



Arthur Waser Foundation

Education, Social, Culture



2024

Annual report

Arthur Waser Foundation, 25 June 2025

Cover image: Experienced teachers at the Children's House of the Montessori Training Centre in Dar es Salaam

All images and graphics used in the 2024 Annual Report are either the property of the Arthur Waser Foundation and protected by copyright, or are credited accordingly in the source references.

Content

On Values and Insights	4
Early Childhood and Primary Education	8
Montessori for All: Child-Centred Education in the Public School System	8
Technical Education	12
Technology, Talent, Transformation – How We Support Technical Education	12
Projects 2024	18
Key Figures 2024	19
Urbanisation and Architecture	20
Population Growth as a Historic Opportunity	20
Agriculture	26
Sustainable Agriculture as the Foundation for the Long-Term Stability of Tanzanian Congregations	26
Central Switzerland	30
Support in the Social Sector	30
Social Projects 2024	31
Support in the Arts & Culture Sector	32
Arts & Culture Projects 2024	33

On Values and Insights

David Keller, Managing Director, Arthur Waser Foundation

For a Swiss foundation, there are certain values that are fundamentally non-negotiable. These certainly include a commitment to democratic principles grounded in the constitution as well as in foundation and association law – values that also shape the foundation's governance. Equally non-negotiable are universal values such as the inviolability of human rights and human dignity. Another such value is the primacy of purpose over means: it is the charitable purpose that justifies the means – not the other way around. Foundations that accumulate wealth instead of pursuing their purposes lack a legitimate reason to exist. This view is also supported by the Swiss Federal Supreme Court. In light of tighter public budgets, it is entirely conceivable that federal legislation could, in the medium term, define binding percentages of foundation assets or income that tax-exempt foundations must allocate annually. Currently, this decision is left to cantonal tax authorities, which enjoy considerable discretion based on a directive from the Federal Audit Office dating back to 1994.

There are also non-negotiable values in the relationship between a foundation and its grantees. These include transparency, efficiency in handling the funds received, and above all, effectiveness. No philanthropist wants their funds to be misused or to fizzle out without effect. This applies to all areas of support; the call for transparency, efficiency, and integrity also applies internally to staff and members of the board of foundations. However, while effectiveness or impact has become an almost universally recognised value in philanthropy, the proof of effectiveness has not. For decades, experts have disagreed on how to measure impact. In other words, impact measurement is negotiable. Since the invention of the "logical framework" in the late 1960s by Robert McNamara – who famously used success indicators to prove, wrongly, that the US would win the Vietnam War¹ – the causal measurement of impact has been redefined, supposedly improved, and repeatedly dismissed as inadequate².

What we argue here is that the imperative of effectiveness is non-negotiable, but that how to measure it definitely is. It is correlated with the insights gained through decades of foundation work. This correlation between values and insights is particularly relevant in the international funding activities of foundations operating in countries of the Global South. Here, the potential power imbalance between "wealthy" foundations, state donors, and inter-

national aid agencies on one side and recipient organisations in "poor" countries on the other becomes especially apparent. Between the need for control and the desire to empower recipients or grantees lies an ocean difficult to navigate. The deeply internalised maxim "who pays calls the shots" often leads to strategies being defined in the Global North and implemented by local "partners" under close supervision. In contrast, the often-invoked "partnership of equals" seeks to turn recipients into self-determined actors who can take responsibility themselves. At least that's the intention. Against this backdrop, it is worth taking a closer look at the values that foundations negotiate and gradually internalise through long-term learning processes. These values become apparent in various areas of foundation practice, especially in the so-called "approaches" and in the values that emerge from management practice, including partnership management as well as the management of projects and staff.

A) Values Reflected in Different Foundation Approaches

- The **"mercy-based approach"** reflects a value system that focuses on helping the poor and those in need. This approach is still widespread in the African context and can be appropriate in certain cases – for example, in the case of orphanages. However, it is also applied in areas where individuals should ideally take responsibility for themselves or where a certain level of cost-sharing is reasonable. Building wells makes sense, but communities must be consistently involved in their maintenance. Distributing mosquito nets is important, but establishing value chains for local production and distribution is more sustainable than handing them out for free.
- The **"helping people help themselves-approach"** is equally widespread and reflects the assumption that local populations could help themselves – if only they knew how. "Give a man a fish, and he will eat for a day. Teach him how to fish, and he will eat for a lifetime" captures the core of this paternalistic attitude. This perspective has rightly come under criticism in many African countries. African solutions to African problems tend to be more effective than imported European ones. Coastal communities in African countries are often skilled fishers – what they may need are boats or start-up capital, not lectures derived from Swiss freshwater fishing.

- The "**entrepreneurial approach**" promotes a liberal value system in which entrepreneurship is considered key to societal prosperity. It emphasises the importance of value chains and market access for Africa's development. The aforementioned example of a mosquito net production and distribution initiative in Tanzania, inspired by the Swiss Tropical Institute, illustrates this perspective. Such entrepreneurial approaches strongly promote ownership and self-determination among local actors. However, they tend to have two major weaknesses. First, business or entrepreneurial approaches overestimate the areas of life in which they can be effectively applied. State functions such as security, health, education, cultural and sports promotion, water and energy supply, tax and monetary policy, and spatial planning can only be complemented by private actors, not taken over. Foundations must therefore be clear about whether they operate in the private or the public sphere. Second, the simplicity of measuring business success tempts many foundation board members – often entrepreneurs themselves – to demand continuous measurement of performance and effectiveness. This leads to a serious fallacy: only what is measurable gets funded, often excluding the most transformative, which is naturally more difficult to measure.
- In recent years, "**scientific approaches**" have gained momentum. These use methods from the social, economic, and political sciences and are evidence-based. One advantage of theory- and data-driven approaches is that they can challenge foundations that pursue questionable, ideologically driven agendas. However, at least for the Sub-Saharan Africa region, most researchers still come from universities in the Global North and tend to study the applicability of Northern solutions for Africa. It is our conviction though that scientific approaches will only truly succeed in African countries when African researchers at local universities begin to develop and test African solutions for African problems.
- The "**systemic approach**" represents a value orientation that places full responsibility for planning and implementation in the hands of local actors – from the agenda-setting stage onward. This approach focuses on participation and the empowerment of local partners and may even go so far as to delegate decision-making power over the foundation's funds to these partners. Systemic approaches assume that partners operate within complex and dynamic systems that require flexibility

in the pursuit and adaptation of project goals. Systemic approaches aim to address root causes rather than symptoms and activate the system's self-healing forces. These approaches are often not based on structured "Theories of Change" or rigid "Balanced Scorecards" but rather on rational bets placed on the strategic intelligence of well-selected, fully empowered partners.

As a matter of fact, many foundations combine various approaches in practice, whether consciously or not. Before turning to the approach of the Arthur Waser Foundation specifically, we will now describe certain values that become apparent in foundation management.

B) Values Arising from Management Practice

- A first observation relates to differing **partnership logics**. In recent years, there has been a clear shift in language – from "beneficiaries" or "recipients" to "partners". However, for many donors, international aid agencies, or foundations, partners are above all implementation partners. This reveals a value system which attributes strategic competence to the donors, not the partners, creating vertical relationships. Since implementation partners are often geographically distant, rigid monitoring based on latent mistrust is the logical consequence. Even the often-cited "partnership of equals" obscures the fact that donor foundations still demand detailed knowledge and control over how funds are used.

At the same time, the fear of dependency of partners often leads foundations to limit support to three-year pilot projects, expecting partners to become financially independent afterward. Put cynically: foundations dictate agenda and strategy for three years, then withdraw in order to avoid creating dependency. This, in turn, forces local organisations to constantly adapt to the agendas of their shifting funding partners. An alternative lies in the systems-based approach described above: mutual responsibility for agenda, strategy, and implementation – alongside the acceptance of long-term interdependence as equal partners.

- A further dimension of value-based learning relates to the "**management of projects and staff**". Most foundations, public institutions, development cooperation agencies, and private companies use a "Management

Non-negotiable universal values

- Commitment to democratic principles
- Inviolability of human rights and human dignity
- Serving the common good
- Transparency and efficiency in the use of resources
- Commitment to effectiveness

AWF approaches – negotiable values

Systemic approach

- Address root causes rather than symptoms
- Empower local partners and grant them full responsibility
- Build long-term partnerships
- Promote self-monitoring and peer accountability
- Measure outcomes with common sense
- Do not only do what is measurable; place rational bets
- Align strategic niches with available resources
- Promote revolving financing mechanisms

Entrepreneurial approach

- Strengthen the independence and own resources of partners
- Promote entrepreneurial thinking and action
- Professionalise the planning and implementation of business ventures
- Implement internal and external reporting systems

Scientific approach

- Build evidence-based knowledge and make it available to partners
- Strengthen local knowledge carriers, trainers, and service providers and ensure their availability to partners
- Promote local networks and South–South partnerships

by Objectives" (MBO) approach. Objectives are the unchanging reference points of such systems – whether in project reporting or annual staff reviews. Failure to meet them must be justified. So while MBO is compatible with most of the foundation approaches described above, it is not recommendable for systemic approaches. For systems thinkers, adaptability to dynamic realities matters more than rigid adherence to objectives.

Planning remains crucial, but once reality changes, they MUST be adjusted accordingly. Instead of objectives or goals, the true benchmarks are values – both the non-negotiable universal values described earlier and those developed through reflective learning. This philosophy is referred to as Management by Values. It means that staff and project partners align their decisions with core values rather than with predefined objectives and adjust objectives to changing realities. This shift requires (and fosters) fast and deep learning processes, rather than focusing on achieving potentially obsolete objectives. Consequently, management by values gives way to promoting individual and collective learning processes whereby we arrive at the very start of this article: there is a strong correlation between learning processes leading to insights shaping the negotiable values of a Foundation.

The Arthur Waser Foundation follows a systemic approach that incorporates entrepreneurial and scientific elements. One example is the interest-free loans granted to ten partner organisations (Christian women's congregations) to promote sustainable agriculture in Tanzania. These loans are repaid to a Tanzanian trust fund. The partnership logic behind this initiative is based on detailed business plans, which place full responsibility in the hands of the partners – for entrepreneurial decisions, risk assessment, and the management and depreciation of equipment. Tanzanian evidence based business experts, funded by the foundation, are made available to support the development of professional business plans. Partners receiving these loans are represented on the trust's board and may reallocate the repaid funds as new loans in the form of a revolving fund. Based on years of experience, we are confident that this trust will not become a "grab bag" but rather a mechanism of empowerment – even extending to the delegation of decision-making power over the Foundation's recycled and multiplied funds.

