## ASPIGA





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#### A note from our founder

2023 has been an incredible year for Aspiga. And, as the business has continued to grow - through product category expansion, product innovation and new retail channels - we are prouder than ever of our commitment to drive positive change for people and the planet through our sustainable objectives.

As a brand, we always aim to go one step further, striving to ensure that all areas of the business work smarter to seek ways to improve and embrace innovation in support of our founding vision.

By working in this way, we actively and collectively challenge new business decisions to ensure that, no matter how big or how small, every activity is measured against our sustainability goals.

This year we are honoured to have received the following accolades:

- Highly Commended for Womenswear Brand of the Year at the Drapers Independents Awards 2023
- Shortlisted for the Sustainability Award at the Drapers Independents Awards 2023
- Nominated for Brand of the Year at the Drapers Awards 2023
- Highly commended for Ethical Brand/Retailer at the Marie Claire Sustainable Awards 2023

Read on for our key sustainability achievements in 2023 and goals for 2024.

Lucy Macnamara Founder



#### Our story so far

Established on principles of fair trade in 2006, we are a responsible fashion brand, leading the way in sustainable and ethical design, putting people and the planet first.

We partner with suppliers and artisans to create contemporary and stylish clothing and accessory collections for women and men using natural, organic and sustainable materials.

We have won numerous awards for our work in the sustainable fashion sector, expanding into many new product categories, retail and marketing channels globally, partnering with fashion resale platform the Cirkel, launching a Repair and Rewear service through our Wilton store, and eliminating plastic from our own brand packaging. In this way, we've been able to prove that making and selling high quality products that minimise the impact on the planet can go hand in hand.

In addition to a thriving B2C online presence, Aspiga now has 12 stores around the UK and 1 in Barbados.

We are proud to have been awarded B Corporation status in 2022, committing to people, planet and profit in equal measure.

"We believe business can and must be a force for good." Lucy Macnamara, Founder



#### **OUR KEY MILESTONES**



#### Our mission

Our mission is to create beautiful products that improve lives, enrich communities and minimise the impact on the natural environment, putting people and planet first. We only partner with ethical suppliers, use the best sustainable materials and design products that are timeless and intended to last.

We give back through charitable community initiatives that help fight social and environmental injustice today for a fairer tomorrow. In short, everything we do comes down to three things: doing right by people, the planet, and positive change.







DOING RIGHT BY THE PLANET



SUPPORTING POSITIVE CHANGE

#### **OUR SUSTAINABILITY PILLARS**



SUPPLY CHAIN TRANSPARENCY



GIVING BACK



SOCIAL ADVOCACY ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT



DYES AND PRINTING



ZERO PLASTIC
PACKAGING & LABELS



SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS



**UPCYCLING INITIATIVES** 



**USING OUR VOICE** 



**FOOTPRINT** 

#### **OUR STANDARDS**

We continue to measure performance across our three commitments: doing right by people, doing right by the planet and supporting positive change. We then review them against our sustainability pillars.

In 2021, we adopted the universal framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a way of matching our efforts with the rest of the industry and to make sure we're tackling the most important issues.



#### Proudly B Corp

We are proud to have achieved B Corporation status in 2022.

Certified B Corps are companies verified by B Lab to meet the highest standards of social and environmental performance, transparency and accountability.

By becoming B Corp certified, we have written environmental and social advocacy into our legal business structure, ensuring we consider people and the planet as important as making profit.

Many companies apply to become B Corp but only a few make the cut. We are thrilled to be one of only a handful of fashion brands to have been awarded this status with a score of 98.9.

#### **OVERALL B IMPACT SCORE**

Based on the B Impact assessment, Aspiga earned an overall score of 98.9. The median score for ordinary businesses who complete the assessment is currently 50.9.



This is just the beginning for us. We recognise that we have a long way to go on our sustainability journey, and receiving such acknowledgement at this stage only inspires us to accomplish more.

In 2025 we will undergo re-certification to retain our B Corp status. Our aim is to increase our overall score and have been working to improve across all areas.









During 2023, Aspiga's teams have taken part in B Corp events.



Featured on Coutts window display showcasing B Corp month x IWD campaign.



Drove traffic to other B Corp brands that we retail, including Soko clothing, Pala sunglasses, Thought socks, Swell waterbottles, Stripe & Stare, Ecoffee cup.



Championed B Corp brands for our press day goodie bags!

# Doing Right By People

"We are proud to still be working with the original Kenyan and Indian suppliers we partnered with at the beginning."

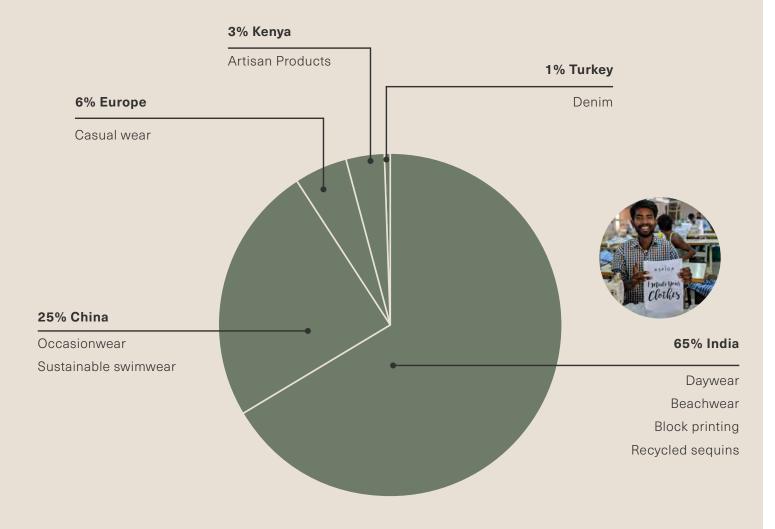
Lucy Macnamara, Founder

Since we began, our suppliers have been central to everything we do. We create long-term relationships with partners who share our values, working side-by-side to ensure social and environmental best practice and long term impact.

