

## **Zohar Cherbit Sendoff Message**

*OBOV Chairperson 2019-2021*

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As a co-founder and the first chair of OBOV, I helped build and develop the organization from the ground up. I could not be prouder of what we have achieved in less than three years. A few years ago, Gabriella Thompson, Daniel Guinness, Claudia Dictus and I came together around one idea: universities can and should do better to prevent sexual violence.

Together we put in countless hours to grow our idea into a legal organization recognized by the Dutch chamber of commerce, to expand from a few events at the University of Amsterdam and Amsterdam University College to having established partnerships with many prestigious universities across the Netherlands.

We then chose to add a student branch to the organization, and I'm so grateful to have witnessed its growth at the University of Amsterdam. These students have done such incredible work, from community building around this topic to organizing and launching the 'It Starts Here' campaign.

We were also lucky to come across two incredible feminist therapists, Angela Carceres and Anesteia Tsagkalidou, with who we co-developed the concept of CARE - a support group for victims/survivors of sexual violence within universities in the Netherlands. The pilot in Amsterdam was successful, received sponsorship from the Central Diversity Office team at the University of Amsterdam, and caught the attention of Leiden University.

There are so many milestones that we have worked towards together, and I cannot list them all here! I do want to highlight what brings me the most joy out of this journey- the community we've built.

Three years ago, I didn't know where to find community-led events around this topic. I felt stuck and completely powerless. Now, I look at OBOV, and I see a community filled with incredibly caring and passionate people. The board of directors, the student board, the advisors, the volunteers, the growing number of projects where OBOV collaborates with other equally incredible people. Seeing all these people come together to dismantle rape culture warms my heart, and I trust that OBOV will be in good hands moving forward.