Time will tell whether this rational bet will pay off. It is grounded in the deeply held belief – developed through intensive, shared learning processes – that development in our African priority countries must be defined and implemented by our African partners: systemically, strategically, and operationally. The agendas, strategies, and projects of traditional development cooperation designed in offices in the Global North have an expiry date.



Early Childhood and Primary Education

Benjamin Brühwiler, Programme Manager

Montessori for All: Child-Centred Education in the Public School System

In Tanzania, around 1.5 million children attend public pre-primary schools. More than 19,000 teachers educate these children, often under challenging conditions. Many of these educators lack specialised training in early childhood education. Teaching is frequently characterised by rote learning, discipline, and teacher-centred structures, with little encouragement for creativity, independent learning, or the holistic development of the child.

Over the past decade, the Tanzanian government has made significant progress, including the introduction of free access to pre-primary and primary education. However, the quality of early childhood education remains inadequate, as numerous studies show. Children from rural areas and disadvantaged social backgrounds in particular often do not receive an education that truly prepares them for school and life.

This is where a new programme comes in, developed and implemented by the Montessori Community of Tanzania (MCT). The "Community-Rooted Education" or CoRE programme systematically brings the principles of Montessori pedagogy into public pre-primary schools in Tanzania for the first time. The target group includes teachers who have previously had little or no access to specialised training in early childhood education.

The programme uses a decentralised, hands-on approach to training. Local trainers – known as CoRE Facilitators – mentor public-school teachers directly in their working environment and accompany them in the classroom over an extended period. This continuous, on-site support enables not only more effective implementation of the content but also strengthens the link to local realities.

The programme deliberately involves the wider community. Parents, school leadership, and local authorities are engaged through awareness-raising activities. This creates an environment that not only accepts but actively supports and sustains child-centred pedagogy. The aim is to build a critical mass of Montessori-inspired teachers in public pre-primary schools. The transformation is not

meant to be top-down but to arise through lived practice, local conviction, and community-driven change from within. The CoRE programme exemplifies how the Arthur Waser Foundation operates: long-term, locally rooted, strategic, and with the aim of enabling systemic change.

Strategic Guidelines of the AWF in the Field of Education

The Arthur Waser Foundation's engagement in education is guided by three strategic principles, which are clearly reflected in the CoRE programme:

1. Quality Over Quantity

The focus is not merely on reaching as many children as possible, but on ensuring they receive high-quality, holistic, and child-appropriate education, i.e. an education that sees children as active agents in their own learning.

2. Systemic Impact

AWF does not support isolated, one-off projects but deliberately invests in initiatives with systemic leverage. Scalable and transferable projects are embedded in existing structures, led by local actors, and adaptable to other regions, school levels, or organisations. High-leverage initiatives aim for structural, deep-rooted change rather than short-term success. They shift attitudes, create new frameworks, or strengthen institutions, thereby initiating processes that extend beyond the individual project and generate long-term dynamics. Change becomes sustainable when critical masses are reached and new approaches are institutionally anchored.

3. Local Ownership and Responsibility

Change is only sustainable when it is initiated and carried by local actors. For this reason, the Foundation is committed to long-term partnerships, local capacity-building, and shared learning. It sees itself as an enabler, not an operative actor.

From Nurseries to Public School

In Tanzania, Montessori pedagogy has been known for decades in the preschool sector, but almost exclusively in privately-run nurseries for children aged 2–5. Since the 1970s, more than 6,000 Montessori teachers have been trained at local colleges run by Christian congregations and civil society organisations.



CoRE facilitator in training, Magdalena Telentine (right), trains teachers from public pre-primary schools in Zanzibar in the use of Montessori learning materials.

In the public education system, however, Montessori has been virtually absent. Public pre-primary schools (for children aged 5-7) typically follow a traditional approach, focused on rote learning, discipline, and hierarchical structures, with limited room for individual learning or child-led development. Through the CoRE programme, public pre-primary teachers are now being trained on-site in the core principles of Montessori pedagogy. Together with the communities and facilitators, they produce essential learning materials adapted to local contexts and available resources.

Change from Within Through a Critical Mass

By 2030, 5,000 of the 19,400 public pre-primary teachers are expected to have completed CoRE training, which is around 25 percent of the total teaching workforce, forming a critical mass. The term "critical mass" originates from physics and describes the point at which a reaction becomes self-sustaining. In education and systems theory, the concept has been adopted to explain how social in-

novations can reinforce and spread themselves once they reach a certain scale or density.

In the context of the CoRE programme, this means that when a quarter of public pre-primary teachers are Montessori-trained, the approach is no longer marginal. It becomes embedded in the public education system. These trained teachers become reference points for their peers, liaisons for school leadership, and credible voices in dialogue with educational authorities. A network of multipliers and changemakers emerges, embedding new forms of teaching and learning in everyday practice. The transformation is not imposed externally but grows from the heart of the system, through shared experience, trust, and the persuasive power of a lived pedagogical ethos.

From Pilot Project to Systemic Anchoring

The idea of offering Montessori training to public pre-primary teachers was first implemented in 2022. A pilot course took place at the Montessori Training College in Bukoba,

with 60 teachers successfully participating. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the strong potential of child-centred pedagogy within the public system. However, an external evaluation also exposed key challenges: high per-participant costs, insufficient on-site support, and limited capacity at existing training colleges.

These insights led to a realignment of the programme. Training is now decentralised and community-based, deeply embedded in local contexts. Teachers are no longer removed from their work environment but are supported and trained on-site by CoRE Facilitators working in their own regions.

In 2024, the first cohort of 40 CoRE Facilitators began their training. By the end of 2025, they will not only have deepened their own skills but will also have trained the first cohort of public pre-primary teachers. From 2026 onwards, the number of trained teachers is expected to reach 1,000 annually. A nationwide movement has started to take tangible shape.

Strong Partnerships as the Foundation of Systemic Change

The CoRE programme illustrates the Arthur Waser Foundation's understanding of education as a locally driven change process, not an external intervention. At the heart of its implementation is the Montessori Community of Tanzania (MCT), with whom the Foundation has collabo-

rated closely for years. Founded in 1997, MCT has become a key institution for Montessori education in Tanzania. As a nationally recognised organisation, it connects training colleges, represents the Montessori community to government, and ensures programme quality. MCT is also responsible for developing and implementing the CoRE programme.

A milestone was reached in 2024: thanks to MCT's long-standing advocacy, two landmark agreements were signed. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed with both the Ministry of Education (Tanzania mainland) and TAMISEMI (President's Office – Regional Administration and Local Government), officially recognising Montessori training within the public education system. A similar agreement has also been established with the Ministry of Education in semi-autonomous Zanzibar.

The Arthur Waser Foundation sees itself as an active partner in this locally grounded transformation. It supports organisations like MCT with financial resources, strategic advice, and institutional strengthening, without exercising operational control. It participates in the process as a partner, learner, and long-term ally. Genuine transformation cannot be imposed, but it arises where people initiate and sustain it themselves. Only what grows from within society can endure.

Excursus: From Colonial Schooling to Education for Self-Reliance

The challenges of Tanzania's current education system can only be understood in their historical context, dating back to a time when education was primarily used as a tool of colonial power. With the arrival of European missionaries and colonial powers at the end of the 19th century, local forms of education were systematically restructured. Mission schools – especially those led by actors from Germany, Britain, and Switzerland – adopted a strict, hierarchical model marked by obedience, discipline, and control, based on Eurocentric ideas of education. Independent thinking, local languages, and spiritual traditions were systematically devalued and often suppressed.

This colonial school model largely displaced the rich traditions of precolonial African education. In Tanzania – as in many other parts of Africa – education before colonisation was deeply woven into everyday life and community structures. Children learned through observation, participation, and storytelling, through crafts and communal responsibility. The goal was not to pass exams but to prove oneself as a responsible member of society.

These everyday learning processes were complemented by ritualised educational practices. One example from East Africa is the "Unyago" initiation rite, particularly for girls transitioning into adulthood. Experienced elder women passed on knowledge about the body, sexuality, hygiene, language, values, and social roles. "Unyago" combined social, emotional, and spiritual learning and remains a valuable cultural resource and educational model.

After independence in 1961, Tanzania under President Julius Kambarage Nyerere sought to redefine education. In 1967, Nyerere introduced the concept of "Education for Self-Reliance", aimed at decolonising education and making it accessible to all children. Education was to be rooted in Tanzanian community contexts and promote independence instead of blind obedience. However, this vision was only partially implemented in practice and, from the 1990s onwards, was increasingly sidelined by internationally driven education reforms.

Reviving the Strength of Local Education

The CoRE programme reconnects with existing local educational traditions. The Montessori approach at its core views the child as an active, responsible being. It fosters independent learning, hands-on engagement, and social responsibility, which is closely aligned with Nyerere's ideal of holistic, community-oriented education. This form of education should not be the privilege of a few children from affluent families but open to children from all backgrounds. The programme's decentralised, community-based design also reflects the principle of self-determination.

CoRE does not seek to import a Western method but to reactivate a local educational heritage, combining it with modern, child-centred approaches to create a future-ready public education system in Tanzania.

Girls' initiation ceremony in Zanzibar, 1906³



Technical Education

Ueli Jezler, Programme Manager

Technology, Talent, Transformation – How We Support Technical Education

The Arthur Waser Foundation is committed to enabling young people in Ghana and Tanzania a self-determined professional future through practical education and training. Our goal is to connect young talents with the demand for skilled professionals and future leaders. We primarily focus on the growing solar sector, convinced that solar energy will continue its rise and become the dominant energy source.

Together with our partners, we support programmes that meaningfully combine theory and practice. We promote training models tailored to local realities and that provide genuine prospects. However, it is not just about school education, but about creating jobs and pathways to self-employment.

Two Programmes Illustrate Our Strategic Goals

In Dodoma, Tanzania, the Foundation has supported the establishment of the Don Bosco Technical Training Centre since 2021. It trains teachers for the secondary level and combines technical and pedagogical components in an integrated model. Through close cooperation with the national education authority, a centre of excellence is emerging, one that will shape the education system in the long term through qualified teachers and modern technology.

Since 2018, we have pursued a similar approach in Ghana. The Don Bosco Solar and Renewable Energy Centre near Accra trains teachers at the highest secondary level. Over the past five years, a national network of 16 solar training schools has developed around this centre, offering hands-on training to young people.

So far, around 1,500 young people in Ghana have completed solar training, with a labour market integration rate of 73%.

