

ANNUAL REPORT

2020



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TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH ART



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Foreword

As this challenging year has come to a close, many of us may hold 2020 accountable for all the hardships that we have had to deal with. For many, this year has understandably come to symbolize pain, loss, and grief – to which there is no denying. One may ask, is there anything of value that we can take from 2020?

It is something we may all feel differently about, but one thing we may agree upon, is that we have all been swayed off our set daily routines and way of working. Lockdowns were imposed, shopkeepers closed their doors, craft fairs were cancelled, postage services were suspended, and tourism has come to a grinding halt. All of these measures were necessary, but they have come at a price, severely impacting the basketry communities we support. Basket sales are an essential source of household income, something they have had to live without in 2020.

As our stocks dwindled, we have had to shift our focus on other issues and long overdue projects such as the overhauling of our website. To this I can say that we have become more creative, more resilient.

As 2021 is on our doorstep, there are promising signs that we are overcoming this, and that normality will return. As nations across the globe are preparing to inoculate their citizens, it has become overly clear that turning the tide on the pandemic has been a collective effort to which we have all contributed. In our efforts to help the weavers weather the storm, we have reached out with advanced orders. Their resilience has been remarkable and an inspiration to us all.

To all of our partners, retailers and clients, thank you for your steadfast partnership and friendship in these unsettling times.



Introduction

The purpose of this annual report is to provide a transparent account of our activities in 2020 and to reveal our plans for 2021.

The organisation's vision and mission as described below concur with those stipulated in our 2021-2025 Policy Document, also published on the Arts for Africa website.

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 through trade aid is based on a number of core activities:

- ❖ Enhancing sales through participation in fairs and the provision of online sales platforms for the weavers to showcase and sell their baskets.
- ❖ Lobbying for retailers to join hands with our programmes.



- ❖ Preservation of the cultural heritage and promotion of the story behind the baskets and the weaving process through our website and other means of communication.
- ❖ Lobbying for donations.
- ❖ Provision of financial support for harvesting trips, revamping of Craft Centres, capacity building workshops, logistics and marketing.
- ❖ Promotion of conservation and sustainable harvesting of raw materials required on which the basketry industry depends.



The team

Sylvia, Richard, Roberta, Erik and Anna founded the Arts for Africa foundation 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 this has ultimately led to this foundation. We are forever grateful.





Activities & Achievements, 2020

Local partners

Our local partners in Botswana and Zimbabwe are more than partners. Over the years we have come to consider them as an extension of our team. They are our hands on the ground; they provide us with the logistical support and the insights that direct our goals and activities. Without their tireless dedication, we would not be able to reach out to the isolated communities we support. In order to cover the expenses of the logistical and administrative support required to purchase directly from the weavers in remote areas, transport, label and package the baskets, as well as conduct outreach activities such as on-site visits, meetings and provision of harvesting trips, our local partners receive a 20% non-profit mark-up on top of the purchase value agreed upon with the ladies. This is entirely non-profit, as this value covers AFORA related expenses only. They act voluntarily and as such, no wages are paid.



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.



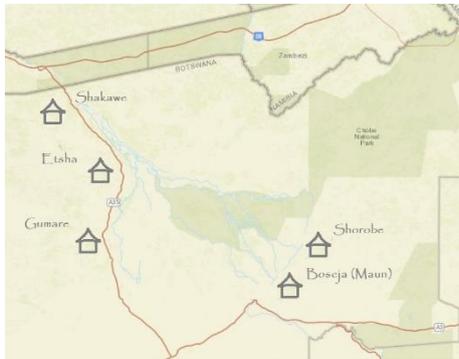
Happie coordinates the Tonga Programme in Zimbabwe. With unique insight knowledge of the whereabouts of talented weavers and the challenges they face, Happie has been instrumental in the success of the programme. Her sheer determination to help the Tonga people and showcase their exquisite basketry has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

to reach out to many impoverished and isolated communities across the region.



The beneficiaries

Botswana – The Crafthood Programme



Under the Crafthood Programme, Arts for Africa works with several basketry groups in the vicinity of Maun and along the Okavango pan-handle in Northern Botswana. Basketry continues to play a central role in sustaining households in a region where drought, disease and isolation threatens these communities more than ever before. We have established close ties with 5 weaver groups (Shakawe, Etsha, Gumare, Boreja and

Shorobe) and hundreds of affiliated crafters in an effort to stimulate responsible trade of their products.

Zimbabwe – The Tonga Programme



The Tonga Programme 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.



Sales

The main goal has been to enhance sales / income through the participation in fairs and the provision of online sales platforms for the weavers to showcase and sell their baskets.

