

Year Report 2017-2018
Voice4Thought Foundation



Radicalisation and positive anger in a polarised world

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1. Statement

Voice4Thought (V4T) is a digital and offline platform that provides a space for voices from around the world to express their thoughts. V4T supports artists, academics, journalists, bloggers, and anyone engaged in socio-political change. Anyone who strongly believes that we need open expression and different voices to create space for socio-political change is welcome.

In 2017 and 2018 the foundation has been working on its orientation in projects and vocation. V4T now works with annual themes, the platform has expanded its function and has become a news platform as well, and we have been streamlined our activities. The website is gaining a more important position in the organisation and production. V4T has proven to be a method, a theory and a way to think. This has become increasingly clear from the further development of Bridging Humanities, the online journal and the Master teaching programme that we developed in 2018. A big achievement in 2018 was our collaboration with the Humanity Hub in The Hague who offered us a working space under a social contract. Being a member of the Hub offers us interesting new opportunities for visibility and collaborations with other organisations.

Our previous report was in Dutch, but as the group of V4T users has become increasingly international we have decided to do the reporting of the foundation in English.

2. 2017

2017 was a year full of new experiences and developments for our foundation. Instead of a year of consolidation that we had hoped to create at the beginning of the year, we were confronted with opportunities, funding offers and many exciting new contacts. We decided to embrace these opportunities, as they tapped into the huge potential that V4T has for the creation of an alternative to knowledge production and to reach out to new audiences. By engaging in different activities we have been able to orientate ourselves in a more firm direction.

Radicalisation discussed during Rencontres in Dakar, Leiden and N'djamena

The theme for 2017 was 'Radicalisation'. Radicalisation is a very prominent concept in discussions about a world that feels increasingly threatened by terrorism and Islamist ideas. During this year we have tried to introduce an alternative idea of radicalism and radicalisation: not only in a negative discourse but also as a force in society that we need. A radical is opposed to the status quo and seeks to change it. Radicalisation as a force for social change is part of our history. The violent turn it takes in some instances should be seen as only one of the possible outcomes of the process of radicalisation.



Dakar

We were invited to reflect on the theme of radicalisation by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs who were charmed by the formula of the V4T festival as an alternative to conferences. With the organisation of a festive encounter ('rencontre') in Dakar, Senegal from 15-18 November 2017, we have been able to reach out to youth in the *quartiers populaires*, bring together many young people and discuss the concept and experience of radicalisation in various ways: through arts (slam, graffiti, music, songs), journalism, panel discussions and concerts. [See our website for an extensive visual and blog report.](#)

The effects of the organisation of this rencontre in Dakar have been numerous for V4T. We had high numbers of attendants to the different events. As the concerts were organised in the peripheral quarters of Dakar where a lot of youth are housed, these attracted thousands of young people. The opening ceremony at the Musee in the centre of Dakar was visited by more than 250 people including ministers, ambassadors, professors, and young people in particular. It has helped V4T to get more visibility in West Africa, as well as in Dutch policy circles, and it has helped to build links with African youth organisations who invite V4T to think with them and add the 'academic' to their projects. The combination of in-depth discussions with arts and expressions of various kinds has been one of the innovations that V4T brought to this rencontre. The effect of the rencontre is still on-going as we are planning to continue our work with the co-organisers in Dakar: G Hip Hop especially. We will hopefully present some of the outcomes - a film made in G Hip-Hop and a song on radicalisation - in the Netherlands in 2019.

