



Strategy plan

2021 - 2025

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List of abbreviations

AGT	Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textile
BMO	Breed Overleg Mensenrechten – Dutch Human Rights network
CCC	Clean Clothes Campaign
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
EU	European Union
FCRA	Foreign Contribution Regulation Act
FLA	Fair Labor Association
ICN	India Committee of the Netherlands (previous name of Arisa)
IDSN	International Dalit Solidarity Network
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MSI	Multi Stakeholder Initiative
MVO-Platform	Maatschappelijk Verantwoord Ondernemen (Responsible Business Conduct) -platform
NCR	National Capital Region (around New Delhi, India)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
RBC	Responsible Business Conduct
SCL	Stop Child Labour
SKC	Schone Kleren Campagne – Clean Clothes Campaign
SOMO	Stichting Onderzoek Multinationale Ondernemingen – Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations
UNGP	United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
WNCB	Work: No Child's Business programme



1. Mission and vision

This strategy plan contains the strategic pathways of Arisa (Advocating Rights in South Asia) for the coming years: 2021 – 2025. It builds on the results of over 40 years of work. The plan will be reviewed and, if considered necessary, updated each year by the team and the board, in order to adjust and adapt it to new developments and opportunities.

Arisa, formerly known as the India Committee of the Netherlands (ICN), is an independent non-governmental organisation that has been working to defend human rights in South Asia, especially India, since 1980. We are a human rights organisation with longstanding partnerships and relations with organisations in India and other South Asian countries, based on a common vision, trust and equality. Our focus is on defending the human rights of vulnerable groups operating in international supply chains. By working closely with local partners we gain on-the-ground information that is instrumental in enabling us to advocate for responsible supply chains with companies and governments in the Netherlands and in the European Union (EU), according to international standards on business and human rights. We aim to improve the lives of the many people in South Asia working in international supply chains. We primarily focus on the garment and textile sector, the leather sector, the natural stone sector and the vegetable and cottonseed production sector. Arisa collaborates in many coalitions with organisations in the Netherlands and other European countries to achieve its objectives.

Mission

We support and reinforce the defence of human rights in South Asia together with local organisations and relevant stakeholders in the Netherlands and at the European level. Although we include all South Asian workers in international supply chains, we focus on the most vulnerable groups, such as children, female workers, migrant workers and workers who are disadvantaged based on caste and background, tribal communities and religious minorities.

Vision

Every working person in South Asia should enjoy decent labour conditions with respect for human rights and labour rights and child labour is combatted and prevented.

Core values

Accountability – Arisa is accountable to all parties it engages with, especially its local partners in respect of their endeavours to improve the human rights and daily lives of South Asian workers operating in international supply chains. Our activities are shaped around the idea of impact on the ground, meaning that labour rights are respected, and the exploitation of vulnerable groups is combatted and prevented.

Long-term commitment – Arisa intends to be a reliable partner, both for the organisations in South Asian countries as well as for stakeholders in the Netherlands and Europe. Our work is based on longstanding partnerships and relations built on trust and equality. We are open,



professional, committed and dedicated to our mission and vision. This also translates into a longstanding focus on various global supply chains.

Independence - Arisa is an independent organisation that maintains its independence in partnerships and coalitions. We will not compromise on our main values and vision in collaborations with companies and other stakeholders.

Transparency – Arisa aims to be transparent in its communication and activities. We are open about the strategic choices we make, and results we achieve, as we believe that transparency for all stakeholders involved in our work will contribute to better outcomes for workers in South Asia. In our research activities, we are transparent about the methodology used and the outcomes achieved. We are transparent vis-a-vis companies as well. Review and fact checking procedures with companies are an integral part of developing public reports.

Flexibility - Arisa takes note of new trends and developments in our area of expertise and is flexible in addressing new opportunities that help to bring about impact on the ground. We are open to create, acquire and transfer new knowledge and will adapt our organisation and activities according to these new insights.