From providing interest free loans to our Kenyan teams to help them scale, to working with charity partners to create impact where it is needed most, we aim to give back and help our communities grow as we grow, understanding and believing that their success is our success.



We only work with suppliers who have strong, internationally audited, social and ethical standards and are located far from regions of conflict and human rights abuse. We aim to visit most of our suppliers once a year.



## Our supplier partners

An estimated 2.21%\* of fashion production facilities are manufacturing sustainably. This can include using certified ecologically sound practices, meeting key labour or fair trade standards, or addressing social needs.

Aspiga only sources from trusted partners around the world. We are committed to working with suppliers who adhere to our Code of Conduct which is based on International Labour Organisation (ILO) standards. We require our partners to provide fair wages, safe working conditions and use sustainable materials. We aim to visit our suppliers once a year.

We select our partners in China based on their expertise in sustainable fabric development and innovation, their supply chain transparency and their high quality finish.

82.35% of our mills, dyers and printers are mapped for full visibility.

100%

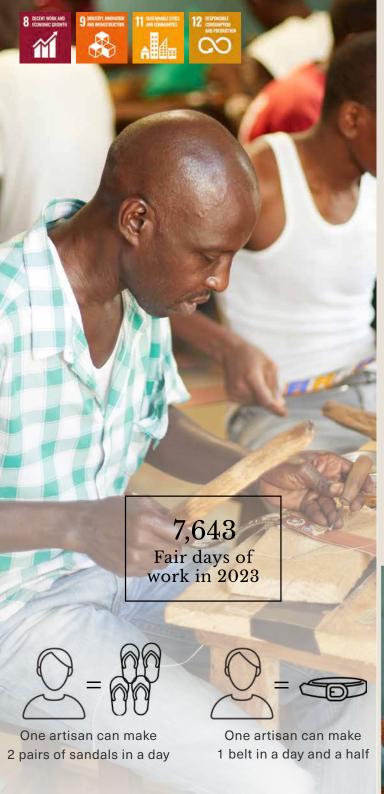
Garment manufacturers signed our code of conduct.











#### Supporting artisanal crafts

Craftsmanship, expertise and sustainability are the pillars of what we look for in a supplier. From day one, we have committed to working with partners with the same values. Many of our suppliers have been with us at every step of our journey, particularly those in Kenya and India. We wouldn't be where we are without them.

#### **OUR KENYAN FAMILY**

Our Kenyan family comprises five family run workshops that employ talented artisans to make our Kenyan sandals, beaded belts, and Kikoy towels. The income they receive from Aspiga often goes towards funding their families' education and living costs and also supports their extended families, who rely on this income.

Crafted by hand with precision and patience, each piece is beautifully unique and takes hours to make.

The craftsmanship takes precision and the process involves artisans sorting the beads and threading them into complex patterns then sewing through punched holes directly on the leather.

- · Each artisan can make two pairs of sandals in a day or one belt in one and a half days
- In 2023 we bought 3,482 pairs of hand beaded sandals, 3,682 belts and 1,527 dog collars, equating to 7643 days of fair work
- Across our four suppliers, we currently have 67 artisans making Aspiga products











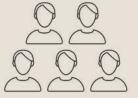
#### INDIAN BLOCK PRINT

Block printing is one of the earliest methods of textile printing, with some of the first examples dating back to 868AD.

The intricate process of block printing requires each individual block to be carved by hand by skilled craftsmen, taking up to 20 days to carve the blocks required for just one print. No two blocks are identical and each colour requires a new block to be carved (even if it uses the same design). This means the patterns on our pieces are entirely unique.

Due to the intricate nature of the process, rather than printing hundreds of metres at a time, our fabric is printed in small batches, ensuring less waste and impact on the environment.

All of the dyes are handmixed and can take up to 3 days to prepare for just one print. The colours are at their most vibrant when printed when the climate is less humid, providing a challenge during the rainy season.



5 artisans work on the fabric design which will be carved into new blocks.



3 colouring specialists work on the dyes.



The fabric washing is done by 5 artisans from 4 generations of family.

All stages from washing and preparing the raw material to the finished product is done under one family run facility. We are currently working with the 4th generation within the family.

We are proud to work with a supplier that hires vulnerable women, and people with disabilities who wouldn't have otherwise been easily employed elsewhere.

We value and champion craftsmanship and slow fashion and seek to preserve these techniques.

#### Our team

We are lucky to have a great team of talented individuals in our Aspiga family, who are all passionate about sustainability.



We encourage staff to champion new initiatives. Sustainability is now a KPI for every member of staff.



Each staff member is entitled to take a day paid by Aspiga to volunteer for an NGO of their choice.



