



# POLICY DOCUMENT

2021 - 2025



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Arts for  
Africa  
Foundation

## TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH ART



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# Foreword

Etsha, 1984 – The Land Rover ploughed for hours on end through thick sand tracks leading up the Okavango pan-handle towards Shakawe. We stopped at one of the Etsha villages at a borehole to refill our jerrycans. Smiling locals came crowding round, displaying the first Botswana baskets we ever purchased. Little did we know that these fond memories would one day mature into Arts for Africa.

The 1984 baskets still adorn our walls and stand testimony to the quality of these exquisite masterpieces. They have transformed our lives...

As drought, disease and hunger threaten these communities ever more, we have decided to step in, help make a difference and keep the cultural heritage of basketry alive.

Sylvia, Richard, Roberta, Erik and Anna founded Arts for Africa in 2015 and make up our core team.

Throughout his life and work in Africa, our founding father Robert Johan Stronkhorst (1949-2015) has inspired us with his ideals for a better world and it is to him that we dedicate this foundation.





# Introduction

Africa always seems to give far more to the visitor than they could ever do in return. To us, Africa has inspired to the extent that an urge has arisen to give something back...

## Vision & Mission

We founded Arts for Africa (AFORA) out of the belief that we can help create a better Africa for people to live through the power of their art. The isolated basket weaving communities in Northern Botswana and Zimbabwe are guardians of one of Africa's most valuable cultural heritage. Each basket carries a tale – of dedication and skill passed on from mother to child, of traditional stories woven into its design, and of the joys and hardships that come with rural life in Africa.

By creating an international sales platform, Arts for Africa aims to provide the weavers with an opportunity to showcase and sell their exquisite works of art across the globe and establish independent, sustainable livelihoods. We call it trade aid.

Over the years, we have had the privilege of joining hands with incredibly talented weavers, cooperatives, NGO's and the inspiring people that make it happen. They have become part of our team as we work together to transform lives through art.



Our work in assisting the weavers in establishing independent, sustainable livelihoods is largely enacted through Trade Aid, which is based on a number of pillars:

- ❖ Provision of an online shop for the weavers to showcase and sell their baskets. Each basket comes with the name of the weaver and her village.
- ❖ Provision of financial support for harvesting trips, revamping of Craft Centres, capacity building workshops, logistics and marketing.
- ❖ Lobbying for retailers to join hands with our programmes.
- ❖ Lobbying for donations.
- ❖ Promotion of conservation and sustainable harvesting of raw materials required on which the basketry industry depends.



# Why work with us



## Our stance on Trade Aid

We believe that honesty and mutual dedication are essential ingredients to the success of our projects. Instead of simply giving, we seek to build and nurture long lasting working relationships with our partners in Africa. The success of our projects depend on the quality of the arts & crafts communities produce, and their commitment to delivering. These responsibilities foster a sense of pride and ownership amongst the communities we support. The idea that “Nothing works unless you work” , is a concept all our partners embrace. Trade Aid is only successful if it leads to sustainable livelihoods – where the natural resources and cultural heritage on which the basketry industry depends are preserved.

## Financial Liability

Arts for Africa is a non-profit organisation, and all financial gains are re-invested into our development projects. To this end we have been accredited with the Dutch non-profit ANBI status. This also implies that all donations are 100% income tax deductible, making it easier and less costly to donate, enabling us to use funds more effectively. The products Arts for Africa promotes and sells are bought directly from the weavers, in partnership with local NGO’ s and representatives on a non-profit basis. Our financial statements are available to all.



# Organisation

## Leadership

Our leadership team is responsible for shaping the organizations mission, development priorities, partnerships, financial management and communication as well as spearheading fundraising activities. The leadership team constitutes the following members:

- Erik Stronkhorst, Founder & Chairman
- Sylvia Stronkhorst, Founder & Secretary
- Anna Jorritsma, Founder & Treasurer

Apart from supporting the leadership team, Co-founders Roberta Cardoso Santana de Melo and Richard van der Velden are mainly involved in public relations, administration & finance, website & media, and logistics. Neither the leadership team nor the supporting members receive financial contributions for their service to the foundation.

## Meetings

Our team hosts at least four meetings annually, but more if deemed necessary by any member. Decisions are democratically made, and are in accordance with the vision, mission and development goals of the foundation as stipulated in this business plan.



This facilitates progress analysis. Events, decisions, mandates and actions are recorded in minutes.

#### ANBI

Arts for Africa possesses the ANBI-status. This fiscal status awarded by the Netherlands Tax and Customs Administration enables AFORA to receive donations with tax reduction or exemption.

#### CBF

Arts for Africa chooses to focus its financial resources on its projects and partner communities in Africa. Acquisition of the CBF label is still too costly for the organisation.

#### Financial report

Our cash flows are accurately and periodically (annually) published in a financial statement on our website.



