

2024 Annual Report

ELBA

CHARITABLE
FOUNDATION

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photo courtesy of PORaad

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A Word from Our Chair

I am pleased to present our Annual Report for the year **2024**.

This past year has shown how quickly the foundations beneath critical social efforts can change. As public funding tightens and many government-led programmes come under increasing strain, the work of our partners has become, not only more urgent, but also more dependent on the support of independent philanthropy.

As a **charitable organisation** we play a vital role in sustaining and advancing **transformative change** and we see our role as more than just supporters of impactful initiatives. We are committed and dedicated to building resilience and creating opportunities for those who need them the most.

Our three pillars of focus **education, health and poverty** have taken on renewed and heightened significance. These areas are deeply interconnected and central to nearly every major challenge we face today; **from ensuring equal opportunities for all, to strengthening the fabric of our communities**. By contributing to these pillars, we are investing in the capacity of individuals and societies to adapt, innovate, and thrive in the face of adversity.

The dedication of those the **Elba Foundation** supports is inspirational and we look forward to continuing this essential work together to drive meaningful change and to build a more **resilient future for all**.

Melanie Smith

About Our Foundation

Our Objectives

The Elba Foundation exists to open doors to opportunity by supporting access to education, strengthening healthcare systems, and addressing the root causes of poverty in vulnerable communities worldwide. Our work is shaped by the charitable principles and regulations of the Netherlands, England, and Wales. Whether through funding or other means of support, we partner with initiatives that bring tangible, lasting change. Each project we back is a step toward building more equitable world.

Our Activities

The projects supported by Elba is part of a long-term commitment to public good, rooted in charitable and nonprofit

principles. These initiatives are designed to create meaningful impact and never personal gain. When we partner with organisations, we carefully ensure their purpose and activities align with our mission and amplify our shared commitment to positive, lasting change.

Our Projects in 2024

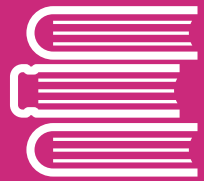
The Elba Foundation supports a broad spectrum of initiatives aimed at making a meaningful difference in communities worldwide. This report highlights our work throughout 2024, with many of the featured projects forming part of longer-term commitments. Together, they reflect the scope and impact of the Foundation's efforts.



photo courtesy of [SotckCake.com](https://www.sotckcake.com)



Our Projects



The Advancement of Education

Education Opens the Future

Education is more than the transfer of knowledge, it is the development of curiosity, judgment, and independent thought. It teaches young people to think critically, question the world around them, and make informed choices.

Access to quality education opens doors to opportunity, personal growth, and meaningful participation in society. It lays the foundation for a future shaped not only by skills, but by self-awareness, resilience, and purpose.

Through these projects, we invest in that future, because everyone deserves the chance to learn, to think, and to flourish in life.







Absolute Return for Kids



photo courtesy of Ark

Transforming lives through education lies at the heart of Ark's mission, a mission that Elba has proudly championed for many years through a range of impactful initiatives. Committed to ensuring that every child, regardless of background, has access to high-quality education and meaningful opportunities, Elba's values align perfectly with the belief that education is key to a brighter future.

In 2024, Elba continued its core support and contributed to several transformative programs. Highlights include Ark's outstanding academic achievements, comprehensive support for students' personal development, enrichment and mental health services, as well as ongoing innovation through Ark Ventures.



Absolute Return for Kids

One of these innovative ventures is EdCity, a not-for-profit development funded by Ark and the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. EdCity provides a new state-of-the-art **educational hub**, office space, community facilities and affordable homes.

Located in the heart of west London, EdCity is designed to bring mission-aligned organisations together to focus on **improving the lives of children especially through education**. It is a place to work, learn, live and play, a place that is creating real opportunities for the local community, and beyond.

Uniquely, income generated from the building will support Ark's charitable work.



photo courtesy of Schoolsweek



Is knowledge
dangerous?



As part of our ongoing commitment to educational equity, we are proud to continue our support for the University of Oxford's ambitious outreach initiative **Explore** which aim to improve access to higher education for talented young people from all backgrounds.