For purpose of transparency and clarification, the purchase value of baskets in Botswana Pula have been determined in full agreement between AFORA, our local partners and the weavers. AFORA Purchase prices for Intermediate / International quality baskets were based on the size and shape (open or closed) of the baskets and compliance to measures of quality (a.k.a. commandments for basket weaving), as determined and agreed upon by all involved weavers:

CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION
Point/beginning	Is the initial starting coil well done and even?
Base	Is the basket stable/does it sit flat?
Pattern	Is the pattern even and symmetrical or pleasing?
Division of palm leaves	Are the leaves used evenly and well-distributed?
Core	Is it solid (firm) and even?
Consistency of shape	Do the sides of the basket change size smoothly?
Feel	Are there flyaway hairs or is it smooth to the touch?
Weaving quality	Are the stitches tight, dense and even?
The finish/end	Is the last coil tapered well to the edge of the basket?

Depending on how many criteria are fulfilled, baskets are graded into different price categories: Competition, Super Plus, International / Intermediate, Premium +, Premium, Trainer.

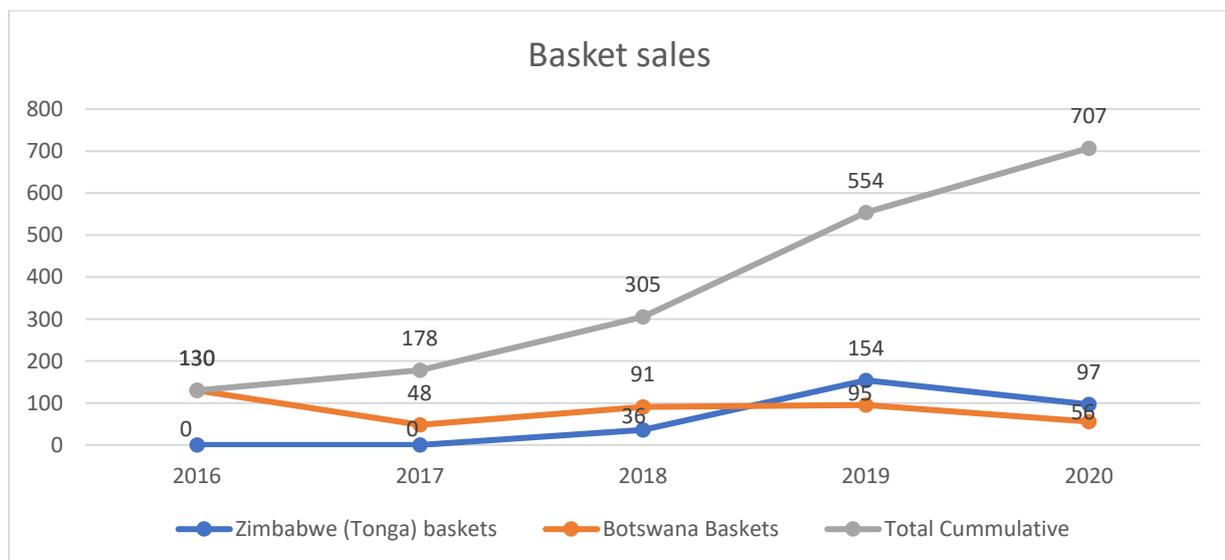
Open baskets are given codes, according to size, ranging between NXX, N1 – N25. Closed baskets range between K1 – K40.



Sizes of baskets are measured by a special tape which is also used by the weavers. The size category of the closed baskets is determined by measuring the circumference of the basket from top, round the bottom and back to the top. The size category of the open baskets is also measured with the special tape and constitutes diameter + height. This is how we have come to a common understanding with the weavers as

how to determine the right purchase price for the baskets. Purchase price of the Zimbabwe baskets have also been determined in full agreement with the weavers we support, although they still lack a grading system.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions, AFORA was unable to attend any fairs and sales have decreased relative to 2019. In 2020 we have sold 153 baskets (56 Botswana baskets and 97 Zimbabwe / Tonga baskets). This is a step down from 2019 when we sold 249 baskets. Our cumulative total has gone up to 707 baskets sold. Our operation in Zimbabwe started in 2018.





AFORA currently maintains two online sales platforms:

- 1) Our online shop: <https://www.artsforafrica.nl/shop>
- 2) Our Etsy store: <https://www.etsy.com/shop/ArtsforAfrica>

*Postage of some of our sales in 2020 (especially to the USA) were delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions. However, we stood by our clients, helped with tracking enquiries and all parcels eventually arrived.

All baskets are meticulously photographed before we post them on our sales platforms. Due to variations in lighting, some client perceived some of the baskets to be of slightly different colour than was depicted. To solve this problem and to improve the overall quality of our images, we now photograph all of our products indoors with a BR-2240 natural daylight set, consisting of 3 softboxes.