2. Context

Arisa works within a framework of cooperation and collaboration at the international level and is therefore influenced by external developments. In this chapter we will briefly describe some developments that we think will influence our work in the coming years

COVID-19

This new strategy plan has been compiled in a year that was dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic caused a lot of serious issues, not only related to health and education, but also to the economy. This directly impacted the workers in global supply chains, especially the ones that are most vulnerable, such as migrant workers, women, and workers discriminated because of their caste. International supply chains were seriously affected by COVID-19: orders were cancelled, businesses were closed due to lockdowns and many workers were left without work and an income. In India, millions of migrant workers got stuck in their destination states, without food and money to pay the rent. Arisa's partner organisations organised relief activities for these groups, providing food and hygiene items and facilitating access to government support schemes.

Other adverse effects that have been observed are the increase in child labour and child marriages, as schools were closed for many months and families lacked sufficient income to cover their daily needs. These serious issues will take time to resolve, and the exact impact in the longer term is still unknown, yet prospects - especially for the children who have missed education for a long period - are bleak.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed systemic flaws in the international supply chains and the position of workers. The unjust global economic system has contributed to these problems. In addition, access to legal remedies in either production countries or countries where businesses are headquartered is lacking or there are too many hurdles. Corporations, especially multinational companies, have increased their power, politically, legally and economically, and continue to protect their own and shareholders' interests. Multinational companies have used their bargaining position in supply chains to overrule suppliers. The situation brought forward by the pandemic can be used to change the structures within different sectors and shape them into more responsible and sustainable industries. Although Arisa is in favour of reshaping the structures and the system, we are not equipped to take on such a challenge on our own. Through our membership of other networks such as the Clean Clothes Campaign, MVO platform and OECD Watch and in collaboration with other NGOs, Arisa will join and support efforts aimed at achieving more responsible supply chains in the coming years.

Another adverse development that evolved during the COVID-19 pandemic is the relaxation of labour laws in India. This process started already before 2020, but the COVID-19 pandemic made the situation worse. Claiming there was an economic need, several Indian states implemented serious relaxation of labour laws and this has led to a serious deterioration of the labour rights of workers.

Shrinking civic space

Worldwide civic space is shrinking. In many countries the work of NGOs and trade unions has become difficult because of increased control by their governments, difficult administrative procedures related to the receipt of foreign funding and other developments. One example is the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) in India that was established in 2010. It provides guidelines for the receipt of foreign subsidies and donations. Especially for civil society organisations it has been challenging to comply with all the requirements. In 2020 the FCRA was amended and now it includes further restrictions for NGOs and trade unions. It is now impossible for an Indian organisation to transfer money to another organisation within India, which makes it difficult to operate in an alliance or a joint programme. Furthermore, all organisations need to have a bank account with the State Bank of India in New Delhi and only 20% of all costs can be used for project management. These measures increase the administrative burden on NGOs and make it more difficult for them to operate in the country. Arisa will closely monitor the FCRA developments and will continue to address these with the Dutch government and within our networks.

Smart mix of measures on responsible business conduct

In the last years there have been a lot of developments in the field of due diligence processes for companies in the field of human rights, both in the Netherlands and at the international level. Since the United Kingdom adopted their Modern Slavery Act in 2015, several other countries have implemented mandatory human rights due diligence measures or reporting legislation and many others are in the process of elaboration. In 2019, the Dutch Senate approved the child labour due diligence law¹ that provides a legal framework for companies to address the risk of child labour in their supply chains. However, this legislation has not been implemented yet. Arisa, together with the MVO Platform, has been involved in the advocacy for mandatory human rights due diligence legislation, not only in the field of child labour but addressing all potential human rights abuses and environmental damage. A first legal proposal has been presented by several political parties in 2020 and the Dutch government will further expand on this in the coming year at the European level. Arisa will continue to play a role in the lobby for mandatory due diligence legislation in the Netherlands and in monitoring the impact and the identification of human rights abuses, together with partners in South Asia.

The new international Responsible Business Conduct (RBC) policy presented by the Dutch government in 2020 aims at combining different mandatory and voluntary measures, a so-called smart mix of instruments. Sector agreements (Covenants) remain part of this mix, and Arisa will continue to participate in two covenants: the natural stone agreement TruStone and the Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textile. The latter will end in 2021 and explorations of a second phase of this agreement have started.

As mentioned above, it is important for Arisa to analyse the impact of these due diligence processes of companies on the ground. We advocate for mandatory due diligence legislation because we are of the opinion that due diligence will contribute to improvements for workers

¹ Wet Zorgplicht Kinderarbeid: <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/stb-2019-401.html>



and communities in production countries. In five years' time, we want to be able to satisfactorily answer this question on impact: can due diligence endeavours by companies really make a difference? We want to critically observe the impact and the improvements on the ground. Although we are aware that real impact on the lives of workers will take a long time, we do not want to just focus on processes, structures and paperwork, without any measurable impact.