The solar network is also an attractive provider of further training for professionals. More than 500 advanced training courses have been held to date, including 200 for employees of the national energy utility. Through the solar network, we are also promoting a vocational education strategy for all church-run schools in Ghana, thereby strengthening their position in the educational discourse. This strategy includes

several key points: joint school leadership between church and state, long-term personnel planning, promotion of technical subjects from primary level, independent expert panels for vocational standards, and sufficient public funding. The Catholic Church, as the second-largest education provider in Ghana, is a key driver of this process, which has the potential to significantly improve the quality of education.

What Challenges Do We Face?

Like other technology-based sectors, the solar industry in Africa is still young and, in places like Ghana, under pressure from economic crises. Many jobs are project-based and limited in duration, meaning that young people often enter working life in financially unstable conditions. Moreover, the cooperation between education providers, businesses, and authorities is often fragmentary, making demand-driven training, its financing, and the integration of graduates into the workforce more difficult.

Growth engine, low youth unemployment, and innovation: Is the Swiss vocational training system a model for all?

From a Swiss perspective, it may seem natural to draw on the country's vocational training system to address these challenges. The Swiss model is seen as a growth engine that combines accessible, practice-oriented training with a structured entry into the labour market. Learners start working in companies from day one, accompanied by trained instructors. Three to four days of company-based practice and one to two days of classroom instruction effectively combine theory and practice. This leads to high productivity and rapid technology diffusion across all sectors. The model relies on strong cooperation between federal, cantonal, and economic actors. The permeability of the system allows for individual educational pathways, from initial training to university access, under the principle of "No qualification without progression".

For public authorities, vocational education is cost-effective, as businesses cover around 60% of the funding. This investment pays off: the productivity of apprentices typically offsets training costs after two-thirds of the training period. However, the system also has risks: power imbalances in the workplace and inadequate mentoring can compromise training quality, and external oversight may be insufficient. The burden of early career decisions also leads many young people to opt for academic paths to postpone commitment.



- Running solar courses
- Solar courses in preparation



Ghanaian youth engaged in hands-on training

Exporting the Swiss Model?

Given Switzerland's economic success, it may appear that other countries would naturally benefit from adopting its dual approach. However, experience has shown that this is not straightforward.

A key requirement is a stable public-private partnership and adequate funding. Often, institutional frameworks for such cooperation are lacking, and states are unable to fulfil their intermediary role between education and industry effectively. While countries like China enforce training mandates top-down, systemic incentives are often missing in our focus countries.

There are initiatives in the Global South where companies play an active role in training, including financial contributions. But these are usually isolated cases, "bubbles" with limited systemic influence.

Our goal, however, cannot be to support these bubbles without creating sustainable foundations that affect the system as a whole. We must therefore ask: which approaches make sense from a systemic perspective, and what can we meaningfully influence with the resources we have?

Global Perspective: School-Based Education

A look at widespread vocational education models shows that public and private vocational schools typically deliver training without company involvement. The curriculum remains theoretical; practical learning is often lacking due to resource constraints.

Even though these models fail to meet labour market needs, they have become globally established. There are several reasons for this: academic education holds greater prestige in many societies, while vocational training is still seen as a path for the socially disadvantaged, a persistent stigma.

Moreover, the role of business is limited. The formal labour market is often weak, and standardised training processes are difficult to implement. Businesses have not helped shape the education systems and lack incentives to participate. In state-dominated models like in Tanzania, companies are required to contribute financially, but these funds do not adequately reach the schools. This leads to frustration on both sides: companies incur costs without seeing tangible benefits and must re-train new employees themselves.

Swiss Vocational Education

Switzerland's vocational education system has its roots in the guild traditions of the late Middle Ages. At that time, trades were taught through a structured system of apprenticeship, journeyman years, and master certification. Training took place directly in businesses, a principle that still holds today.

With industrialisation and the dissolution of the guilds in the 19th century, the Swiss cantons took on increasing responsibility for regulating vocational education, particularly in terms of training standards. In 1930, the first federal law on vocational education established a nationwide framework.

Since then, the dual system has continued to evolve. The revised 2004 Vocational Education Act increased permeability from secondary to tertiary education and integrated new training pathways.

Public Private Partnership

Switzerland's vocational education system is among the world's most effective. It closely aligns with labour market needs and is based on a partnership between the federal government, cantons, and industry.

The federal government sets strategic direction and ensures the quality of programmes. Cantons are responsible for vocational schools, the training of instructors, and the supervision of apprenticeships. Companies provide training places and personnel and thus secure their future workforce. Through professional associations and other social partners, they define curricula and develop new training offers.

School-Based Education

School-based models, such as those in Anglo-Saxon countries, were largely introduced through state reforms to systematically educate broad population groups and promote social integration. These models focus on theoretical content, with education providers and the state bearing primary responsibility. Practical experience is usually gained only after graduation through internships or trainee programmes.

Role of Employers

In school-based models, employers do not have a systemic role. Their engagement tends to be limited to specific contexts where they see direct benefit, such as in-company trainee programmes to secure skilled labour. This market-driven logic offers individual flexibility but does not lead to unified standards needed for systematic, practical training. As a result, the visible gap between educational content and labour market needs remains.

In Ghana and Tanzania, an informal learning system complements the formal, school-based system. Young people acquire technical skills through traditional apprenticeships in small workshops. These learning formats are practice-oriented but lack standardisation and regulation.

In the contexts examined, there is no institutionalised role for employers, making it difficult to align education with employment.

Vocational Training on the African Continent

Historical factors also play a role. Looking at precolonial Africa, vocational training was deeply embedded in the social and economic fabric. Skills were transmitted mostly informally but systematically through hands-on learning in daily life. Young people learned trades such as mud and wood construction, blacksmithing, pottery, weaving, or fishing by observing and being guided by experienced masters, often within their communities.

In many regions, master-apprentice relationships formed within guild-like structures. Certain professions were associated with specific social groups, blacksmiths among the Mande in West Africa, leatherworkers among the Hausa. These artisan groups ensured the intergenerational transfer of knowledge. Urban centres with vibrant trade and craft cultures, such as Timbuktu in Mali or Kilwa in Tanzania, had organised vocational networks long before colonisation, with structured training paths and quality standards. These systems were integral to the social and economic life of many African societies before being displaced by imported education models.

Vocational training in Africa was also closely linked to initiation rituals, which conveyed not only practical skills but also social responsibility and cultural values.

International cooperation has played a questionable role. Since the independence of African countries, international vocational training projects have often been implemented with disappointing results. They tended to focus on low-threshold occupations like carpentry, construction, or tailoring, intended to provide a livelihood for poorer segments of society. This focus did not align with the development agendas needed to drive forward-looking change. It has so far failed to produce a critical mass of skilled workers necessary for economic autonomy and global competitiveness in countries like Ghana and Tanzania.

So how can we positively influence a system when previous approaches have not had the desired effect?

Universal Elements as a Basis – What We Achieve in Our Projects

Our approach is to harness globally applicable principles of vocational learning, professional development, and economic success, and to apply them where we can have the greatest impact.

1) Valuing technical education as a true asset

Skilled professionals and leaders are not just a resources. When they develop local solutions, adapt technologies and improve processes, they become drivers of economic transformation. In the universal principle of learning – modelling and imitation – dedicated teachers are invaluable. We invest in excellent mentors who act with conviction. They are the core of our projects in Ghana and Tanzania and we support their practical and pedagogical training.

Appreciation is also reflected in the learning environment. We enable access to state-of-the-art technology and hands-on training through networks of training centres with strong technical and pedagogical capacity. Facilities like the Solar and Renewable Energy Centre in Ghana are platforms for scaling, experimentation and innovation. In such an environment, skilled professionals and leaders mature into a true asset – for themselves, for the economy and for society.

2) Supporting entry into the labour market as a "Professional Initiation"

When entering working life, clear structures are crucial. In Switzerland, the transition begins gradually from the first day of training. In Ghana or Tanzania, entry happens upon graduation. Here, the school's job placement service, the so-called "Job Service Office" plays a steering role, supporting graduates in the search for suitable internships and jobs.

This structural difference can be bridged in the sense of an initiation ritual: over the entire course of training, young

people are inducted into a new phase of life. They are integrated into professional networks and accompanied beyond their first job or into self-employment. In our programmes, we see great potential in expanding existing structures. Job Service Offices that are organised as an integral part of professional maturation become pivotal to a future-oriented technical education system.

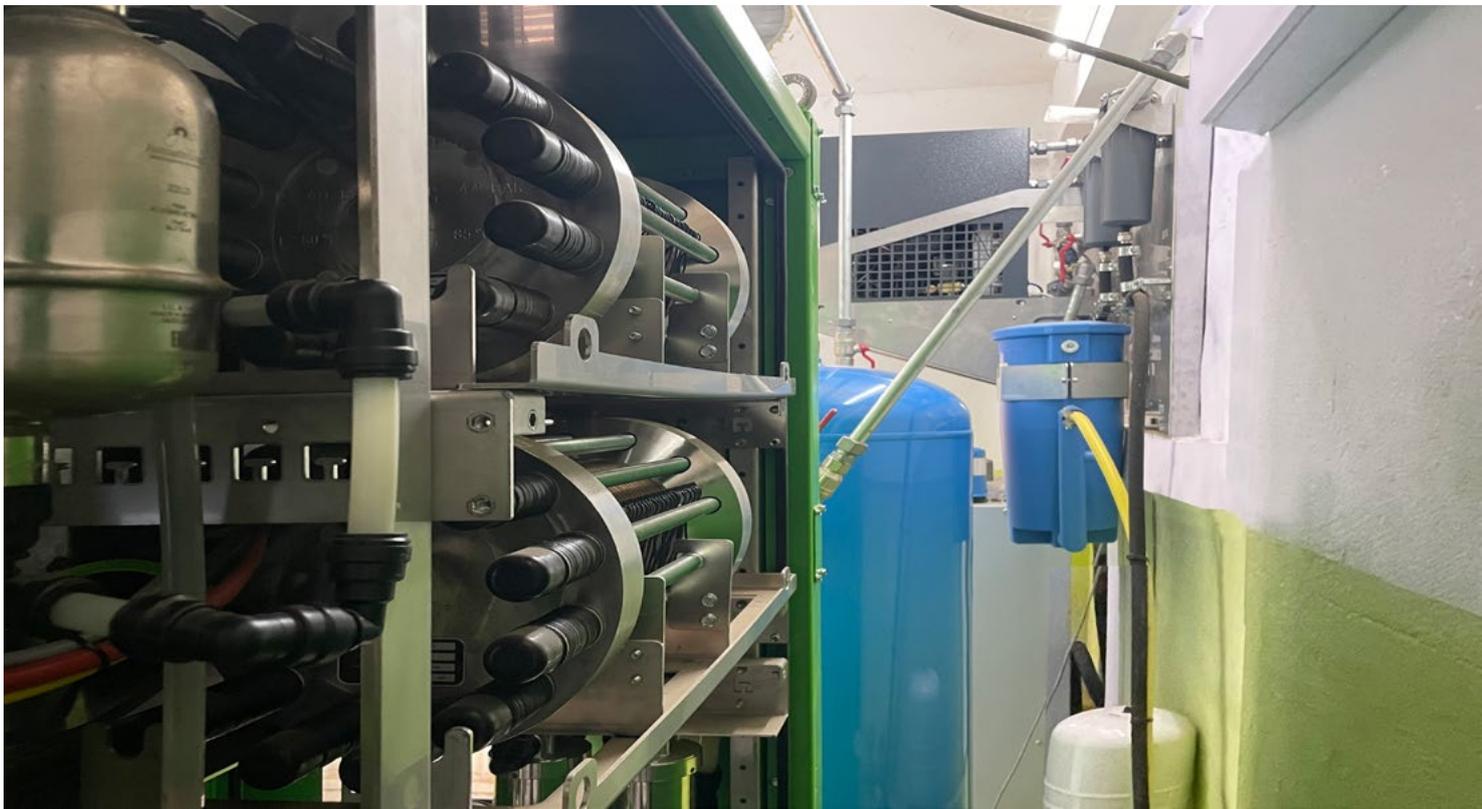
3) Strengthening coalitions and telling a story of the future