Botswana basket: Running Ostrich (B 458)

€68.95 (Price including tax)

Village: Maun
Crafter: Kelebogile Kushuka

Diameter: 26 cm
Height: 24 cm

Every basket is unique. You'll receive the basket shown in the photograph. The actual colour tone of the basket may vary slightly between one light source and another. This basket was photographed indoors with a BR-2240 natural daylight set consisting of 3 softboxes.





Retailers



The main goal has been to Lobby for retailers to join hands with our programmes. Due to our dwindling stocks in 2020, caused by the suspension of transport & postage from Botswana and Zimbabwe, our efforts to create new partnerships with retailers has been rather limited. We were approached by 2 retailers willing to become resellers of AFORA products. AFORA hopes to solidify these partnerships as soon as COVID-19 related restrictions are lifted

and import becomes possible again.

An exiting new development has been the inclusion of the Travel Industry into our retailer Programme. A Travel Company has expressed its intent on purchasing small baskets for all of their clients as cultural ‘thank-you-for-booking-with-us’ gifts. Several baskets were sold and another order of 200+ baskets has been placed, which will be delivered when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted and tourism resumes. As of 2020, we will be monitoring the (cumulative) number of retailers. Our cumulative total now stands at 12.

Year	Pre-existing retailers	New retailers	Cumulative total	New leads
2020	11	1	12	2

Preservation of the cultural heritage

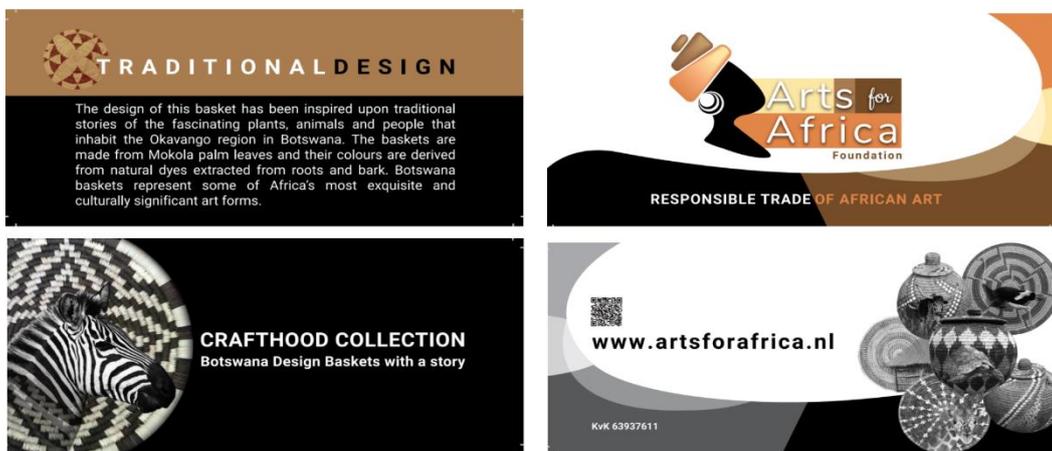
In 2020 we have continued to convey the cultural heritage so diligently kept alive by the talented weavers we support. Although there has been little opportunity (COVID-19) to showcase our folders and canvass posters as all fairs were cancelled, we have been able to fulfil this goal via other means:



- 1) We continue to post on Facebook and Instagram, and our website was completely overhauled, which conveys the story behind the weavers, the designs of their baskets and the process of basket weaving. www.artsforafrica.nl

- 2) The production of the official AFORA video, with kind consent of the Playing for Change foundation for use of their music.
<https://youtu.be/u3TN3Biztg8>

- 3) We have improved our product labels. 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 labels convey this message, and includes the name of the design, weaver and her village.



- 4) Cultural exchange is promoted through our correspondence box on our website, through which buyers can send a message to the weaver of their basket.



Lobbying for Donations

Arts for Africa has the non-profit ANBI status, as issued by the Dutch Tax Office. It basically means donations to Arts for Africa are 100% income tax deductible. This makes it easier and less costly to donate, enabling us to use funds more effectively. Mollie is our online payment service provider and guarantees quick and secure transactions. Donations can now be made safely via IDEAL Online, Credit Card via our website or via regular bank transfer. In 2020 we have received several private and corporate donations.

Financial support

The main goal has been to support our partners in their efforts to assist the weavers with harvesting trips, revamping of Craft Centres, increased basket orders, capacity building workshops, sustainability, logistics and marketing. Until now, our funding has enabled us to set up a flow of basket purchases, provide logistical and marketing support, and organise harvesting trips in cooperation with our local partners. However, funds have been insufficient until now to offer tangible assistance with workshops and revamping of Craft centres. The positive news is that outside funding has increased recently and we are currently reviewing eligibility of several basketry related projects led by our Partner NGO in Botswana and expect to allocate part of our available donor funds in the first quarter of 2021.

