

CONSTITUTION

STEPPING STONES FOR AFRICA

ARTICLE 1. HISTORY OF THE ORGANIZATION

Established in Ghana in 2015, Stepping Stones for Africa (SSFA) is a Ghanaian charity organization focused on grassroots development in West Africa. We work together with community-based associations to achieve their development objectives. We are very well-connected to the West African context where the majority of our board members have been working and living in different fields of development for more than a decade.

SSFA was initially founded in The Netherlands in 2006 by Cindy Noordermeer-Panou and Remco Kalf, and a Ghanaian branch was registered in 2015. The initial focus of the organization was based on Cindy's experience of working in an HIV/AIDS-specialized clinic in Ghana where she realized that the local people behind a cause make all the difference. We decided to focus on supporting local leaders by providing them with stepping stones to reach their goals in making a difference for the society.

From 2006 to 2014 this focus produced results in a large variety of projects. We completed a wide range of projects contributing to eco-tourism development, education and improved health and sanitation in the Volta Region in Ghana and Southern Togo. We also conducted various programs with the International Health Care Centre in Accra contributing to the prevention and care for people living with HIV/AIDS.

In 2015, we decided to transform the organization to ensure more focus, efficiency, productivity and sustainable results in the future. We implemented a few major changes. We attracted three new board members who are living and working in Ghana and who are consequently more connected to the African context. These changes has enriched us with in-house expertise and a significant network. We revised our mission and vision statement and adopted a new strategy for the design and implementation of our projects. We also officially established in Ghana from where we are operating from today.

ARTICLE 2. LEGAL NAME AND LOCATION OF THE ORGANIZATION

- 2.1 Registered as Stepping Stones for Africa Stepping at the Register General in Accra, Ghana at 4 November 2015 (CG 193222015).
- 2.2 Headquarters in Amrahia Lamb farms, off. Adenta-Dodowa Road, Adentan Municipality, Greater Accra, Ghana.

ARTICLE 3. STATUS OF THE ORGANIZATION

- 3.1 SSFA is a voluntary, humanitarian, non-governmental, non-profit, non-political and non-partisan organization.
- 3.2 SSFA has a legal status and personality; it has the legal right to sue or to be sued in its name and generally, subject to this constitution, capable of doing anything that corporate bodies may lawfully do.
- 3.3 SSFA is a corporate body with perpetual succession; capable of acquiring and holding property separately from its members.

ARTICLE 4. VISION AND MISSION

VISION

In West Africa, we see many communities with a lack of basic necessities like healthcare, clean water or sustainable ways of making a living. Despite being mostly well organized, these communities are often not capable of making significant changes by themselves to improve the quality of life in their community.

Our vision is to empower communities to lead their own development and improve the living conditions of their inhabitants, through small scale projects that are initiated and sustained by the community itself or its leaders, and not imposed by others. SSFA wants to provide capacity building to fuel these community-initiated projects and make them a success.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to provide stepping stones among others guidance, expertise, inspiration and funding for development initiatives by communities in West Africa. We want to empower communities to lead their own development and reach their goals through participatory approaches, and thereby significantly improve the quality of life of its inhabitants, while respecting the environment.

PRINCIPLES

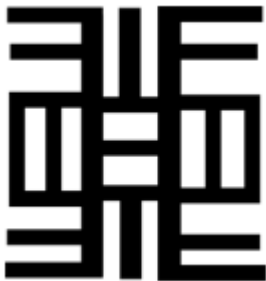
- ✓ Each project is based on a community-participatory approach where initiatives are community-driven and communities are an equal partner playing a major role in decision making during each phase of the project.
- ✓ SSFA always operates in public-private partnerships (PPP) where a private partner collaborates with SSFA to bring development to a community, and either makes resources available or provides market opportunities which both contribute to the sustainability of the projects.
- ✓ We operate in a dynamic world where situations, needs, and trends are ever-changing. SSFA responds to that by being dynamic and specifying it's approach every five years in a strategic plan.

