



**CLOSE THE GAP**  
Year Report 2007  
Close the Gap International VZW  
[www.close-the-gap.org](http://www.close-the-gap.org)



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## Chairman's Foreword

It is a great pleasure to present herewith the fourth annual report of Close the Gap for the year 2007.

Compared to the previous year, 2007 showed again a considerable growth in the activities of our not-for-profit organisation. The assets received (pc's, notebooks, monitors, printers etc.) increased by more than 35%. A similar tendency was also noted for the project developments.

On 18th October Close the Gap reached an important milestone. During a solemnly meeting on that day with the strategic partners of Close the Gap, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, member of the Advisory Board, received in The Hague the 50.000th computer from our most recent donor Essent in the Netherlands.

Since its creation in 2003 Close the Gap has installed almost 30.000 high quality refurbished assets in more than 300 projects spread over 30 developing countries (mainly Africa, but also in Middle and Latin America as well as in South-East Asia).

The Friends of Close the Gap Programme, which was launched in the previous year, developed further in 2007. This programme which is open to the donors and the 13 main strategic partners of Close the Gap aims at extending and strengthening their CSR programmes towards Close the Gap. It is also an important networking tool both for the donors and the strategic partners as well as for Close the Gap itself.

In 2007 the total of the balance sheet of Close the Gap came at € 1.843.405, -. Due to an efficient management as well as a conservative expenditure policy, total revenues exceeded in 2007 total expenditures.

The Board of Directors decided that part of the positive result will be used for creating an allocated fund intended for unforeseen operational costs. Furthermore the rest of this result will be used to support sustainable projects in developing countries where there is a clear need for IT-solutions but where no (or too small) budgets are available to pay for the out-of-pockets expenses for the refurbished computers. It is the intention to set up in the course of next year a special Close the Gap Trust Fund for this purpose. This way, the net available result from fiscal year 2007, after deduction of the various allocated funds, will amount to € 198.347, - for the Close the Gap Trust Fund.

Close the Gap will intensify its efforts to extend in the years to come its original concept of offering IT-hardware to projects towards offering complete IT-solutions with networking equipment, software solutions and training programmes. Close the Gap will also continue to play an active role in the whole question of what to do with computers in developing countries once they reached the end of their 2nd life.

Finally, I like to express a word of gratitude and appreciation for all the material and immaterial support received in 2007 from our donors, strategic partners, the Flemish and Federal Belgian Government, the members of the Board of Directors as well as the Advisory Board and last but not least I like also to thank the management and staff of Close the Gap for their commitment.

**Prof. em. Dr. Wim A.G. Blonk**  
Chairman of the Board







# ORGANISATION

## 1. Organisation

### Facts

Close the Gap is an international not-for-profit organisation with its head office in Brussels that launched its activities in September 2003. Close the Gap helps to bridge the digital divide in the world by offering high-quality refurbished computers to IT projects in the South. Companies and institutions in Western countries replace their computers every three to four years, which means that these bodies are increasingly looking for sustainable ways to replace their used computers. At the same time millions of computers are needed in developing countries.

In the industrialised world, PCs are seen as a commodity. They are being used for ever more varied applications, such as text treatment, Internet research, e-mailing, e-banking, e-shopping, e-medical services and thus have become an essential part of the personal, educational and business and professional world. One tends to forget that one of the basic assets provided by a PC is access to all kinds of information, ranging from basic tools, over development and education to leisure information. The failure to have access to information is the disease which hinders communities and individuals in the developing world, as a result of the ever growing digital divide. With simple PC's and an Internet connection, information becomes accessible to those who need it the most, at the click of a button. The difference that access to the Internet via library encyclopaedia with information on water purification processes, first medical aid, HIV prevention, on how to build roads or how to implement basic water irrigation, can make for example, on people's futures, is immeasurable.

Within just a few years, Close the Gap has expanded its activities from Belgium to the surrounding countries, and is now active in the Benelux, Germany and France. Its aim is to empower Third World communities by supplying IT equipment donated by Western companies and individuals. Ever since its start, Close the Gap has managed to reinstall thousands of PCs donated by Western companies across the world, offering local communities and individuals access to knowledge and the transfer of knowledge.

When donations are made, Close the Gap and its partners collect the IT equipment. It is then checked by professionals, repaired if needed and reconfigured before it is sent off to a designated project. Due to strong historical ties with its European base, Close the Gap's activities initially focused on projects across Sub-Saharan Africa, but have subsequently expanded across the globe. Today, Close the Gap has supported projects from Africa to the Philippines, from Brazil to India. However diverse the projects may be, they all have one common denominator, namely a focus on advancing both the individual and the community within a spirit of social education.

### Mission

**It is Close the Gap's mission to contribute to bridge the digital divide between the Western World and developing countries, by offering communities access to much-needed IT equipment.**

Essentially, Close the Gap does not offer aid, it simply meets a real demand. Even when considering the vast scale of this digital divide, Close the Gap's mission will not be completed until the gap has been closed. To do so, millions of computers and the support of hundreds of individuals and organisations is required. In addition, Close the Gap offers companies and organisations an opportunity to participate in the United Nations' "Millennium Development Goals" (<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>).

The eight targets, as outlined by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan at the turn of the millennium, include access to IT technology and the transfer of knowledge. It is here that Western companies, through Close the Gap, can offer millions of people and communities the support to bring about a true change.





#### Year on Year

Close the Gap prides itself on its unique capacity to grow as it continues to branch out towards more communities in need of equipment. Since the official start of Close the Gap in 2003 the organisation collected almost **84.000** assets from its numerous donors in Europe. On the project side, this has translated into a total of **30.000** pieces of IT equipment being transferred from companies in the North to projects in the South. This includes various CPU units, monitors, printers and notebooks as well as peripheral equipment like hubs, routers, multi-functional printers, software, etc.

During the year 2007, the project development of Close the Gap counted **5,514** pieces of computer hardware, being implemented in a range of projects in 27 developing countries. In comparison to previous years this number seems relatively low but due to unforeseen external circumstances in the last trimester of 2007 a load of orders had to be postponed. About **2.500** pieces of IT equipment, planned to be executed during the last few months of 2007, were finally delivered begin 2008.

Throughout this sustainable maintained project development, Close the Gap thanks its partners and sponsors for their essential donations of talent and material.

#### Foundation Dates

- De facto association (unofficial start as start-up at university) 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2001
- Official establishment of the legal person 4<sup>th</sup> of September 2003 by deposition of the articles of association at the Brussels Chamber of Commerce
- Official launch in the Netherlands 26<sup>th</sup> of May 2004

#### Organisational and Legal Structure

Close the Gap Int. VZW/ASBL<sup>1</sup>  
 Registration nr.: 860353772<sup>2</sup>  
 VAT Belgium: BE 0860 353 772  
 VAT The Netherlands: NL 8153.23.062.B01

#### Registered Headquarters

c/o Vrije Universiteit Brussel  
 Pleinlaan 2, 1050 Brussels, Belgium



#### Board of Directors

**Prof. em. Dr. Wim A.G. BLONK** - Chairman  
 Honorary Director General European Union

**Mr. Andre BONTEMS**  
 Television System Engineer

**Mr. Michel DE BRAUWER**  
 President and CEO Pietercil NV

#### Advisory Board

**Viscount Etienne DAVIGNON**  
 Vice Chairman Suez-Tractebel  
 Former Vice-President of the EU-Commission

**Prof. Dr. Marc DESPONTIN**  
 Professor at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel  
 (Free University Brussels)

**Mr. François-Xavier de DONNEA**  
 Minister of State, Belgium

**Mr. Dieter FRISCH**  
 Former Director General for Development  
 at the EU-Commission

**Mrs. Monique HEIJN**  
 Ambassador STOP AIDS NOW!

**Prof. em. Dr. Silvain LOCCUFIER**  
 Honorary Rector of Vrije Universiteit Brussel  
 (Free University Brussels)

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 Managing Director

**Mr. David LEYSSENS**  
 Head International Affairs

**Mr. Peter MANDERICK**  
 Office Manager

**Mrs. Danuta SARNA**  
 Management Assistant

**Mrs. Dorien BAELDEN**  
 Researcher

**Mr. Danny DE GRAAF**

**Mrs. Alessandra AZCARRAGA DE SEPUL**

**Mr. Olivier VANDEN EYNDE** <sup>3</sup>  
 Founder Close the Gap Int.

**Mr. Guido VANDERVORST**  
 Partner Deloitte Belgium

**Dr. Beyers NAUDE († 1915-2004)**  
 Former Secretary General of the South African Council  
 of Churches\*

**Prof. Dr. Jan PRONK**  
 Former Minister for Development  
 Former Deputy Secretary General United Nations  
 and former special UN-envoy for Sudan

**Count Jacques ROGGE**  
 President International Olympic Committee (IOC)

**Archbishop Desmond M. TUTU**  
 Nobel Peace Prize 1984

**Prof. Dr. Frank VANDENBROUCKE**  
 Minister of Education in Flanders, Belgium

**Prof. Dr. Karel VAN MIERT**  
 Former Vice-President of the EU-Commission  
 Minister of State, Belgium

**Mr. Tony VANDEPUTTE**  
 Honorary Delegate Administrator at the Federation  
 of Belgian Companies

1. VZW = Vereniging Zonder Winstoogmerk, ASBL = Association Sans But Lucratif  
 2. Registration number = Ondernemingsnummer  
 3. Representative (Managing Director) of OK MGM bvba

\* Close the Gap owes Dr. Beyers Naudé a tremendous debt and gratitude for all his efforts to help Close the Gap. We would therefore like to mention his name here as a sign of our recognition and respect.