3. Strategic choices

3.1 Focus on South Asia

Since 2016, Arisa has broadened its focus from India to other South Asian countries. The main reason for this was the fact that the sectors we work on are not limited to only India and similar issues are at play in the region. This shift in geographical focus also led to the change of our name in 2019.

.In the coming years, Arisa will expand its activities to other South Asian countries, starting with two surveys on the garment sector in Pakistan. We aim to identify three new partners in Pakistan and commission a more in-depth research on human rights violations in the garment sector. At the same time, Arisa will expand its network of local NGOs and trade unions in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka and establish contacts with at least ten organisations. We will look at the leather sector in Pakistan and Bangladesh, as we have established initial contacts in that sector through a project on leather that Arisa has been involved in since 2020. Expansion to other South Asian countries will be carried out in a controlled way, by involving local partners, carrying out surveys and research and by developing joint projects.

3.2 Sectors

In the last strategy plan of Arisa (2016 – 2020), the focus was on various core issues, such as child labour and education, corporate social responsibility, caste discrimination and Dalits, and human rights defenders. With the organisational change in 2018/2019 we have developed a new brand identity model and have chosen to use the framework of business and human rights as main reference point for Arisa.

In the coming five years, Arisa will continue its work on garment and textile, leather, natural stone and seed production. Human rights and labour rights violations, in particular child labour, forced labour and discrimination based on caste and gender, are highly prevalent in these sectors, especially in lower tiers. Arisa has been working on these four sectors for many years now and we see that this long-term commitment is important to build knowledge and expertise and to create a network of organisations and businesses that is instrumental in achieving impact on the ground. We feel that our experience and knowledge of these sectors, combined with the long-lasting relationships with our partners working on similar issues, contribute to developing relevant, impact-oriented activities and to being able to share relevant specialised sector and area-based knowledge with various parties. The sectors also provide for a clear link with The Netherlands and the EU, with businesses who have their production outsourced in South Asia.

Textile and garment

The textile and garment industries are of major importance for the (export) economy of South Asia and a crucial source of employment, both formally and informally. India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka all belong to the top 10 of Asian garment exporting

countries. In Pakistan and India, the entire textile supply chain - from cottonseed production to cotton-based garments - is present. Besides Arisa there are only a few organisations that address labour rights violations in the entire garment supply chain. Arisa also addresses the issue of labour rights in textile recycling, which is still a largely invisible issue despite the increased attention for 'circular fashion'.

Leather

South Asia also is an important hub for the production of leather goods for export markets. Millions of workers are employed in the leather supply chain in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Arisa has been working on this sector for more than 10 years.

Natural stone

The natural stone sector is a fragmented . Natural stone is used for, among others, public pavements, building materials, gravestones and kitchen tops. Granite and sandstone are sourced from India by Dutch, European and international companies. In addition to Arisa, few other non-governmental organisations focus on labour rights violations in this particular sector.

Seeds

Dutch vegetable seed breeders are the world's largest exporters of seed.² They operate worldwide, including in India. Over the past two decades the Indian seed industry has been growing rapidly in quantity and value. Arisa is one of the few NGOs working on labour rights issues in this sector and has been doing so for many years.

We will conduct new research on each of these sectors, at least every 3-5 years, to assure we have up-to-date evidence to engage with companies and policy makers. We continue our long-term focus on specific sectors in order to deepen our knowledge and expertise. At the same time, we aim to be flexible in our reaction to new challenges, always in close collaboration with local partners in South Asia.

For a more detailed description of the activities per sector see annex I.

3.3 Activities

Arisa operates within a business and human rights framework, based on international standards, including the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) and the [OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises](#) and sector-specific guidances.

Arisa has a rights-based approach to her work, promoting and protecting human rights included in international human rights instruments such as the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) and the [ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work](#).

