



DESIGN-A-THON WORKS

ANNUAL REPORT 2020 & PLANS FOR 2021



Empowering children to design a better future

Introduction

Design-a-thon Works is an international foundation that empowers children (aged 8 - 12) around the world to design sustainable futures using simple technologies. We do that via a proven, collaborative design process, called 'design-a-thon'.

We see children as changemakers: engaged citizens, activists, scientists and inventors. Our methodology, lesson materials and network offer a pathway for children to further develop their capacity to take action for a world they want. Each design-a-thon topic is related to its participants' specific context, and is also nested within a bigger global challenge linked to one of the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals, such as water scarcity, poverty, deforestation, or citizenship.

Design-a-thon Works operates under the name: Stichting Designathon Works. In this report, we will elaborate on the policies and activities of Design-a-thon Works in 2020.

Kind Regards,

Evelyn Doyle, Maarten Nelissen, Emer Beamer Cronin & Michele Ernsting

(The Board of Design-a-thon Works)

The Foundation

1.1. Organization

Stichting Designathon Works

Address: Duindoornplein 19, 1032 CL Amsterdam

Phone: +31 (0)613787010

Website: www.designathonworks.com

Email: info@designathon.nl

Chamber of commerce: 60140615

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1.2. Board

In 2020 the board consists of:

- Evelyn Doyle: Chair Woman
- Maarten Nelissen: Treasurer
- Emer Cronin: Secretary, Founder of the Foundation
- Michele Ernsting: General Board Member

1.3. Remuneration

Board members do not receive any remuneration for their board activities, as stated in the articles of Association. Design-a-thon Works has a moderate wage policy for the management team and freelancers and aims at salary levels and working conditions that match the responsibilities. Employees do not receive bonuses or 13th months.

1.4. ANBI

The “Belastingdienst” (Dutch Tax Authority) authorized Stichting Designathon Works with the ANBI status in January 2017. This means that Stichting Designathon Works is classified as ‘Algemeen Nut beogende Instelling’, meaning that the foundation is a non-profit, aiming to have as much impact as possible and holds a certain tax exemption status.

Mission, Vision and Impact

2.1 Our dream...

What if we radically reimagined the way we see children? What if we saw children as changemakers, engaged humans, activists, scientists or inventors? What if EVERY child was offered a path to develop these abilities?

[Design-a-thon Works](#) (DW) is a Dutch non-profit organisation with the ultimate aim to enable 1 million children around the world to become changemakers for a better world and that society in turn includes children in co-designing the future.

2.2 How do we create the change we wish to see?

- CHILDREN | 1 million are enabled as changemakers to co-create a better world!

Our method is a design hackathon where children tackle complex global problems (the SDGs*), use their creativity and develop prototypes (with simple technologies) and present their solutions to an audience. By doing a Design-a-thon SDG Challenge, many children discover that their possibilities are unlimited and they think beyond their borders, literally and figuratively. Children gain knowledge on the SDGs and develop 21st century skills to collaboratively develop new solutions, use new technologies and take action. The method focuses on building the inner abilities of all children, regardless of their gender, race, class, skill-level or learning situation. To date, 90K children in over 40 countries have participated in at least one Design-a-thon SDG Challenge and at least 50% of those children have come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- NETWORK PARTNERS | sustainably engage children to become change-makers to solve 21st century problems

Our network partner organisations have enabled us, in the last 5 years, to reach a huge diversity of children and provide them with the opportunity to get social and environmental education, develop their changemakers ability and have their voices heard. Each of our network partners have a wealth of knowledge and capacity in their region. Together we are learning and developing new ways of: engaging society for inclusion of children; influencing decision makers; measuring our impact and developing new context-relevant approaches.

- DECISION MAKERS AND DIVERSE STAKEHOLDERS | engage children and take their input into decision/policy making

At Design-a-thon works we collaborate and co-create with many different stakeholders to amplify our impact in ways that are contextually relevant. In each SDG Challenge we host, we strive to set up rich collaborations that bring together our network partners reaching children, supported by corporates, social enterprises and NGOs who together in turn influence decision makers & policymakers to make these youth voices heard.