A successful sector grows from entrepreneurs who have courage and trust in the future. What is crucial is a narrative that gives technical professions the appreciation they deserve. Job profiles must be conveyed jointly by actors from education, business, and government to give young people orientation and perspective.

However, the top-down approach of African governments often remains half-hearted. Therefore, local coalitions must emerge to create good examples and establish a model that is scalable and broadly financeable. Companies need to take responsibility by clearly expressing industry needs and providing human resources for negotiations. When this is done out of genuine conviction to benefit their own company and the sector as a whole, technical professions gain cultural significance and shape the self-image of future generations.

This is also where we see the greatest potential in our projects. We invest in ethical leaders and young entrepreneurs with a strong interest in technology and social change, particularly regarding fair working conditions for well-trained young people.

View into the electrolyser of the newly installed hydrogen pilot plant at the Solar and Renewable Energy Centre in Ashaiman, Ghana



Projects 2024

Early Childhood and Primary Education		CHF 853,394
Maintaining the quality of early childhood education in nurseries	Refresher courses for Montessori teachers, scholarship fund for students, renovation fund for nurseries, annual assembly, regional hubs	
Improving the quality of education in public pre-primary schools	Further training for public pre-primary school teachers (CoRE programme), international AMI 3–6 Montessori course	
Improving the quality of education in public primary schools	International AMI 6–12 Montessori course	
Structural costs of the Montessori Community of Tanzania (MCT)	Financial support for four staff members in Dar es Salaam and seven regional coordinators	
Training and further education for partner organisations	Leadership courses and university scholarships	
Technical Education		CHF 438,522
Solar Programme West Africa	Training and professional development in solar technology for teachers, students, and professionals in Ghana, including non-technical competencies	
Solar Network Ghana	Development of a nationwide network of solar training schools	
Engineers for Sustainable Development in Africa	Development of a master's programme in Mechatronics and Ethical Leadership at Ashesi University (Ghana) and ETH Zurich	
Solar and Mechatronic Innovation Award	Promotion of an enabling environment in the solar sector for young Ghanaian entrepreneurs at Ashesi University	
Teacher Training in Dodoma, Tanzania	Training and professional development in solar technology for teachers, students, and professionals	
Don Bosco KIITEC in Arusha, Tanzania	Training and professional development at a leading technical education institution in Arusha	
Electrical Engineering Training in Arusha	Establishment and operation of two electrical engineering training programmes in Arusha	
Urbanisation and Architecture		CHF 422,107
Expansion of the model school «Simba Vision» in Ngabobo, Arusha	Summer School for architecture students from Tanzania and Switzerland; construction of an assembly hall	
Extension of the model school in Ifakara, Morogoro	Construction of a library	
Capacity Building at the Montessori Community of Tanzania	Establishment of a Challenge Fund jury committee composed of Montessori educators, architects, and a legal expert	
MCT Challenge Fund for child-centred nursery school	Planning and construction of ten model nursery schools across different regions in Tanzania	
Realisation of a public model school	Preparatory project in collaboration with the City Council of Dodoma	
Outreach "Montessori Architecture"	Architecture competition for a model school in Kenya	
Urbanisation	Development of a handbook titled «Grassroots Urbanization»	
Agriculture		CHF 482,245
Research Programme on Mechanisation and Agroecology	Sokoine University of Agriculture and Bern University of Applied Sciences: Procurement of innovative agroecological machinery for large-scale farming, pilot operations, and evaluation	
Mechanisation Status Analysis	Sustainable Agriculture Tanzania (SAT) and MATI Mlingano: Inventory of existing machinery and recommendations for farm-specific mechanisation strategies	
Organic Crop Farming with Integrated Animal Husbandry	Loan to the St. Vincent Sisters in Mbinga: Expansion of organic crop farming and construction of animal-friendly stables	
Vineyard and Natural Wine Production	Loan to the Gemma Sisters in Dodoma: Expansion of organic vineyards to 6 hectares and establishment of a winery	
Development of Agricultural Strategies	St. Vincent and Gemma Sisters: Preparatory work for business plan development	
Training and Advisory Programme in Sustainable Agriculture	SAT: Training sessions, exchange visits, pilot plots, and advisory services. Business plan development	
Preparatory Work for the Establishment of the Sustainable Agriculture Trust	Workshop with project partners, legal opinion, and drafting of the Trust Deed	
Research on Land Conflicts and Conflict Resolution Approaches	Commissioned study on land conflicts in the Morogoro region	
Feasibility Study for Water Management Systems	Expert assessment by SAT and specialised engineers: feasibility and cost-benefit analysis of water management and irrigation for Usambara and Huruma Sisters	
Continuing Education Fund for Education and Agriculture	Strengthening technical skills of Sisters and agricultural workers	

Key Figures 2024

Early Childhood and Primary Education

348 Tparticipants took part in refresher courses

for Montessori teachers (11,636 children reached). Since 2020, refresher courses have been conducted for 1,591 teachers.

41 scholarships

were awarded for training at a Montessori training college. Since 2020, a total of 161 scholarships have been granted.

27 Montessori nurseries

were renovated. Since 2019, 72 nurseries have been renovated.

616 teachers

participated in the annual assembly of the Montessori Community of Tanzania. Since 2019, 2,347 individuals have attended annual assemblies.

2 Montessori hubs

were held, reaching 631 people. Since 2022, a total of 1,738 individuals have been reached through hubs.

613 teachers at 171 Montessori nurseries

were inspected by MCT coordinators. Since 2022, MCT coordinators have visited 2,060 teachers at 1,199 Montessori nurseries.

32 reports

(at least) on Montessori pedagogy were published in newspapers and other media. Since 2022, at least 78 reports have been published.

Urbanisation & Architecture

Handbook Montessori Architecture

and website offer practical guidance for the independent design of schools by architects worldwide; a network of local Montessori architects has been established.

3 Montessori model schools

have been built and are operational; two of them were nominated for international architecture awards.

Geography-relevant blueprints

for modular child-centred small schools have been developed.

The first public Montessori school

is currently in development – conceived as a replicable model for public education institutions.

10 model nursery schools

are under construction in various regions of Tanzania.

Agriculture

2 business plans

financed with loans totalling CHF 370,000. Since 2020, 7 business plans have been supported with loans amounting to CHF 1,275,000.

230 participants

in 11 agroecology training sessions. Since 2020, 62 courses have reached 1,713 individuals.

18 advisory visits

by agronomists. Since 2020, 93 multi-day farm consultations have taken place across the 10 partner congregations.

2 agricultural strategies

developed. Since 2020, 7 congregations have developed agricultural strategies.

4 pilot plots

More than 40 pilot plots have been established on the farms since 2020.

Technical Education

3 new solar schools

in Ghana. Since 2020, the network has grown from 2 to 16 schools, including two girls-only schools.

86 teachers

certified on secondary-level since 2019.

1520 graduates

in solar technology at secondary level since 2020, including 330 girls.

500 solar training courses

for professionals in the energy sector conducted since 2021.

73% of graduates

found employment in the solar sector within 3 months after graduation.

104 students

enrolled in the master's programme in Mechatronics and Ethical Leadership since 2022. First graduating cohort with 100% employment rate: 85% in industry, 15% in academia.

A schema for the financing,

planning, construction, and maintenance of child-centred nursery schools has been established through the «MCT Challenge Fund».

A fundraising campaign

has been prepared to finance an additional 100 Montessori nursery schools.



Urbanisation and Architecture

Benjamin Stähli, Programme Manager

Population Growth as a Historic Opportunity

Nowhere in the world is the population growing faster than in Africa. When the Arthur Waser Foundation was established in the year 2000, roughly 830 million people lived on the continent; by the end of 2024, that number had reached 1.5 billion. According to United Nations estimates, the population is expected to double again within the next 25 years⁴.

In pace and scale with this demographic surge, built transformations are taking place in the villages, towns, and swelling megacities of our southern neighbour. Afrika has become the "new frontier" of the 21st-century urbanisation. Traditional, hologram-like village structures – whose spatial logic repeats the whole within each part⁵ – are dissolving. Colonial grid towns, with their rigid functional zoning, persist. Meanwhile, vast real-estate projects devised by global investors, international development agencies and algorithmic planning tools are rising. Too often, these new urban forms remain detached from local realities, cultural practices and ecological conditions. The result is a deepening epistemic asymmetry⁶: global capital flows, technocratic masterplans and standardised notions of "development" increasingly shape African urban spaces—frequently without meaningful involvement of the affected communities.

Amid this landscape of spatial alienation and depersonalisation, the Arthur Waser Foundation advocates for a self-determined «grassroots» urbanisation and supports an independent, distinctly African architecture. Consistent with its systemic approach and educational mission, the foundation places particular on developing child-centred school architecture and empowering self-organised rural and urban town communities.

"Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all".

UN Sustainable Development Goal 4

Example, Equal Access to Child-Centred School Architecture

In Tanzania, with a current population of 64 million and a steady growth rate of just over 3 percent, additional schools for millions of children will need to be provided in the coming years – by both public and private actors⁷.