We have switched all waste management to Curbside Waste and Recycling. They specialise in businesses with multiple sites, which means we can now unify and take better control of recycling across our HQ and all of our stores..



#### Produce an Aspiga Mental Health Policy for all staff, working closely with the Charlie Waller Trust

ACHIEVED: In 2023 an Aspiga Mental Health Policy document was published and shared with all staff. The policy was created in conjunction with the Charlie Waller Trust who worked with us to develop a mental health strategy that is practical, effective and achievable. All employees have also been enrolled in an online support platform called LifeWorks.

LifeWorks is a full-service employee assistance program (EAP) and work-life/wellbeing resource that provides confidential consultations, information and resources, connections to community agencies and supports, and referrals to counselling (by video or in-person).

#### Every member of staff to have a sustainable objective for 2023.

ACHIEVED: All staff now have a sustainable objective within their KPI's. This has been a really positive step for employees and has led to them undertaking much larger sustainable projects.

#### Rollout of staff hardship loans.

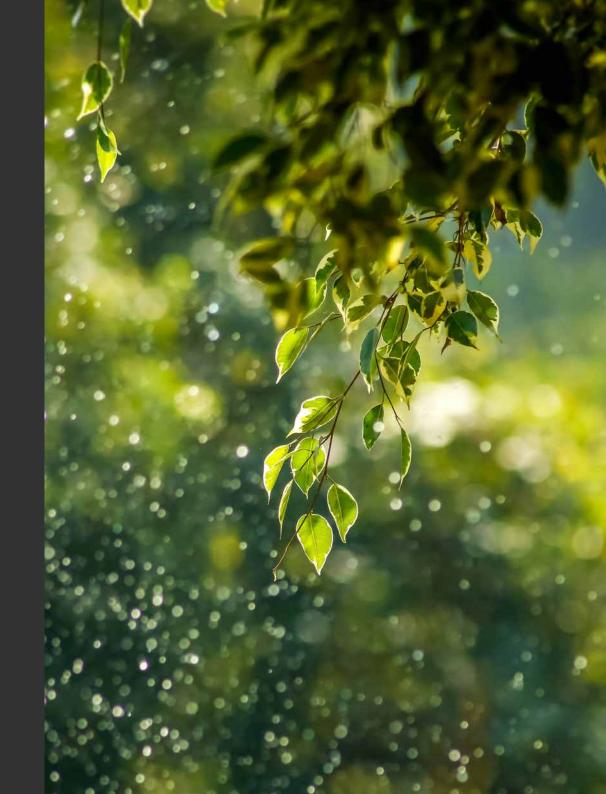
ACHIEVED: The staff hardship loan is an interest-free loan designed to support eligible staff facing short-term financial difficulties, where it has not been possible to find funding from other recognised, reputable sources such as a bank or building society. The loan helps individuals manage a short-term cash flow problem. The Employee Welfare Loan is available to employees of Aspiga on permanent contracts with continuous service of at least 12 months.

Doing right by people '23 goals and achievements



# Doing Right By The Planet

Every decision we make is geared towards minimising the impact we have on the planet - both as a business and individuals. From our production processes, to our fabrics and packaging, we continue to uphold our commitment to reducing our carbon footprint and improving our environmental practices.

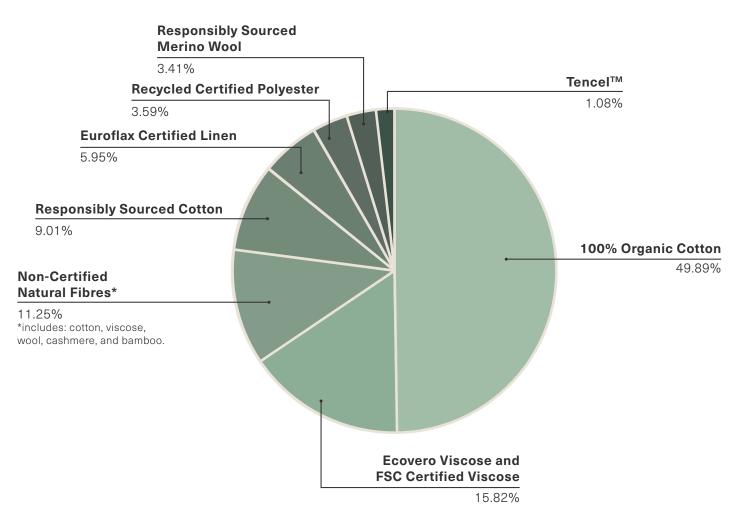




#### Choosing natural & organic

We invest in certified fabrics to ensure responsible sourcing and traceability at every step of the process, from the field to the mill.

#### ASPIGA COLLECTION FABRIC BREAKDOWN



#### Our fabric sourcing ethos

We carefully select our raw materials from natural, renewable and certified sources, wherever possible, to best suit their final purpose and to minimise the impact on the environment.

We use silky soft certified EcoVero<sup>™</sup> viscose for blouses and dresses, lightweight organic cotton for summer dresses and kaftans, along with European certified linen and Tencel<sup>™</sup>.

We source the most innovative sustainable fabrics. We have removed 100% conventional synthetic fabrics from our collection and introduced recycled polyester made from post-consumer waste, certified by the GRS (Global Recycled Standard) for new product categories such as men's and women's swimwear, eveningwear and outerwear.