Our main strategies are initiating and sustaining a critical dialogue with companies and MSIs, lobby and advocacy with policy makers in the Netherlands and Europe, research carried out together with organisations in India and South Asia and collaborative projects with businesses

² <https://home.kpmg/content/dam/kpmg/nl/pdf/2019/sector/dutch-seed-breeding.pdf>



and organisations in India and South Asia. In this paragraph we explain our strategies more in detail. We raise awareness about human rights abuses in supply chains in the different sectors that our work covers. These strategies are organised through projects and programmes, in collaboration with other organisations in the Netherlands and South Asia and/or with companies in specific sectors. Arisa plays a supporting and linking role between companies and local organisations and critically monitors the progress and results. We believe that involving local rightsholders in shaping policy and activities on responsible business conduct within companies is essential. We facilitate communication and relations between relevant stakeholders in South Asia and the Netherlands, provide background about the outcomes of our research, identify possible concerns and mediate where necessary to find solutions. Furthermore, as Arisa we focus on specific activities in the Netherlands related to business and human rights, such as advocacy and critical dialogue with policy makers, active participation in MSIs (e.g. the covenants); CSR initiatives and companies. Through our activities, we are able to identify issues and gaps in global supply chains and this is how we contribute to the discussions on systemic change. In the coming years Arisa will follow these discussions and involve partners in them by asking for their input.

Critical dialogue

Our main focus is always on how to achieve real impact for labourers working in all parts of international supply chains in the different sectors that our work focuses on. Arisa has developed a two-pronged strategy which we will continue in the coming years. On the one hand we are an independent watchdog that critically monitors companies and multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSIs) and we inform parties about abuses in supply chains in India and other South Asian countries through independent research. On the other hand, Arisa maintains a dialogue and collaboration with businesses, MSIs and CSR initiatives. The viewpoints and opinions of our South Asian partners are our main source to verify whether this impact has been achieved or not. In the coming years we aim to further improve our partnership with South Asian organisations by strengthening their role in our joint projects. We will seek direct involvement of rightsholders and incorporate their voice into the objectives and activities of the organisation. We will do this by supporting access to remedy mechanisms for workers through critical dialogue, by filing complaints against companies, e.g. via NCPs, by encouraging the use of complaints mechanisms of MSIs and lastly by exploring opportunities for strategic litigation against companies or supporting other organisations in that endeavour.

Participation in MSIs and collaboration with companies

Arisa started participating in MSIs and entered into collaboration with companies in joint projects a few years ago. As member of MSIs and in collaborative programmes with companies, Arisa aims to contribute to improved due diligence by companies in line with international guidelines on business and human rights. As member of MSIs Arisa aims to increase its influence through the effective use of our two-pronged approach/strategy as well as the collaboration with organisations in South Asia, the Netherlands and internationally. An insider-outsider strategy can be developed with network partners outside an MSI. This strategy allows network partners to take up the role as critical watchdog from the outside,



while Arisa addresses the issues from the inside, through a constructive dialogue with member companies and parties of an MSI.

In our decision-making process about possible participation in MSIs and collaboration with companies, Arisa takes into account a number of preconditions: 1) there has to be a progressive interpretation of the UN Guiding Principles and the OECD Guidelines as this serves as a framework for collaboration; 2) the collaboration has to be aimed at achieving real and sustainable impact for workers and their families in companies' supply chains; 3) companies have to address the adverse impacts on human rights and labour rights in their supply chains by improving their own policies and practices, including sourcing and buying practices; 4) Arisa and involved organisations in India and South Asia have equal weight and power in decision-making processes; 5) the core values of Arisa are respected and the collaboration does not hinder other strategies of Arisa and involved organisations in South Asia.

In the last couple of years, we have started several collaborative projects with companies, aiming to achieve real impact on the ground for rightsholders. In the coming period, Arisa will evaluate these collaborative initiatives, in order to assess the impact for rightsholders.

Political lobby

Arisa focuses on raising awareness and drawing attention in the Netherlands to the position of different groups of workers in international supply chains within South Asia. We provide politicians and policymakers with information about human rights violations in supply chains in India and other South Asian countries. We advocate for the improvement of existing voluntary guidelines, such as the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Simultaneously, we advocate for the rule of law e.g. mandatory human rights due diligence legislation in the Netherlands and internationally.

Research

Arisa will continue to conduct research with local partners in India and South Asia, including research organisations, civil society organisations and trade unions. Research is not a goal in itself, it provides the factual evidence underlying a critical dialogue with companies and MSIs and it provides for lobby and advocacy with policy makers in order to achieve a positive impact for rightsholders in global supply chains. We invest in long-term relationships with them and strengthen their research capacities.