2.3 Our approach to enabling children: the Design-a-thon method



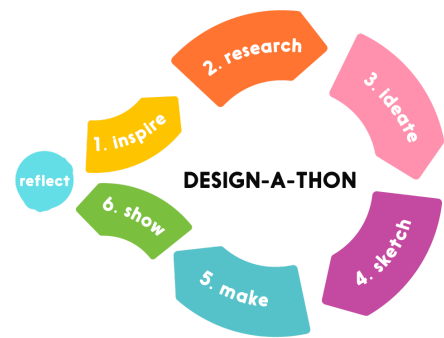
We engage children in Design-a-thons, design hackathons where they tackle complex global problems (aligned to the SDGs*), such as clean energy, clean water, waste and poverty.

The Design-a-thon method is a structured and open-ended process where children (8-12 yrs) design, build and present their ideas. Children gain knowledge on the various SDGs, gain 21st century skills (like creative thinking,

global citizenship and technological literacy) and gain agency to take action. The methodology maps to learning objectives specified by:

- OECD's Future of Education 2030 framework
- Unesco's SDG's Learning Objectives
- World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs report

Design-a-thons build the inner abilities of all children, regardless of their gender, race, class, skill-level or learning situation. We work with a diverse population of students, at least 50% of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Some are growing up in the slums of Nairobi, some are newcomers in their first year in the Netherlands, and some are winners of the Shanghai Science Fair.



2.4 Impact & influence

Through SDG Challenges, we have demonstrated that education has the power to change the world! We can show the impact of our work on three levels:

INDIVIDUAL IMPACT:

- Children gain 21st century competencies and agency to fulfill their personal ambitions and strengthen society
- Families who are influenced by their children's enthusiasm, concern and conversations about the topics

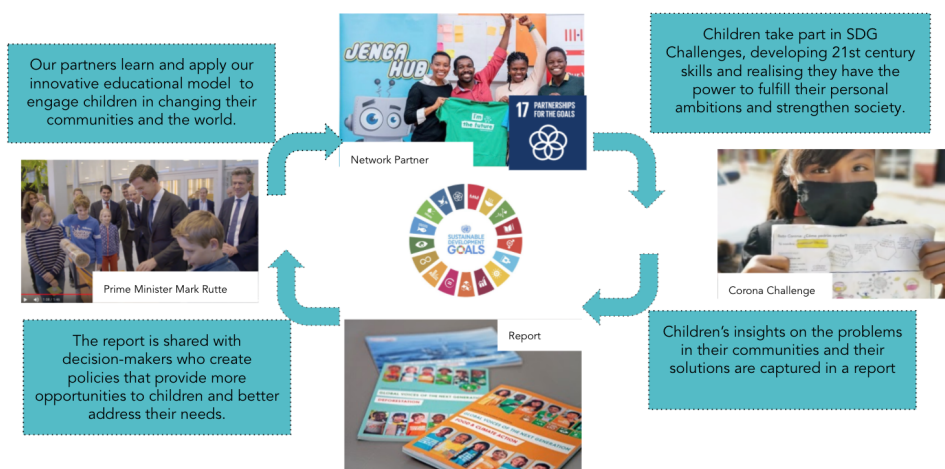
REGIONAL IMPACT:

- Municipalities and organisations integrate children's perspectives, insights, and solutions on local issues into policy decisions
- Schools that adopt our method in the classroom also report a noticeable behaviour change in their children

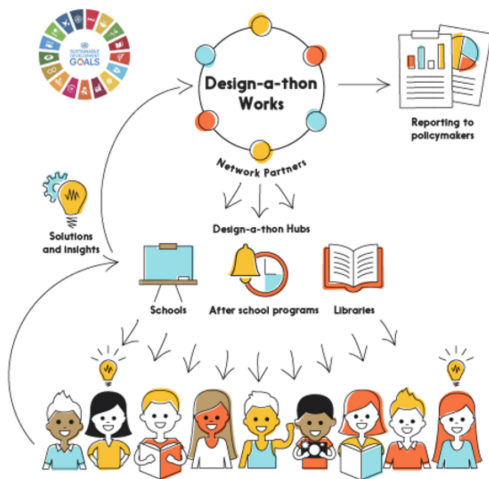
GLOBAL IMPACT:

We change the world by influencing many stakeholders through our research reports. Please find an example of the latest Global Voices of the Next Generation via [this link](#).

- By deeply engaging communities, we create a virtuous cycle of impact!