## WHAT CLOSE THE GAP MEANS TO OTHERS

### 2. What Close the Gap Means to Others

“Working for Close the Gap convinced me that there are more similarities between people than there are differences. The obvious differences usually don’t make much sense. Close the Gap both directly and indirectly, helps to get rid of the nonsensical ones. That’s why my staff and myself love to participate in the CTG project.”

**Jos Dillen**  
CEO Vintage Productions

“The fact that Close the Gap has a workshop where they actually clean up and discard the computers and where they add a new mouse and keyboard distinguishes them from other second hand computer providers. That small difference makes a very big difference to people in the South.”

**Gilford Hapanyengwi**  
Director of the computer centre of the University of Zimbabwe

“Close The Gap is a very professional organisation for facilitating back-to-end ICT donation schemes. They make it happen because they have the right spirit, people and focus making a difference in developing countries”

**Joep Van Loon**  
General Manager Flection International BV

“Through these computers we are able to close the gap between high school and university. We are grateful that we can teach our learners basic principles about computers when they leave school.”

**Teacher Lwamondo Secondary School Computer Laboratory - Kagiso Trust**

“ ‘Contribution to youth development ’ is one of the objectives within the Ricoh CSR policy and that is what Close the Gap embodies! ”

**Michel De Bosschere**  
Chairman and CEO Ricoh Benelux

“I am thrilled to support Close the Gap. They are building bridges of understanding and knowledge. It is the process of teaching a person to fish instead of giving a fish as a hand out. The partnership with the University of the Western Cape is a wonderful initiative. I have been Chancellor of this University since 1988 and am delighted that “my” University should be the beneficiary of this excellent project.”

**Archbishop Desmond M. Tutu**

“Close the Gap is the pearl among the NGO’s: Pure, sincere, professional and efficient!”

**Nicolette Kraay**  
Manager Social Responsibility Projects Ricoh Nederland



### 3. Event Time Line

#### April

e-Learning for Kids offers online learning courseware to Close the Gap projects



e-Learning for Kids is a global not-for-profit organisation that is dedicated to opening doors to education worldwide. It provides high-quality online learning tools to children all over the world. e-Learning for Kids offers more than 80 courses specifically designed to build and improve basic skills for children aged 5-12. Subject areas include Mathematics, Language Arts, Science, English Language, Health, Life and Computer skills. Through the partnership with e-Learning for Kids, educational courseware can be offered to the projects Close the Gap supports.

#### May

Belgian Government and its Minister of Foreign Affairs provide CtG computers to South-Sudan

The Belgian Government and its Minister of Foreign Affairs provided 60 Close the Gap computers to the University of Juba, the capital city of South-Sudan. Furthermore, 20 computers have been donated to the Ministry of Regional Cooperation, 15 to the Legislative Assembly and five to the NGO Acord. The Minister of Foreign Affairs was finalizing a diplomatic mission in the country and visited the region of South-Sudan to support the fragile stability in the region. The Belgian Government supports Institution Building projects to secure the state structure that has been put in place since peace agreements were signed in 2005 (after 22 years of war in the region). On request of the Special Ambassador for Institution Building Jos Geysels, Close the Gap has sent computers to the University of Juba and to the good governance projects that the Belgian Government is carrying out in South-Sudan. By giving quality IT solutions to these institutions, Close the Gap contributes to the capacity building programme of the Belgian Government.

#### September

Essent and Close the Gap give computers a second life

At the beginning of the CSR-month of reuse and in the framework of the action 'Binnengoed' in the Dutch firm Essent, Essent IT and Close the Gap signed an important agreement. The computers being replaced by Essent will be given a second life in Africa.

This agreement is a perfect example of how word of mouth and networking attract new donors to Close the Gap, ensuring continued growth. Essent first heard of Close the Gap from Ricoh Nederland, one of Close the Gap's strategic partners.



From left to right: Olivier Vanden Eynde (Managing Director) and Prof. em. Dr. Wim A.G. Blonk (Chairman of the Board) representing Close the Gap and Tamme Wieringa and Kees Moolenaar from Essent.



Close the Gap welcomes this substantial new partnership. Tamme Wierenga, manager IT Infra Services, says: "The average useful life of three years means that Essent can offer Close the Gap around 3.000 computers per year for reuse. I'm glad that we can give a social contribution through lengthening the life of these computers in a relatively simple way."

#### Close the Gap and One Laptop per Child share ideas about bridging the digital divide

28 September 2007, Olivier Vanden Eynde, Managing Director of Close the Gap, had a meeting in Boston (USA) with the organisation One Laptop per Child (OLPC). He met with Lindsay Petrillose, Special Assistant for International Affairs, David Cavallo, Director of Central and South America and Dr. Mary Lou Jepsen, Chief Technology Officer.

The purpose of this meeting was to get to know each other and to share ideas, best practices and common challenges to the important work both organisations undertake in the field of bridging the digital divide. They had the opportunity to share the operational and logistical aspects of their work in more depth and Close the Gap is eager to stay in contact with the team of OLPC in order to further explore potential future partnerships.

The main objective of OLPC is to see children in even the most remote regions of the globe being given the opportunity to tap into their own potential, to be exposed to a whole world of ideas and to contribute to a more productive and just world community.

By means of reaching that ambitious goal, OLPC started with the development of a \$ 100, - laptop: the XO. A unique harmony of form and function; a flexible, ultra-low-cost, power-efficient, responsive, and durable machine with which nations of the emerging world can leapfrog decades of development - immediately transforming the content and quality of their children's learning. The exchange of ideas and insights between Close the Gap and OLPC was very interesting and both parties are interested in exploring potential opportunities to work more closely together in the future, reaching their common goal of bridging the digital divide.



As a token of interest Olivier Vanden Eynde received a laptop from Lindsay Petrillose, Special Assistant for International Affairs.

#### October

#### Close the Gap celebrates its 50.000th computer

On 18th October 2007 the South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu received the 50,000th computer for Close the Gap. The computer was handed to him by Mrs. Marga Edens, CSR Manager of Essent, which recently started a partnership with Close the Gap.



From left to right: Tamme Wierenga and Marga Edens representing Essent, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Olivier Vanden Eynde

## 4. The Green Perspective

### Close the Gap's green role in e-waste

Technological developments in electric and electronic equipment take place at an ever-increasing rate. As a result, e-equipment ages quickly. Every day a vast number of electric and electronic devices therefore end up as waste; some of them ready for scrap, others just obsolete. All this is gradually mounting up to a serious environmental problem. By selling high quality used, but refurbished computer equipment that is destined for direct re-use, Close the Gap lengthens the lifespan of e-equipment and consequently ensures its positive role in dealing with this global e-waste issue.

### The WEEE directives, the Basel Convention...

E-waste is a growing problem. Not only because of the millions of computers that are thrown away each year, but also because of the hazardous components they contain. Exact figures are difficult to find, but most studies suggest that because of the high recycling costs involved, large parts of the e-waste are dumped in landfills, or transported to the South. The WEEE directives ([http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/weee/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/weee/index_en.htm)) and the Basel Convention (<http://www.basel.int/>) have dealt with these concerns. The WEEE (Waste from Electrical and Electronic Equipment) directives are European directives and aim at restricting hazardous components in e-equipment and diminishing the e-waste stream by compelling producers to take back and recycle electrical and electronic equipment. The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal is an international treaty that is designed to control and minimize the movements of hazardous waste between nations and to prevent the transfer of hazardous waste from developed to less developed countries.