Leiden

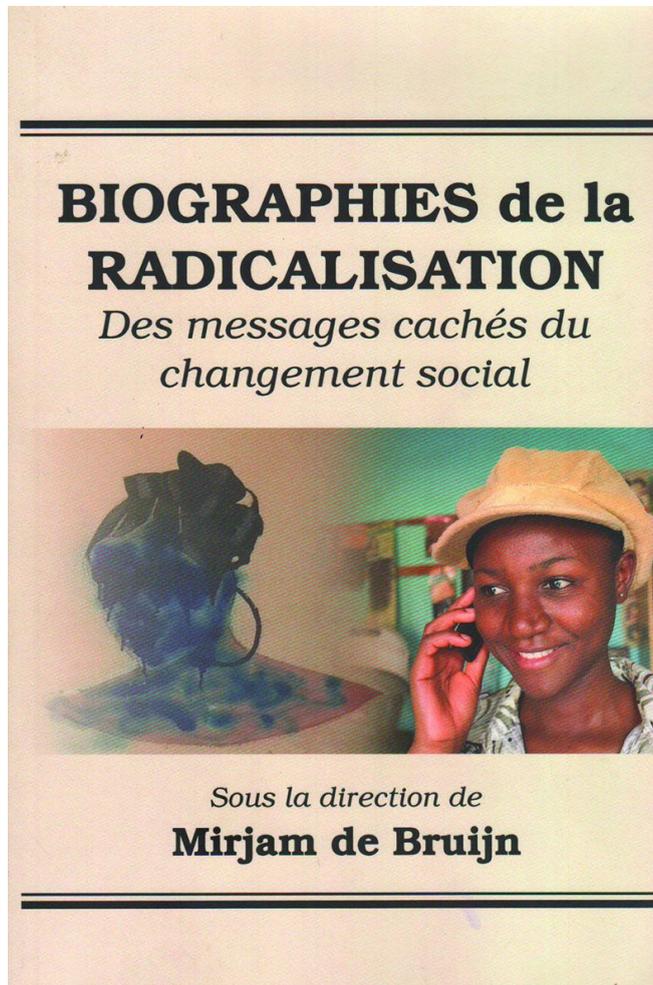
Prior to the festival in Dakar, V4T organised a small two-day event in Leiden, the Netherlands, around the same theme of radicalisation, focussing on the role of the digital world. The discussions were lively and in depth, and the concert was a showcase of great talent from

different parts of the world. As a rencontre, the festival was a success, as the participants were able to exchange and collaborate in new ways. However, as was the case in previous rencontres in Leiden, audience numbers were not up to expectations. [More extensive reports on the event can be found on the website.](#)

N'Djamena

V4T worked also in partnership with the research programme Connecting in Times of Duress (CTD), that organised its end conference in N'Djamena, Chad, and for which V4T was responsible for the cultural programme. This programme was developed together with the organisation behind the annual slam poetry festival there: Ndjam s'enflamme en slam. [The cultural programme consisted of various elements: an art exhibition, concerts,](#) and the participation of artists during the conference debates. For more information about the conference and the debates, [you can visit the website.](#)

V4T also provided the reporting during the CTD conference, in the form of [a live blog which was published on the CTD website.](#) For this web publication V4T collaborated with Ndjam s'enflamme en slam.