# Current Programmes

## The Craffthood Programme

The Craffthood programme was launched by our partner NGO, Travel for Impact with seed funding from Southern African Regional Environmental Program (SAREP) and is now jointly coordinated with Arts for Africa in a united effort to create a centralized marketing and sales platform for basket weavers along the fringes of the Okavango Delta. The aim is to support the weavers (and their families) in establishing independent, sustainable livelihoods. This is being done through workshops, revamping of craft centres and trade aid. Through the Craffthood programme, we have established close ties with 5 weaver groups and hundreds of affiliated crafters in an effort to stimulate responsible trade of their products.

Travel for Impact's understanding of life in the rural communities has enabled Arts for Africa to work alongside hundreds of crafters; it has also allowed us to move forward on a basis of trust and a sense of common purpose. We now know the traditional stories behind each basket design, the name of each weaver and the village she lives in. This adds so much more meaning to the baskets we sell. Travel for Impact is more than a partner. We have come to consider them as an extension of our team.



## The Tonga Programme

The Tonga Programme, which started in 2018, reaches out to numerous small homesteads hidden deep in the bush in the districts of Binga and Hwange. Our work here is challenging because the tracks that lead to these isolated communities deteriorate considerably during the wet season. The Tonga weavers we work with have not (yet) established cooperatives and as most weavers lack the means to travel to towns such as Hwange and Victoria Falls to sell their baskets, they depend heavily on the programme for income. Thus far, we have been able to reach out to the villages of Chibhala, Mdingura, Depota, Manjolo, Tinde, Chilelema, Nsenga and Mabale.

Happie coordinates the Tonga Programme in Zimbabwe. With unique insight knowledge of the whereabouts of talented weavers and the challenges they face, Happie has been instrumental in the success of the programme. Her sheer determination to help the Tonga people and showcase their exquisite basketry has enabled us to reach out to many impoverished and isolated communities across the region.



# Development Activities 2021 – 2025

## Preservation of Cultural Heritage

We place particular emphasis on cultivating a transparent, open relationship with the crafters we work with. We seek to share their stories, hopes and dreams with those who buy or resell their products. Each and every item sold has a story to be told. Our product labels convey this message, and includes the name of the design, weaver and her village. We also have folders and canvas posters to support sales.

Our website seeks to inform and inspire buyers, potential partners and the general public through informative texts, pictures and video, insight into the lives of the weavers, where they live, the art of basketry, and the story behind their designs.

## Correspondence box

In an effort to connect the weaver with her buyer, the Arts for Africa Foundation has set up a correspondence box on its website, allowing buyers to send a message to the maker of their basket.

## Direct sales

Baskets are sold across the globe through the Arts for Africa web shop. Sales via the web shop are predominantly to Dutch customers, but now that the web shop also supports international credit card payments, we anticipate an increase in international sales.



Baskets are also sold on the Etsy platform, which is currently our main sales platform for international sales, especially other European countries and the United States. Arts for Africa may look into suitable sales platforms to promote online sales in other regions if under condition that supply can keep up and sustainability is upheld. .

### Fairs

In the Netherlands, Arts for Africa participates in several fairs, such as the annual fair at the Africa Museum in Nijmegen and the Africa Festival in Hertme. If deemed feasible, Arts for Africa will also appear in other fairs.

### Retailer programme

Several interior design retailers have already joined our retailer programme. We will continue to welcome businesses, ranging from hotels, lodges, warehouses and art galleries to local markets and the general public, to join hands with Arts for Africa to promote, display and help sell a wide range of fantastic crafts made by the communities we support. This is achieved through in person visits and meetings, to online lobbying via our website.



## Donations

Arts for Africa continues to lobby for donations, in person and through the website. In cooperation with our local partner NGO' s and representatives in Botswana and Zimbabwe, Arts for Africa will utilize these donations to support the weavers through Trade Aid.

## Trade Aid

Trade aid is an essential part of our work. The women master the talent of weaving but so often lack the means to sell their baskets. Expertise, logistical help or financial support can make all the difference. Whether it be a tour operator that would like to offer their guests a basket as a welcome gift, or assistance with transport, marketing, construction, fundraising, sponsoring or any other way you feel may help the weavers, please contact us.

Harvesting palm leaves and dyes for basket weaving often requires woman to walk for long distances through the bush. This is arduous and sometimes they encounter potentially dangerous animals. When we reach out to isolated communities to buy new baskets, the women are sometimes taken on harvesting trips. This does not only save them time and valuable energy, it also allows them to harvest in regions further away from the villages. This enables palm and dye trees closer to the villages more time to regenerate.



Many communities live away from the main road used by tourists and even further away from the lodges and camps where tourists reside. This is why Craft centres are so important. They provide a centralised sales location, venue for workshops and opportunity for the crafters to learn from each other and connect. With funding from SAREP and the EU, our local partners in Botswana have been able to revamp several craft centres, provide skills development workshops and develop “the people path” , an initiative aimed to bring more tourists to the centres. The workshops have also been a venue to come to streamlined pricing agreements.