### ... and Close the Gap

It is of course obvious that re-use is a better alternative than recycling. As mentioned before, IT equipment ages quickly. Yet, this doesn't necessarily mean that the hardware is 'old'. A computer doesn't need to have the very latest specifications to still be useful. By donating this so-called 'old' equipment to Close the Gap instead of recycling it immediately, companies can -in close cooperation with Close the Gap- contribute in lengthening the lifespan of e-equipment. A longer lifespan means re-use; re-use means less consumption and less consumption means less waste. Briefly the following measures and controls are in place:

- Close the Gap collects and processes IT donations from its donors and adheres to specific and clearly defined criteria to evaluate whether a computer is just 'old' or really worn-out. After collection, the equipment will be refurbished by Flection International BV.
- Close the Gap is involved with Microsoft in the set-up of the Digital Pipeline programme in the UK. Chairman Prof. em. Dr. Wim A. G. Blonk is a trustee of the Board of the Digital Pipeline.
- The refurbishment partner of Close the Gap, Flection International BV, has all required and necessary permits and audited controls to support, prevent and facilitate e-waste minimisation. Flection is also an active member of the StEP Initiative (Solving the E-waste Problem). StEP has the following prime objectives:
  - Optimizing the life cycle of electric and electronic equipment by improving supply chains, closing material loops, reducing contamination;
  - Increasing utilization of resources and reuse of equipment;
  - Exercising concerns about disparities such as the digital divide between the industrializing and industrialized countries.



- If equipment has failed test and is not suitable for re-use, the product will be disassembled and materials and waste disposals are handed over to European approved down-stream recyclers. This whole process is in compliance with current environmental standards and legislation such as the WEEE directives and the Basel Convention. In this way Close the Gap and Flection implement a **0% landfill policy and will never ship not working equipment or hazardous waste to our projects.**

#### End-of 2nd life at our project location

What happens with donated products after their 2nd lifetime at one of Close the Gap's projects, or what happens if products fail during their 2nd lifetime?

This question is frequently asked and answered by Close the Gap. Knowing its quality, shipment and usage guidelines and its experiences, the equipment will be repaired in most cases. If equipment cannot be repaired anymore the original equipment manufacturer (OEM) stays responsible. This is not different compared to the car industry and other "product remanufacturing industries". It must be taken into account that in the target countries of Close the Gap the OEM's also sell new products with this responsibility. Close the Gap is fully aware of the programmes OEMs undertake in order to facilitate end-of-life services (e.g. [www.euro.dell.com/recycling](http://www.euro.dell.com/recycling)).

Finally, Close the Gap follows up what procedures and treatments are being used by its project partners in the South towards end-of-life products. This information is then being shared with other project applicants in (neighbouring) countries.

## 5. Activities in Europe

Each year, Close the Gap's strategic partners and donors replace thousands of computers. As soon as a partner or donor indicates to Close the Gap that they are due to go through this upgrading process, Close the Gap stores the outgoing equipment at its premises in Belgium, The Netherlands or Germany.

#### How Close the Gap collects and refurbishes

Close the Gap has been successfully delivering IT solutions for more than four years and has developed in-depth expertise in its field.

The computers are transported to Close the Gap's logistics partner, Flection Int. BV in Culemborg (The Netherlands), Antwerp (Belgium) or Berlin (Germany). Flection was chosen as Close the Gap's logistical partner through a restricted European tender procedure and makes the equipment collected fit for reuse. This procedure offers Close the Gap the guarantee that a high-quality end product can be supplied.

The so-called refurbishing procedure consists of five steps: check-in, refurbishing of the PCs, refurbishing of the monitors, final inspection and logistics. During the check-in, the status of the received equipment is checked, the computer's serial and asset numbers are registered and every asset is given a unique bar code to enable an easy track and trace. The refurbishing of the computers consists of a power on switch test, internal and external cleaning, a Blancco certified data wiping process, virus scanning, upgrading of the computers and a durability test. When the received computers have a high-quality label, Windows XP is added if requested by the project concerned. The monitors go through durability and colour testing, are cleaned and damage checked. Thanks to the refurbishing process, Close the Gap is able to use approximately 60 % of the computers that have been donated by partners and donors.

After a final inspection of the computer and the screen, a new keyboard, a new mouse and new speaker boxes/headphones are added and the computer equipment is packed for air or sea transport to the developing country. For smaller orders, air transport is used. Bigger lots of computers (starting from 150 full computer systems) are transported via container sea-freight.

The computers are validated for their use in the different Close the Gap projects. For some projects there is the need for more modern computers while for other projects a computer with a Pentium III processor can be sufficient.

All the partners and donors of Close the Gap receive a complete overview of the examination and refurbishment process of the computers. A detailed status report informs the donor on the quality of every asset given. This file contains all the original tracking numbers of the IT-equipment and can be used by companies for inventory purposes. Furthermore, a data wipe certificate is always given to the donors, **guaranteeing that all personal and/or other confidential data have been erased.** This data removal process complies with the strictest requirements of NATO and the U.S. Ministry of Defence. Donor banks such as KBC put their trust in Close the Gap on the reliance of this data wipe process when they donate systems to Close the Gap. In case of recycling a recycling certificate is given to the donor.

In case Close the Gap is unable to use specific computers from donations, for example because of a mismatch of quality for minimal specs or because of a significant short time overstock of unplaceable computers which would lead to high storage costs, the computers are recycled or offered to third brokerage parties respecting eventually specific conditions agreed with the donors of the computers. The generated income will be used either to source computer assets that are not available in donations and need to be sourced through commercial ICT suppliers, or to finance Close the Gap's operations and project development.







Storage of Computer Equipment

The environmental and quality systems used by Flection International BV, refurbishing partner of Close the Gap are:

- NEN-EN-ISO 9001:2000 certified
- NEN-EN-ISO 14001:2004 certified

Flection also holds the most recent licenses concerning transport, collection, processing and sale of EEE and WEEE material conform the local and EU-legislation.

### Friends of Close the Gap Programme

The successful work of Close the Gap depends on a very large extent on the generosity of its partners and donors on the one hand and on the other hand on Close the Gap's supply of win-win situations to both its strategic partners and donors as to Close the Gap and its stakeholders. In this light, Close the Gap launched in 2007 the Friends of Close the Gap Programme, where its most committed partners are encouraged to contribute their niche expertise rather than just their cash.

This programme supports the internal Corporate Social Responsibility Programmes of the partners of Close the Gap. It provides community investment opportunities, employee involvement initiatives and also clear logistical solutions for the end-of-life of the partners' ICT assets. Within the framework of the Friends of Programme the strategic partners and donors of Close the Gap see their activities with us also gather the rewards of their important partnership. In return, the collaboration with Close the Gap is rewarded with a more integrated relationship.



	Computerdonation Supports CTG with core activities	Computerdonation
YOU RECEIVE	STRATEGIC PARTNERS	FRIENDS
Yearly Golden Flash meeting	●	
Company name on press files	●	
Project adoption	●	
Close the Gap website logo homepage & exclusive webpage	●	
Digital thank you	●	
Ambassador & Consul Day	●	
Invitations press conferences	●	
Close the Gap Partner logo for internal & external use	●	
Close the Gap website logo & description	●	●
Close the Gap merchandise	●	On request
Close the Gap year report	●	●
Close the Gap online newsletters	●	●



## Strategic Partners

### CISCO

Cisco Systems is the worldwide leader in Internet networking. One of its initiatives is Cisco Impact Philanthropy, a project that helps not-for-profit organisations committed to building strong and productive global communities - like Close the Gap - to give people the means to learn new skills and make a better living.

Close the Gap has signed an agreement with Cisco Systems, making it possible to provide networking equipment to not-for-profit organisations in the South. This particular agreement allows Close the Gap to provide equipment at 10% of the commercial price. The agreement meets Close the Gap's mission to offer all-embracing solutions to its projects.

### Computer Task Group (CTG NV)

Backed by over 40 years' experience, CTG Belgium delivers ICT Consultancy, Outsourcing, Training and Staffing Services in the areas of Application Solutions, Business Intelligence, IT Service Management, Regulatory Compliance and Testing. CTG delivers these services and solutions to clients in sectors such as finance, telecom, the industrial sector, government and life sciences. In all of these areas, CTG offers consultancy and expertise in the standard methodologies, tools and techniques on the market. They help clients assess or implement a structured approach; CTG can automate their processes, and will provide them with the necessary resources or manage their entire processes for them. CTG manages all network services for Close the Gap.

### Deloitte Belgium

Deloitte Belgium assists Close the Gap with internal audits, accountancy services, tax advice and legal services, so as to guarantee the transparent and professional use of the funds raised through the sponsors and donors of Close the Gap. Deloitte experts perform comprehensive accounting work for Close the Gap. More recently, IT-experts from Deloitte have developed a management tool in order to facilitate Close the Gap's administration.

### Deloitte The Netherlands

Deloitte has been a long-time loyal supporter of Close the Gap. Deloitte The Netherlands started collaborating with Close the Gap in November 2006. Specifically, their work has focused on supplying dedicated employers, hardware and financial means. This engagement was taken for a period of at least 3 years.