Collaboration with partners in South Asia

Arisa cooperates closely with organisations in India and other South Asian countries as we feel they have the best knowledge and insights about local situations, needs and possible solutions. We support and strengthen partners, based on a relationship of trust and equality in their fight against human rights violations in supply chains. While we learn from them through their local knowledge and experience, we strive to strengthen them by sharing information on the international segments of the supply chains and developments and frameworks on international responsible business conduct in The Netherlands and the EU,

and by giving them a platform for advocacy with businesses and policymakers in The Netherlands. In the coming period Arisa would like to further strengthen our partners in South Asia, by involving them as full partners in joint projects and not only as implementing partners. This will increase equality.

Strategic alliances with NGOs

We cooperate with selected organisations and networks in the Netherlands, Europe and internationally in order to keep issues such as labour rights violations, child labour and the need for access to remedies and compensation in South Asia on the agenda of policy makers and businesses. By collaborating with other NGOs and networks, we increase leverage and reinforce lobby and advocacy.

An area-based approach to child labour

Arisa promotes and supports the child labour free zone approach, an area-based approach that has proven to be a constructive and successful tool for eliminating child labour. Arisa promotes the child labour free zone approach in different sectors as a proven sustainable methodology to address child labour. [Child labour free zones](#) are defined areas where everyone is convinced that 'no child should be working, every child should be in school.' Teachers, local authorities, community leaders, employers, parents, and children work together to get children out of work and into school. Child labour is no longer accepted because all children are entitled to good, full-time education. Arisa will continue to promote this approach in international fora and networks and in dialogue with companies.

3.4 Caste and gender as crosscutting issues

Arisa has been raising awareness on caste-based discrimination and gender-based discrimination for many years. Caste and gender discrimination are very serious human rights violations that are still rampant and demand more attention from both governments and businesses. We do not want to limit ourselves to quantitative data in our research - just showing figures - we would also like to address discrimination in a more qualitative way. Questions that we would like to address are, among others, what does caste-based discrimination mean in work situations, in communities, how can we address it, how can businesses and governments address it? What are possible solutions where Arisa could play a role and what role does gender play? Religious minorities are likewise disadvantaged and discriminated against in the supply chains of the sectors that Arisa focusses on, so we want to include discrimination based on religion in our efforts as well.

The coming years, in addition to mainstreaming caste and gender, Arisa aims to conduct qualitative research on caste-based discrimination in the garment and leather sector, with a focus on India, while also addressing the situation in other South Asian countries. Together with local partners and the International Dalit Solidarity Network we will draw attention to caste-based discrimination and advocate for more awareness and change.

4. Strategic collaboration

In most activities Arisa strategically collaborates with others: with NGOs and trade unions in India and other South Asian countries; with many different stakeholders in the Netherlands (government, companies, multi-stakeholder initiatives and NGOs/trade unions) and also at European level.

The collaboration with partners in South Asia has evolved into a longstanding partnership, based on trust, equality and transparency. We have sustained a relationship of several years and even decades with many partners. Most of our partners are from India, due to the historical links with this country. Arisa also has contacts with organisations in other South Asian countries and we aim to reinforce them in the coming years.

Arisa also participates in several networks and alliances, and joins forces in specific areas. For the coming years Arisa will continue its active participation in the following networks as these reinforce our work as an organisation and we have significant experiences to share.

Stop Child Labour coalition and network

Arisa is one of the founding partners of the coalition Stop Child Labour (SCL) and we work together with Hivos, Mondiaal FNV, Algemene Onderwijsbond, Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland and ICCO/Cordaid on the fight against child labour. The motto 'no child should work, all children should be in school', guides our work. The coalition supports partners that work in Asia and Africa on the creation of child labour free zones. The SCL-network includes organisations in various countries. On behalf of SCL, Arisa participates in the Child Labour Platform of the ILO. Furthermore, Arisa participates together with other SCL partners in the Work: No Child's Business (WNCB) programme with Save the Children and UNICEF, covering six countries and several sectors. In the coming years, Arisa seeks to strengthen its participation in the Stop Child Labour coalition and to support more local ownership by organisations in the network.