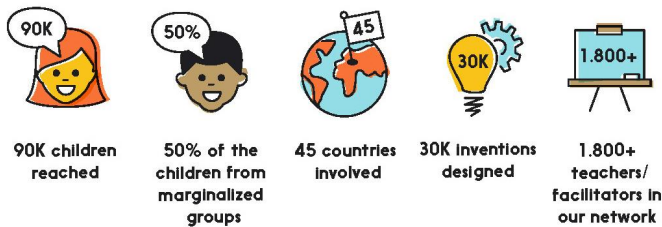
➤ Amplifying impact globally, by networking locally



In each SDG-linked challenge we host, we strive to set up rich collaborations between our Network Partners and our sponsors: companies, social enterprises and NGOs. Together, all the actors in our ecosystem align to influence decision makers & policymakers, ensuring the voices of youth are heard on topics such as clean energy, water scarcity, inequality, and sustainable food systems.

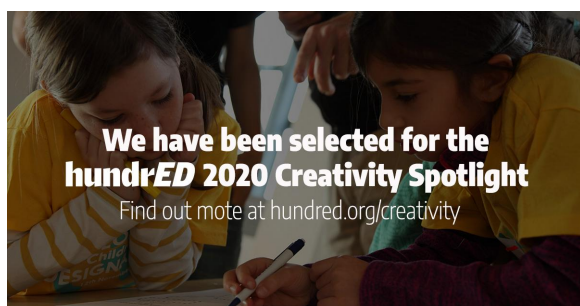
➤ Our impact in numbers

Since 2014, the Design-a-thon Works network has enabled:



Activities & Projects 2020

3.1 Highlights of 2020



➤ Creativity Spotlight by HunderED

We are proud to be selected by HunderED.org as one of the world's most impactful and scalable innovations in sustainability education!

[Designathon Works Sustainability Spotlight video.](#)
[Spotlight on the HundrED website.](#)

➤ Changemaker Challenge Junior

After a successful first edition of the [Dopper](#) Changemaker Challenge Junior in 2018, we have created a second, international, edition of the challenge. In the challenge, children came up with solutions for single-use plastic pollution. The project was run by city co-ordinators in London, Berlin, Belgium and Nepal. You can find more information about this project in section 3.2.

Changemaker Challenge Junior [Website](#).

➤ Online Challenges

In March 2020, as a first immediate response to online schooling we launched an online educational project and worked with children and partners in the Netherlands, Turkey, Mexico and Tanzania. This educational challenge is based on the Design-a-thon method but adapted to be done online and at home, with instructions for parents and teachers, and supported and realised

by our global network partners. The online challenges were a springboard for the Designathon Works community platform.

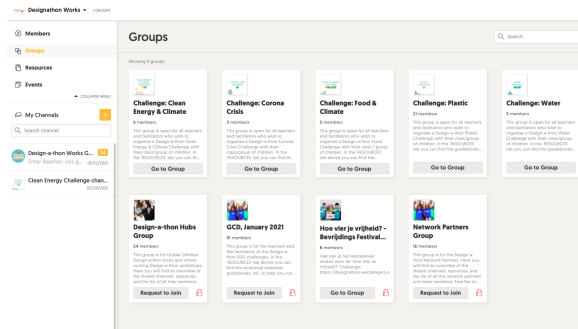
➤ Designathon Works community platform

To support our work and our network partners, teachers and facilitators, we have created an online learning platform that contains multiple challenges & learning materials on the SDGs such as clean energy, water pollution, food waste. This platform enables our network partners to engage students in these topics so that the participating children gain knowledge about the topic, develop 21st century skills and notice that their ideas and concerns are taken seriously.



Our community platform is also a place for the Library of Ideas! This is where teachers/facilitators upload children's sketches for various design-a-thon challenges, allowing all members of the online platform to easily view and share children's ideas from around the world. The selection of the ideas is visible on a public library on our website.

[DW Community platform.](#)
[Library of Ideas.](#)



➤ Corona Challenge in Mexico

With [Mayama](#), our partner in Mexico, 150 children from very marginalised groups took part in the Corona Challenge. To design solutions to issues their communities are facing during times of COVID-19. All the sessions were done by phone. One educator said: 'I learned to trust children more and their creative power.'



[Short video.](#)

➤ Tanzania

In late August, we were able to execute a program together with our partner JengaHub in the rural Kilombero Valley in Tanzania. The project consisted of a teacher training, school site visit, a children's Design-a-thon and an exhibition.