### Flection Int. B.V.

Flection Int. B.V. helps Close the Gap in maximizing the quality and use of refurbished computers by offering a high-quality guarantee on the computers that are used for Close the Gap's projects. They guide Close the Gap in the difficult and very volatile environment of ICT asset recovery and help Close the Gap logistically. Flection's services are offered to Close the Gap at favourable rates.

### KLM

Besides donating several thousands of computers, KLM is offering transport facilities for Close the Gap computers to its several destinations within developing countries. Work for Close the Gap in this area is facilitated by KLM already functioning extensively within Africa. KLM's charitable programme, KLM AirCare, also decided to add Close the Gap to its programme. Every three months KLM AirCare selects a charity which can use KLM's communications resources to reach a major international audience. Through their in-flight video and magazine, and various other media, KLM passengers are asked to donate money or frequent flyer miles to the charity. Close the Gap remains involved in all the KLM charity actions as a partner of KLM AirCare.

### Leo Burnett

It is Leo Burnett's long standing desire to use its passion, brains and creative talent to inspire communication solutions for those who are trying to address the most important social issues of our time. Therefore Leo Burnett has become Close the Gap's strategic partner in above and below-the-line communication. In practice this means going through the process of identifying communication opportunities as well as freeing the time of their creatives to convert these opportunities into broad-ranging and innovative advertisements for Close the Gap.

### PKF Belgium

PKF has supported the activities of Close the Gap for many years. Throughout this important relationship, PKF has committed its expertise to ensure Close the Gap's transparency through its extensive annual external auditing contribution.

### Ricoh Nederland B.V.

Ricoh, one of the world's leading manufacturers and suppliers of office automation equipment, decided to support Close the Gap with its core business, knowledge and products. During a business event in Belgium, Michel De Bosschere (Chairman and CEO of Ricoh Benelux) announced that his company was to become one of Close the Gap's strategic partners. Through use of their core competence (product and service provision in the field of printing solutions and document management) their work supports the development of Close the Gap projects.

### The Nielsen Company

Close the Gap's partnership with The Nielsen Company, a global information and media group, plays a key role in the latter's community investment programme. The aim of this programme is the development of people by improving their access to information. Close the Gap has been given support to contribute to this objective. This support comprises of the donation of used computers by The Nielsen Company and financial contributions. The Nielsen Company decided to support Close the Gap for a period of three years (2005-2007) for projects in South Africa. Together with the empowering and involvement of The Nielsen Company, Close the Gap will be able to continue and enlarge its work in developing countries.

### Vintage Productions

"One should not focus only on the differences between people but look for commonality and similarity." This quote, from Theodore Levitt, serves as the guiding principle of what Vintage stands for as a pan-European communication agency and, moreover, how Close the Gap works. Thus, their support of Close the Gap, which aims to bridge the communication technology divide between countries and continents, fits perfectly within that vision. As part of this strategic partnership, Vintage has developed the Close the Gap website. Hosted by Vintage and backed by a custom-built authoring environment, this site serves as an easy-to-use, professional and flexible online hub for all Close the Gap audiences.

### VLIR-UOS

The Flemish Interuniversity Council for University Development Cooperation supports research and higher education institutions in the South through partnerships with Flemish universities. VLIR-UOS' specific objectives are to build up the capacity of institutions in the South, and to maintain and expand the expertise and support available within Northern hemisphere societies. During a period of three years VLIR-UOS' partner institutions in the South have received 2500 computers and local staff will be trained to use them. In this context, Close the Gap computers have been sent to projects in Cuba, Kenya, South-Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Apart from this programme, the partnership with VLIR-UOS has also been communicated towards VLIR-UOS' partner institutions and their network in the South. As a result of this, partner universities of VLIR-UOS in Tanzania, Ethiopia, Congo and South-Africa have received computer equipment through Close the Gap directly.

### Vrije Universiteit Brussel

As a spin-off of the University, Close the Gap is still receiving logistical assistance by means of office space and usage of common accommodation and services of the university (meeting rooms, telecom and fax facilities, conference accommodation etc.). Furthermore, office costs, including telecommunications, fax and postal services are partly sponsored by the Free University of Brussels.

## Close the Gap's Donors

Close the Gap's donors assist with IT equipment supplies. These donors have been kind enough to give Close the Gap used computers to be used for social- and educational projects in developing countries. Some of the donors have become structural donors while other donors prefer to donate on an ad-hoc basis. For both types Close the Gap is grateful and would like to thank these donors for their generous donations. Close the Gap also thanks its numerous 'Silent' donors.

### Among others following donors contributed during 2007 with computer donations:

Aegon	KLM
Beltrami	Kuehne-Nagel
Centrale Bibliotheek Brussel	Menzis
Coditel	Mobistar
Corelio	NFTE Belgium
DAF Trucks	Pietercil Delby's
Deloitte	PKF Brussel
Donaldson	Ricoh Nederland
Essent	Ricoh België
Hogeschool Gent	Starwood
Hostbasket	Stichting BOBZ
Howrey LLP	Toyota
IBS	Universiteit Gent
KBC	Wolters Kluwer



## 6. Activities in the South

Close the Gap's activities in the South continued growing in a sustainable way in 2007. The strength of Close the Gap is the ever innovative concept making sure that the projects are directed to the people in need in developing countries. The quality and sustainability of the supported projects are the main criteria to be respected.

Close the Gap managed to consolidate its partnerships with support organisations like VLIR-UOS and BRS who make sure that the computers from Close the Gap are used for the right audiences with professional local support. The product offer has further elaborated and Close the Gap has been able to upgrade the quality of the computer configurations provided. Through the Cisco partnership, networking equipment has been distributed at 10% of its cost price for a commercial value of € 56.585,-. Close the Gap is also very pleased with the partnership that has been set up with e-Learning for Kids, offering e-learning courseware to educational projects.

In 2007 5.514 computer assets (PC's, printers and laptops) have been distributed to 98 projects spread over 27 countries. The objective in 2007 was to extend the geographical diversification as in the starting-up phase of Close the Gap, the activities were mainly focused on Southern Africa. Gradually, project partners in West-Africa (Benin, Mali, Togo), East-Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Tanzania), Asia (The Philippines, Thailand), Central and Latin America (Cuba and Suriname) gained knowledge about Close the Gap. The project management team also detected an increasing demand for IT solutions in Central Africa (R.D. Congo, Rwanda and Burundi). Through a pilot programme of Close the Gap, for the first time not-for-profit organisations in Belgium also received IT equipment.

In June 2007, Close the Gap sent out a survey to its project partners in the South to evaluate Close the Gap's work and to gain insights in future perspectives.

The expectations for 2008 are that 85% of all supported projects will ask for Pentium IV computers. Thanks to the high-quality donations Close the Gap receives, it will be possible to follow this demand line.

The project management of Close the Gap takes place in a transparent way. Therefore, all realized projects in the developing world are mentioned on the website of Close the Gap: <http://www.close-the-gap.org/>

David Leyssens  
Head International Affairs



David Leyssens during an IT-training for future partners in Congo.



## Project Management

Close the Gap's objective is to assist in developing local knowledge, putting local talent and potential to use and empowering communities through the access to data.

In essence, Close the Gap does not offer direct aid to any project, but rather provides tools which can be put to good use and which can enhance the further growth of a community in a developing country. ICT should thus trigger social and economic development as it embraces enormous potential to accelerate growth in efficiency and accessibility.

A project should produce a social added value focused on the needs and requirements of the beneficiaries. Close the Gap wants to ensure that edge conditions concerning reliability, security and computer infrastructure are met before approving a project application, this to assure maintenance and sustainability of a project.

Close the Gap focuses on non-commercial projects in line with a local broader Capacity Building Programme. Basic infrastructure, a minimum of local IT knowledge and proficiency need to be at hand and agreements with local governments must be in place. However, this does not limit the scope of the projects Close the Gap participates in - from four laptops being transferred to a South African Child Hospital, to more than 300 computers to a Cuban University.

The vision of Close the Gap is that reducing the digital divide is an important step towards a higher living standard in developing countries, enabling young people to fully explore their talents.

### Close the Gap makes a distinction between to types of projects:



#### Infrastructural Missions

IT infrastructural missions can receive cost-efficient IT-solutions when collaborating with Close the Gap. The equipment is primarily and purely meant to install computer systems for educational, social, medical, good governance and civil society projects. Close the Gap installs the computers and gives follow-up to the projects on a regular basis to keep the IT-systems up-to-date.

#### Charitable Missions

An IT Charitable mission is similar to an IT infrastructural mission but besides sending and installing IT hard- and software, Close the Gap also supports charitable organisations by means of communications, logistics expertise or financial resources.

