



Better Futures Guide

Strategic Plan 2026–2028

Stichting Better Futures Guide

KvK 99510073

February 2, 2026

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Introduction

We are Better Futures Guide, an independent non-profit organization dedicated to maximizing the impact of livelihoods-focused giving. Launched following our incubation through the Charity Entrepreneurship Incubation Program, we exist to bridge the gap between rigorous evidence and charitable donations.

1 in 10 people live on under \$3 a day. Evidence-based livelihood programs – initiatives that enable people to increase their income and consumption – can change that. Yet billions are spent every year on ineffective programs.

In other sectors, charity evaluators have helped donors direct hundreds of millions to high-impact charities. However, there's no dedicated evaluator for donors who want to give to livelihood charities. As a result, donors whose values don't fully align with existing evaluators are left to build homegrown models, adapt research from evaluators with different priorities, or simply give based on intuition.

Our mission is to synthesize research to identify the most cost-effective livelihood interventions and recommend the charities best equipped to deliver them. By helping donors turn priorities like sustainable income growth and agency into high-impact giving, we aim to shift sector norms toward effectiveness.

This strategic plan (Dutch: *beleidsplan*) outlines our strategy for 2025–2027. It serves as an internal, high-level roadmap for our management and Board, while recognizing that we will need to adjust our plans as we launch and build our young organization. The plan also serves as a public accountability document detailing how we intend to fulfill our status as a Public Benefit Organization (Algemeen Nut Beogende Instelling or ANBI).

Our Mission

Mission

Our mission is, as included in our Articles of Incorporation:

- to contribute to the reduction of global poverty and the improvement of economic wellbeing worldwide;
- to increase the impact and effectiveness of philanthropic giving to interventions in the areas of work, income, and livelihood security;
- to undertake all activities that are directly or indirectly conducive to achieving these objectives.

Problem

Globally, over \$100 billion is spent annually on livelihood-related programs. While some interventions have demonstrated large and lasting income effects, many others have limited or uncertain impact.

At present, donors who wish to support livelihoods lack a dedicated, trusted evaluator comparable to those that exist for global health, climate, or animal welfare. This results in, among others, underfunding of highly effective programs, continued funding of ineffective or poorly evidenced approaches, and missed opportunities to improve millions of lives through better allocation of resources.

Solution

Better Futures Guide was established to serve the distinct needs of impact-oriented donors who prioritize economic development and livelihoods. While the livelihood sector receives billions in annual funding, it lacks a specialized evaluator dedicated to identifying the most cost-effective interventions with the same rigor found in global health or climate philanthropy. By synthesizing existing high-quality evidence and conducting targeted evaluations, we can identify overlooked opportunities that offer exceptional returns on investment. This specialization allows us to provide trusted, actionable recommendations to donors who value sustainable income growth and agency.

To achieve this mission, we conduct the following activities, as included in our Articles of Incorporation:

- conducting, analyzing and synthesizing research to find out which livelihood programs are effective (including, but not limited to, agriculture, education, and entrepreneurship);

- evaluating and recommending charities based on evidence, transparency, and measurable results;
- sharing these findings with donors, advisors, and the public to encourage giving that has a high impact;
- partnering with other evaluators and researchers to help the sector focus more on cost-effectiveness and impact;
- potentially creating funding channels to directly support high-impact livelihood organizations.

Nonprofit Status

We operate exclusively for public benefit purposes and do not pursue profit or private gain.

To ensure our continued alignment with that principle, our Articles of Incorporation include specific safeguards mandated by both Dutch and US tax regulations. These include strict prohibitions on the distribution of profits to private individuals, limitations on board remuneration to non-excessive attendance fees (vacatiegeld), and the irrevocable dedication of our assets to charitable purposes upon dissolution.

We are committed to operating in full compliance with the requirements for Public Benefit Organizations (ANBI) under Dutch law and 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status under the United States Internal Revenue Code.

Core Activities

We carry out our mission through the following core activities.

Research and Evidence Synthesis

We systematically review and synthesize existing high-quality evidence (e.g., randomized controlled trials, meta-analyses) on livelihood interventions. Our research focuses on outcomes such as income, consumption, employment, and economic security. In principle (barring exceptions), all our research outputs are published openly and are freely accessible

Charity Evaluation and Recommendations

Based on our research, we evaluate charitable organizations that implement promising livelihood interventions. Our evaluations assess, among others:

- Evidence of impact
- Cost-effectiveness
- Transparency and governance
- Capacity to effectively use additional funding

We publicly recommend a limited number of organizations based on these criteria.

Public Communication and Education

We communicate our findings through our website, publications, and public outreach. The purpose of these activities is educational: to improve understanding of what constitutes effective livelihood philanthropy and to encourage evidence-based giving.

