners.

# Consultancy activities

As in previous years New Silk Roads has conducted various fundraising and programme development consultancy activities. In 2020 these included:

- Assisting Hivos in developing a new programme for the US Bureau of Democracy Human Rights and Labor (DRL) in Iraq focusing on creative expression for young people (ultimately unsuccessful);
- Assisting INCO Tunisia (on behalf of INCO France) in developing a new programme for Expertise France focusing on expanding their local Minassa incubator for the cultural and creative sector (applied successfully, currently at final interviewing stage);
- Co-developing a Future Thinking School and Artist in Residence project with Tunisian media organisation Nawaat for the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (IFA; under their Zivik programme). This application is currently pending. In case of success the project will be launched in March 2021.

## Looking ahead to 2021

### Existing programmes

New Silk Roads expects to wrap up its Vertical Atlas project over the course of 2021 with the publication and launch of the (physical) Vertical Atlas. Furthermore, we expect to launch our first fully fledged Future Thinking School in Tunisia in the second half of 2021, and in case our pending Zivik application is successful, we expect to launch an additional School in Tunisia over the course of 2021. Finally, our BDSO fundraising trajectory is expected to continue and expand to support a number of additional BDSOs in Tunisia and Egypt over the course of 2021.

### Additional programmes

New Silk Roads expects to launch its Madar project in 2021. In 2020 New Silk Roads successfully partnered with Impact Partner in Tunisia to develop this project, funded by Expertise France. The Madar project focuses on building the Tunisian entrepreneurship ecosystem. New Silk Roads has committed to strengthen the programme development and fundraising capabilities of 12 local BDSOs, partly from interior regions in Tunisia. Additionally New Silk Roads will support up to 6 local social enterprises with fundraising support and by involving them in Impact Fest 2021 and African Crossroads 2021.

### Consultancy activities

New Silk Roads expects to continue its fundraising and programme development activities with Hivos. Furthermore, New Silk Roads expects to continue to collaborate with Nawaat and Bluefish in Tunisia to develop additional joint projects.

# Financial Overview 2020

<b>Profit and Loss</b>		
	<b>EXPENDITURES</b>	
<b>Administrative expenses</b>		
Administration	€ 7.000,00	
Banking fees	€ 281,28	
Interest	€ 0,00	
Total administrative expenses		€ 7.281,28
<b>Exploitation expenses</b>		
Commercial activities	€ 1.416,48	
Travel expenses	€ 1.394,51	
Consultancy	€ 2.050,00	
Total exploitation expenses		€ 4.860,99
<b>Project based expenses</b>		
Project 0: 2019 BOOST	€ 4.000,00	
Project 1: Vertical Atlas	€ 12.500,00	
Project 2: Green Works (Schools and BDSO support)	€ 55.569,42	
Project 3: ROOM (Schools and Vertical Atlas)	€ 11.040,00	
Project 4: Madar	€ 0,00	
Total project based expenses		€ 83.109,42
<b>Total EXPENDITURES</b>		<b>€ 95.251,69</b>
	<b>BENEFITS</b>	
<b>Income</b>		
Turnover	€ 92.445,10	
Total income		€ 92.445,10
<b>Other benefits</b>		
Interest	€ 0,00	
Other	€ 3,81	
Total other benefits		€ 3,81
<b>Total BENEFITS</b>		<b>€ 92.448,91</b>
<b>RESULT</b>		<b>-€ 2.802,78</b>

**Balansrekening**

<b>ASSETS</b>	
<b>Liquid assets</b>	
Cash EUR	€ 0,00
Cash EGP	€ 1,58
Accounts Triodos	€ 85.155,44
Total liquid assets	<u>€ 85.157,02</u>
<b>Short-term receivables</b>	
Debtors	€ 3.461,00
Provision doubtful debts	€ 0,00
Pre-paid VAT	€ 0,00
Total short-term receivables	<u>€ 3.461,00</u>
<b>Other receivables</b>	
Premiums paid in advance	€ 0,00
Total other receivables	<u>€ 0,00</u>
<b>Total ASSETS</b>	<b><u>€ 88.618,02</u></b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>	
<b>Current liabilities</b>	
Creditors	( € 0,01)
Provisions (audit)	€ 3.500,00
Provisions (Vertical Atlas)	€ 8.200,00
Provisions (Green Works)	€ 18.769,14
Provisions (ROOM)	€ 53.619,90
Provisions (consultancy)	€ 1.500,00
VAT payable	€ 158,55
Total current liabilities	<u>€ 85.747,58</u>
<b>Equity</b>	
Retained earnings	€ 5.673,22
Result	( € 2.802,78)
Total equity	<u>€ 2.870,44</u>
<b>Total LIABILITIES</b>	<b><u>€ 88.618,02</u></b>



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