Oxford's **digital outreach programme** supports learners throughout their educational journey, from school through to university and into future pathways. With a particular focus on areas that have traditionally seen lower progression into higher education, the programme works to raise attainment, broaden horizons, and inspire academic confidence.

A central part of this work is the platform

the Home of the Big Questions which invites school-aged students to explore challenging ideas through digital content that sparks debate and encourages independent thinking.

Is school the
best place to learn?



photo courtesy of the University of Oxford



Building on this strong digital foundation, Oxford has extended its reach through **Explore Festivals** as well as a series of **Hackathon** events, designed to offer interactive and immersive learning experiences. These initiatives help bring university-level thinking to schools and communities where access to such opportunities has historically been limited.

These events provide meaningful opportunities for engagement, creativity, and aspiration. Participants are encouraged to explore complex ideas, develop critical thinking skills, and gain a deeper understanding of the possibilities that higher education can offer.

Our support also helps advance **Explore Teach** a professional development programme for teachers. By offering tailored resources and training, the initiative strengthens teaching practices and supports efforts to raise achievement and ambition in schools.

Together, these programmes are contributing to a more **inclusive and equitable future in education**.

We are proud to partner with the **University of Oxford** in supporting the next generation of learners and helping to ensure that potential, not background, determines opportunity.



photo courtesy of the University of Oxford





University of Oxford



photo courtesy of Imperial College

The Elba Foundation continues to support bright minds through a new endowed graduate scholarship at the University of Oxford. This scholarship, created in partnership with other funders, supports exceptional students pursuing doctoral research in **green and sustainable energy**.

Their work tackles some of the world's most urgent challenges, developing innovative solutions in clean energy and sustainable chemistry.

In 2024, the first scholar has begun their **Dphil in Chemistry** marking the beginning of a long-term investment in future leaders and changemakers.

This initiative reflects what we believe education also should be: ambitious, forward-looking, and impactful. By opening doors to **world-class research opportunities**, we are helping to shape a generation equipped to make a real difference.



The Relief of Poverty

Reducing Poverty, Growing Lives

Poverty limits more than resources, it restricts choices, erodes dignity, and narrows the future. Alleviating poverty means creating the conditions for stability, opportunity, and self-reliance.

With the right support, people can rebuild their lives, support their families, and contribute to their communities. It is about more than meeting needs, it is about unlocking potential.

Through these projects we invest in that potential, because everyone deserves the chance to live with dignity, security, and hope for what lies ahead.

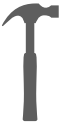




photo courtesy of Gered Gereedschap



Gered Gereedschap



Gered Gereedschap's **Equip programme** supported in recent years by the Elba Foundation, enters a new phase with the **Craftsmanship as a Basis for Self-Reliance** project. The program focuses on accessible, high-quality vocational education, helping young professionals enter the labor market and promoting entrepreneurship in the crafts sector to support sustainable livelihoods.

Building on this foundation, the program has now launched an **Entrepreneurial Workshop** in Iganga, Uganda.

Opened in 2024, the workshop provides young craftsmen with

access to tools, workspaces, and business training, empowering them to start and grow their own businesses.

The facility has quickly become a valuable **community resource**, offering tool rental, technical support, and coaching. It reduces travel for equipment access, boosts local economic activity, and includes a small loan fund and a marketing app to connect artisans with customers.

This successful model is attracting interest from other NGOs and highlights how **skills-based support** can drive sustainable development and community resilience.



photo courtesy of Gered Gereedschap



Purposeful Ventures



photo courtesy of the Baby Bank Alliance

The Elba Foundation has supported the Baby Bank Alliance (BBA) from the outset, helping to lay the groundwork for what is now a growing national network. Developed within Purposeful Ventures, BBA is working to **strengthen baby banks** across the UK by increasing access to funding, goods, and shared resources.

Over the past period, the Alliance has built new partnerships and secured meaningful donations, enabling more baby banks to support families in need. The network has continued to grow, with a focus on reaching smaller and independent baby banks, and providing practical support through training, advice, and peer connection.

BBA's **national profile** is also increasing, with several high-impact campaigns and collaborations raising awareness of the role baby banks play in tackling hardship. This visibility is helping drive both public engagement and policy conversations around support for families.