Book: Biographies de la Radicalisation, des messages cachés du changement social

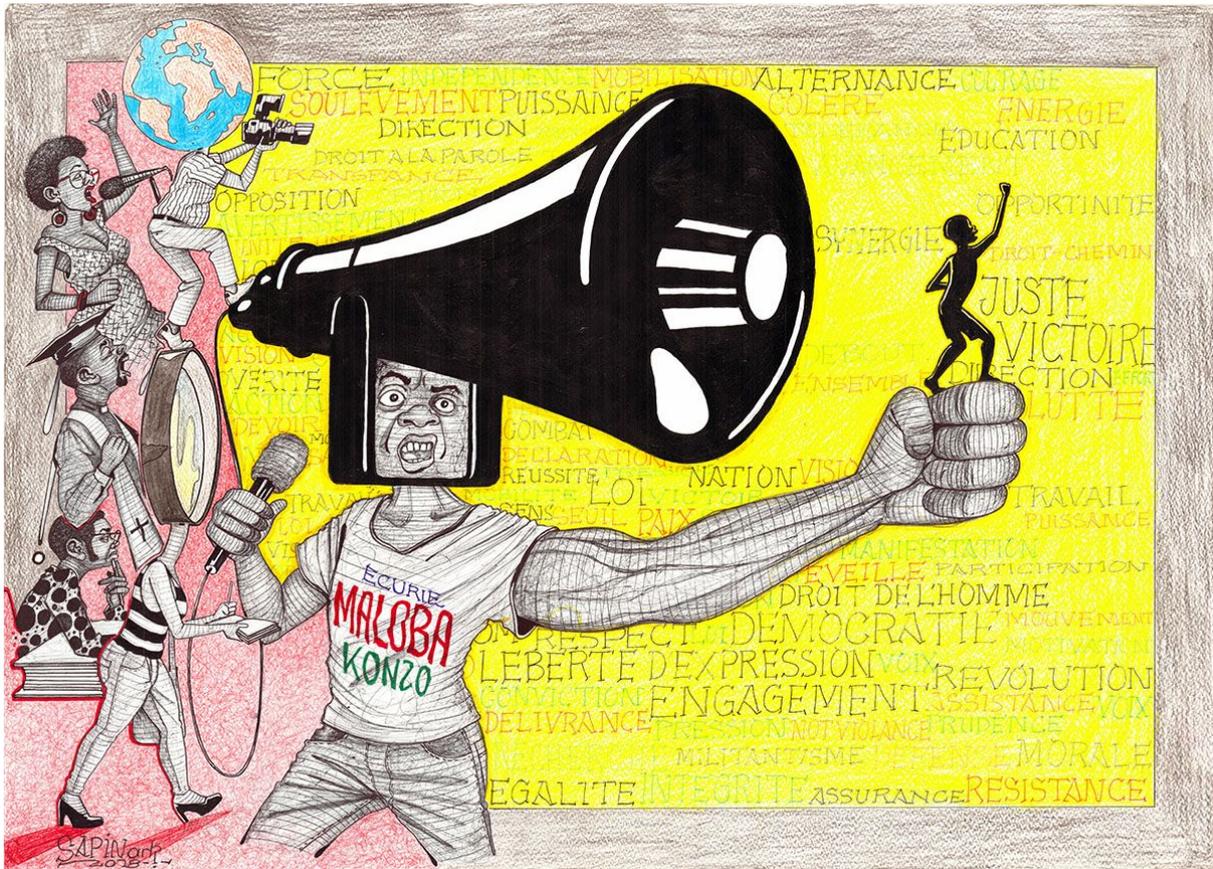
These rencontres were also an inspiration for the creation of a book. Prof. dr. Mirjam de Bruijn was invited by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to edit a book on radicalisation. The book

[*Biographies de la Radicalisation, des messages cachés du changement social*](#) was published in 2018 by Langaa, an Africa-based publishing house. It is composed of an introduction, 15 chapters, and a slam text and an interview with the slam artist. The chapters are all related to research projects that developed since 2012 in which the researchers were confronted with radicalisation of various kinds in their regions of research. The English version of the book will come out in 2019 through De Gruyter, a publisher based in Germany. In combination with the book, Mirjam de Bruijn and Sjoerd Sijsma produced a documentary called *Sans-espoir*, or *Hope-less* in English, that relates the story of two researchers in history and anthropology and how they discovered radicalisation in their work.

3. 2018

Positive anger

‘Positive anger’ became the theme of 2018 after long discussions in our team about the reception of radicalisation. Radicalisation is perceived as a negative term, whereas through our activities we strived to bring a positive message and open a debate. We concluded that ‘positive anger’ would provide a better starting point to the debate. We live in a world where anger is abundant. Some anger is simply anger, other anger is related to opposing factors, and sometimes this anger can be turned into positive action. Being angry is an emotion and a reaction of disagreement. Instead of staying in this state of anger, we should try to get rid of it by erasing the reasons for its existence. As V4T, we are inclined to argue that anger is often based on oppositional ideas and disparities in knowledge. To search for a common ground, we should look for a space to share and exchange opinions, even if they are different and opposed violently. Thorough provision of information, solid discussions, and opportunities to gather knowledge will help to calm the pains that cause the anger.