In this program we chose to start with a teacher training program. This allowed us to equip teachers with the necessary skills to interact with technology and integrate design thinking skills. It also made teaching more efficient and the program more sustainable.

➤ Amsterdam Designation Challenge

The Amsterdam Designation Challenge 2020 was a city-wide designation challenge commissioned by the Public Library of Amsterdam for the second year in a row. During the challenge, more than 300 primary school students took part in the Amsterdam Designation Challenge with the theme Global Citizenship. You can find more



information about this project in section 3.2.

[Amsterdam Designation Challenge webpage.](#)

➤ Helsinki Education Week

We were invited to run an online designation with children in Helsinki as part of the during Helsinki Education Week. The workshop was the unofficial



kick off of the global challenge Clean Energy and Climate leading up to the Global Children's Designathon on January 23rd 2021.

➤ Zalando / Ashoka

Designathon Works has been selected to the Changemakers United support program by Ashoka and Zalando, a collective effort to support social innovators at the forefront of the Covid-19 crisis.

[Read more.](#)



➤ SNF

We embarked on our collaboration with SNF with the goal of evolving how we use technology to



engage children, facilitators and our partners in user-friendly, accessible ways all in order to teach as many children as possible how to design a better world. The unique circumstances of the

global pandemic kept reiterating the importance of this goal, but required us to test, try and continually evolve beyond our initial plans for achieving this goal. Eventually leading to our amazing community platform which is a perfect foundation to scale our work and to support our clients, our network partners and their CBOs. It contains training resources and lesson materials on multiple SDG Challenge themes. It has a gallery to showcase all children's inventions. Lastly it will support our impact and collective advocacy strategy.

3.2 School Programs

So far on a local level, 400 Dutch schools did a Designathon workshop. We have trained over 600 teachers and 200 teachers are certified. In 2020 we've worked with the schools indirectly through our partners and our online program, and directly during the summer school projects.

➤ Armoede Rotterdam

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics 15 percent of Rotterdammers live in poverty. In 2019 and 2020, Commissioned in 2019 by the Rotterdam city council and in collaboration with Camping Onbestemd, we ran 10 designathon workshops about poverty with 164 Rotterdams children. In the workshops, children learned about different forms of poverty, came up with ideas, and made prototypes to solve the problems around poverty among Rotterdam city families. In September 2020, children from the Nelson Mandela school in Rotterdam met with Michiel Grauss (Alderman for Poverty Reduction, Debt Management and Informal Care, Rotterdam) to present him with a report on the insights and ideas of the participating children to tackle poverty in Rotterdam. The aim is to share the perspective and the voice of children towards influencing policy-making around poverty in Rotterdam. [You can download the report here.](#)



➤ Verkeer Designathon

The second edition of the 'Verkeer Design Hackathon' commissioned by Verkeersplein Amsterdam took place during the 'Week van het Verkeer' in March 2020. During the Design Hackathons children think of solutions to problems around traffic in Amsterdam. During the launch, we also provided a micro-designathon session for the parents. A unique opportunity for parents, the school and the municipality to talk about road safety in their neighborhood.

➤ Fietslab Gelderland

The series of three designathon workshops for the children of the local community school. To engage children in a Designathon around cycling and how might we make cycling better, safer and more fun. The insights were presented to the municipality Gelderland on the occasion of the opening of a new bicycle bridge near Nijmegen.

➤ Summer schools

Geste Summer School

Geste Summer School by [Physee Technologies](#) is a week where children who struggle with an opportunity gap learn about the energy transition and the opportunity to impact. Children learn by doing, that technology is for everyone, that diverse groups foster creativity and that there is endless power in renewable energy sources. The Designathon Works team designed a custom design challenge, the 'Climate neutral Delft', for the programme and trained the PHYSEE team of facilitators and engineers. The three day summer school was wrapped up by a design pitch session, during which all teams presented their ideas to a panel of experts and an audience. [Video here](#).

Summer School Zuidoost

During this four day summer school, we worked with 256 children from Amsterdam Southeast on the problems surrounding the new reality of the Corona crisis. What struck us is that the children were very involved and that they were eager to talk about their experiences during lockdown. Many solutions have been devised to keep 1.5 meters distance, trendy mouth masks, flying food bank for people in need, and a guide dog robot.

