

# Shared Mission & Values Statement

*“Veganism is a way of living which - as far as practically possible - avoids all exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or other purposes.” - The Vegan Society*

We, the Vegan Student Associations of the Netherlands, and our umbrella association, VSA Netherlands, want to end animal exploitation and secure the future of the planet through veganism. In order to achieve this, we declare the following to be our shared mission and values:

## Shared Mission

We aim to build and maintain supportive communities of vegan(-minded) students, to bring veganism to the attention of students as an effective means of helping animals and the planet, and to create a facilitating environment with the purpose of making veganism easier, more enjoyable and affordable. We plan to achieve these goals through the following means:

### Building Communities

By organising social events, such as potlucks, drinks, pub quizzes, we aim to create and maintain supportive communities, so that students do not just go vegan, but stay vegan.

### Providing Education

By hosting educational events, such as lectures, workshops, screenings, we aim to bring attention to the negative consequences of the animal industry, challenge students to rethink their relations with other animals and encourage students to choose vegan alternatives.

### Creating Facilitating Environments

By collaborating with universities, restaurants and supermarkets in our cities, we aim to create facilitating environments where it is easy, affordable and enjoyable for students to choose plant-based.

# Shared Values

The following key values reflect our shared beliefs. We take these values into consideration in all our actions. When collaborating with outside organisations, we also look for these values in our partners. Exceptions can be made for pragmatic reasons, for example collaborating with non-vegan organisations to help us promote veganism. We are also aware that we have no power over the activities our members do in their free time, however, these activities will not be carried out on behalf of VSA.

## Animal Ethics

Although we support all different reasons for people to live a more vegan lifestyle, veganism is first and foremost about the animals. We aspire to promote the well-being and interests of all sentient beings and try to raise awareness about the ways in which animals are being exploited.

## Sustainability

We aim to promote sustainable living by advocating for veganism, and raising awareness about the impact of animal products on the environment and the climate. We also aspire to promote reducing one's ecological footprint in other ways.

## Inclusivity

We want to avoid all exploitation and cruelty towards animals, which includes humans. As such we reject any form of discrimination in the strongest possible terms and are committed to avoid reinforcing oppression of marginalized groups. We are open and welcoming to members of any biological sex, gender identity, sexual identity, age, race, ethnicity, religion, political affiliation, cultural heritage, regional origin, physical and mental abilities and disabilities.

## Independence

We are independent associations, not affiliated with any other vegan organisations, activist groups, student associations, et cetera. This is especially the case for political parties: we are a politically neutral network in the sense that we are not bound to, and do not promote any specific political parties or a specific part of the political spectrum. We collaborate with other organisations on a regular basis, but we do so while retaining our independence.

## Legality

We neither partake in nor promote illegal activities. We recognize that legality does not equal morality and that civil disobedience has played a historic role in various emancipation movements. However, this is emphatically not the role we wish to play in the emancipation of animals. We are mindful that associating with organizations or groups that are known for organizing disruptive illegal actions (for example blocking traffic, vandalizing property, or disrupting other citizens' everyday activities) may negatively affect the reputation of all VSAs. Therefore, we ensure that collaborations (e.g. organizing an event together or promoting an event of theirs) with these types of organizations are neither close, nor casual, neither thoughtless, nor rash, and certainly not frequent.

## Non-Violence

We understand violence to mean both violence and aggression of physical, emotional and verbal nature. We do not use violence to achieve our goals, do not promote violence, and do not condone violent behaviour under any circumstance.

## Reliable Sources

We do our best to ensure that information shared online and at our events is based on reliable sources and that environment- and health-related claims are based on scientific research. If, despite our best efforts, we do share misinformation, we will publish a rectification.

## Responsible Alcohol and Drug Use

We do not promote, enable or encourage overconsumption of alcohol and other drugs.

# The Umbrella

We created VSA Netherlands to serve the individual Vegan Student Associations, to help them be more effective as individual associations, and to facilitate us in reaching our shared mission of building communities of vegan students, providing education about veganism and creating a facilitating environment where it's easy to become and stay vegan. VSA Netherlands plans to achieve its goal of supporting its members through the following means:

## Facilitating Members

By sharing resources and best practices, brainstorming solutions to common challenges, supporting new local board members, and taking on administrative duties like alumni registration, VSA Netherlands aims to lighten the administrative load for individual associations, allowing us to focus our time and energy on reaching our goals.

## Organizing National Events

By organizing unique national events, VSA Netherlands aims to bring together our members from across the country and strengthen the community building work of the individual associations.

## Increasing Influence

By speaking to (inter-)national organizations and businesses as our combined voice about sponsorships, subsidies and other collaboration opportunities, VSA Netherlands aims to increase our influence and make it easier for individual associations to create facilitating environments for veganism.

## Helping New Associations

By guiding enthusiastic vegan students in new cities towards creating their own association, VSA Netherlands aims to take pressure away from us to do so, allowing us to keep focus on our own cities.