Woede@Leiden

V4T used the theme of ‘positive anger’ during the event that was organised in Leiden on 18 and 19 October 2018. [Woede@Leiden 2018](#) was a smaller version of the festivals V4T has held in previous years, which concentrated especially on the discussions in Leiden. Contrary to previous years, the events were not organised in the University buildings, but in *lokale buurthuizen* (community halls), which are managed by Leiden based organisation B+C. Also new was the organisation of debates in high schools and the performances of slammers and painters in the streets of Leiden. In the debate on anger (‘woede’) we invited citizen organisations, a professor and others who are critical about the role of the University in the city of Leiden. The debate was interesting and brought the municipality leaders in direct confrontation with the citizen organisation and the University people. It was lively, deep and the parties involved were interested to organise a similar debate in the coming year (2019).

Documentary: Sans-espoir

On 28 November 2018 the [documentary *Sans-espoir \(or Hope-less\)* was launched](#) in the Humanity Hub in The Hague, with Nigerien Professor Mahaman Aliou as reviewer. 25 people attended the launch, all from very diverse backgrounds: from the ministry, NGOs, students, and conflict- and regional specialists. The launch functioned as a pre-screening, to spark discussion on the message(s) of the film and to see how it was perceived. Based on the first comments the film will be slightly adapted, after which it will go in rotation in 2019. This event was organised in collaboration with the African Studies Centre Leiden.

Teaching programmes

V4T works with visuals, accessible texts, combined arts and academic work. In doing so, V4T also explores methods of knowledge production in the digital age. This approach is part of digital humanities. V4T was awarded a subsidy at Leiden University to develop such innovative teaching of methodology for African Studies masters students. V4T team members were the core teachers in this course on methodology. The course was held from September to December 2018. The evaluation will be done during the first months of 2019. In the meantime V4T developed a section on its website that allows students to publish their own research archive online, with multi-media publications and methods. Results will follow in 2019.

Another course was based on the painting of Congolese painter Sapin Makelenge who made an impression of the Congo crisis (1960-1965). Students from [the course 'negotiating power' in the MA History at Leiden University](#) develop their own historical research on the basis of the interpretations they can read in the painting of Sapin.



4. Website and Facebook statistics

During the second half of 2018, the V4T team developed and built the new Voice4Thought website, which will be launched in early January 2019. The old website had been in use since the start of the organisation, and its design, layout and content structure no longer met the requirements and ambition that V4T holds with regards to its digital platform. Improvements include a design that is a better fit for the multimedia content that V4T produces, a content approach that turns Voice4Thought into an online magazine fed with content by partners from around the world, a directory of the Voices that are a part of the V4T network and an e-learning platform.

With the launch of the new website we expect to dramatically grow the exposure of our digital content to international audiences. An important way of doing so is to improve our social media presence. So far, the digital and offline activities of Voice4Thought content have been promoted mostly via Facebook. In 2017 we had a dedicated volunteer who was able to post frequently, but in 2018 she was not available, so the core team members took over the task. In 2019 we plan to grow the use of social media from a sporadic activity to a core activity with set targets, and to aim at reaching specific audiences and regions.

Website and social media statistics for the years 2017 and 2018 show that there's still a lot of room for growth in numbers and in reach to specific audiences and countries. For the year 2017, we have no Google Analytics results for the website since we only started using Analytics statistics in January 2018. For 2018, we can show these results:

V4T website statistics in 2018 as of 15-01-2018:

Total visitors: 6,356

Total pageviews: 14,190

Top countries

1. Netherlands (18%)
2. Cameroon (15%)
3. USA (14%)
4. France (10%)
5. UK (3,5%)
6. Chad (3,5%)
7. Nigeria (2,7%)
8. India (2,5%)
9. Germany (2%)
10. Senegal (1,7%)