Summer School Globe

The six design-a-thon workshops at the Elementary school De Globe in Amsterdam Osdorp were a part of De Globe Summer School. They were offered as an additional program for primary education to children in the neighborhood. Children selected for the program are enriched in arithmetic, general education and social skills. But most important is that the children have enjoyed discovering their inner changemaker through creativity, play and teamwork.

3.3 Tailor-made Designathon workshops

Our tailored-made services are commissioned by a company or organization and made to fit the chosen purpose, theme or context. Any designathon always includes one or more of the following knowledge areas: creativity, 21st century skills, SDG's and technological literacy. Please find a few other tailor-made project below:

➤ Changemaker Challenge Junior

After a successful first edition of the [Dopper](#) Changemaker Challenge Junior in 2018, we have created a second, international, edition of the challenge. In the challenge, children worked on topics such as: How to prevent plastic use, How to improve recycling plastic and How to make people

aware of the plastic problem. This time the project was international and run by city co-ordinators selected by DW, in London, Berlin, Belgium and Nepal. We enabled the teachers to do the first four 4 steps of a designathon in the classroom or online, by providing them with a downloadable and very accessible version of Designathon method. They uploaded the sketches and a short description to a CMCJ website. More than 27.000 children from 650 schools have registered for the challenge. The jury in each country has selected several finalist groups that joined the online finals. Each country announced a national winner.

Changemaker Challenge Junior [Website](#).

[Winner's video Germany](#).

[Winner's video Nepal](#).

[Winner's video UK](#).

➤ Amsterdam Designathon Challenge

The Amsterdam Designathon Challenge 2020 was a city-wide designathon challenge commissioned by the Public Library of Amsterdam in collaboration with Designathon Works and De Waag. During the challenge, more than 300 primary school students took part in the Amsterdam Designathon Challenge with the theme Global Citizenship. They were challenged to come up with technological and innovative solutions to the question: How can we connect all the different citizens of Amsterdam? Every week one idea has been selected from each participating class, from which one winner was announced. The jury consists of: Ilias Admi - former (first) children's mayor of Amsterdam, Emin Kecici - teacher, designer of a better world and co-founder of Masters with Dreams, Sarah Swart - former production coach, now OBA program maker Digital Literacy and Esther Lagendijk - City district administrator Stadsdeel Noord, portfolio social domain.

[Amsterdam Designathon Challenge webpage](#).

➤ Fietshelden Amsterdam

In this annual collaboration with the Amsterdam based BYCS foundation and a Bicycle Mayor of Amsterdam, we invite children of Amsterdam to think about ways to make cycling in Amsterdam better, safer and more fun. The winner of the designathon workshop received the title of the Bicycle Hero 2020 in the presence of Sharon Dijksma (Alderman traffic and transport, and water and air quality).

➤ Design Futures

Design Futures is a two year European design-project funded by Erasmus+. Together with TU Eindhoven, Stimuli and the Aristoteleio Kollegio (Greece), All Grow (Romania) and PACO (Italy), the project is aimed at offering new practices that embed Design Thinking and Maker Education pedagogies in school.

3.4 GCD 2020-21

The sudden shift in learning and working environments, caused by the pandemic, forced us to adapt the way we organize and run our annual event. As an international organization, we wanted to make sure all our global partners were able to participate, no matter the circumstances. Therefore we presented three event scenarios: In-person, Online and a Hybrid. We have also introduced a challenge component prior to the GCD day itself:

➤ Stage 1 | Design-a-thon challenge:



Children follow the first four steps of the Design-a-thon process: Inspire & Research, Ideate, Sketch. This stage took part in the months of November and December.

➤ Stage 2 | Final event:

Chosen finalists were invited to build prototypes and present them during the finals, to a panel of experts, their parents and an audience. On the 23rd January.

In total, 18 global hosts in 15 countries took part from which 10 of them did the challenge. With over 1.300 participating children.

3.5 Children in the spotlight

Including young people and their ideas is a growing worldwide trend and one we have been actively advocating for, where young people are finally being seen as active stakeholders in their own futures. Below, you will find a selection of examples of the Design-a-thon children taking stage:

➤ Presentation at the Municipality of Amsterdam

In February 2020, the three teams from the Global Children's Designathon, visited city council member Touria Meliani (Alderman for Art and Culture and the Digital City, Amsterdam), to present her with the three most empathetic, innovative and sustainable solutions for food and climate action. The young inventors developed their designs during the Global Children's Designathon in November, and with it earned the title of the Designathon Excellence for the 2019 edition in Amsterdam.