Limited production runs to minimise left over stock



Follow our preferred fibres benchmark



Choose natural materials over synthetic



Prioritise certified, traceable materials



Use circular design principles



Ensure factories are using best practices



#### Our preferred fabrics



#### **ORGANIC COTTON**

is grown without harmful chemicals. By buying organic cotton, you are investing in water conservation, cleaner air, better soil and farmer livelihoods. The price for organic cotton is higher than conventional cotton, but we think it's a price worth paying.

## **EcoVero**

#### ECOVERO LENZING™ VISCOSE

is the most sustainable form of viscose, derived from wood and pulp from certified forests which do not contribute to deforestation. Processing uses 50% lower emissions and water impact than generic viscose. This type of viscose is compostable and biodegradable.



#### **FSC VISCOSE**

is a more sustainable variant of viscose. Wood from sustainably managed forests can be used without damaging the biodiversity of the forest from which it comes.



#### RESPONSIBLY SOURCED COTTON

uses water more efficiently than conventional cotton. By building partnerships within the cotton supply chain we can help to improve the social, economical and environmental outcomes for farmers and their land.



#### **EUROPEAN FLAX® LINEN**

is derived from flax plants, which grow successfully with limited use of chemicals. Our preferred linen carries The EUROPEAN FLAX® certification, which certifies traceability at every step of processing.



#### RECYCLED POLYESTER

100% recycled polyester from post consumer fibres. Using 59% less energy than virgin polyester, all of our recycled polyester is certified to ensure responsible social and environmental practices.



#### MERINO WOOL

is 100% biodegradable, naturally breathable and hypoallergenic, and is made from the finest wool yarn, using sustainable farming practices. Our 100% Merino wool is certified Pure New Wool, meaning that it has not been blended with any other fibres and meets OEKO-TEX® standards.



#### TENCE! TM

We use tencel lyocell and modal fibers which are produced in an environmentally responsible way from the sustainably sourced natural raw material, wood. Using a closed loop production process, 99% of chemicals are recycled.

## Full transparency

We are committed to traceability and supply chain transparency and continue to work towards full traceability for all our products.

### TRANSPARENCY MILESTONE: SUSTAINABLE CORDUROY

#### PRODUCT PASSPORT

We have full traceability of this product from fibre to final garment.

#### CODE OF CONDUCT

Our factory has signed our code of conduct.

#### **FACTORY**

Our factory is based in Portugal and has been socially audited by SMETA.

We can map every single component in our corduroy range. This includes fibre wholesaler, spinner, mill, dyer etc...

We are able to provide full traceability from fibre to final product on our corduroy collection AW23 made in Portugal. This is 33% of the AW23 collection and 5% of our total product range for 2023 and is a great achievement for us.











## Extending the life of each garment

#### WILTON REPAIR AND REWEAR

We encourage our customers to shop and live mindfully and to extend the life cycle of their Aspiga products wherever possible, supporting them with this vision through our in store mending services and resale partner.

We are proud of producing clothes that are sustainable, beautifully designed and made to last. However, the best loved clothes will be subject to wear and tear, which is where our Repair & Rewear service comes in. Launched in 2023, the service - available to all Aspiga customers and provided by our wonderful Wilton store team - helps reduce the impact on the planet and ensures our products last even longer.

Not only do we offer a repair & rewear service, we also repair any imperfect items that are returned to our warehouse, and sell them in our Wilton store at a reduced price. This aligns with our objective to increase circularity of clothing and ensuring we limit any waste.

"We want our products to be loved, worn, fixed and passed along." Lucy Macnamara, Founder of Aspiga

#### THE CIRKEL

2023 also saw Aspiga partner with The Cirkel, a fashion resale platform that allows customers to shop and sell pre-loved womenswear Aspiga products, increasing a product's lifespan and avoiding unwanted clothes going to landfill.

"Partnerships like this one help push resale from niche to mainstream. We make shopping second-hand feel like new, and selling your clothes completely hassle-free. Partnering with Aspiga only works to elevate the world of resale!"

Eliza Batten, Founder of The Cirkel



#### Reducing our CO2

#### Mapping, reducing and offsetting our impact on the planet.

With Future Leap, we have completed our scope 1, 2 and 3 carbon emissions and have offset our emissions for scope 1 & 2. To do this, we have chosen to work with two UN approved programmes. The first is a clean cooking program in Malawi, providing improved cooking stoves that help reduce CO2 emissions by reducing the amount of non-renewable biomass that is used in household cooking. The second is a 22.5MW wind power project in India, that uses renewable energy to generate clean electricity. Based in the Indian state of Rajasthan and promoted by Orange DND Wind Power Private Limited, this project has played an important role in reducing CO2 emissions by generating 45 GWh of clean electricity annually – the equivalent of powering 10,500 households every year.



#### 2020

Launched an online checkout offset initiative with CarbonClick, to empower consumers to purchase gold standard carbon credits at checkout to offset their purchases.

#### 2021

We partnered with World Land Trust to offset our carbon emissions from our printing.

#### 2022

We began mapping our roadmap to offset our emissions. Started working with consultancy Future Leap to measure our emissions. They helped us to calculate our footprint and advised us on how to reduce and offset it.