### Close the Gap Project Adoption Programme

Thanks to the big commitment of its partners Close the Gap was able to launch a Project Adoption Programme. Reflecting the scale of their engagement, partners endorsing the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility can support a specific project financially to create more IT opportunities in developing countries.



Deloitte Project in the Ban Thanong School in Thailand

Close the Gap wants to offer opportunities to local talent to develop, but has no intention to make the projects it supports dependent on foreign financial support. The projects that are supported through the Project Adoption Programme therefore need to be in line with the socio-economic vision Close the Gap supports. The most important selection criteria for Close the Gap will therefore continue to be focused on the evaluation of the self-supporting vision that project partners have developed in order to realize their objectives.

### Project Map: Close the Gap across the Globe

On this map an overview of all the projects on world scale of Close the Gap is presented. A number of projects implemented in 2007 will be highlighted. Specific information on all the projects of Close the Gap can be found on the website (<http://www.close-the-gap.org/>).



#### Interact Rwanda

**Project name:** INTERACT (Infectious diseases Network for Treatment and Research in Africa)  
**Project date:** April 2007  
**Partners:** TRAC (Treatment Research Aids Centre), CHUK (Kigali Referral Hospital), Laboratoire National de Référence, Programme National Intégré de Lutte contre la Tuberculose, Programme National Intégré de Lutte contre le Paludisme, School of Public Health, Project Ubuzima.  
**Quantity of equipment:** three desktops, four printers, seven laptops, one multifunctional printer and one router.

**Goal:** In 2007 Close the Gap supported the Rwanda Interact programme. This programme focuses on establishing and consolidating the infrastructure for conducting clinical chemotherapeutic intervention trials for HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. Equipment has been sent to Rwanda with the purpose of creating a basic research infrastructure. One multifunctional printer, one router and three printers are used to equip a workspace for all employees and students. Six laptops are used by PHD students to conduct their research under supervision of local project coordinators and European coordinators. The rest of the equipment is used by two data entry clerks and one data base coordinator to capture the data of the research projects in the main office (two desktops) and research sites around the country (one laptop).

#### RESO Femmes

**Project name:** RESO Femmes (Réseau d'Engagement et de Soutien aux Organisations de Femmes)  
**Project date:** June 2007  
**Partners:** RESO Femmes and Deloitte The Netherlands  
**Quantity of equipment:** 30 laptops and four Laser Printers

**Goal:** RESO-Femmes is a Swiss NGO that supports women's movement organisations in Mali in order to facilitate the integration of women in the social and political life of Mopti. In 2006 an educational centre was formed in Mopti to train female advisors and decision makers. The laptops, donated by Deloitte in 2007, are used to equip an IT-room. In this room the women movement organisations can get access to the Internet to inform themselves about their political rights, to promote their organisations and search for possible partnerships with other organisations. Besides that, the room is used to give economical and social training.



## Ban Thanong School



**Project name:** Ban Thanong School  
**Project date:** July 2007  
**Partners:** Deloitte Belgium and e-Learning for Kids  
**Quantity of equipment:** 24 PC's, one Cisco Router Switch and one Multi-functional Printer

**Goal:** In July 2007 Deloitte decided to sponsor the Ban Thanong School for boys and girls in Thailand. The project consisted of building a multifunctional hall and the upgrading of a computer class. The school now possesses a complete updated classroom with 24 computers, a local network and a central printing unit. The educational software e-Learning for Kids was installed on the computers.

## Deaf Children Centre MUA



**Project name:** MUA - Deaf Children Centre  
**Project date:** October 2007  
**Partners:** Lions Clubs of Grimbergen (Belgium) and Enepe Ruhr (Germany); Foundation Harrie van den Brekel (Hoensbroek-Netherlands); Close the Gap Project Fund  
**Quantity of equipment:** 20 PCs, two Laser Printers and one Cisco Network Router

**Goal:** Since several years LC Hoensbroek Brunssum and the Foundation Harrie van den Brekel are supporting the MUA School for the Deaf with educational appliances like sewing machines, toolboxes etc. The MUA School is supported by both organisations almost since its creation by Brother Ludwin de Speeth. Close the Gap also empowered two computer classrooms for handicapped learners in Moshi in Tanzania; one for deaf children and another one for blind and visual impaired children. The purpose of this project is to improve education for deaf children in Malawi. A Close the Gap delegation, consisting of Chairman Prof. em. Dr. Wim Blonk and Managing Director Olivier Vanden Eynde travelled to Malawi for the implementation of the project. They installed the computers with special software for the deaf. The e-Learning for Kids programme, software for educational use, could also be added thanks to its partnership with Close the Gap. Besides the IT-components, the project comprises also computer furniture and security of the classroom. The official inauguration of the project took place on the 3rd of November 2007.



## Project Overview 2007

The table below lists the projects executed in 2007.

Project Name	Country	Computer Assets
Restore Hope Africa	Benin	200
Touareg Trail	Benin	42
Louvain Développement NGO	Benin	3
Fédération des Caisses Populaires du Burkina	Burkina Faso	277
Collège des Champions	Chad	1
ABVV - Central de Trabajadores de Cuba	Cuba	590
VLIR-Universidad Central de Las Villas	Cuba	692
Université de Kisangani	D.R. Congo	27
Missiefonds Anuntiaten	D.R. Congo	33
Action Intégrée pour le Développement de Ngandajika	D.R. Congo	3
VUB - Centre Universitaire de Bukavu	D.R. Congo	21
Facultés Catholiques du Kinshasa	D.R. Congo	20
Kalasi	D.R. Congo	9
Wereldmissiehelp	D.R. Congo	99
Kisiwu	D.R. Congo	12
Broeders van St-Gabriel	D.R. Congo	21
Association Internationale des Clubs du Tiers Monde	D.R. Congo	44
Vlaamse Vereniging voor Opleidingsprogramma's NGO	D.R. Congo	50
Rafiki-Bukavu	D.R. Congo	54
Wereldmissiehelp	D.R. Congo/Zambia	145
Den Reisende Højskole	Different Countries	15
Stimulate VUB	Different Countries	12
Peter Verlinden	Different Countries	13
Assembling the Tree Of Life	Different Countries	12
Groupage Laptops	Different Countries	20
Cisco Networking Academy Programme	Ethiopia	48
Larabanga Primary School	Ghana	30
Society of African Missions	Ghana	1
Lamdon School Leh	India	109
Iraqi Dutch Association	Iraq	50
Kibera Township School	Kenya	52
Foundation Generation Europe	Kenya	12
Help Self Help Centre	Kenya	12
People Empowerment Programme	Liberia	10
Embassy of Malawi - School Project	Malawi	20
MUA Deaf Children Centre	Malawi	44
HIV-Education	Malawi	20
RESO-Femmes	Mali	34
Ceseri	Mali	30
VLIR-Saint Louis University	Philippines	692
Agriterra	Romania	15
Agriterra	Rwanda	70
Institut d'Enseignement Supérieur de Ruhengeri	Rwanda	84
Interact	Rwanda	19
Centre Culturel Karin Daniels	Rwanda	5
International Network of Engineers and Scientists	Rwanda	30
Maison de la Culture	Rwanda	4
One night for Dakar	Senegal	24
Panguma Hospital	Sierra Leone	1
St Josephs Child Hospital	South Africa	4
Philani	South Africa	30
Nielsen School Project	South Africa	250
Kagiso Trust	South Africa	162
Fédération Internationale des Musiciens	South Africa	2
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Sudan	210
Blauwgrond Kortenberg	Suriname	62
VLIR- Sokoine University of Agriculture	Tanzania	400
Hekima Girls School	Tanzania	56
Msandaka School for Deaf-Mute Children	Tanzania	55
Shirati Hospital	Tanzania	25
Ban Thanong School	Thailand	51
Pasnam	Togo	47
Leraars Zonder Grenzen	Ukraine	6
VLIR-Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe	416





## Support Organisations

Close the Gap's activities go further than only providing computers and printers. Close the Gap wants to offer all-embracing solutions to its projects and in this context agreements were made with several partners to provide complete IT-solutions.

### Belgian Raiffeisen Foundation

The Belgian Raiffeisen Foundation (BRS) supports poor people in developing countries who take the initiative to build a better life for themselves and a future for their children. To this end it supports local savings, loans and insurance initiatives according to co-operative principles. BRS considers it very important for these activities to be transformed in a reasonable time into independent operations.

### e-Learning for Kids

e-Learning for Kids is a global, not-for-profit organisation dedicated to fun and free learning on the Internet for children of all ages. It offers free, best in-class courseware in mathematics, science, reading, English language and health life skills and is building a community for parents and educators to share innovations and insights in childhood education.