Figure 1: overview of the visits to the Voice4thought.org website 2018

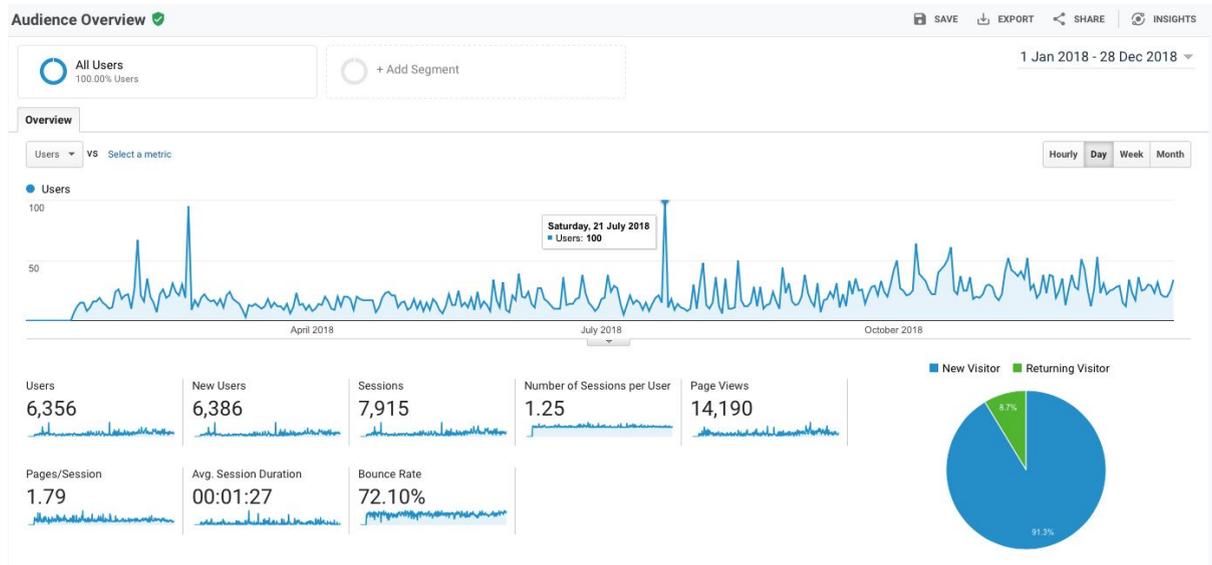


Figure 2: overview of specific page views

Plot Rows		Secondary dimension	Sort Type: Default	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Page ?	Page Views ? ↓	Unique Page Views ?	Avg. Time on Page ?
		14,130 % of Total: 100.00% (14,130)	11,441 % of Total: 100.00% (11,441)	00:01:48 Avg for View: 00:01:48 (0.00%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. /	2,184 (15.46%)	1,721 (15.04%)	00:01:21
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. /demonstrations-in-cameroon-anglophones-response-to-their-marginalization/	1,478 (10.46%)	1,103 (9.64%)	00:02:18
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. /tchad-des-individus-plus-riches-que-letat/	731 (5.17%)	684 (5.98%)	00:02:58
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. /category/coupe-afrique-slam-poesie/	601 (4.25%)	366 (3.20%)	00:01:46
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. /anger-in-leiden-woede/	279 (1.97%)	257 (2.25%)	00:03:30
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. /team/default1/	236 (1.67%)	222 (1.94%)	00:01:10
<input type="checkbox"/>	7. /category/news/	232 (1.64%)	186 (1.63%)	00:01:13
<input type="checkbox"/>	8. /what-we-do/	218 (1.54%)	187 (1.63%)	00:01:26
<input type="checkbox"/>	9. /crise-sociale-au-tchad-la-menace-est-bien-reelle/	195 (1.38%)	181 (1.58%)	00:08:23
<input type="checkbox"/>	10. /team/	185 (1.31%)	137 (1.20%)	00:01:30

Facebook statistics in 2017

In 2017, we reached a total of 70,728 people with our posts on Facebook. The posts with the most reached audience did not use Facebook's 'paid posts' option of promoting content, and are listed below:

"Op veler verzoek is de nieuwe blog van Marije Mutter nu ook in het Nederlands te lezen @Marije Mutter" - (13/1/17) - total reach: **2,228 people**

"Call for volunteers at the #voice4thought festival!! We welcome volunteers to assist" - 30/8/17 - total reach: **3,334 people**

Facebook statistics in 2018

In 2018 we had an increase of 1,2% organic likes to 960 likes. Due to budgetary constraints, we did not use paid ads or the promotion of posts, hence all likes and outreach are created organically. In 2018, we reached a total of 30,564 people through our Facebook page. The decline in reach compared to 2017 can be explained through the lack of capacity within the V4T team; as a result we did without a social media action plan and a person responsible for its execution. Both of these issues will be tackled in early 2019 alongside the launch of the new website.