Arts for Africa ships baskets from Africa to pretty much all over the world. We try to keep the costs down as much as we can and we are grateful to all those who have contributed to our cause. But we can’ t escape overhead costs entirely. The costs involved in transport, import tax, packaging and marketing are some of the challenges we face. Exposure at expo’ s and fairs in Europe must also be paid for.



# Sustainability

## Conservation

The Okavango Delta is a biodiversity hotspot, constituting one of Africa's most pristine and important conservation areas. We believe that conservation of this natural resource is futile without the support of resident communities. In order to encourage communities to support and actively partake in conservation of natural resources, they should be allowed to benefit from these conservation areas and the tourists who come to visit them. For the crafters we support, this implies fair access to raw materials and opportunities to sell their crafts to tourists in safari camps, attractive craft centres, and internationally.

## Sustainable harvesting

There is room for the industry to expand, if communities are given the knowledge and means to implement sustainable harvesting. Mokola is a resilient species, and availability of the leaf-shoots used for basketry will increase rapidly if harvesting is conducted in a sustainable manner. Studies have shown that productivity can be sustained when there is an annual harvest of no more than 50% of the annual leaf production. This may be achieved by rotating or spreading harvesting out over a larger area. To this end, the workshops and logistical support our partners provide for harvesting trips away from the villages are a step in the right direction.



## Research

In promoting responsible trade of Botswana and Zimbabwe baskets, we cannot ignore the numerous studies presented over the last three decades that point to the importance of a sustainable harvesting strategy of palm leaves and associated dye plants. We have taken some steps in the right direction, but realise that we have a long way to go. We welcome any support in our efforts to understand and promote sustainable harvesting.





# Communication

Openness is essential, not only when new projects and successes are involved, but also regarding challenges and setbacks. At minimal costs, AFORA endeavours to inform its supporters clearly and transparently as to the details of its activities, craft products and the people who make them. AFORA will develop folders and information banners to serve this purpose.

## Website

Our website ([www.artsforafrica.nl](http://www.artsforafrica.nl)) was launched in August 2015, serving to communicate our vision, mission and activities to those who seek to get further acquainted or involved with our organisation. The website is under continuous development and will evolve as new projects emerge in different regions. The website also features a web shop. Our banking details are available on our website, so that donations can also be made via online deposits.



# Finance

AFORA seeks to fund its work through sale of crafts, donations and development subsidies.

## Costs

Costs incurred during the initial start-up phase in 2015/2016 included registry at the chamber of commerce and other legal documentation. Annual costs include the purchase of hand-made baskets, local logistical support, transport, VAT, customs handling and clearance, amongst other taxes. Other overhead costs include marketing, bank costs, web-hosting, PR, packaging and other administrative costs.

## Financial policy

AFORA focuses its financial assets on facilitating fair commerce so that the communities it supports become increasingly self-sufficient, as opposed to depending on donations to further their development. Donations are intended as supplementary incentives to facilitate successful projects.

Our financial statements are made public via our website on a yearly basis before the 1st of April.



# Future

We look at Africa's future through positive eyes. AFORA believes that using the power of commerce, we can create a 'better Africa for People to live', as long as we work together with the communities we support.

## Partners

We hope that our mission and work in Botswana and Zimbabwe has a ripple effect, resulting in many new partnerships across other regions.

## Markets

Europe and the United States comprise AFORA's prime consumer markets. Over the coming years, we intend to explore opportunities to expanding our consumer market to other regions.

## Acquisition and use of Donations

AFORA will continue to lobby for donations. In virtue of increased sales and exposure, the foundation received its first corporal donation in 2020. These funds will be used in 2021. The use of donations is meticulously accounted for in our yearly reports. Donations will be used to support the weavers in several ways:

- ❖ Direct sales support: purchase of baskets, marketing, lobbying, labels, maintenance of sales platforms.
- ❖ Structural support: revamping of craft centres, signage.



- ❖ Skills development support: capacity building workshops, sustainability training.
- ❖ logistical support: harvesting trips, on-site purchasing, transport.



## Foundation details

The Arts for Africa Foundation (AFORA) is based in Nijverdal, the Netherlands.

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Banking details:

Bank: SNS Bank

International Bank Account no. (IBAN): NL87 SNSB 0925 2321 22

Chamber of Commerce: 63937611



# Colophon

Policy Document 2021 – 2025

Nijverdal, January 2021

Officially agreed upon by all members on behalf of the Arts for Africa Foundation,

Erik Stronkhorst | Founder & Chairman

Sylvia Stronkhorst | Founder & Secretary

Anna Jorritsma | Founder & Treasurer

Richard van der Velden | Co-Founder

Roberta Cardoso Santana de Melo | Co-Founder

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