#### 2023

We have been able to measure our emissons for scope 1,2 and 3. In August this year we signed the UN carbon neutral pledge. Following this we selected two programs (Kenyan & Indian) to offset our scope 1 & 2 emissions.

#### 2024

We will again work with a third party to reasses our carbon emissions. Through our business wide goals for 2024 and beyond we hope to reduce our carbon emissions.

#### 2025

Become carbon



#### Zero plastic packaging

In 2023, we have partnered with Weavable, a bespoke clothing branding specialist dedicated to creating sustainable packaging and innovative design solutions.

With their help for our 2024 collection we are now using certified organic cotton woven labels, our swing tags use certified FSC paper, all our garment bags are made from biodegradable cornstarch.

All our garment care labels and kimbles are now made from recycled polyester and produced in Mumbai and Delhi, in India.

In 2023 we have also developed sustainable hygiene stickers for our 2024 swimwear range. These are made out of YUPO® paper which can be recycled, rather than using single-use plastic that ends up in landfill.

Our warehouse uses paper mailing bags and boxes and we use paper tape instead of plastic packaging tape.

#### 121,814

plastic bags saved from going to landfill by using compostable bags

#### 74,085

plastic shipping bags saved by sending our orders in paper mailing bags

Using a nominated supplier has allowed us to consolidate all our supply and minimise any additional waste.

Our suppliers' production facilities are independently audited to ensure that production meets or exceeds all local legislation and requirements. This includes social and factory audits, where quality commitment is agreed with all manufacturing facilities to ensure all product ranges adhere to the latest codes of practice.









THE FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL®

We are certified to the FSC® chain-ofcustody standard FSC-STD-40-004 V3-1 for items such as hang tags, boxes and envelopes.

## Sustainable marketing materials

All our printed marketing materials (including; brochures, inserts and booklets) use sustainable paper certified by the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC). The PEFC promotes sustainable forest management, using fibres from sustainable and controlled sources, adhering to the standards set and agreed by the non-profit, non-governmental organisation.

Furthermore, all paper used in Aspiga brochures is produced using **non-chlorinating bleaching methods** and are **fully recyclable**.

We offset all our carbon emissions from our prints, working with international conservations charity, World Land Trust

Our brochure printer has ISO 14001 Quality

Management accreditation, which includes
a documented commitment to environmental
management. The printer is always looking for further
ways to reduce their environmental output and regularly
reviews their Environmental Compliance Register.
Furthermore, the environmental aspect of the mills and
printers we work with are also managed according to the
requirements of ISO 14001.



PEFC Certified

This product is from sustainably managed forests and controlled sources

PEFC/16-33-795 www.pefc.co.uk



CBP005757



#### Ensure our Carbon footprint transparency and continue to further our Carbon emissions.

**ACHIEVED:** We have partnered with Future Leap to measure our Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions and will have implemented a carbon-free roadmap by the end of Jan 2023.

With Future Leap, we have completed our scope 1, 2 and 3 carbon emissions and have offset our emissions for scope 1 & 2. To do this, we have chosen to work with two UN approved programmes:

- 1. A clean cooking program in Malawi, providing improved cooking stoves that help reduce CO2 emissions by reducing the amount of non-renewable biomass that is used in household cooking
- 2. A 22.5MW wind power project in Rajasthan, India, that uses renewable energy to generate clean electricity. The project plays an important role in reducing CO2 emissions by generating 45 GWh of clean electricity annually the equivalent of powering 10,500 households every year.

Achieve an EPC rating by the end of Jan 2023 and aim to be carbon neutral by UNEP's "Climate Neutral Now" programme by 2025, including all business travel for stores and Head Office.

**ACHIEVED:** We comply with the current government standard, achieving an E rating.

#### Increase our sea ship freight to 80% and reduce our air freight to 20% for each collection

**ACHIEVED:** Our initial orders were 75% Sea & Road and 25% Air Freight, however our in season Trading/ Supplier pay to Air were 50/50

#### Reduce the carbon footprint of Aspiga collections through:

- Increasing manufacturing options in Europe
- Reducing manufacturing in Asia and the Far East
- Investigating UK factories for special production runs

**ACHIEVED:** For AW23 we introduced three new European factories; two in Portugal and one in Turkey. Notably, one of the Portuguese factories (Tailertex) has a specialist waste management system to limit their impact on the surrounding environment.

**IN PROGRESS:** Where we have been unable to source closer to home, production in the FE and China has focused on specific product categories, e.g. Occasionwear, Swim & Outerwear.

Continue to work with our supply base to source new and innovative fabrics with less impact on the environment.

**IN PROGRESS:** This continues to be ongoing. We have worked hard with our suppliers to push for more sustainable and traceable fabric bases, and have improved our sustainable fabric mixes from 2022 to 2023, as outlined on page 14.

'23 goals and achievements

Provide full traceability - from fibre to fabric to end product - by introducing product passports for 5 -10% of the collection. The passports also showcase the artisan processes used and the suppliers who make our collections.

**ACHIEVED:** For AW23 we have been able to trace our corduroy collection from fibre to garment. This equates to 5% of our total range. We have also worked with our Block Printing supplier to trace all garments from GOTS certified fabric to garments. This equates to 9% of our total range.

Continue our partnership with Carbonclick, empowering consumers to purchase gold standard carbon credits at checkouts to offset their purchases.