In order to help the weavers in these unsettling times, we have pre-ordered and paid for a new shipment of baskets, eventhough airfreight has been suspended due to the pandemic. The baskets are now in stock and kept safe by our local partners and will be transported to the Netherlands and sold on to other countries worldwide as soon as restrictions are lifted.



Sustainability

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 (harvesting trips, workshops), but realise that we have a long way to go. On our website, we have published a conservation report in which we convey our philosophy and the issues that must be addressed to ensure that basketry retains its cultural heritage and continues to be seen as a sustainable livelihood activity in the face of continued growth.

<https://www.artsforafrica.nl/sustainability>

Intended Activities, 2021

Sales

As 2021 is on our doorstep and there are promising signs that the pandemic will subside, we must proceed with prudence. If restrictions are lifted we intend to push full steam ahead in our efforts to provide trade aid for the weavers we support.

If anything, the online sales industry has been supercharged as a result of the pandemic, so we expect demand to increase significantly. The main challenge in the coming period will be to meet demand during COVID-19 airfreight restrictions.

With our enhanced ICS payment methods on the AFORA website, we anticipate an increase in direct international sales. Sales mainly focus on Europe and the United states. Arts for Africa may to look into other sales platforms to promote online sales in other regions under the condition that supply can keep up and sustainability is upheld.



First however, we intend to pick up on private and retail leads which stagnated in 2020 due to the pandemic. We will continue promoting sales through our website and Etsy, and we also intend to participate in fairs such as the annual fairs at the Africa Festival and Africa Museum, if the pandemic subsides.

Donations & Financial support for basketry related development projects

We expect to allocate private and corporate donations obtained in 2020 in the first quarter of 2021 – contributing to sustainable livelihoods. We will continue to lobby for donations.

Cultural Heritage

More information will be added to our website, including insight into the basket quality grading / pricing system. We will continue to feed our social media channels, such as Facebook and Instagram.

Transport

Transport of Baskets from Botswana and Zimbabwe to our depot in Europe continues to be one of the most costly components of our operation. We will continue to lobby for logistical support.

Sustainability

There is room for the basketry industry to expand, but there is a need to devise a sustainable harvesting strategy for palmleaves and associated dye plants used for basket weaving in the North-West of Botswana and Zimbabwe, to be coordinated and facilitated by AFORA and our local partners. This will require cooperation with educational / research institutes. To this end, our programmes require support for the following interventions:

- 1) Re-assessing the current effect of the basket-weaving industry on the Mokola Palm and associated dye plants in our active project regions.
- 2) Establishing methods for communicating, facilitating and monitoring sustainable harvesting standards.



Finances - 2020

AFORA generates funds through sales of baskets and acquisition of donations. Profits are reinvested to 1) purchase products from the communities we support; 2) cover operational expenses; 3) provide financial support for harvesting trips, revamping of Craft Centres, capacity building workshops, logistics and marketing.

INCOME & EXPENSES

2020

	Annual	
INCOME		
Sale of Botswana Baskets	€	2.760,25
Sale of Zimbabwe Baskets	€	3.623,45
Donations	€	829,47
Post NL betaald door koper	€	1.506,15
Balance 2019	€	3.514,45
Balance Till 2019	€	345,05
Total	€	12.578,82
PURCHASE EXPENSES		
Purchase Botswana Baskets	€	780,00
Transport / Botswana (EMS)	€	220,00
Import taxes Botswana (BTW)	€	76,86
Purchase Zimbabwe Baskets	€	793,21
Transport / Zimbabwe (EMS)	€	246,00
Import taxes Zimbabwe (BTW)	€	38,57
TOTAL PURCHASE EXPENSES	€	2.154,64
Gross profit	€	10.424,18
OPERATIONAL EXPENSES		
Administration / Stationary	€	48,45
Internet + webshop (+ mollie)	€	575,53
Publicity / Marketing	€	173,56
Transport PostNL & Delivery	€	1.503,75
Bank costs (incl Western Union)	€	191,90
ETSY costs	€	1.115,22
MOLLIE + Izettle	€	14,70
Restitutions	€	189,54
Other expenses (lighting/packaging)	€	258,20
Till Expenses (packaging)	€	31,30
LOAN	€	1.000,00
TOTAL COSTS	€	5.102,15
Net profit	€	5.322,03



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.

Foundation details

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

Contact

Majoraan 16

7443 JB Nijverdal

THE NETHERLANDS

Telephone: +31 (0) 548 546558

Mobile: +31 (0) 613867048

E-mail: info@artsforafrica.nl

Website: www.artsforafrica.nl

Banking details:

Bank: SNS Bank

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

Chamber of Commerce: 63937611



Colophon

Annual Report 2020

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

Text: AFORA team

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