"Meaningful community participation extends beyond physical involvement to include generation of ideas, contributions to decision making, and sharing of responsibility"

ARTICLE 6. VALUES OF THE ORGANIZATION

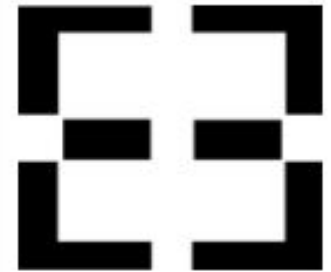
The West African Adinkra symbols¹ below have been selected to illustrate the core values of the +

SANKOFA literally translates as "reach back and get it" (san - to return; ko - to go; fa - to fetch, to seek and take). There is potential in our history and heritage, and in terms of development and problem solving it is sometimes good to go back and take that egg from the past into the future as often illustrated by the bird.



NEA ONNIM NO SUA A, OHU literally translated "he who does not know can know from learning". This is the symbol of knowledge, life-long education and continued quest for knowledge. SSFA is a learning organization. Our current vision and mission is based on a 10-years working experience with Jolinaiko Eco Tours. Empowerment through training and education is integrated in all the projects we do.

WOFORO DUA PA A literally translates as "when you climb a good tree" and is a symbol of support, cooperation and encouragement. It comes from the expression "woforo dua pa a, na yepia wo" meaning "when you climb a good tree, you are given a push". More metaphorically, it means that when you work for a good cause, you will get support. This means that we try to empower community and individuals who have started to make a change themselves. It also refers that 'When you are inspired, you inspire others, when others are inspired, what is impossible, becomes possible'.



NKONSONKONSON means "chain link" and is a symbol of unity and human relations. A reminder to contribute to the community and that in unity lies strength. SSFA believes that we can only make a difference in communities where the people are united and willing to sacrifice for development and where there is peace and security. Unity at community level is the main criteria for a

BESE SAKA means a "sack of cola nuts". Cola nuts were a widely-used cash crop and played an important role in the economic life of Ghana. It is the symbol of affluence, abundance, power and togetherness and unity. This symbol also represents the role of agriculture and trade in bringing peoples together. This translates to our belief in public-private partnerships to ensure the financial sustainability of the organization and to create economic activity to reduce poverty level in the communities we work with.



¹ Adinkra symbols were or country of the Republic of Ghana. They have a decorative function but also represent objects that encapsulate evocative messages that convey traditional wisdom, aspects of life or the environment.

ARTICLE 7. STRUCTURE OF THE ORGANIZATION

7.1 SSFA will be structured in the following manner:

- ✓ Board
- ✓ Executive Members
- ✓ Officers
- ✓ Committees

7.2 The Board

- ✓ The Board consists of the founders of SSFA or those who support the work of SSFA and have a significant professional background and experience. As a governing body, the Board has two major responsibilities:
 - Makes certain the organization is working to fulfill its mission.
 - Acquires and protects the organization's assets.
- ✓ Membership of the Board is voluntary and non-remunerative.
- ✓ The maximum number of board members is six.
- ✓ The following functions enable the Board to carry out its responsibilities:
 - *Planning*: The Board develops strategies to ensure that the mission and purpose of the SSFA are carried out.
 - *Personnel*: The Board hires the officers, makes assignments and monitors their performance.
 - *Financial*: The Board approves budgets and spending reports for the organization including approval of fundraising plans.
 - *Public relations*: The Board seeks opportunities to enhance the public image of the organization.
 - *Monitoring and evaluation*: The Board routinely gathers information on key aspects of a project, program, or organization to determine if these activities are proceeding as planned.
 - *Practical and technical assistance*: Individual Board members are expected to offer practical and technical assistance in the field of their expertise.