**ACHIEVED:** 1,875 customers have added carbon click to their basket in 2023.

Continue to protect endangered forests through our partnership with World Land Trust, offsetting all our carbon emissions from our printing.

**ACHIEVED:** By using Carbon Balanced Paper during 2023 Aspiga has balanced through World Land Trust the equivalent of 111,850kg of carbon dioxide. This support will enable World Land Trust to protect 21,364m2 of critically threatened tropical forest.

Improve energy efficiency in stores and HQ through energy saving and waste management initiatives.

**ACHIEVED:** We have switched all waste management to Curbside Waste and Recycling, who specialise in businesses with multiple sites. This means we can now unify and take better control of recycling across the whole business including HQ and all stores.

Move away from conventional couriers to a sustainable alternative such as E-Bikes.

**IN PROGRESS:** Unfortunately we have not been able to move over to E-Bikes, however we ensure that where possible, all packages and couriers are consolidated to minimise impact.

We will ensure all packaging for non Aspiga branded products is 100% plastic free. We have removed all plastic from Aspiga own brand packaging and all marketing materials are sustainably sourced.

**ACHIEVED:** Since 2019, we have not used plastic in our packaging. We work with our suppliers and partners to do the same to encourage them to reduce and remove plastic packaging, suggesting instead materials such as cornstarch, fabric and cassava root (all of which we use). We also use paper tape instead of plastic packaging tape.

**ACHIEVED:** All of our non Aspiga brands now use sustainable packaging. Two brands who were unable to source plastic-free packaging, are now supported by Aspiga supplying them with our branded cornstarch bags.

Doing right by planet '23 goals and achievements

## **Circularity**

### '23 goals and achievements

Continue our terminal stock strategy, increasing sample sales and selling to outlet partners. We will continue to offer in-store garment repairs and customer workshops on how to repair garments.

**ACHIEVED:** We have introduced a re-wear + repair service online and in our Wilton store. In addition, we also repair any imperfect items that are returned to our warehouse and sell them at a reduced price in our Wilton store. This aligns increases the circularity of our clothing and limits waste.

In 2023, we also donated 116 items of clothing to SmartWorks, a charity that provides clothing and guidance for women seeking employment.

Furthermore, we launched an Aspiga outlet on eBay. This encourages sales of older stock and supports our circularity mission to avoid landfill and give clothes a second chance.

Continue to work with more of our supply base to upcycle any fabric wastage.

ACHIEVED: In 2023, we upcycled 125 metres of fabric wastage, to create wash bags and scrunchies.

Work with the Cirkel, a fashion resale platform focused on sustainability - taking our samples and reselling them on their platform.

**ACHIEVED:** We have partnered with The Cirkel, a resale platform for womenswear that makes shopping and selling pre-loved easy for our customer. Customers access the initiative online or drop

off unwanted clothing (Aspiga and non-Aspiga) at any of our London stores.

Donate off cut fabric samples and other unsellable stock to local schools and charities.

**ACHIEVED:** Donated off-cut fabrics, samples, and unsellable stock to local colleges and charities including:

London based Bolingbroke Academy's textiles department, to support student coursework

Days for Girls, a charity promoting better menstrual health awareness, use our off cut fabrics to make sanitary product holders

Sew Pretty uses our scrap fabric to teach adults and children a variety of sewing skills to give them the confidence and ability to make their own garments

Project Preloved also uses our scrap fabric to upskill people with basic sewing skills, enabling them to do mending projects and making sewing rolls.

Continue our partnership with Thrift + for customers to donate second hand clothing.

**ACHIEVED:** While Thrift + no longer fits our business model, we have since partnered with The Cirkel, a resale platform that allows customers to sell their own preloved Aspiga (and non Aspiga) items. Customers can drop off their unwanted items at our Northcote Road. Windlesham and Winchester stores.

# Creating Positive Change

We choose to use our voice to help fight social and environmental injustice today for a fairer tomorrow. By giving back through our charitable community initiatives we can do right by people, do right by the planet, and support positive change.



## Community based partners

Our ethos has always been to go beyond business as usual towards empowered community, undertaking initiatives that have the power to disrupt cycles of poverty.



## **ELIMU SEWING PROJECT**& HERI MINISTRIES GIRLS

A charity that supports vulnerable young women in rural Kenya, equipping them with income generating skills and a sewing trade. Heri Ministries Sewing College is our local partner in our sewing project. To date we have sponsored almost 100 girls to become sewing artisans. In 2023 the Heri girls produced 803 sandal bags, 450 shopper bags and 1000 belt bags for Aspiga.



#### SOKO KENYA

SOKO Kenya is an ethical clothing manufacturer committed to sustainability and community empowerment. In 2023 we had 3 styles developed with Soko, using fabrics from Kenyan mill Thika, who produce responsibly sourced Kenyan grown cotton fabrics. Additionally we created our own print that took inspiration from the bold graphics of traditional Kanga fabrics and the pretty floral colours of Aspiga.



#### **SMART WORKS**

Donated 116 items of brand new clothing to Smart Works, a charity providing clothing and guidance for women seeking employment in the UK.



#### DAYS FOR GIRLS

Donated off-cut fabrics to Days for Girls to be transformed into sanitary products. Days for Girls works to eliminate the stigma and limitations associated with menstruation so that women and girls have improved health, education and livelihoods.