### The Flemish Ministry for Administrative Affairs, Foreign Policy, Media and Tourism

The Flemish Ministry for Administrative Affairs, Foreign Policy, Media and Tourism - Department International Flanders supported Close the Gap in developing a partnership programme towards existing and potential new partners and computer donors. This programme was developed in 2006 and 2007 and on the basis of this project the 'Friends of Close the Gap programme' has been created. This programme creates incentives to develop 'win-win' partnerships by making available a structural set of 'returns' towards the partners, i.e. merchandising material, networking business development events and local employee involvement programmes.

### Institute for Science and Technology

The Flemish Government also supports Close the Gap in the setting-up of a regional Flemish project roll-out towards digital divide partners. This support is coordinated and supervised by IWT (Institute for Science and Technology) with a subsidy for the project "Dicht de Kloof". With this subsidy, Close the Gap aims at diffusing ICT-technologies in Flanders by stimulating Corporate Social Responsible Entrepreneurship for Flemish small and medium sized companies to help bridging the digital divide in their own neighbourhood. A second objective of this project is to investigate how a platform can be developed and further expanded together with Flemish companies with the objective of donating more products and services to Close the Gap's projects.

### Kagiso Trust

Close the Gap and the Kagiso Trust in South Africa agreed a partnership to work together in the Beyers Naudé Schools Development Programme, which aims to restore the culture of learning and teaching in schools in rural areas, while at the same time developing functional and sustainable relationships between key stakeholders within the school community. One key aspect of this programme is that it focuses on establishing good governance and management principles which will ultimately benefit the long-term success of the schools programme. Close the Gap sponsors the computer labs that are being implemented in the second phase of the Beyers Naudé School Development Programme.

### Unesco

UNESCO developed an Open Training Platform, which wants to empower trainers and trainees with free resources and offer them a structured collaborative space to share their training but also to promote and value the "open" training materials, which are freely and openly accessible for trainers and self-learners to use and re-use for non commercial purposes such as teaching, learning and research. Close the Gap supports this training platform by actively promoting it towards its projects partners.

### University of the Western Cape

The University of the Western Cape is a national university committed to excellence in teaching, learning and research, to nurture the cultural diversity of South Africa and to respond in critical and creative ways to the needs of a society in transition. Drawing on its proud experience in the liberation struggle, the university is aware of a distinctive academic role in helping to build an equitable and dynamic society.

### VLIR-UOS

The Flemish Interuniversity Council for University Development Cooperation (VLIR-UOS) supports research and higher education institutions in the South through partnerships with Flemish universities. Specific objectives are building the capacity of institutions in the South and maintaining and expanding expertise and support within the societies of the North. The last three years VLIR-UOS' partner institutions in the South have received about 2,500 Close the Gap computers and have trained the local staff to use them. Close the Gap computers have been sent to VLIR-UOS projects in Cuba, Kenya, South-Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Apart from this programme, the partnership between VLIR-UOS and Close the Gap has also been communicated towards VLIR-UOS' partner institutions and their network in the South. Subsequently, VLIR-UOS' partner universities in Tanzania, Ethiopia, Congo and South-Africa have received computer equipment directly through Close the Gap.





## Sustainability

As sustainability has become one of the more important and challenging issues nowadays, Close the Gap conducted an online survey with the coordinators of its project partners around the world. The objective of this survey was to map out and evaluate Close the Gap's work and to gain insights in future perspectives. The survey pointed out that the greatest part (96%) of the respondents was satisfied to very satisfied with the services offered by Close the Gap and that the organisation's future challenges mainly concern logistics and recycling issues.




The questionnaire was sent out in June 2007 to 180 project partners and had a response rate of 35%. The majority of the partners that answered the questionnaire are located in Africa (53%); the remaining partners are spread over Latin America, Asia and Europe. More than six in ten (65%) of the respondents are active in the educational sector. The other respondents are very fragmented over different sectors among which the social, medical and micro-financing are the most important.

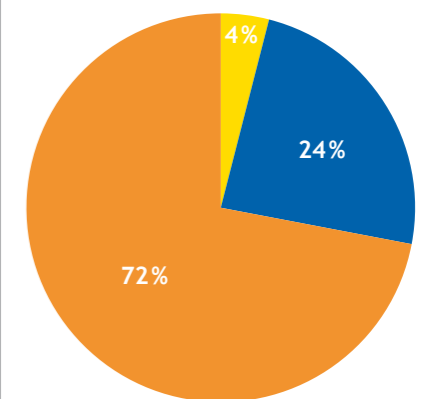
Even more important is the fact that the survey also demonstrated the sustainability of Close the Gap's projects: from all the respondents that were using the computers already for 19 to 24 months, three quarter (75%) estimated to use the same equipment for at least another 19 months. After this (expected) lifespan of three years, the majority of the respondents (33%) plans to donate the equipment to other projects in their neighbourhood. Less positive is the fact that only 16% of the respondents consider recycling options. The main reason for not considering recycling options is the lack of recycling facilities in the country (47%). Close the Gap is aware of this issue. In 2008 we therefore will strive to ensure our positive role in dealing with the e-waste issue like we have done already in 2007.

Finally, from all the project partners that answered the questionnaire, almost half (49%) would like Close the Gap to expand its services to logistics. Four in ten of the respondents arranged the transport from Europe to the final destination themselves. However, after experiencing the time-consuming aspect of this process, 42% of those respondents said to be willing to pay more the next time if Close the Gap would take over the transportation process. In addition, 50% of the partners that left the transportation process to Close the Gap, received their equipment within three months after their first contact with the organisation.

Close the Gap would like to thank again all the project partners that participated in this survey and by doing so they allow Close the Gap to further improve its services. Close the Gap is therefore thankful to incorporate the partner's suggestions in its future plans.

Customer's rate of CTGs services in general.

Not good, not bad   
Good   
Very good 





## HIV/AIDS Research

### Close the Gap researcher works on HIV/AIDS awareness

Dorien Baelden, researcher at Close the Gap Int. in Brussels, works on a South-African/Belgian Project to do research on a digital information layer for HIV and AIDS awareness.

The programme, which started in 2006, is made possible through a partnership with the Belgian federal institution BELSPO (Belgian Science Policy Office). Dr. Tania Vergnani, director of the HIV and Aids programme at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), acts as the academic promoter on South-African side. On Belgian side, the research project is promoted by Prof. Dr. Leo Van Audenhove, member of the research centre for studies on Media, Information and Telecommunication, associated with the Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

The objectives of the research are threefold:

- The first goal is to develop a digital information layer on HIV and AIDS for computers in public places.
- Secondly, this layer will be tested in terms of usability and impact in the environment of tertiary education, more specifically in the computer labs of first year students at UWC.
- Finally, this research will analyze the more general ICT usage of students in order to be able to fit the layer into students' user patterns.



Computer classroom at the University of the Western Cape.

Obviously, before such a layer can be developed and implemented, it is indispensable to gain insights in students' opinions and preferences concerning existing and future HIV/AIDS campaigns. For instance, what kind of campaigns do students like and dislike? How should a new campaign look like? What should be the scope of new campaigns? And, do students think that a digital layer is a good platform for new campaigns? In the search for answers on these questions, Dorien Baelden went to UWC to talk to the students. In total 85 students have been interviewed on their views on HIV/AIDS campaigns. Some of the interviews were rather touching, others carried out a message of hope and still others expressed feelings of powerlessness. But all the interviewed students had one thing in common: blatant beliefs on how future campaigns should (not) look like.

As the research project is running towards its end, Close the Gap Int. spoke to Dorien Baelden in order to get a clear picture on the state of the art of the research.

### In what does your research differ from HIV/AIDS campaigns conducted during the last 20 years?

**Dorien Baelden:** Evaluations on primary prevention programmes during the past 20 years made clear that the majority of these programmes are based on a limited number of theoretical models aimed at individual behaviour change. These programmes really achieved important results, such as an improvement of the knowledge concerning HIV and AIDS. Although figures show that large-scale individual behaviour isn't altering. This is caused due to the fact that HIV and AIDS are embedded in social and cultural realities. **Topics such as poverty, unequal gender proportions, stigma and discrimination play an important role in the distribution of the virus.** When people take decisions on sexual behaviour, they don't particularly do it out of individual considerations, but out of social considerations. The existing campaigns based on individual behaviour changes, must therefore be completed with campaigns focussed on social changes. Recent research suggests that the emancipation of certain groups in society plays an important role.

**The investigation conducted by Close the Gap starts from the assumption that dialogue, emancipation and social change are of primordial importance when creating primary HIV and AIDS prevention programmes.**

### How important is ICT as a tool in HIV-related programming?

**Dorien Baelden:** Within the framework of HIV and AIDS programmes ICT can be used differently. Most of the existing ICT initiatives operate on the level of care workers, research workers, teachers etc. In this context one tries to set up platforms which facilitate the information exchange between for example teachers. This method encourages the exchange of knowledge and allows people to share experiences. ICT-initiatives on the level of risk groups are however relatively new. Little research has been conducted on this topic. This is in no way astonishing since ICT is not the most obvious

media to communicate about HIV and AIDS. The importance of ICT for HIV and AIDS preventions is restricted to groups who use new technologies on a regular base; university students for example.