Ancillary Advisory Activities

Where appropriate, we may provide limited advisory support to donors or foundations, provided that:

- They remain a minor and clearly subordinate share of our total activities and expenditures.
- Such activities are directly related to our public-benefit mission.
- Any fees charged are cost-covering and not profit-making.
- The independence of our research and recommendations is preserved.

Collaborative and Additive Approach

We are collaborative by design and aim to be additive to the existing ecosystem of charity evaluators.

We coordinate with organizations such as GiveWell, Giving Green, and The Life You Can Save to ensure we fill genuine gaps rather than duplicating efforts. By focusing exclusively on livelihoods – a vast sector often outside the primary scope of health-focused evaluators – we serve a distinct group of donors whose worldviews prioritize agency and economic opportunity.

Our goal is to expand the pie of effective giving by providing high-quality guidance in an under-served cause area.

Governance and Organization

Board

The Board is our highest governing body and is responsible for supervision, strategy, and financial oversight. Our Articles of Incorporation define the following about our Board:

- The Board has between three and seven members and appoints a Chair, a Secretary and a Treasurer.
- Board members act independently and in the interest of the Foundation's public purpose.
- Board members receive no remuneration for their role. Only reasonable expense reimbursements and a limited attendance fee are permitted.

The current Board members are Céline Kamsteeg (Chair), April Lawson (Secretary) and Joost Meulendijks.

Management

Day-to-day management is delegated to one or more Executive Directors, as provided for by the Articles of Incorporation.

The Executive Director(s) is (are) responsible for:

- Executing the strategic plan
- Managing staff and operations
- Conducting and overseeing research
- Stakeholder management
- Any other activities necessary for running the organization

Plans for 2026–2028

Our roadmap for the coming three years is designed to establish Better Futures Guide as a known and trusted resource for donors prioritizing livelihoods. We will adopt a phased approach: establishing and validating our model in 2026, expanding our scope and reach in 2027, and pursuing further growth and impact in 2028.

We recognize that this three-year plan is very likely to change based on our further exploration of the space, the results of our work, and unforeseen opportunities. In such cases, what will guide us is not the specific plans we formulated here, but our ambition to maximize our impact in line with our mission described above.

2025: Work done in founding phase

In the months leading up to our formal launch in January 2026, we have focused on establishing the legal and operational infrastructure of the foundation.

- Operational & legal: We have incorporated the foundation in the Netherlands, formed our board, secured \$187,000 in seed funding, and laid the groundwork for our day-to-day operations. We are currently finalizing our application for ANBI status.
- Research and recommendations: We have made a start on a landscape analysis to identify high-potential intervention areas, reviewing existing evidence to inform our initial focus, and developed early drafts of our research and recommendation process.
- Donor outreach: We have started to map the donor and funding landscape, interviewed experts and advisors, and launched a strategy process to identify the highest-impact approaches in this area.

2026: Validation and first recommendations

Our primary objective for 2026 is to validate our research framework and publish our first set of recommendations. We will execute this through three strategic pillars: research & recommendations, donor engagement, and organizational development.

High-quality research and verified recommendations

We will move from broad sector selection to specific charity recommendations using a funnel: sector selection, intervention identification, and charity evaluation.

- Validated research framework (Q1). We will publish a transparent methods note and announce the specific livelihood sectors we will focus on for our first year.

- Intervention assessment (Q2). We will identify the most promising interventions within our chosen sectors by synthesizing existing evidence. We will produce analyses assessing, among others, cost-effectiveness and strength of evidence.
- Deep-dive charity evaluations (Q3). We will evaluate 2–4 charities using our new methodology. This involves assessing, among others, their cost-effectiveness, room for more funding, and operational competence.
- Published recommendations (Q4). We strive to publish our first set of recommended charities in time to support donors during the end-of-year giving season.

Donor engagement and counterfactual money moved

We will build a donor pipeline to ensure our research translates into funding for effective charities.

- Donor advisory infrastructure (Q1–Q2). We will establish a donor advisory panel to align our research questions with donor demand. We will implement a customer relationship management (CRM) system and establish a regular newsletter cadence.
- Strategic outreach (Q2–Q3). We will engage philanthropic advisors and donors through conversations and attendance at relevant sector events. We aim to conduct approximately 60 conversations to refine our value proposition.
- Impact tracking (Q4). We will establish a system to track "money moved" and our "giving multiplier" (money moved divided by operating costs). Crucially, we will also estimate our counterfactual impact on charity beneficiaries. This involves calculating the value of new donations generated plus shifted donations, adjusted for the effectiveness of the recommended charity versus where the funds would have otherwise gone.