#### **BOLINGBROKE ACADEMY**

We have donated a large box of left over fabrics, unsellable stock and scrap trims to their textile students as additional resources. We hope to build a relationship with the textile students at Bolingbroke, giving talks about careers in the fashion industry as well as implementing work experience opportunities.

## Our charitable initiatives

It is hugely important to us to support the people who make Aspiga possible, as well as other causes close to our hearts.

Over the years, we've given much-needed loans to some of our small suppliers so they can build workshops and buy tools and machinery to grow their businesses.

Since the beginning of our journey we have chosen to use our voice to support initiatives where we can make positive change. Today we continue to take action and collaborate with a number of charities on a local, national, and international level.

#### + SCRAP DONATIONS

We donated leftover and scrap fabrics ranging in prints, colour and sizes to **Project Preloved** and **Sew Pretty**. After sorting through all our scrap fabrics and donating where possible, some pieces were just too small to be of use and we recycled these offcuts with **Love Not Landfill**, making sure that even the tiniest scraps are not going to waste.



#### **WATER HARVEST**

WaterHarvest, is a non-profit organisation that works with rural communities in India to help them build rainwater harvesting structures, so they can collect, filter and store water.

Our donations help to provide clean water and good sanitation to families and schools. To put it into perspective, 1 water tank could provide a family of 6 clean water for 25 years.



#### **LOVING HUMANITY**

Aspiga proudly donated each month to Loving Humanity; a non-profit organisation created to support refugees and the health and wellbeing of girls and women.

Every £5 donated helps to keep 10 girls in education, transforming their lives and helping them to learn, work and live with dignity.



#### **BLUEBELLS SCHOOL**

Bluebells is a rural primary school, near to our Kenyan suppliers, with 150 children. Each year we help to fund the salaries of the teachers, enabling children to get an education they otherwise wouldn't.



#### **RESTART AFRICA**

Opened in 2014, located in Gilgil, Kenya, Restart Africa provides children with an education and a safe and healthy environment to grow and flourish in. The orphanage is entirely funded by donations and is now home to over a hundred children.

We are proud to work with the Santana Women's Group, who supply some of our sandals and jewellery, and donate all profits to Restart Africa.





#### Leading by example

We believe in leading by example and inspiring others to achieve positive change. From talks with industry bodies and schools, to involvement in local sustainable events and regular communication with our customers, we actively encourage and inform our community across all touchpoints.

Through our seasonal brochures (approx 10/year), bi-monthly Aspiga Loves parcel insert magazine, our non-profit 16 page 'How to Live a More Sustainable Life' booklet, emails (over 140k base), social posts (over 75k followers on IG), social communities, paid performance advertising and even swing tags, we encourage customers to engage in a more sustainable lifestyle.

#### To date:

- 4,348 copies of "A Guide to Living a More Sustainable Life" have been requested by customers
- 500+ followers have joined our Facebook Sustainable Living Community group, dedicated to sustainability
- The first post on our 75k follower Instagram feed is pinned as B Corp status, (that is always the first post that our 75k followers see.)
- · B Corp status is highlighted in all of our social bios
- B Corp status logo is on every performance advertisement
- We have a B Corp specific highlight on Instagram with a reach of 1,813
- We were featured in the Coutts window display, showcasing B Corp month and International Women's Day 2023
- This year our B Corp certification page has been viewed 36,444 times

4,348

copies of "A Guide to Living a More Sustainable Life" requested by customers 500+

followers in our Facebook community dedicated to sustainability



#### Our retail stores

We now have 13 Aspiga stores. This year we opened five new sites and also a number of pop-ups throughout the year including Teals, St Mawes Arcade, Southwold, London - West Hampstead and King's Road

We aim wherever possible to repurpose what is already in the new sites we open and minimise the purchase of new fixtures. We are proud to report that this year we did not to send any waste from new sites to landfill.

We have implemented a new store opening sustainable checklist to align values across new sites.

We re-use fixtures and fittings where possible Implemented a store opening sustainable checklist.

#### Our awards



Rising Star: Sustainability Award from The LDC Top 50 Most Ambitious Business Leaders 2023 "I am proud to win this award. It truly is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the entire team at Aspiga"

Lucy Macnamara, Founder



Finalist for Womenswear Brand of the Year: The Drapers Awards 2023



Highly Commended for Ethical brand/retailer: Marie Claire Sustainable Awards 2023



Highly Commended for Womenswear Brand of the Year: The Drapers Independent Awards 2023

#### Our partners



B-Corp

CO



THE CIRKEL







Common Objective

World Land Trust

The Cirkel

Future Leap

Carbon Click

Water Harvest

Increase our orders with the Elimu sewing project in Malindi, Kenya, a charity that sponsors vulnerable young women, equipping them with income generating skills and a sewing trade.

**ACHIEVED:** In 2023, Elimu sewing project went back to being only a training college. As we couldn't place orders with them as a supplier we instead raised money to keep supporting them.

Continue to work with SOKO Kenya, an ethical clothing manufacturer. They source cotton from Thika Kenya to stimulate Kenya's home-grown cotton industry.

**ACHIEVED:** In 2023 we launched our second capsule collection with SOKO Kenya. The product team visited SOKO Kenya in March 2023, where they worked on final samples prior to the collection going into production.

Communicate clear messages about our B Corp status and its benefits on social media and increase B Corp awareness with customers in stores.