**The Internet has a wide range of important advantages in comparison to traditional medium channels. It is an interactive and participative medium, which must be seen as an immense advantage on the level of emancipation and dialogue.**

### Can you describe the potential uses of the digital information layer in HIV/AIDS related care?

**Dorien Baelden:** The digital platform created in the framework of Close the Gap's research focuses on South-African university students. For the development of the platform 1.205 students, all registered at the University of the Western Cape, were questioned about their ICT-skills, their preferences concerning the development of new AIDS prevention campaigns and their opinions concerning the use of ICT for health information. These answers were analysed and used for establishing directives concerning the development of the platform. Topics such as the need to dialogue, interactivity, honesty and unvarnished messages and bottom-up tactics were emphasised by most of the students. For that reason an ambiguous treatment was chosen when developing the platform. On the one hand computer wallpapers were developed, focussing substantively on subjects the students are concerned about; for example the need towards more dialogue. On the other hand a discussion platform was created where students have the possibility to inform themselves about HIV/AIDS issues. These two digital platforms are still in a test phase. That is the reason why no judgements can be made concerning the potential of such platforms in other contexts. We expect, however, that we might be able to implement the wallpapers and the forum at other universities in South-Africa and neighbouring countries.

Up till now, the digital platform has a broader function than just informing. At the UWC they are already used in terms of curriculum integration. They are used by several teachers in order to raise HIV/AIDS awareness. For example: the computer-science-teacher uses the discussion forum to guide his students through the wide world of the Internet. In this approach our platform also serves as an ICT-promoter.

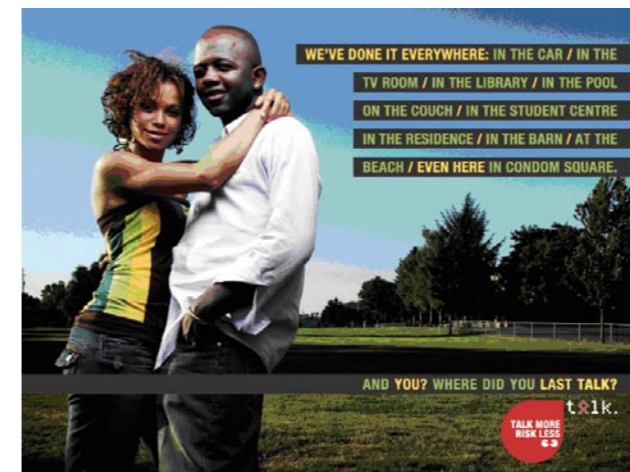
### Does this layer prove to be a good platform for the campaign? What is the primary goal of your research?

**Dorien Baelden:** It is too early to do evaluative judgements concerning the platform. The actual implementation of the platforms will occur in February 2008. From then on, an evaluation of the platform can be carried out.

It is however very important to notice that it is impossible to find causal relationships within the evaluation. The subjects of research, i.e. the students, are a very difficult controllable group. Furthermore, as we guarantee the privacy of our respondents, it becomes even more complicated. All the previous facts, combined with the fact that the students are exposed to several other influences, such as other HIV/AIDS campaigns of the UWC, the government, other organisations, etc. Each one of these campaigns has a certain influence, which makes it even more difficult to filter the weight of our campaign.

This research is as a matter of fact not unique. One of the main troubles experienced by developers of worldwide information campaigns is exactly the verifiability of the research subjects and the context in which they occur. The eventual aim of the research does not concern finding causal relations, but examining whether students appreciate ICT as a carrier of health information and examining whether students effectively make use of an anonymous online discussion platform.

These findings will be used as a trigger for further research, in which the platforms can be implemented for a longer period and in which thorough research can be conducted concerning user appreciation and impact.



Sneak preview of a wallpaper that will be implemented at the University of the Western Cape.





## CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

### 7. Corporate Governance

Close the Gap's governance wants to be directly accountable towards its partners in Europe as well as towards its partners in the developing countries. The process of executing and the process by which decisions are implemented are based on clear and transparent governance codes.

Close the Gap is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors; this independent board is responsible for giving its formal approval to major strategic and organisational decisions taken within Close the Gap. The Board needs to approve all main decisions taken by the management, including the budget and the year plan, as well as reviewing the financial results.

Complementing the Board of Directors, Close the Gap's Advisory Board consists of a number of international personalities. Members of this board act as international ambassadors and also play a strong role in strategic decisions to be taken by giving advice to the Managing Director on existing approaches and proposed directions.

In order to be transparent Close the Gap is audited on a yearly basis by 'PKF Bedrijfsrevisoren Belgium'. The audit is conducted in accordance with legal and statutory requirements and provides assurance that the financial statements are free of material misstatement. The audit process includes measuring the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by the management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statements.

Reliability towards donors and partners is crucial for an organisation like Close the Gap. In order to assure a transparent and professional use of funds, raised by sponsors, donors and subsidiary governments, Deloitte supports Close the Gap with internal audits, risk management and legal support, as well as providing Deloitte experts to carry out the entire accounting. A 2-yearly audit conducted by Deloitte oversees the entire technical path to guarantee that the refurbishing and logistic track, as well as the quality assurance of the equipment delivered to Close the Gap projects takes place in a consistent and transparent way.

This whole process of transparency by internal and external auditing is strengthened furthermore by Close the Gap's policy concerning its project management, which operates clearly by a neutral and independent selection of projects based on clearly defined criteria. A guiding principle, hereby, is the concept of local ownership by each project beneficiary. This means that local partners are ultimately responsible for the results of their supported activities. In most cases Close the Gap charges a reasonable personal contribution per computer configuration, but exceptions can occur when external funds or Close the Gap funds are available to carry the costs of a project.

In order to increase the long-term-self-supporting characteristic of its projects, Close the Gap offers all-embracing solutions to its partners, among others peripheral equipment, additional hard- and software and capacity building programmes through various qualitative partnerships, both local and international. The tools provided by these partnerships lead to improved and sustainable projects and bring people together to exchange knowledge and experiences. A large number of projects found these broad sources to support them, thereby securing a sustainable and independent integration of the Close the Gap equipment.

Close the Gap is aware of the importance of a well-developed and open communication strategy, both in the short and the long run. In the course of the years Close the Gap established a traceable communication path to improve its transparency. This is done by providing complete information about every step in Close the Gap's process chain. In practice, this means that all communication matters are handled by a dedicated FTE communication's coordinator who makes sure that all relevant information about executed projects, partnerships and other facts are accessible through the Close the Gap website, newsletters and other communication media.

In a world where climate change is a key concern, Close the Gap is increasingly aware that it has to take up its own responsibility. Lengthening the lives of IT-equipment is one aspect, but Close the Gap wants to go much further. As mentioned in 'The Green Perspective' Close the Gap constantly keeps track of green evolutions in order to ameliorate its green governance policy.





## 8. Financial Report

Close the Gap International has financial transparency in its management in order to be able to account at any given moment for the use of the funds assigned to the organisation, whether by third parties, companies, private individuals or governments.

Through active fundraising of financial- and computer contributions, Close the Gap can guarantee its existence as a financially self-supporting organisation and remain fully focused on its core activities, namely help organisations in developing countries to continuously close the digital divide.

Close the Gap is a not-for-profit organisation partly funded by financial donations from third parties, such as companies, governments and private individuals and partly funded by her own operational activities, i.e. making computers available to developing projects at cost-price. In case Close the Gap is unable to use specific computers from donations, for example because of a mismatch of quality for minimal specs or because of a significant short time overstock of unplaceable computers which would lead to high storage costs, the computers are recycled or offered to third brokerage parties respecting eventually specific conditions agreed with the donors. These contributions combined with revenues generated from limited personal contributions from buyers of hardware for developing projects allow Close the Gap to cover its annual operational and administrative costs. The generated positive results will be used to support sustainable projects in developing countries where there is a clear need for IT-solutions but where no (or too small) budgets are available to pay for the out-of-pockets expenses for the refurbished computers.

In order to keep its operational costs as low as possible, Close the Gap heavily relies on sponsoring for most of its activities, from printing to web design and transport. In addition, Close the Gap receives support of a number of volunteers.

The Board of Directors guarantees that all donations to Close the Gap projects are handled in a professional manner and completely free of profit. In order to guarantee that all sponsoring funds are used as intended, Close the Gap is audited on a yearly basis by a registered and independent auditor, PKF.

The balance sheet and income statement of Close the Gap, as well as an independent auditor's report in which PKF grants an unqualified audit opinion on the 2007 financial statements are published below.