Robust organizational and operational foundation

We will ensure the organization is compliant and financially stable.

- Compliance and governance (ongoing). With the approval of this strategic plan, we will execute our governance structure, ensuring compliance with ANBI requirements and internal policies.
- Financial management (ongoing). We will maintain a rigorous budget monitoring system. We will secure necessary insurance and finalize employment and payroll arrangements for the co-directors.

2027: Expansion and deepening

In our second year, we will look to broaden our research scope and reach.

- New sector exploration. We will explore expanding our research into additional high-potential livelihood sectors.
- Explore livelihoods fund. We will explore the feasibility of launching a dedicated livelihoods fund to simplify the donation process for donors.
- Broadened donor base. We will start to expand our outreach to a wider range of donors. We aim to support donors who already prioritize livelihoods to achieve greater impact by providing data on cost-effectiveness.

2028: Stable presence, systemic contribution

By year three, we aim to be a stable presence in the livelihoods sector.

- Sustainable funding flow. Our goal is to consistently direct funding to high-impact charities, helping to improve the allocation of resources in the livelihoods space.
- Sector contribution. We aim to contribute to the adoption of cost-effectiveness and evidence-based metrics within the sector.

Financial Management

Funding Sources

We are primarily funded through grants from philanthropic institutions and donations from individuals and foundations.

Ambitious Impact (AIM) has confirmed we will receive USD 187,000 in initial seed funding resulting from the co-founders' participation in its Charity Entrepreneurship Incubation Program. AIM will transfer these funds to us once we have received official ANBI charity status by the Dutch tax authorities.

We anticipate limited additional funding from the reimbursement of ancillary advisory activities, all of which will be added to our overall budget. Such activities will be clearly subordinate to our main activities and must meet the conditions described under 'Core Activities'.

We will monitor our financial runway closely. As our remaining runway approaches the six-month mark, we will activate a dedicated fundraising strategy to secure follow-on funding, ensuring operational continuity. We do not seek to accumulate capital beyond what is necessary for continuity; all funds raised are intended for direct deployment towards our mission.

Remuneration Policy

Board members are unpaid and will only receive cost reimbursement, decided on by a case-by-case basis. Though the Articles of Incorporation contain the possibility of an attendance fee, board members currently receive no such compensation.

The Co-Executive Directors will be paid employees of the Foundation. The Board will separately determine their salaries. In setting remuneration, the Board will ensure salaries are proportionate, sober, consistent with our public-benefit purpose, and not exceed comparable roles in non-profit organizations.

Financial Management, Reporting and Transparency

The Board has delegated the daily financial management to the (Co-)Executive Director(s), with the use of the "four-eyes principle" for all unbudgeted payments exceeding €500, regular budget-versus-actuals monitoring, and the use of a separate business bank account for all transactions. All unbudgeted expenses above a €5,000 threshold require prior approval by the Board.

Annual financial statements are prepared within six months of the end of each financial year.

Key documents (strategic plan, financials, remuneration policy) are published on the Foundation's website.

2026 Financial Prognosis

As a newly founded organization, this budget represents our financial projection for our first fiscal year.

Thanks to our co-founders' participation in the Charity Entrepreneurship Incubation Program, Better Futures Guide has received an incubation grant of \$187,000 (approx. €154,000). This is our primary source of income for 2026.

Our expenses are categorized by function. The majority of our budget is allocated to direct research, analysis, and fieldwork, consisting of staff time and external expert consultation. We allocate our salary costs based on time spent. The Executive Directors perform the research, analysis, outreach and stakeholder management themselves. We roughly estimate that 10% of our time is spent on general management and governance, while 90% is directly attributable to program activities. (Some totals do not exactly add up due to rounding.)

Category	Projected Amount (€)	Notes
Income	€ 156,200	
Expenses		
1. Direct mission spending	€ 114,200	
<i>Research & Analysis (Staff)</i>	€ 82,800	Staff time allocated to research & evaluation (90% of total personnel costs)
<i>Fieldwork, Advice, Events & Comms</i>	€ 21,000	External research advice, field visits, knowledge sharing events, and communications
<i>Contingency</i>	€ 10,400	10%
2. Management & Admin	€ 15,800	

<i>Management Costs (Staff)</i>	€ 9,200	Staff time allocated to governance, finance, and ops (10% of total personnel costs)
<i>General Ops & Startup Costs</i>	€ 5,200	Insurance, notary, software, and 2025 reimbursements
<i>Contingency</i>	€ 1,400	10%
Total Expenses	€ 130,000	
Net Result (Reservation)	€ 26,200	Allocated to continuity reserve for 2027 operations