

# Document: The Open Africa Charter (48)

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Open Africa is a social enterprise under the patronage of Nelson Mandela with a vision to sustain livelihoods across rural Africa by offering authentic life enriching journeys to all involved – communities, travellers, partners and the Earth.

This charter confirms the exchange of value between Open Africa and the individual participants in its network of routes.

Everyone who is an Open Africa participant:

- Must sign this charter to qualify for a listing on the Open Africa website;
- Agrees to abide by its values and principles; and
- Receives a certificate and unique membership number for public display.

By signing this charter you become a member of the Open Africa network of routes and its value system. Being part of Open Africa means conducting business in a way that respects and benefits local people, their culture and the natural environment and has community participation as its cornerstone. The Open Africa Footprint is the icon for Open Africa routes.

Open Africa's **VALUES** are based on . . .

- Focusing on people's strengths – not their weaknesses
- The principle that 'you start with what you've got' and work from there
- Incorporating biodiversity and a sense of place into tourism

- Integrity, honesty and complete transparency in maintaining impeccable credibility.

Through subscribing to these values you contribute to Open Africa's aims of stimulating job creation, encouraging conservation of natural and cultural resources and motivating community participation in tourism. Furthermore, by becoming a route participant you are committing to working towards promoting tourism in your area in a responsible manner, for the benefit of all route participants.

### **Open Africa Commits...**

- To function at the grass-roots level, from the bottom up.
- To not decide for others what they need or want, but to listen to what they perceive their needs and wants to be.
- To believe in people, in their capacity for self-actualisation, and accordingly never to impose anything from the outside.
- To act purely as a functionary, installing a framework in which people can exercise and leverage their own talents. It makes no promises and creates no expectations beyond what individuals themselves decide is possible.
- To facilitate the development of routes, but leave the management of routes up to the participants.
- To disseminating information, promoting the cross-fertilization of success stories and ideas, making connections between parties with common interests, and serving as custodian of the openafrica.org website. The rest is up to the route participants.
- To give new entrants barrier free access and enable all products that add value to be included on the route.

### **Route Participant Obligations**

- To do everything possible in the way business is conducted to add value to the network's attractiveness to visitors, by making travel within the route a meaningful, worthwhile and a memorable experience.
- To cooperate in providing information in order to measure progress, which is essential to the success of the system.
- To conduct business in a way that aims to benefit the community as a whole by encouraging cooperation and communication between established and emerging entrepreneurs.
- To work towards protecting the natural and cultural resource base of the area.
- To cooperate with the Route Forum and ensure that all details as displayed on the website are up to date at all times.
- To display the Open Africa Footprint wherever appropriate as a symbol of participation in the network.
- Subscribing to this charter implies that failing to meet these obligations could result in removal from the network.