



# Policy 2020 - 2023

## Tree of Life Foundation



*Latest revision 11-02-2022*



## **Vision & Mission**

Our vision is to come alongside and enable smallholder farmers in poverty to build a hopeful future. Our mission is to create networks of partners that take an active role and share their resources sustainably. We strive to increase solidarity for people in poverty.

## **Target audience**

The world has 815 million malnourished people, 50% of whom are farmers<sup>1</sup>. We focus primarily, but not exclusively, on this group of subsistence farmers and in particular, their children. We are no respecter of persons and do this regardless of ethnic background, religion, gender or political preference.

## **Geography**

Our primary focus area is sub-Saharan Africa. Our spearhead countries are Cameroon and Malawi. Pioneering projects are currently taking place in Kenya, Angola and Uganda. We traditionally also support projects in India and Thailand.

## **Method & core values**

We aim for a grassroots approach to "come alongside" people in poverty to empower them. We facilitate a learning process in which they can discover how to be faithful stewards of their scarce resources. This brings a sustainable future within reach. The foundation upon which we build is what a person can do in the way of skills and what he or she owns. Our projects become self-sufficient, can multiply themselves, and are based on our Christian core values of a sharing community and stewardship.

## **Strategy**

### *Local presence*

We work together with a (business) network in the Netherlands as well as local partners and village communities in our project countries to ensure their cooperative independence. The hubs from which we initiate this development are our local training centers. These centers comprise demonstration and production fields, training and group facilities, product processing capabilities and space to present sustainable solutions. The training centers are examples of cooperative communities. A variety of village development projects are initiated from the training centers.

### *Fill primary needs together*

Together with local village communities, we identify primary and secondary needs, and we jointly address these issues at hand. This creates trust and local ownership. Primary needs often comprise access to clean drinking water and food security. We train the community in the stewardship and proper management of the new resources it has acquired, and we ensure that there are local stakeholders. To obtain food security, we train farmers in Foundations for Farming (akin to permaculture / conservation agriculture) and extend this skill set into agroforestry, agroecology and watershed management.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Estimate of the FAO, The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World, 2017 p. 7



### *Multiply by dividing*

To maintain the obtained food security, we train trainers from the first trained group of farmers. These local trainers provide long-term coaching to farming families in share-groups. This creates a "learning community" and creates jobs for agricultural trainers. These jobs are maintained because farmers donate a part of their yields. We invite successful farmers to grow and develop into trainers. If there is a surplus in local food production, we train and facilitate product processing and trade in order to start a sustainable mini-economy.

### *Future-proof*

An important pillar in our approach is the training of children and young people. By involving them actively in the learning community, we hope to help build a hopeful future for them. Good use of scarce resources in an impoverished environment immediately increases the chances of survival and development. A farmer often does not have much more than his two hands and a piece of land. Jointly applied, stewardship enables a community to meet its essential material needs together.

### *Holistic approach*

Poverty is not only a lack of material things, but also of skills, knowledge, opportunities and perspective. Poverty brings uncertainty and resignation. This challenge requires a holistic approach. If a person's mentality is not addressed, material help is no more than a plaster on the wound. We therefore offer comprehensive training and resources in family values, finance, Christian faith and health to grow together into a fully-fledged community.

## **Objectives**

Our mission is to create networks of partners that are involved and share their resources sustainably. We strive to increase solidarity for people in poverty. How do we want to achieve this in the next 3 years?

- 1) Continuing to develop our holistic approach in cooperative independence to achieve growth and sustainability within the target group.
- 2) Continuing to build a professional organization with a network of partners to accomplish sufficient support for projects within the target group.
- 3) Expanding our network of involved partners in the Netherlands and in the project countries to work together in building towards a hopeful future for people in poverty.

The goals are further elaborated upon in our annual plans.

## **Organization**

### *Board*

1. Sander Joziase (Chairman)
2. Sybren Stelpstra (Secretary)
3. Steven Abbink (Treasurer)
4. Bianca van Mourik (Member)

### *Field workers*

Our projects provide 80+ local people with full-time jobs. Our field leaders are: Steve & Truus (Cameroon), Deon & Sarah (Malawi), Sam & Karin (India), Kees & Willemijn (Thailand), Petra & Sousa (Angola), Gert Jan & Kate (Uganda), James (Kenya), Lucas & Esther (Curaçao). Our pioneer projects comprise 'coming alongside' existing field workers or local trainers.



### *Employees*

By donating specifically for this purpose, it is possible to deploy 1.5 FTE paid functions for the organization on a self-employed basis.

### *Partners*

We consider people who periodically give gifts, voluntary time or expertise as our partners in mission. Our website provides an overview of involved companies, foundations and churches with whom we carry out this mission together.

### **Finances**

To date, our work has depended entirely on donations, although our training centers in Cameroon and Malawi are increasingly generating their own income from training and agricultural production. In our fieldwork, we strive for sustainable cost reduction (local employees, solar panels, own water, seeds, etc.) at an early stage.

### *Raising funds*

Our primary recruitment strategy is partner development, where we focus on personal relationships and challenge people to become partners in a project and / or the entire mission for a long period of time. Project visits and active participation in the implementation are facilitated where possible. Our secondary approach is the submission of project proposals for funding as well as presentations for companies, churches and individuals.

### *Management and use of assets*

Budgets are drawn up annually and approved by the board. Quarterly figures are included in the quarterly meetings. Larger projects (Cameroon, Malawi, app development) have their own project budgets. The foundation has no profit motive and no debts are incurred. The foundation does not hold capital which is greater than the required continuity reserve. The annual accounts are audited by an external administration office. For more information, see the financial statements.

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