#### **ACHIEVED:**

- Pinned B Corp to the top of our Instagram feed.
- Ensured B Corp branding across social posts, printed brochures and bi-monthly magazine.

- Partnered with other B Corp brands for giveaways and competitions.
- Featured on Coutts window display showcasing B Corp month x IWD campaign.
- Drove traffic via emails and social posts to other B Corp brands that we also retail.

Continue our Beach Cleans across all sites in UK, Barbados and Kenya, inviting customers to take part.

**ACHIEVED:** We have continued and expanded our Beach Cleans to total 37 across Kenya, Barbados and the UK.

Expand our Sustainable Living Community on Facebook to spread Aspiga's key sustainability messages.

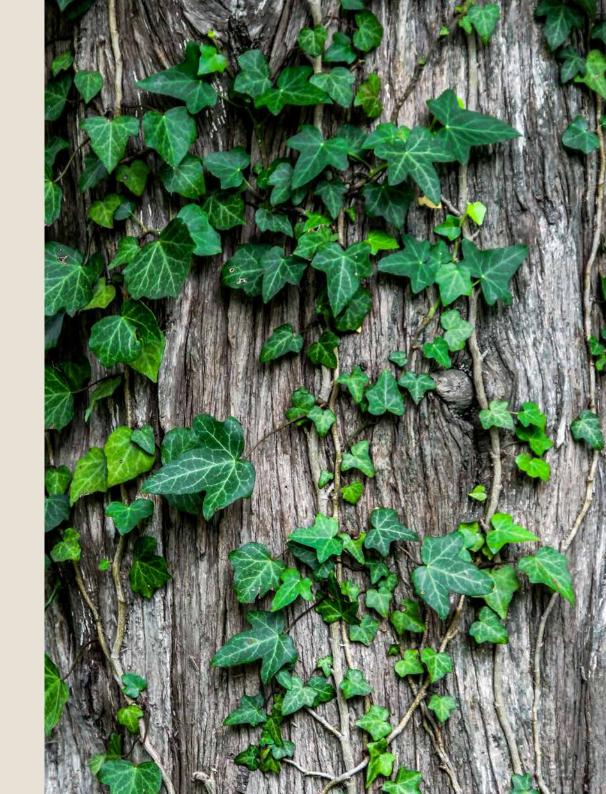
**ACHIEVED:** The Sustainable Living Community group on Facebook is promoted across selected emails, social posts, brochures and Aspiga Loves.

Continue to share our tips to help our customers to live more sustainably through our How To Live A More Sustainable Life booklet (free at checkout and shops).

ACHIEVED: 720 guides have been requested at checkout

Positive Change '23 goals and achievements

# Goals For 2024



#### **LOGISTICS**

- In 2023, we shipped 75% of our initial buys by sea and 25% by air. In 2024 we plan to increase this to 80% and 20% respectively.
- We will work with our third-party logistics provider to identify options for zero-carbon delivery and then make these available for customers to choose.
- We aim to support the Race to Zero campaign as expressed at COP 28.
   We will continue to use offsetting as part of this commitment but we will work with B-Corp to identify other ways in which we can move our business towards net zero.
- We will work with our landlords to ensure best possible EPC ratings are achieved in all of our shops and within our HQ.
- Achieve an EPC rating by the end of Jan 2024 and aim to be carbon neutral by UNEP's "Climate Neutral Now" programme by 2025, including all business travel for stores and Head Office.

#### PRODUCT AND DESIGN

- We aim to introduce QR codes for 30% of the range to promote more transparency on our products. Initially this will focus on our Indian Block Prints, Merino Wool, and Corduroy, as well as all products made in Europe.
- We will reduce the number of samples used for all new production by 50%. Our target will be a maximum of 3 samples per product. Inpursuit of this, we will adopt 3-D technology into the design process to reduce the requirement for sampling and the waste it generates.
- We will aim to launch a capsule collection of new products using mineral or natural dyes.
- We will work further with all suppliers to upcycle fabric wastage into products or ensure that uses are found for it in the supplier's local markets.
- In 2024, we will ensure that all of our 3rd party suppliers are signed up to sustainable processes.

#### MARKETING

- By the end of the year, 100% of Aspiga's brand assets and marketing materials will be printed on recycled materials and papers. Currently we are at approximately 95%.
- We will keep using our voice to promote sustainability via our Sustainable Facebook group and our free booklet "Tips for a more sustainable life".

#### **EMPLOYEE**

- We offer a bike to work scheme and try to recruit individuals who live close to our offices and encourage them to bike and walk to work for well-being and environmental benefits.
- Aspiga HQ will commit to increasing the number of beach cleans to 1 per month in work hours. In addition, we will continue to support beach cleans in Kenya financially through support for schoolchildren in Malindi.
- We believe in the value of bringing people together to work collaboratively.
   But we also recognise that occasional working from home is a good option
   for some elements of some roles and we are committed to putting in place
   a programme to support this for the right roles and seniority. We also aim to
   implement a programme whereby employees can work from home one Friday
   every two months to make weekends away easier.
- We will engage more deeply with the B-Corp community by requiring all employees to sign up to the Beehive, B-Corps community platform for B-Corp companies.
- We will use all of our channels to engage more fully with our customers and employees with tips and ideas to promote sustainability.

Positive Change '24 goals