7.3 The Executive Members:

- ✓ Three Executive Committee members are elected by the board and may be one of their members:
 - *Chairperson*: The chairperson presides over the affairs and activities of the organization; convenes all official board meetings and ordinary management meetings and prepares the Annual Report for the Board. The Chairperson is the authorized legal representative of the Association.
 - *Secretary*: The Secretary shall maintain the records of the organization, conduct the correspondence and keep the seal of the association, or oversee the same. The Secretary shall assist in the preparation of the Chairperson's Annual Report and act in the absence of the Chairperson.
 - *Treasurer*: The Treasurer shall keep account of all monies and properties of the organization and prepare the Treasurer Annual Report for the Board.
- ✓ The Executive Committee has the authority to make decisions.

7.4 Officers:

- ✓ The board assigns a Chief Operational Officer and if needed Assistant Officers to carry out day-to-day tasks of the organization.
- ✓ The responsibilities of the Chief Operations Officer and Assistant Officers are described in their tasks descriptions or contracts adhere to the SSFA personnel policy.

- ✓ The Chief Operations Officer is answerable to the board.
- ✓ Officers are not permitted to vote.

7.5 Committees

- ✓ Consists of official board members, ex-officio members such officers or community representatives and focused on specific projects and assignments.
- ✓ Committees allow the board to be more flexible to conduct its business and fulfill its mission.

ARTICLE 8. MEETINGS AND DECISION-MAKING

- 8.1 Formal board meetings are organized three times a year.
- 8.2 The Board makes strategic decisions during board meetings, decisions concerning day-to-day execution of the projects are made by the Executive Members, and extraordinary board meeting could be organized if necessary.
- 8.3 The majority vote is used to make important decisions during meetings.
- 8.4 Management meetings between the executive members and officers are held once a month.
- 8.5 Committee meetings are organized and frequent as needed to achieve the assignment.
- 8.6 In practice, board members meet more often as they play an important role in the development and the output of the foundation. Besides providing direction and decision making during board meetings, they are important contributors who provide technical support and assist in the development of manuals, conducting of assessments and community meetings and engage themselves in networking and fieldwork activities.
- 8.7 The organization believes in community participation where initiatives are community-driven and communities play an important role in decision making in each step of the project cycle. This explains why many decisions about the projects are made in the field during assessments and trainings and for this reason, community representatives are invited to join committees and attend board meetings.

ARTICLE 9. FINANCE

- 9.1 The income of SSFA derives from sponsorships, aid, donations, funds raised and generated by SSFA international affiliates, and income generated by the organization's income-generating arm and public partnerships.
- 9.2 The fiscal year begins 1 January of each year and ends 31 December of the same year.
- 9.3 All funds received by or on behalf of SSFA shall, in the first instance, be paid to such bank accounts that operate on behalf of the organization.
- 9.4 Each bank account requires at least two signatories who shall be determined by the board.
- 9.5 The Treasurer shall ensure that full and proper accounts are kept in respect of all the organization's transactions involving the receipt and expenditure of money and the acquisition of assets property.
- 9.6 The board is responsible for accurate and transparent financial administration by local financial regulations.
- 9.7 The SSFA accounts shall be audited each year by an auditor who is certified by the local regulations and who is appointed by the board.

ARTICLE 10. PROPERTY

All property of SSFA shall be registered in the name of the organization and managed according to the fixed organizational asset and inventory policy.

ARTICLE 10 DISSOLUTION OF THE ORGANIZATION

The NGO will only be dissolved by joint resolution of the board supported by a vote of no less than 4/5 of all delegates present. If less than 2/3 of all delegates are present, then the vote may not be passed, regardless of its outcome.

ARTICLE 11 INTERPRETATION

The responsibility for the interpretation of the terms of this constitution or any matter arising in connection with its meaning is that of the board by a majority vote, with at least 3 /4 of the board present.

ARTICLE 12. APPROVAL

This constitution was adopted by the members present at the Official Board Meeting held on 1st August 2016 in Amrahia,

Signed:

President

Cindy Noordermeer

Board Member

Naa Ashiley Vanderpuye

Board Member

Petra van Liere