



Alive & Kicking Factsheet

Alive & Kicking (A&K), a UK registered charity, makes leather footballs, netballs and volleyballs in sub-Saharan Africa and sells them at not-for-profit prices for donation across the continent. It aims to combat a number of interrelated problems affecting people, particularly the young, in poor communities. Our work in Africa also provides the basis for materials used in A&K's UK education programme.

Issues Alive & Kicking tackles in Africa:

- The severe lack of sporting opportunity and equipment, particularly balls, for Africa's young people.
- The lack of effective preventive health education suitable for young people.
- The failure of health services to reach poor communities in rural areas.
- Unemployment and lack of skills training in urban and rural communities.



Alive & Kicking's solutions:

1: Sporting opportunity. In sub-Saharan Africa, the balls currently on offer, are imported, synthetic, and once punctured, cannot be repaired. Good quality balls are too expensive for the majority of institutions to buy. Cheap plastic balls are totally unsuited to tough playing conditions and do not last long. If the poorest children ever have a ball, it soon punctures and they are back to kicking around stuffed plastic bags. As a result, there are few opportunities for them to play proper games. A&K makes tough leather balls which last much longer in these harsh conditions and can also be repaired. The balls are sold at not-for-profit prices so that donors will be attracted to buy large numbers to distribute to the poorest communities.

2: Health education. Sport is now recognised by development agencies around the world as an effective medium for preventive health education. Every A&K ball carries HIV/AIDS, malaria or TB messages, as appropriate to the specific needs of the area where the ball will be sent. This makes it possible for peer educators, teachers, coaches and others to use the ball as a teaching aid for health education. A&K also sponsors a hard-hitting poster series which features famous African sports stars giving powerful AIDS information and advice.

3: Health services. A&K, the World Health Organisation and Christian Aid have developed a strategy to set up stitching centres in deprived rural communities. These will act as a hub for employment and a community programme providing essential medical services and preventive health education through sport. The first rural stitching centre is currently starting in Zambia supported by Government Ministries and NGOs. The concept is easily replicable and will be increasingly attractive in the region as the 2010 World Cup in South Africa approaches.

4: Sustainable employment. A&K currently employs 130 workers in three stitching centres in sub-Saharan Africa. Our aim is to get our first rural stitching centre up and running and employing people in the most disadvantaged rural areas by the end of the year. Balls are hand-stitched at a rate of 3 per stitcher per day. After a year of production a stitching centre becomes self-financing through the sale of balls at not-for-profit prices. The market for balls in Africa is vast.



Where we are working now...

Kenya: Production in Kenya began in 2005. In 2007 67,082 balls were made in Nairobi, sold to donors and distributed to schools, clubs, orphanages, refugee camps and slum and street children projects. After inspecting our stitching centres, UNICEF made A&K their official supplier of balls in Kenya. A&K has recently completed a two-year order for 81,000 balls from UEFA, These balls are being donated to schools and clubs all over Africa.

Zambia: A&K Zambia was set up as a Zambian not-for-profit company limited by guarantee in 2007. Production started in March 2007 in a stitching centre located in the Zamleather tannery in Lusaka, in partnership with Zambeef, one of the biggest companies in the country. 2500 balls a month are already being produced by 48 stitchers. We are now training more stitchers so we can reach our target of 3500 balls a month. Employment and capacity will increase further once our first rural stitching centre opens.

South Africa: A pilot scheme took place near Durban in 2006 when 1000 balls were stitched for the Homeless World Cup hosted by Cape Town that year. The decision was then taken to set up permanently near Cape Town and a Managing Director was appointed in December 2007. The first A&K stitching centre, attached to the Mossops-Western tannery near Wellington in Western Cape, started production in March 2008, employing 30 stitchers.