As BBA prepares to become an **independent organisation**, it continues to work closely with Purposeful Ventures while planning for long-term sustainability





The Promotion of Health and Healthcare

The Power of Health

Good physical and mental health enable people to actively participate in life. They empower individuals to work, learn, stay active, and building meaningful connections within their communities.

By investing in accessible, high-quality healthcare, promoting healthy lifestyles, and strengthening mental resilience, we help people reach their full potential. This not only enhances individual wellbeing, but also strengthens the bonds within our society.

Through these projects we invest in that strength, because everyone deserves the chance to be healthy, to feel empowered, and to thrive.



Tess Unlimited



photo courtesy of Tess Unlimited



Tess Unlimited

One of the first organisations we have supported on an ongoing basis is Tess Unlimited, and with good reason. Based in Guatemala, they provide vital care to children born with cleft lip and palate, offering not just surgery but a **full program of support** that includes nutrition, speech therapy, orthodontics, dental care and psychological guidance.

Since its inception, the charity has grown into the country's only **multidisciplinary cleft care centrum**.

From their own clinic, **Tulipanes**, and through outreach to multiple locations across Guatemala, the team

ensures children and families receive the help they need, close to home.

What stands out about Tess Unlimited is their holistic approach and tireless drive. Whether helping malnourished babies reach a healthy weight for surgery, training local professionals, or simply offering a safe space for families, they continue to grow, adapt and push forward.

In 2024, they supported more than 1,150 children, a powerful reminder of what's possible when **care goes beyond the basics**. We are proud to be part of a mission that is truly changing lives.



photo courtesy of Tess Unlimited





Courtside Hubs



photo courtesy of Courtside Hubs

Now in the second year of our long-term partnership with Courtside Hubs CIC, we continue to support **Together Active**, an initiative that reimagines public parks as **inclusive spaces**, where people of all backgrounds can come together, be active, and connect.

The first hubs are operational and already demonstrating its value, not only as places for physical activity, but also as spaces that support mental wellbeing and builds a stronger sense of community. They are each **tailored to local needs**, while guided by the

same core principles of access, inclusion, and impact.

A central aim of **Together Active** is to reduce barriers to participation, ensuring that everyone, regardless of background or ability, feels welcome and able to take part. Whether through sport, shared meals, or social connection, each hub provides meaningful opportunities for engagement and wellbeing.

We are dedicated to fostering this initiative and together with Courtside creates **resilient, connect communities** that endure.





HMS Oardacious



2024 saw HMS Oardacious make history as the **Valkyries**, the first all-female Royal Navy team, rowed across the Atlantic Ocean. Facing towering waves, seasickness, and sleep deprivation, they completed the 3,000-mile challenge in just over 46 days, showcasing incredible endurance and teamwork.

This extraordinary journey has brought global attention to **mental health and wellbeing** for its bold display of resilience, strengthened by strong partnerships with the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and the Young Women's Trust.



Beyond the ocean, HMS Oardacious drives inspiring **STEM Outreach programmes**. Working with partners like NSSL Global and Reach the World, they engage hundreds of students, highlighting the role of maritime technology and promoting women in science, technology, engineering, and maths.

Attending the 2024 HMS Oardacious Gala was a memorable experience, a celebration of community, resilience, and **charitable impact**, raising vital funds to support submariners and their families.



photo courtesy of HMSOardacious



Future Outlook



photo courtesy of [FreePik.com](https://www.freepik.com)

Looking ahead, we remain deeply committed to supporting organisations in ways that let them fully **dedicate** themselves to their mission. By nurturing **long-term partnerships**, we provide the stability and trust that empower our partners to dream bigger, act boldly, and create lasting, meaningful change. At the same time, we stay curious and open-hearted, always on the lookout for new and unique initiatives that spark **hope and growth in individuals and communities**.

We believe that balancing steady support with openness to fresh ideas helps us stand beside those who are creating a better future, both through proven paths and innovative solutions.

Our focus remains unchanged: **education**, **health**, and **poverty**. These pillars guide everything we do, inspiring us to contribute wherever we can make a **real, positive difference** in people's lives.



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