Yet with only 566 registered architects across the country (compared to over 16,000 registered members of the Swiss SIA in 2024)^{8,9}, most school construction projects in Tanzania proceed without any involvement of professional architectural services. To streamline planning and execution, local education authorities and contractors frequently fall back on standardised blueprints. Architecturally, these plans often reflect a colonial legacy of frontal teaching, perpetuating a didactic approach in which children are continuously monitored, guided, and corrected. As a result, these schools share characteristics with many in the Global North: segregation into classrooms, restrictions on independent activities, limited space for focused learning, and minimal interaction with the natural environment. These schools ultimately reproduce an authoritarian spatial logic rooted in control and discipline – a legacy that endures not only in Tanzania but across much of the Global North.

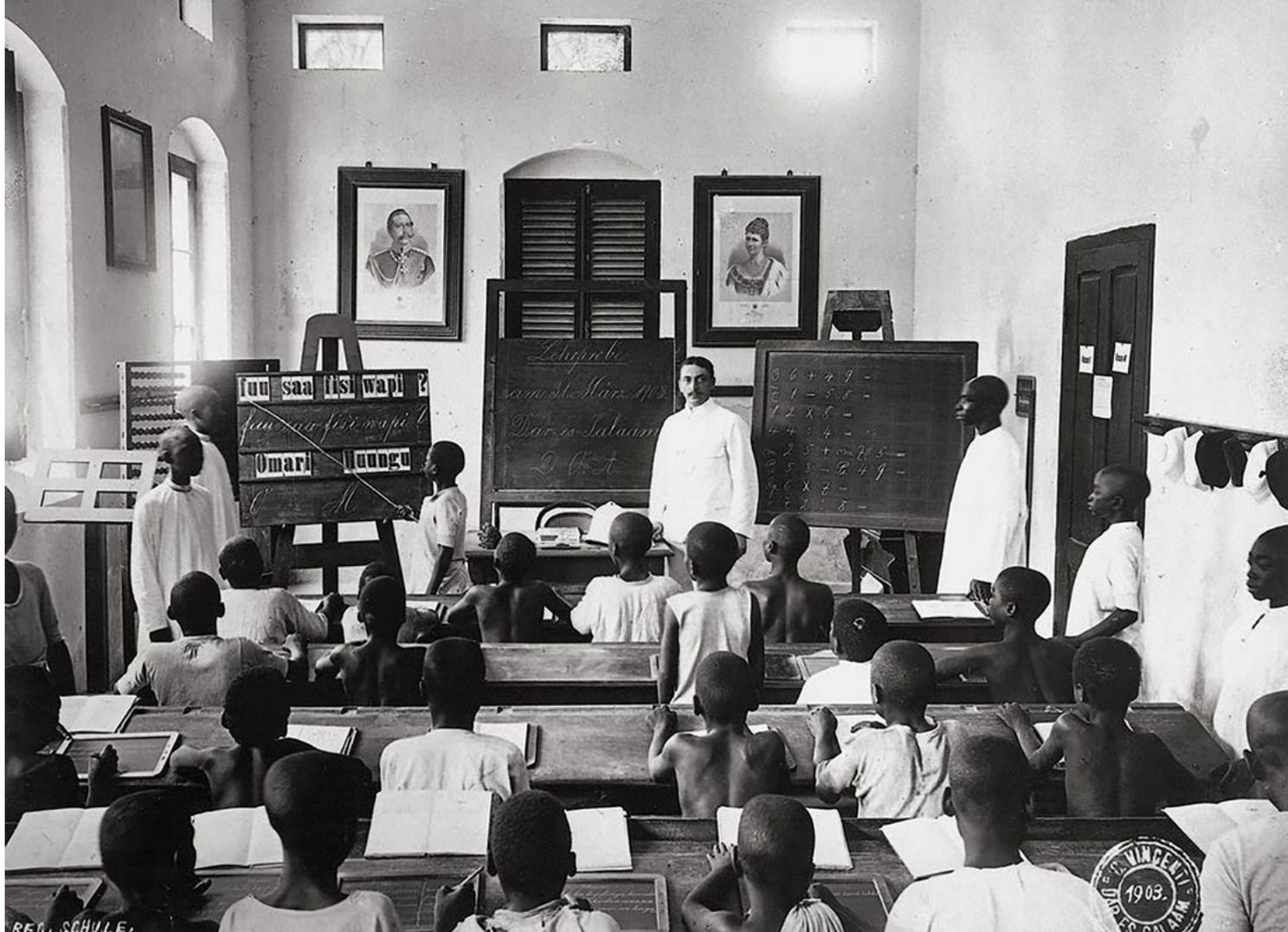
The AWF and its local partner, the Montessori Community of Tanzania (MCT), see children as wholesome, responsible individuals with a genuine interest in learning. Rather than domesticating them or moulding them to fit into a hierarchical adult world – a world that remains, at its core, authoritarian, colonial, and undemocratic – children should be supported in developing independently, taking responsibility, and learning to understand and value the natural world around them.

"We must, therefore, quit our roles as jailers and instead take care to prepare an environment in which we do as little as possible to exhaust the child with our surveillance and instruction".

Maria Montessori

Step 1 – Foundational Research and Models: "Montessori Architecture"

The Italian physician, human rights advocate, and educational reformer Maria Montessori (1870–1952) never defined a specific architectural form. However, her educational pedagogy – grounded in the belief that the child is a "builder of him- or herself", and centred on open learning and independent activity in a carefully prepared environment – has inspired a worldwide repertoire of schools characteri-



Teacher-centred primary school in former German East Africa (German: Deutsch-Ostafrika), ca. 1903.

sed by a remarkably positive atmosphere for both learning and teaching. To capture this phenomenon, a team at AWF identified 28 recurring architectural patterns from the most inspiring schools they studied across Africa, Asia, and Europe.

In 2019, the foundation called for an architectural competition, open to all architects in Tanzania, to test a prototype version of a 28-pattern "Design Instrument". The first resulting project – the Simba Vision Montessori School in Ngabobo, Arusha – was awarded the prestigious Architecture Project of the Year title by the Dezeen Architecture Awards 2023 panel of judges. Another model school – the Padre Matern Marty Montessori School in Ifakara, Morogoro – was nominated for the Holcim Foundation Awards in 2024.

Today, the updated Design Instrument is available as a handbook and freely accessible resource on montessori-architecture.org, offering practical guidance for the independent design of schools by architects worldwide.

"It is almost possible to say that there is a mathematical relationship between the beauty of his surroundings and the activity of the child; he will make discoveries rather more voluntarily in a gracious setting than in an ugly one".

Maria Montessori

Step 2 – Capacity Building: Architectural Association and New Design Templates

In Tanzania, architectural competitions, construction projects, and workshops on child-centred school design gave rise to a group of committed, mainly female architects. In 2024, they officially registered as the Pan-African Association for Montessori Architecture (PAAMA) in Dar es Salaam.

PAAMA is a collective of Tanzanian professionals actively engaged in the design, planning, and construction of schools based on Montessori architecture patterns. The group has been dedicated to fostering a growing pool of qualified local architects and advancing child-centred architecture, "...designed by Africans for Africa".



Open learning space. Architectural patterns emphasise the use of local materials, techniques and craftsmanship, and are tailored to accommodate diverse climatic conditions.



Samia Suluhu* Montessori School

Since September 2024, negotiations have been underway with the Dodoma City Council for the construction of another model school. In collaboration with the city government, the central planning office TAMISEMI, and the teachers' association MCT, the aim is to establish the first public Montessori school in the heart of Tanzania's capital – a replicable model for child-centred public education.

*Samia Suluhu Hassan has been President of Tanzania since 2021

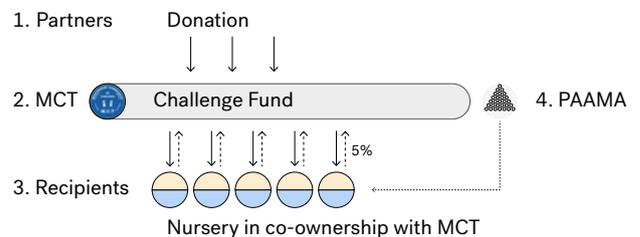
To support the creation of new child-centred learning environments, particularly in underserved peripheral regions of Tanzania, PAAMA partnered with MCT and AWF to develop a series of affordable Montessori architectural blueprints. These plans utilise local materials, techniques, and craftspeople and are tailored to suit different climatic zones in Tanzania. The modular and expandable learning spaces accommodate approximately 80 children, with each blueprint carefully designed to keep costs at CHF 50,000.

Step 3 – MCT Challenge Fund

With a particular focus on early childhood education, the MCT Challenge Fund is designed to provide resources for the creation of child-centred learning environments, based on the patterns of Montessori Architecture. Through this initiative, dedicated teachers in Tanzania can access grants to establish new nursery schools. Eligible applicants are trained Montessori teachers who hold a land title deed and can contribute 10 per cent of the building costs. Affordable school designs and architectural consultancy are provided by members of PAAMA.

The Challenge Fund operates as follows:

1. Financial partners determine how many learning environments they wish to sponsor, with each nursery school costing CHF 50,000
2. The teachers' association MCT manages the fund through the Challenge Fund Committee, established in 2023.
3. Recipients are trained Montessori teachers who hold land titles and can contribute at least 10 per cent of the building costs. In return, each recipient contributes 5 percent of their nursery school's annual turnover back to the Challenge Fund.
4. PAAMA members provide architectural plans and supervise construction and maintenance.



To ensure long-term quality, all schools built through the Challenge Fund are co-owned by the teachers and MCT, proportionate to their contributions. The 5 percent annual revenue contribution is used for repairs and to sustain the fund's financial viability. Ideally, these contributions will enable the realisation of future small schools. As part of the preparation for the Challenge Fund, AWF is currently financing the development of ten pioneering nursery schools in various regions across the country.

Next Step – Campaign for Child-Centred Nursery Schools

Our partner, the Montessori Community of Tanzania envisions a homeland where all girls and boys have equal access to quality education, characterised by self-directed activities, hands-on learning, and collaborative play. Trained teachers provide age-appropriate activities to guide the learning process, enabling children to work in groups and individually to explore knowledge of the world and realise their maximum potential.

Schools designed according to the 28 patterns of Montessori architecture offer beautifully crafted environments tailored to the developmental needs of children in specific age ranges. Each learning environment is designed, constructed, and maintained by local architects, teachers, craftspeople, and communities.



Map showing the model schools as of December 2024

The immense demand for new nursery, preschool, primary, and secondary schools – driven by a rapidly growing population of school-aged children – represents not only a major infrastructural challenge, but also a historic opportunity: to move beyond the colonial legacy of teacher-centred classroom models in favour of a child-centred African school architecture.