➤ Wij Amsterdam, Platform for Amsterdam heroes and initiatives

In April 2020, Mijntje (10 years) took stage during the promotion of the Wij Amsterdam initiatives, to talk about the online Corona Challenge and her ideas to tackle the problems around the coronavirus.

[Video here.](#)

➤ Mama Gaia Talks

In May 2020, Mijntje (10 years) was interviewed by Merijn Everaarts, founder of Doppler, about the online Corona Challenge and her ideas to tackle the problems around the coronavirus.

[Video here.](#)

➤ Educaution

In May 2020, Lya (11 years) was interviewed during the 'Educaution' livecast by Pakhuis de Zwijger about her dream to become a scientist and to tackle environmental pollution.

[Video here.](#)

➤ Presentation at the Municipality of Rotterdam

In September 2020, children from the Nelson Mandela school in Rotterdam met with Michiel Grauss (Alderman for Poverty Reduction, Debt Management and Informal Care, Rotterdam) to present him with a report on the insights and ideas of 164 children to tackle poverty in Rotterdam. The insights in the report were gathered during the Designathon workshops on poverty, realized in collaboration

with Camping Onbestemd and the Municipality of Rotterdam. You can find more information about this project in section 3.2.

➤ Cinekid Festival

In October 2020, as part of the Cinekid Festival Francis from Tanzania, Nora from the Netherlands and Joppe from Belgium talked about their inventions for the climate.

➤ Ashoka Changemaker Summit

In November 2020, Mijntje and Breno (10 years) joined a panel discussion at the Ashoka Changemaker Summit session 'Over the New Frontier: Youth Defining Success', about youth leading change and redefining an idea of success for their generation.



Plans for 2021

We have been able to create lasting impact over time because of our wide range of partnerships:

NETWORKPARTNERS

Our network partners (NWP) are organisations that have a wealth of knowledge and capacity in their region and have a large network of community based organisations. They have a similar DNA to Design-athon Works. We work with them to deliver SDG challenges to children around the world.

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

We work with many other stakeholders (Foundations, Social Enterprises, Corporates, NGO's, Municipalities) who for example, sponsor our events, raise awareness, share whitepapers, advocate for change, and expand the population of students we are able to reach.

Looking ahead, we are scaling the impact by increasing:

1. The collaboration with our network partners

In the past, we have worked with each of our network partners in different ways, often providing training on the Design-a-thon methodology and inviting them to bring children to participate in our annual Global Children's Design-a-thon.

This year and going forward, we are investing more deeply and intentionally in a selection of network partners to enable them to run a series of SDG challenges regionally via their community based organisations (classrooms, after school programs, scouting groups etc.). This approach will enable:

- Deeper scale in each region, allowing more children to access innovative educational content on the SDGs and creating a greater impact with policy makers
- Development of new context-relevant approaches (for example for regions with no access to internet)

2. The further development of our offerings towards our clients

- COMMISSION-BASED CHALLENGES: we design and execute tailor-made challenges on SDG topics. These challenges are on a commission basis and customized to the specifics of the client. DW supports the client to take the children's input into their decision making processes. Commission-based challenges are similar to the Doppler Changemaker Challenge Junior.
- SPONSORSHIP OF THE GLOBAL EVENT: we organise one big global final per year, to bring all participating children, NWPs and CBOs together to amplify the impact on all our other work. Many of our partners financially sponsor this event via tailor made offerings.
- SPONSORSHIP OF SDG CHALLENGES: Many of our partners financially sponsor the SDG challenges designed and executed in partnership with our NWPs.

To support this strategy we have upgraded our online platform to support our clients, our network partners and their CBOs. It contains training resources and lesson materials on multiple SDG Challenge themes. It supports our work with clients and it has a gallery to showcase all children's inventions. Lastly it will support our impact and collective advocacy strategy.

The board confirms that the annual report 2020 is accurate and true. This written confirmation can be signed in different copies and is dated May 18th 2021.

Stichting Designathon Works

Name: Evelyn Doyle

Title: Chair Woman

Stichting Designathon Works

Name: M. Nelissen

Title: Treasurer

Stichting Designathon Works

Name: Emer Cronin

Title: Secretary

Stichting Designathon Works

Name: Michele Ernsting

Title: General Board Member