The table below shows a condensed representation of Close the Gap's balance sheet and profit and loss accounts for the year ending 31st December 2007.

BALANCE SHEET		31.12.2007	31.12.2006	31.12.2005
<b>ASSETS</b>				
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>				
Tangible assets		6.864,07	8.123,16	3.954,35
Plant, machinery and equipment		6.864,07	8.123,16	3.954,35
Furniture and vehicles		705,62	720,00	
		6158,45	7.403,16	3.954,35
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>				
Stocks and contracts in progress		1.836.541,88	1.114.077,73	779.369,73
Stocks		1	1,00	1,00
Goods purchased for resale		1	1,00	1,00
Amounts receivable within one year		612.907,53	244.471,13	321.106,45
Trade Debtors		607.047,58	242.054,91	306.855,12
Other amounts receivable		5.859,95	2.416,22	14.251,33
Cash at bank and in hand		1.222.304,95	858.270,87	448.781,80
VLJR-ICT, Fund		145.625,83	310.832,24	292.758,68
. Own Cash		1.076.679,12	547.438,63	156.023,12
Deferred charges and accrued income		1.328,40	11.334,73	9.480,48
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>1.843.405,95</b>	<b>1.122.200,89</b>	<b>783.324,08</b>
<b>BALANCE SHEET</b>				
<b>LIABILITIES</b>				
<b>CAPITAL AND RESERVES</b>				
Association's funds		1.132.378,80	304.058,17	71.171,03
Starting Capital		9.461,62	9.461,62	9.461,62
Funds allocated by Close The Gap		9.461,62	9.461,62	9.461,62
Profit carried forward		629.973,47	294.596,55	61.709,41
<b>CREDITORS</b>				
Amounts payable within one year		711.027,15	818.142,72	712.153,05
Financial Debts		390.396,85	146.643,19	363.737,15
Trade debts				1.379,55
Suppliers		353.629,39	88.075,48	265.611,67
Advances received on contracts in progress		353.629,39	88.075,48	265.611,67
Taxes, remuneration, and social security taxes		0,00	27.610,45	68.790,09
Taxes		35.056,61	30.957,26	25.815,83
Renumeration and social security		4.524,07	1.664,27	9.428,18
Other amounts payable		30.532,54	29.292,99	16.387,65
. Accrued charges and different income		1.710,85	2.140,01	2.140,01
		320.630,30	671.499,53	348.415,90
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>1.843.405,95</b>	<b>1.122.200,89</b>	<b>783.324,08</b>
<b>INCOME STATEMENTS</b>				
Operating income	A	1.623.740,55	923.549,35	528.147,01
Turnover		692.919,69	772.485,91	416.078,22
Contributions, donations, grants, etc		927.798,58	151.052,89	110.640,62
Other operating income		3.022,28	10,55	1.428,17
Operating charges	(-)	808.104,48	699.132,86	515.120,60
<b>Intermediate consumption</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>619.216,70</b>	<b>551.559,98</b>	<b>356.111,11</b>
Raw materials, consumables and goods for resale		362.668,83	451.665,52	293.623,75
Purchases	600/8	362.668,83	451.665,52	293.623,75
Increase (-);decrease(+) in stocks				
Services and other goods		256.547,87	99.894,46	62.487,36
<b>Gross Margin (Pos result)</b>	<b>A-B</b>	<b>1.004.523,85</b>	<b>371.989,37</b>	<b>172.035,90</b>
Remunerations, social security costs and pensions		149.894,32	139.210,98	118.875,24
Depreciation of and amounts written off formations expenses intangible and tangible fixed assets		3.912,79	3.660,75	1.485,21
Other operating charges		35.080,67	4.701,15	38.649,04
Operating profit	(+)	<b>815.636,07</b>	<b>224.416,49</b>	<b>13.026,41</b>
Financial income		13.450,71	9.483,91	5.432,13
Income from current assets		13.310,71	8.279,81	5.420,87
Other financial income		140,00	1.204,10	11,26
Financial charges	(-)	-766,15	-1.013,26	-1.102,88
Interest and other debt charge		14,16	74,38	77,34
Other financial charges		751,99	938,88	1.025,54
Profit on ordinary activities	(+)	828.320,63	232.887,14	17.355,66
Extraordinary income	(+)	0,00	0,00	576,64
Write back of depreciations				576,64
Positive result for the year	(+)	828.320,63	232.887,14	17.932,30
Positive result allocated to funds	(-)	629.973,47	0,00	0,00
<b>Positive result for the period to be carried forward</b>	<b>(+)</b>	<b>198.347,16</b>	<b>232.887,14</b>	<b>17.932,30</b>

Reviseurs d'entreprises



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AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE ANNUAL MEMBERS' MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION CLOSE THE GAP INTERNATIONAL VZW ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2007

In accordance with the legal and statutory requirements, we report to you on the performance of the audit assignment, which has been entrusted to us. This report contains our opinion on the true and fair view of the financial statements as well as the required additional statements.

**Unqualified audit opinion on the financial statements**

We have audited the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2007, prepared in accordance with the financial reporting framework applicable in Belgium, which show a balance sheet total of EUR 1.843.405,95 and a positive balance for the year of EUR 828.320,63.

Management is responsible for the preparation and the fair presentation of these financial statements. This responsibility includes: designing, implementing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with the legal requirements and the Auditing Standards applicable in Belgium, as issued by the Institute of Registered Auditors (*Institut des Réviseurs d'Entreprises / Instituut van de Bedrijfsrevisoren*). Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In accordance with the above-mentioned auditing standards, we considered the association's accounting system, as well as its internal control procedures. We have obtained from management and from the association's officials the explanations and information necessary for executing our audit procedures. We have examined, on a test basis, the evidence supporting the amounts included in the financial statements. We have assessed the appropriateness of accounting policies and the reasonableness of the significant accounting estimates made by the association as well as the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that these procedures provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

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The PKF International Association is an association of legally independent firms.



In our opinion, the financial statements for the year 31 December 2007 give a true and fair view of the association's assets and liabilities, its financial position and the results of its operations in accordance with the financial reporting framework applicable in Belgium.

**Additional statements**

The compliance by the association (foundation) with the Law related to not-for-profit associations, international not-for-profit associations and foundations is the responsibility of management.

Our responsibility is to supplement our report with the following additional statements, which do not modify our audit opinion on the financial statements:

- Without prejudice to formal aspects of minor importance, the accounting records were maintained in accordance with the legal and regulatory requirements applicable in Belgium.
- There are no transactions undertaken or decisions taken in violation of the association's statutes or the Law related to not-for-profit associations, international not-for-profit associations and foundations that we have to report to you.

Brussels, 27 May 2008

PKF reviseurs d'entreprises SCRL  
Represented by

Gunther Loits  
Registered Auditor | Partner





## VISION ON THE FUTURE

### 9. Vision on the Future

Close the Gap wants to offer companies a concrete opportunity to participate in reaching the Millennium Goals as set forth by the former Secretary General of the UN, Kofi Annan, at the turn of the millennium. Kofi Annan outlined eight target segments in which companies can make a significant contribution. ICT and the transfer of knowledge is one of the criteria where Close the Gap fits in perfectly. The vision of Close the Gap is to further intensify and professionalize its relationship with partners and donors and to look for new strategic partners with a clear synergetic relationship towards Close the Gap. The organisation wants also to further elaborate its relationship with its donors towards sustainable CSR-programmes (Corporate Social Responsibility) by means of the 'Friends of Close the Gap'-programme. This programme wants to commit donors and encourage them to breathe and support Close the Gap activities in developing countries in a sustainable and passionate way.

On the project side Close the Gap wants to offer all-embracing IT-solutions to budget limited organisations in the South. The spread of information and communication technologies has given rise to noticeable opportunities of development for the underprovided population. Close the Gap wants to explore these innovative trends in the market and offer independent advice on these products and services by creating a test lab. The purpose of this testing laboratory is to examine the possibilities of all new and refurbished technologies and other affordable IT-equipment, so that Close the Gap can offer the best solution for a project, based on their endeavour, potential and possibilities. This testing laboratory will also serve as a demonstration room for project partners.

Furthermore, Close the Gap wants to refine the digital inclusion by building up long-term sustainable partnerships with supportive organisations in the field of training, programme management, etc. to better assist underserved communities.

In the near future Close the Gap will embed itself into two developing countries to be able to anticipate even more effectively towards its projects.

As mentioned in 'The Green Perspective', Close the Gap will keep on focussing on its green role that is in compliance with current environmental standards and legislation and keeps track of all changes and directives in order to stay ahead on topics concerning this matter.



## 10. Contact Details

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1. VZW = Vereniging zonder winstoogmerk - ASBL = Association sans but lucratif  
2. Registration number = Ondernemingsnummer