With the publication of the book and website *Montessori Architecture: A Design Instrument for Schools*, successfully constructed model schools across different regions of Tanzania, a robust local network of experienced architects, a set of architectural blueprints, and the framework of the Challenge Fund guided by MCT, significant groundwork has already been laid. Building on these achievements, the Montessori Community of Tanzania, in collaboration with the Arthur Waser Foundation, invites individuals and organisations to join our shared mission by funding one or more child-centred learning environments in Tanzania. Our goal is to secure 100 commitments by the end of 2026.

Agriculture

Anton Küchler, Programme Manager

Sustainable Agriculture as the Foundation for the Long-Term Stability of Tanzanian Congregations

Background

For the ten partner organisations in the agriculture programme of the Arthur Waser Foundation, agriculture represents an important economic foundation. It serves as a source of income and, through self-sufficiency, contributes significantly to food security. The production of their own food often meets higher quality standards than products available on the open market – not least due to an increasing awareness of the health risks of chemical pesticides and the importance of fertile soils. Moreover, agriculture plays a central role in the identity of many monasteries and strengthens community life through shared work among religious members, workers, and candidates.

Since 2020, the agriculture programme has developed into a priority area for the Arthur Waser Foundation. Its aim is to support the sustainable development of medium and large farms in Tanzania – with landholdings between 3 and 3,000 hectares. These farms are to become not only ecologically valuable but also economically successful and socially responsible. In the spirit of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato si'*¹, they are to serve as models of future-oriented, human-centred, and environmentally sustainable economic activity.

The Foundation follows a systemic approach that initiates transformation processes based on long-term collaboration with partner organisations. The economic success of the agricultural enterprises is intended to contribute to the long-term financial stability of the congregations. The profits are to cover not only the costs of charitable works but also the structural expenses of the communities.

Strategic Focus: Example Projects

The two example projects presented below illustrate the Foundation's approach. The sunflower cultivation and oil mill of the Huruma Sisters (Example 1) are representative of the other business plans of the congregations. An overview of these business plans is provided in Table 1. In addition to the topic of mechanisation, from which two projects are presented in Example 2, the programme is currently developing foundational strategies for water management and land conflict resolution.

Example 1: Sunflower cultivation and oil mill of the Huruma Sisters

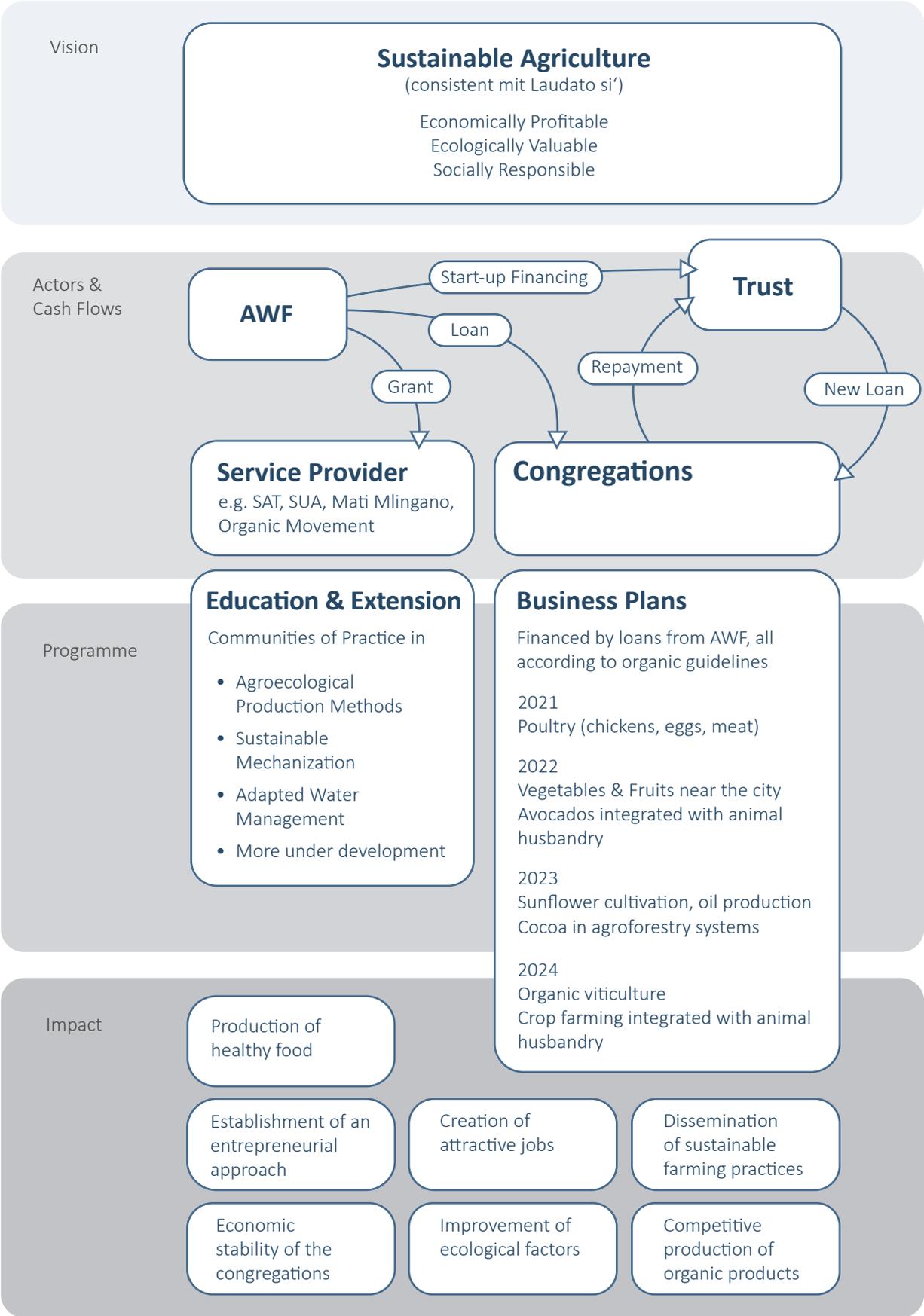
In 2023, the Huruma Sisters received a loan from the Arthur Waser Foundation to establish a value chain for sunflower cultivation and processing in accordance with East African organic standards (Kilimo Hai label). The loan covers investments in production inputs such as machinery and seeds, the construction of an oil mill near the city of Moshi, and operating costs for the first three years. The goal is to produce high-quality cooking oil for the local market – a priority also identified by the Tanzanian government. The product is to be sold at the same price as conventional sunflower oil, which requires efficient cultivation methods and a strong awareness of production costs.

Initial sunflower cultivation began in 2024 but faced challenges: due to unusually wet weather, there was severe weed growth, which reduced yields because sufficient labour for manual weeding across the 80 acres (32 hectares) of farmland could not be found. Thanks to expert advice from Sustainable Agriculture Tanzania (SAT) and exchanges within the agriculture programme's other farms, improvement measures were identified. One potential next step is the mechanisation of weeding, which appears necessary due to the difficulty in recruiting the required labour.

Over the coming years, the project aims to generate insights into how practical knowledge can be shared between congregations. It also intends to explore the feasibility of expanding organic cultivation around the oil mill. Through an outgrower system, neighbouring small and medium-sized farms will be encouraged to supply organically grown sunflowers to the Sisters' oil mill. This approach not only promotes organic agriculture but also creates income opportunities for the local population and raises awareness of agroecological practices in the wider region.

Example 2: Mechanisation and technological innovation

A second strategic project focuses on mechanisation. The goal is to strengthen innovation in agricultural technology and to develop context-specific solutions that are not only ecological but also socially and economically viable. In cooperation with MATI Mlingano (a state agricultural college specialising in mechanisation in the Tanga region), the Soikoine University of Agriculture (SUA) in Morogoro, and the Bern University of Applied Sciences (BFH-HAFL), baseline assessments of existing mechanisation were conducted on all farms. Based on these findings, the second project phase will develop mechanisation concepts tailored to the operational realities and the principles of agroecology.



System overview of the AWF Agriculture Programme

Table: Agricultural business plans supported by the Arthur Waser Foundation. All business plans are based on the principles of agroecology and organic farming.

Partner Organisation	Business Plan Description	Loan	Status
Dada Wadogo	Vegetables and fruit for local markets in Dar es Salaam	CHF 20,000	Operational since 2022. Revenue targets not yet met
Mkombozi Sisters	Poultry meat and eggs for local markets in Mtwara	CHF 14,000	Operational since 2021. Revenue targets not yet met
Ushirika Wa Neema	Avocado production integrated with livestock farming for export	CHF 200,000	Implementation since 2022. Expected to generate returns in 1–2 years
Mahenge Sisters	Cocoa for export	CHF 430,500	Implementation since 2023. Expected to generate returns in 2–3 years
Huruma Sisters	Sunflower and legume cultivation and processing for national markets	CHF 240,000	In implementation since 2023
St. Gemma	Wine production	CHF 255,000	Approved in November 2024
St. Vincent	Integration of livestock and crop farming	CHF 114,750	Approved in November 2024
Usambara Sisters*	To be defined	approx. CHF 200,000	In preparation for 2025
Don Bosco	To be defined	approx. CHF 200,000	In preparation for 2026
Maua Sisters	To be defined	approx. CHF 200,000	In preparation for 2025

*In 2022, a business plan for the cultivation and processing of maize and cassava was approved. In 2024, the Usambara Sisters decided not to proceed with this plan, as they deemed it too risky. A new business plan is expected to be submitted in 2025.

The Foundation finances the acquisition of innovative machines whose effectiveness is not yet fully known. Examples include equipment for minimal soil tillage, small machines for mechanical weeding, or compost preparation. Machines whose use, effectiveness, and cost structure are already well established are to be financed through equity or loans. Alternative propulsion methods, such as animal traction or small to medium-sized tractors, will also be tested.

These innovative tools and methods aim to improve efficiency while minimising ecological impact and improving the socio-economic conditions of workers. The objective is to move away from purely conventional equipment and instead find solutions tailored to the specific needs of medium and large farms in Tanzania.

Business Plans and Investment Logic

Economic sustainability is a key concern of the Arthur Waser Foundation. The support it provides is based on an investment logic aimed at economic self-sufficiency. The business plans developed by the congregations are based on the idea that structural costs can be covered in the medium term. This requires not only profitable business models but also an entrepreneurial mindset – something many partners still need to develop. The Foundation supports this process through targeted investments in agroecological yet profitable business lines. To enable long-term access to finance, a trust under Tanzanian law is to be established. Repayments of loans granted by the Arthur Waser Foundation to partner organisations will flow into this trust. The trust will act as a revolving fund and reallocate available financial resources to the beneficiary organisations for further investments.