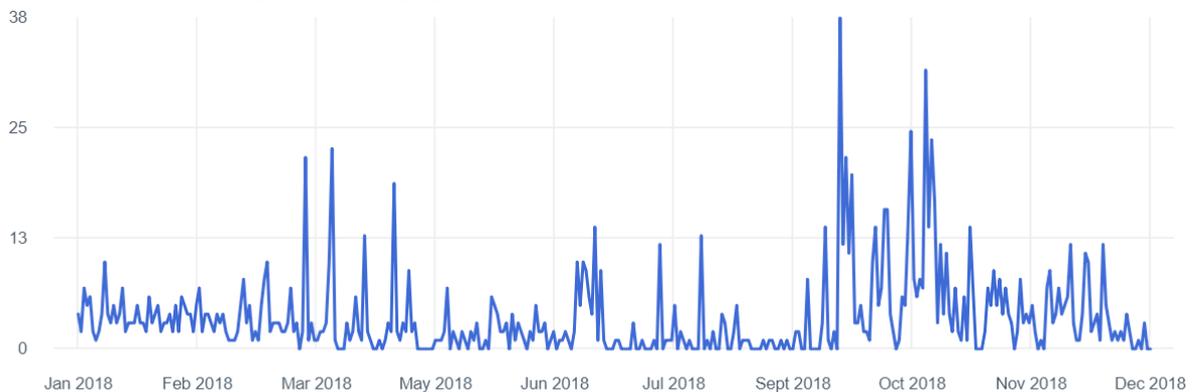
The posts with the most reached audience in 2018 through Facebook are listed below:

"Activist and artist Yero Gaynaako from Mauritania is organising a dinner and concert in collaboration with Pakhuis de Zwijger in Amsterdam to raise funds for his projects. Come out and support him to #thinkcritically." - 6/4/18 - total reach: **2,730 people**

“Meet Croquemort. Didier Lalaye, a.k.a. Croquemort, is a slam artist from Chad. His music of social and political protest has inspired a new slam generation in Chad, and is recognised internationally in and outside of Africa”. - **16/10/18 - total reach of 1,820 people with a total number of 1,188 video views**

“Video report of the successful first day of Anger in Leiden, the 2018 edition of Voice4Thought's annual event bringing together the academy and the streets. Painting in the streets of Leiden with Sapin Makengele (Dem. Rep. Congo) and a workshop cartoon drawing with Freddy Djerra (Chad) and Tjeerd Royaards (the Netherlands)”. - **21/10/18 - total reach: 1,820 people**

Below you can see a figure of our page views on Facebook in 2018.



5. Independent projects supported by or in partnership with V4T

Collaboration with Bridging Humanities

Bridging Humanities is an online journal that developed from the V4T method. The journal is published by Brill (Leiden) since 2017, and has its own editorial committee. See: www.bridginghumanities.com. We continue our collaboration on the journal as well as in the development of teaching modules and the publication of MA projects on the V4T website.

In 2017 the first peer reviewed article was published: [‘Croquemort: A Biographical Journey in the Context of Chad’](#) by Mirjam de Bruijn. For this the V4T team designed a project website with interactive search features and the inclusion of a short film (pamphlet), a visual multimedia narrative on the protest voice of Croquemort. Editor in chief Kim de Vries was appointed in September 2017 with the help of LeidenASA, a network of Leiden based Africanists. LeidenASA sees how the journal can help integrate the field of African Studies in Leiden University and make the field more ‘avant-garde’ by engaging in new forms of academic production offered by the digital realities of today.

