



Enablers of change, Individuals,  
Family Trusts, Foundations, NGO's  
and Public Institutions

Wolwedans, NamibRand Nature Reserve, 2021

Re: ***The AridEden Project – Wolwedans Vision 2030***  
**Be part of the solution for more resilient tourism/ conservation economies**

Dear friends and colleagues,

After what has been a challenging and uncertain year for everyone with very limited certainty as to when it will be behind us, I wanted to share with you some inspiring news about Wolwedans' vision for the future. It is a vision that I believe you share – one that sees the possibility of being and doing better for our planet, future generations, and each other.

July 2020 marked our Jubilee year at Wolwedans – 25 years since we pitched our first tents atop the dunes of the Namib Desert. We were optimistic about the future and had a strategy to launch into the next 25 years, better than ever before. Then COVID struck and everything came to a grinding halt. Wolwedans was certainly not spared this unprecedented disruption; it did however provide the luxury of time to reflect, rethink, reboot and open a new chapter. As the saying goes, every crisis bears opportunity – you just need to make use of it.

What emerged more profound and pressing than ever before is that although the complexity and challenges of our times can often feel overwhelming, we, as humanity, must stop talking and start walking. Each and every one of us must step up and effect a paradigm shift – away from the depleting yet dominant economic models of the past, and towards a more positive, balanced dynamic that respects the interconnectedness between business, natural resources, and people. Wolwedans has accepted its role in this and has developed a practical framework – *The AridEden Project – Wolwedans Vision 2030* – to bring the concept of sustainability to life, showcasing that “business for good” can indeed work. It even inspired our new vision statement: “*Our purpose is the pursuit of Happiness and Wolwedans exists to inspire a new way.*”

To achieve this Vision, we will continue to be guided by the “Cs”: previously these were Conservation, Community, Culture, and Commerce, and we have now added “Consciousness” to ensure that we maintain a mindful awareness of balancing people, planet, and profit. For each of the 5Cs we have defined activity areas, i.e. projects and programmes, resulting in a 5 x 5 matrix or “Matrix | 25”, as we call it. Underpinning all of this is the necessary pursuit of happiness for people (including guests, team and community), the environment, and our financial bottom line. We have committed to sharing our journey, including challenges experienced along the way, lessons we learn, and successes enjoyed by our team's efforts. It is our hope that this will inspire others to act and advance our collective progress towards systems that thrive. In so doing, *The AridEden Project* could even become a blueprint and lighthouse project in Namibia and perhaps even globally!

There is, however, an obstacle in our way. After a full year of zero income from our tourism entity, which includes guest levies collected for the Foundation, and despite slashing operational costs to the bare bone (15% of normal), all financial reserves have been exhausted. As the saying goes, “cash

# Wolwedans

is the oxygen of a business” and Wolwedans is slowly running out of air. Although the ‘ship’ is safely moored in the harbour for now, kept afloat by credit lines from commercial banks and shareholder loans, it might take years to regain the level of occupancies that were necessary for our business to drive the important work being undertaken by the Wolwedans Foundation.

Although we are confident that things will eventually come right with the business (this we will take care of ourselves) our more immediate concern is that many years of “doing good” through the Wolwedans Foundation – and, now, *The AridEden Project* – might be sacrificed at the expense of people and the planet.

We simply cannot accept that this essential work of building a better future must grind to a halt. We are hence actively pursuing a number of creative solutions to seek out the “oxygen” to keep our Foundation work moving forward. The ‘recovery toolbox’ includes:

1. Leave your mark – plant a tree, pack a stone circle, or adopt a fairy circle...
2. AridEden Angels – philanthropic grants and loans (minimum of € 250,000) to drive the social and conservation agendas, with the value-add benefit of a Club Chateau membership
3. Wolwedans Friends – crowdfunding, match funding, and fundraisers for Foundation projects
4. Institutional grants or loans to finance major capital projects (e.g. Desert Academy Campus)
5. Club Chateau – pre-selling N\$ 150,000 (± € 8,500) worth of Wolwedans bed-nights to be redeemed at a discounted rate within 5 years. This is a straight-forward business transaction and will help to get the commercial arm of Wolwedans back on its feet.

As we reach out to you today, please consider whether one of these opportunities to support the Wolwedans Foundation’s work might be right for you. No matter how big or small your pledge, rest assured that every Dollar, Euro and Rand will be put to good use in building a more resilient, sustainable and inclusive tourism/conservation economy.

Wolwedans has a proven track record of delivering high impact developmental and conservation results and we are committed to offering this experience as a platform on which sustainability solutions can be tested, refined and implemented more broadly. Together we can, should, and will get the Wolwedans Foundation and all the good it represents back on track.

As humanity, we are running out of time; action is required now and Wolwedans is poised to do its part while hopefully inspiring others to do the same. The mission cannot be shouldered alone and to make it happen, we need support.

As such, we appeal to you with the words of Edward Abbey, who said, “Sentiment without action is the ruin of the soul.” What are we waiting for? We hope you feel inspired ‘to put your shoulder to the wheel’ with us, becoming a partner and enabler of change.

The time is now and it’s worth a shot.

Yours Sincerely



Stephan Brückner  
(Founder of Wolwedans)