This approach is designed to create functioning value chains: from agroecological cultivation to processing and marketing. Access to capital, combined with knowledge of financing tools and marketing strategies, opens new degrees of freedom for the participating organisations. The central question is: How free are the congregations to take responsibility for their own future? And how can capital help them to achieve this freedom?

Responsibility and Community of Practice

Another key to the programme's long-term impact lies in establishing a Community of Practice. This network enables participating farms to exchange regularly, visit each other, and learn together. Rather than simply transmitting knowledge, the focus is on building competence: the ability to tackle challenges independently and in a context-sensitive manner.

In Tanzania, knowledge of agroecological management of large farms is still limited. The Community of Practice helps develop solutions suited to local climatic conditions and social structures. In the long term, these skills should have an impact beyond the religious congregations and be integrated into the agricultural education landscape. Many farms in the agriculture programme are run by religious members or lay staff without formal agricultural training. To build essential agricultural skills, the Arthur Waser Foundation supports participation in agricultural schools or training courses for both management and workers.

Conclusion

The Arthur Waser Foundation's agriculture programme sees itself as a comprehensive transformation process for all stakeholders and deliberately rejects a short-term project logic in which relationships with partner organisations are limited to just a few years. As a partner foundation, AWF develops reliable, long-term partnerships and supports congregations in building a sustainable economic base.

The programme's systemic objective is to foster entrepreneurial thinking and management within the congregations. Loan repayment is an important indicator of success – but not the goal in itself. By combining ecological responsibility, economic success, and social engagement, the farms are to become key economic pillars for the congregations. They are expected to prove that sustainable agriculture can be profitable on medium and large-scale farms in Tanzania.

The projects of the Huruma Sisters and the mechanisation initiative are emblematic of a development based on participation, learning, and entrepreneurial responsibility. The Foundation supports this transformation not only financially but also structurally – through networks, knowledge transfer, and the promotion of long-term ownership. In doing so, it contributes to sustainable development, opens new perspectives for agriculture in Tanzania, and supports congregations in building long-term economic stability.

Endnotes and references

1 Powell, Colin, with Persico, Joseph. (1996). *My American Journey*. New York: Ballantine Books, 103: "While I was in the Be Luong base camp [Defense] Secretary McNamara had made a visit to South Vietnam. —...every quantitative measurement, he concluded after forty-eight hours there, —shows that we are winning the war. Measure it and it has meaning. Measure it and it is real. Yet, nothing I had witnessed in the A Shau Valley indicated we were beating the Viet Cong. Beating them? Most of the time we could not even find them. McNamara's slide-rule commandos had devised precise indices to measure the immeasurable...This conspiracy of illusion would reach full flower in the years ahead, as we added to the secure-hamlet nonsense, the search-and-sweep nonsense, the body-count nonsense, all of which we knew was nonsense, even as we did it."

2 Regarding the criticism of the prevailing causal measurement logic, see AWF 2023 Annual Report, page 3 ff.

3 Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University Libraries. (June 1, 2025). African photographs, Zanzibar, 1906. Retrieved from <https://dc.library.northwestern.edu/items/b25b6d08-f752-448f-82da-d48bf7107756>

4 Africa Population - Worldometer: <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/africa-population/>

5 The concept of a "hologram-like" or fractal village structure refers to ethnographic and architectural theory studies on traditional African settlement forms. See, for example,

Eglash, Ron: *African Fractals: Modern Computing and Indigenous Design*, Rutgers University Press, 1999. Siehe auch Bourdier, Jean-Paul; T. Minh-ha, Trinh: *Drawn from African Dwellings*, Indiana University Press, 1996

6 Epistemic asymmetry refers to the structural imbalance that arises when knowledge, problem analyses, and solution approaches are defined unilaterally from an external, usually Western-dominated perspective – without the equal inclusion of local knowledge and cultural experience.

7 Tanzania- Population Growth (annual %) - Trading Economics: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.GROW?locations=TZ>

8 Architects Association of Tanzania: <https://aat.archi/>

9 The Swiss Society of Engineers and Architects: <https://www.sia.ch/en/cms/organisation/about>

Laudato si' is the second encyclical by Pope Francis (published in 2015). The text, entitled "On Care for Our Common Home," addresses the societal challenges arising from environmental and climate protection, social injustice, and the depletion of natural resources. In 2022, the East African Bishops' Conference issued a call to church actors to develop examples of sustainable lifestyles.

Central Switzerland

Support in the Social Sector

The social sector covers a broad thematic range: from children and youth to the elderly, from prevention to intervention, people on the margins of society, people with disabilities, and the social aspects of illness. Choosing the "right" and "important" applications from this large and diverse pool in order to use the available resources effectively is a major challenge.

The Arthur Waser Foundation's (AWF) social funding strategy is a key tool for maintaining and refining focus within this thematic breadth and adjusting it where necessary. The central aim is to support and relieve hardship for severely disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals of all ages – particularly children and youth – as well as to promote projects that contribute to the common good and social cohesion.

In line with this strategy, the AWF supports social projects that are not financed by the public sector. Budget cuts at federal, cantonal and municipal levels often lead to co-financing requests directed at foundations like the AWF. Social developments also result in certain topics becoming more urgent. The AWF can therefore provide support for projects in their initial stages, which may later receive public funding through service agreements.

In 2024, a total of 66 applications were processed in the social sector. Of these, 46 were approved, receiving a total of CHF 560,930 in support. About half of these were multi-year commitments, as many organisations depend on ongoing support from foundations. A long-standing partnership worth highlighting is with the association kirchliche Gassenarbeit, supporting services for children and youth from families affected by addiction in Paradiesgässli.

The foundation does not provide individual case assistance, as this would exceed its administrative capacity. For this reason, it participated again in 2024 in the Weihnachtsaktion of the Luzerner Zeitung, which is specialised in individual case support. Another special case is the AWF's funding of the *Stiftung Breitensport* which promotes grassroots sports.

Social Projects 2024

People with disabilities	
Beratung Schwerhörige und Gehörlose BFSUG	Skulptur Blühende Hände
Casa Farfalla KG, Luzern	Betreute Kurzzeitaufenthalte
Genossenschaft im Chrüz	Bistro und Laden, Hohenrain
Netzwerk Neubad	Vereinbar-Kulturhaus für alle
PRO FILIA	SOS BahnhofHilfe Luzern 2024
Pro Infirmis LU/OW/NW	Entlastungsdienst
Pro Infirmis UR/SZ/ZG	Entlastungsdienst
Rollstuhltaxi-Genossenschaft	Lutixi
Schweizer Paraplegiker-Stiftung (SPZ)	ParaWork und ParaSchool
Stiftung Kinderhilfe Sternschnuppe	Freizeitsterne
Tagesstätte Pilatusblick-Leben mit Demenz	Musik und Bewegung nach Jaques-Dalcroze
Theatergruppe amabilis	Tickt sie richtig?
Verein Aktion Demenz	Krankenkassenkonforme Abrechnungs-Software
Verein aphasie suisse	Aphasie Jodelchor
Verein FahrFlex	Beitrag an Betriebskosten
Verein Wärbrogg	Anschaffungen und Weiterentwicklungen
Child and youth work, parental protection	
Gefangene helfen Jugendlichen	Auf Augenhöhe
Islamische Gemeinde Luzern	Islamischer Religionsunterricht Luzern
Jubla / Lieder- und Kulturfest 2024	Kulti24
Schweizerischer Katholischer Frauenbund SKF	Solidaritätsfonds für Mutter und Kind
Verein Elternnotruf	Rund um die Uhr Notfallberatung
Verein kirchliche Gassenarbeit Luzern	Paradiesgässli LISTO/LISTINO
Verein Seevogtey	Beitrag an Betriebskosten
Verein Sentitreff	Kindernachmittage
Health	
Gleich und Anders Schweiz	Genesungsbegleitung
Krebsliga Zentralschweiz	Unterstützungsfonds für Einzelfallhilfe
Ronald McDonald Haus Luzern	Ein Zuhause auf Zeit
Schweiz. Rotes Kreuz, Schwyz	Selbstbestimmung im Alter
Schweiz. Rotes Kreuz, Unterwalden	Kinderbetreuung zu Hause
Education, community building, public interest	
RADIX Schweiz. Gesundheitsstiftung	Purzelbaum Workshop
Verein Hotel Dieu	Treffpunkt Stutzegg
Unemployment	
SAH Zentralschweiz	Arbeitsintegration Garten & Landwirtschaft
Stiftung Dreipunkt	Nachbegleitung von pMK in die Lehre
Addiction	
Lungenliga Zentralschweiz	Kinder und Jugendliche ohne Nikotin
Other and transdisciplinary topics	
Caritas Luzern	KulturLegi
Fachstelle für Schuldenfragen	Neuanstellung
Stiftung Breitensport	Breitensport Zentralschweiz
Stiftung LZ Weihnachtsaktion	LZ Weihnachtsaktion
Trägerverein LUEG JETZT	Beratung für Menschen in Not
Verein LISA	Bessere Bedingungen für Sexarbeitende
Verein Tischlein deck dich	Beitrag an Betriebskosten

Support in the Arts & Culture Sector

A strategy process launched in 2024 addressed the question of whether the AWF should move beyond a reactive funding logic based on artistic disciplines (i.e. traditional categories like music, theatre, visual arts, literature) and instead define specific goals. The question of "why" to support art and culture often remains unanswered, as it is seen as self-evident. Yet it is essential to consciously consider these goals – especially in times when cultural institutions are under financial pressure and grassroots culture is threatened by a lack of volunteer engagement in associations.

A crisis of volunteerism could, firstly, also be a crisis of direct democracy. Secondly, the weakening of major cultural institutions (such as Lucerne Festival, the Lucerne Symphony Orchestra, Lucerne Theatre, the Art Museum, and the Festival Strings) would mean a weakening of the region as a whole. Thirdly, the AWF sees talent development and cultural/arts education as especially central – in both the professional and amateur spheres.

In 2024, funding in the arts & culture sector rose to just under CHF 1.05 million. Of this, around CHF 450,000 went to so-called small grant applications.

The AWF processed a total of 212 applications. Of these, 30 were excluded during the initial review. The remaining 182 were assessed by the foundation board or executive committee (for grants under CHF 10,000). 23 applications (13%) were declined and 159 (87%) approved. Among the approved small grants, approximately 50% went to music, 21% to performing arts, 10% to visual arts, and 11% were arts education projects. The rest related to literature and inter- or transdisciplinary arts.