The journal was officially launched in June 2018 with a well attended meeting at the Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam: *Decolonisation of knowledge*. The meeting was funded by Brill and discussed how Bridging Humanities could be of importance as an open access publication platform in publishing critical knowledge with the help of digital methodologies. The importance of including new voices in knowledge production through co-creation was emphasised. In 2018 the team worked on a new website and various publications, amongst others [‘Dissenting Voices: Challenging the colonial system’](#) that will be published early 2019. This publication discusses critical voices that have challenged the dominant colonial narrative in the context of the Dutch

East Indies/Indonesia. It combines journalistic and academic writing with musical performance and film making to amplify these voices and to analyse why they have long been ignored in the public and academic debate.

Dawa M-health project in Chad

Dawa m-Health is a project for public health development in Chad, coordinated by Chad+, in which Didier Lalaye is a medical doctor. The project, which started in 2015, aims at the eradication of Schistosomiasis, more commonly known as Bilharzia, in the province Mayo-Kebi in Chad. V4T offers this PhD project organisational capacity and is following its development. Voice4thought also offers space on the website to promote the project and we have been filming its activities for both research and promotion. V4T, together with UMC Utrecht and Leiden University, works on project proposals for the continuation and upscaling of the project.



La Coupe d'Afrique de Slam Poésie; The Africa Cup of Slam Poetry

V4T was partner in the organisation of the partnership with CASP, [La Coupe d'Afrique de Slam Poésie](#), that was held from 5-10 November 2018 in N'Djamena. This was a unique event, a pan-African spoken word poetry competition (often called 'slam') in which 20 countries participated. V4T was happy and honoured to contribute to this event by co-organising three panel discussions, producing visual reports of the competition, producing studio recordings and website profiles of all competitors, being part of the jury and playing a role in the programme as DJ. V4T will publish the report on its website as soon as it is out. For now see the 'live' blog reports and small videos made by the candidates. The visual report is still under construction. During one of the panels we discussed on radicalisation and presented the book that was produced in 2017 and published in 2018: [Biographies de la Radicalisation, des messages cachés du changement social](#)

Festival International de Slam et Humour du Mali (FISH Mali)

In 2017 and 2018, V4T participated in the annual FISH Mali festival in Bamako, Mali, organised by our partner, Maison Agoratoire (website: fishmali.org). The festival aims to promote spoken word poetry (slam) and stand-up comedy to a broad audience and organises a string of events in suburban areas as well as in uptown Bamako. FISH provides a platform where arts and in-depth discussion meet, and in doing so it aligns well with V4T's plans to develop a V4T Academy. During its 2017 edition, V4T organised an art workshop for students from participating schools, and in 2018 we participated in its panel discussions, and created a visual report which will be available on the new Voice4thought website in 2019.

6. Collaboration and Funding

Active Partnerships:

- Bridging Humanities, the Netherlands
- G Hip Hop, Senegal
- Humanity Hub The Hague, the Netherlands
- LeidenASA, the Netherlands
- LeidenGlobal, the Netherlands
- Maison Agoratoire, Mali
- Ndjam s'enflamme en slam, Chad
- Tchad+, Chad

Funding partners and donors:

- Connecting in Times of Duress, NWO, Leiden University
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands
- Filmhuis Leiden
- Foundation Children's Urology Utrecht
- LeidenASA
- LeidenGlobal
- Municipality of the City of Leiden
- Prins Claus Fund
- Stichting Scholtus - de Bruijn

For more information on our funding partners and donors we refer to our financial report.

7. Looking forward to 2019:

- Launch of the new website on January 5th and invest in its promotion;
- Developing new projects building on the ideas we developed over the past few years: the main project being the V4T Academy that will develop both in Europe and in Africa;
- Developing V4T Academy;
- Broaden our partner network, also to develop more projects together;
- The merger (or fusion) with the Stichting Scholtus-de Bruijn;
- Building on the theme of 'Positive anger';
- Giving the Advisory Board a more active role;
- Changing the board with new, innovative and fresh ideas after three years;
- Developing our own office space at the Humanity Hub in The Hague;

- Organising expositions, debates, street events and screenings in tandem with the programme of partner events and festivals;
- Building the V4T consultancy team in order to integrate our methods and network into existing or new projects from other organisations