Arts & Culture Projects 2024

Partnerships	
Lucerne Festival	Lucerne Festival Sommer 2024: Music for Future
Luzerner Sinfonieorchester LSO	Erweiterung Orchester, 1 Stelle
Luzerner Sinfonieorchester LSO	Entwicklungspartnerschaft
Luzerner Sinfonieorchester LSO	Le Piano Symphonique und Lunchkonzerte
Luzerner Theater	Junges Luzerner Theater
Music applications	
AmadeusChor Küssnacht a.Rigi	Dvořák and more
Ars Excelsis Ensemble	Winds
Bach Ensemble Luzern	Bach h-Moll Messe und parodierte Kantaten
B-Sides	B-Sides Festival 2024
Cantando Gersau, Chor Schwarzenberg	Tanzen möchte ich, jauchzen möchte ich
Chor der Nationen Luzern	Jahreskonzert 2024
Chor inkognito	AyeAye-inkognito auf hoher See
Chor Klangwerk Luzern	Dreamweaver
ChorTon Vokalensemble	The Sprig of Thyme
Collegium Vocale zu Franziskanern Luzern	Solange die Erde steht
Colores Trio / Luca Staffellbach	Releasekonzerte "En Couleur"
DER CHOR LUZERN	DER CHOR tanzt mit dem Tod
Dissolution Ensemble	Lucid Flow
Dormant Noten	235. Todesjahr L. Meyer von Schauensee
Duo Baratta Jetzer	Créations
Duo Müller-Mazzoletti	Voyage à Paris
ensemble idéo	diven.dramen.dispute
Festival Strings Lucerne	Talentwoche 2024
Fokus Gitarre	Lucerne Guitar Festival 2024
Four Forest Strings	My dearest. My fairest
Four Forest Strings	BACH und Mehr!
Funkyou Bigband	Funkyou Bigband & Andreas Tschopp
Gesellschaft für Kammermusik Marianischer Saal	Kammermusik Saison 2024
Gospel Singers Stans	Hauptkonzert What a feeling
Händel-Chor Luzern	Irish Soul
Helvetiarockt	Helvetiarockt Music Lab 2024
Hochschule Luzern Musik	Dieter Ammann und seine Musik.
Intercity Jazz Orchestra	Intercity Jazz Nights 2024/2025
Internationale Gesellschaft für Neue Musik	IGNM Zentralschweiz 2024
Jugendblasorchester Unterwalden	Programm 2024/2025
Jugendstreichorchester Luzern Landschaft	JSOLL Osterlager 2024
Kammermusikfestival Zwischentöne	Zwischentöne Engelberg 2024
Klangweltfinder – L'arte del suono	Argentina meets NW
Klassik & Kultur für lebendigen Alltag	Abendbier zum Klavier, Musik & Geist
KleinstadtBrise	Neujahrgala, Festival, Weltreise
Kultur im Zehntenhof	Kultur im Zehntenhof. Saison 2024
Kulturella	Damenwahl
Kultursalon Felsenegg	Felsenegg- Konzertreihe 2024
Landäbärg Unplugged Festival	Landäbärg Unplugged 2024
Lucerne Blues Festival	Lucerne Blues Festival 2024
Luzerner Chor	Konzert Harmonie ohne Grenzen
Luzerner Jugend Brass Band LJBB	Lager 2024 der LJBB
Luzerner Kantorei	Konzertprojekte 2024
MaiHof Kultur	Bilder (k)einer Ausstellung
MehrKlang Seetal	Konzertreihe Mehrklang Seetal
molto cantabile	unverblümt
Musik & Kultur Franziskanerkirche	Abendmusik
Musik- und Theatargesellschaft Sursee	Chor+
Musique Simili	Konzert 2024

Orchester Emmen	Programm 2024/2025
Orchester Sursee-Sempach	Lichterklang und Volksweisen
Projektensemble Vergnügte Ruh	Vergnügte Ruh
ProMusicaViva VokalEnsemble	Frühling- STILL, Herbst- VISIONES
Rondo Vocale Malters	Rondo al fuego latino
Schweiz. Jugend-Sinfonie-Orchester SJSO	Orchesterwoche Herbst 2024
Schweizer Vokalconsort	Konzertsaison 2024
Schwyzer Kantonales Jugendblasorchester	Orchesterlager
Singkreis Brunnen, Urschweizer Kammerens.	Mozart-Requiem-Projekt 2024
Singkreis Sursee	La voz latina
Stadtorchester Luzern	Frühlingskonzert
Stiftung Geistl. Musik Jesuitenkirche LU	Geistliche Musik Jesuitenkirche LU
Stiftung Schweiz. Jugendmusikwettbewerb	49. SJMW
Swiss Brass Consort	Neujahrs Konzert 2024
Trägerverein klang	klang-Festtagskonzerte 2024
Trio Sorriso	Schwizer Schümli Konzerttorunee 2024
Veranstaltungskollektiv Antonmusik	Abschlussfestival Industrie
Verein "Musigfäscht Soorsi 2025"	Musigfäscht Soorsi 2025
Verein "pro musica regia"	Wauwiler Bachkonzerte
Verein 31/07 Bundesfeier	Bundesfeier 2024
Verein Andermatt Folk	Klassik meets Volksmusik
Verein Castle Classics	Castle Classics 2024
Verein Drehmoment	3FACH durchgedreht 2024
Verein Echolot	Echolot Festival 2024
Verein Ensemble Metafora	'Alles Tanz!'
Verein Ghörgang	Startschwierigkeiten
Verein ICE2024	Innerschweizer Chorevent 2024
Verein kunst.kultur	Keramikkonzerte 2024
Verein Lumberjack	There Are Worse Bands Festival 2024
Verein Musik am Hof	Eröffnungskonzert Intl. Orgelfestival Luzern
Verein Othmar Schoeck Festival	Othmar Schoeck Festival 2024
Verein Pro Tramhüsli	Kultur im Tramhüsli
Verein Sprungfederation	Bandcontest Sprungfeder 2024
Verein Stall & Lauch	Sommerfest Kultur auf dem Lande
Verein Stanser Musiktage	Stanser Musiktage 2024
Verein Stimmen Festival Ettiswil	20 J. Stimmen Festival Ettiswil 2024
Verein Volkskulturfest OBWALD	Volkskulturfest OBWALD 2024
Verein Voxpop	Vocal Festival Luzern 2024
Verein Werft	Konzertprogramm 24/25
Vidas-Chor	Rythm of Life
visch&fogel. theater unterwegs	Ja Ja Jandl
Vokalensemble i-Cantanti	Musikalische Vespere 1. Sem. 2024
Vokalensemble Luzern	Programm 2024
Vokalensemble Sursee	Doppeljubiläum Vokalens. Sursee+Chor Voix-là
Vokalensemble tempo d'affetto	in retro
wilderbluescht	zart & zääch-Konzerte

Performing arts applications

A.D.F. /Fetter Vetter & Oma Homage	My Heart Is Ready For A Revolution
akku Kunstplattform	Neue Schweizer Aussichten
Bureau Substrat	Woyzeck redux
Das Theaterkolleg	Grounding
ecco RONDO junges Theater Luzern	Im Gaggo usse
FLUX crew	Unapologetic
IG Tanz Zentralschweiz	Profitraining & Workshops 2024
Jugendtheater Theatergesellschaft Willisau	Scho immer jung
KUKA Kinder- und Kulturatelier	KUKA 24/25

Kulturmühle Horw	«Wundertüte» Saison 2024-2025
Luzerner Spielleute	Produktionen 2024
Momänt & Co.	Der letzte Zuschauer
RV Zentralschweizer Volkstheater (RZV)	Jutz
Schule Greppen	Zirkuswoche Greppen
Sheila Runa	Open Circles
Spektakulum Dunjascha	Das Tagebuch der Anne Frank
Tankstelle Bühne	Förderplattform Tankstelle Bühne 2024
Theater Aeternam / Das Theaterkolleg	Was bin ich Wert?
Theatergesellschaft Sarnen	Lysistrate 2024
Theatergesellschaft Stans	200 Jahre Theatergesellschaft Stans
Theaterverein Grenzgänger	Kassandra und keine mehr
TheaterWärch Stans	Wolke 97
Triplette	Ei Ei Ei
Verein Freilichtspiele Luzern	Shakespeare-Trilogie
Verein Tanzlager Luzern	Tanzlager Luzern 2024
VorAlpentheater / Narwal	Dinge, die ich sicher weiss

Visual and media arts applications

Filmcamp Luzern	Filmcamp Luzern 2024
Forum Neue Musik Luzern	SoundArt Festival 2024
Kunstmuseum Luzern	The Lucerne Exhibition. 1935
Laura Spichtig	Lichtton
Museum Bruder Klaus	Kunstvolle Begegnung
Verein Weltformat	Graphic Design Festival 2024

Literature applications

Carl Spitteler-Stiftung	Das Tagebuch der Margret 'Gritli' Sachs
Förderverein Märchen Schweiz	Märchen auf dem Vierwaldstättersee
LiteraturGesellschaft Luzern LGL	Jahresprogramm Lettera 2024
Schweiz. Institute für Kinder- & Jugendmedien SIKJM	Schweizer Erzählnacht 2024
Verein Die Predigt	Die Predigt. Die vierte Staffel
Verein Die Predigt	Die Predigt. Die fünfte Staffel
Verein Literaturfest Luzern	Lettera Literaturfest Luzern 2024
Verein Sofalesungen	Sofalesungen 2024

Cultural/Arts education

BildWerk Luzern	Pilotphase Bildschule Region Luzern
Die Zauberlaterne Luzern	Zauberlaterne 2024/2025
IG Kultur Luzern	Kulturdrehscheibe
Katharina Werk	Sounds of Palestine
Kleintheater Luzern	Vermittlung Kleintheater Luzern
Stiftung World Band Festival Luzern	Andrew Bonds Jahreszeiten- Familienkonzert
Supervistas Luzern	Supervistas Luzern 24/25
Verein BaBeL Strings	BaBeL Strings 2024
Zirkusschule Tortellini	Zukunftsprojekt Zirkusschule Tortellini

Other and transdisciplinary topics

Butterplace Productions	Die Grosse Menschenschau
equipe wiss	Geschwister am Limit
Figurentheater Petruschka Luzern	De Flug zum Planet Sossindra
Kloster Baldegg	Buch- Klosterleben im Bau von Marcel Breuer
kultur . morschach	food&culture . morschach
Pro Juventute. Regionalstelle Zentralschweiz	Kultissimo Kinder- & Kulturfestival
Verein Kulturbildung für Kinder Luzern	KulKids
Verein Leporello Luzern	Kindersenf- Kulturkritik von Kindern für Kinder
Verein Schmelzpunkt	Winterreise 2024