MVO Platform

Another important network based in the Netherlands is the MVO Platform, which advocates for policy improvements of the Dutch government in the field of responsible business conduct. Arisa is an active member since many years and we are focused on the lobby for mandatory human rights due diligence measures, access to remedy mechanisms and sustainable public procurement. These are issues that we will continue working on within the platform in the coming years.

Clean Clothes Campaign

As a member of the Dutch Clean Clothes Campaign, together with the Schone Kleren Campagne and SOMO, Arisa contributes to the discussion of human rights abuses in the garments and textile sector. By conducting independent research and raising complaints about human rights violations, Arisa aims to contribute to improvements in labour conditions of workers. In the coming years, Arisa wants to strengthen its participation in the Dutch Clean Clothes Campaign, further align activities with SKC and SOMO and to develop joint activities.



International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN)

As an international associate of the International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN), Arisa aims to raise awareness about the issue of caste-based discrimination, especially in relation to work in international supply chains. Together with other members, Arisa contributes to the dissemination of information on the violation of human rights of Dalits in South Asia and advocates for the recognition of caste as a discriminatory practice in international guidelines and regulations. In the coming years, Arisa aims to focus more on caste-based discrimination in all elements of its work and therefore seeks to further strengthen its collaboration with IDSN.

Human Rights Network - Breed Mensenrechten Overleg (BMO)

Together with other Dutch organisations, Arisa participates in the BMO. This network focuses on the inclusion of human rights in the foreign policy and practice of the Dutch government. Special attention is given to the shrinking civic space in many countries and how the Dutch government can address this in its communication with foreign governments. Arisa contributes its knowledge on South Asia and specific issues related to business and human rights. Arisa will continue to follow BMO, specifically on the issue of shrinking civic space, but will not be a very active member.

OECD Watch

Arisa is also a member of OECD Watch, a network of civil society organisations in over 50 countries that aims to provide information and advice on how to use the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. Arisa shares information on the different sectors we work on and we make use of the expertise of the network with regards to complaints and grievances. In the coming years, Arisa will continue its participation in the OECD Watch network.

Other organisations

Another important partner of Arisa is SOMO, with whom we are participating in the Clean Clothes Campaign and we jointly conduct research activities on different sectors. In the coming years we seek to further align our activities and strengthen collaboration on different sectors. With the Fair Labor Association we cooperate on responsible business conduct and the collaboration with business in different sectors and we will continue to do so.

5. Organisation

The plans and ambitions described in this strategy plan are reflected in the organisational structure of the organisation. Arisa wants to maintain the small, flexible and professional character of the organisation, with a small, experienced group of staff members. Arisa aims for a staff diversity in gender, age, background and competences. Ideally, provided there is sufficient funding, we would like to hire 1-2 extra programme officers who will cover our work on the different sectors. Including the support staff in the field of financial administration, administration and communication, the team will total around 8 staff members. We envisage this is the ideal size for a practical and collaborative team without the need for additional management layers.

In the coming five years we will maintain the board with at least 3 members, with the support of the advisory group that might be expanded with some new members. In the coming years, Arisa will invest in a diverse team and board, that reflects the identity and focus of the organisation.

Communication strategy

The main aim of this strategy plan is to support and strengthen the defence of human rights in South Asia. This goal requires communication strategies and activities that support the implementation of the goal. The main target groups of our communication are companies, MSIs and policy makers, seeing that we aim for changes in their policies and actions.

Although Arisa operates in collaboration with other alliances and networks, and therefore we have become part of their communication strategies, it is also important to reinforce our own profile in the media. By explaining our unique position, we aim to contribute to awareness raising and advocacy in the field of human rights in supply chains in South Asia and also to be visible for (potential) funders.

An important aspect of our communication strategy will be storytelling: we want to tell the stories of the rightsholders who are affected by the negative impact of global supply chains. By including specific case stories in our research reports, Arisa aims to give human rights violations a face. We will use both our own communication channels such as our website, newsletter and social media, and the media to disseminate the case stories.

Arisa aims to integrate the communication activities more into the different projects in the coming years, so that case stories will be identified during the project itself and not only after completion. By creating and collecting audio-visual material the communication activities will support the implementation of the project directly.

In the first year of the strategy plan period a more extensive and elaborate communication strategy will be developed, including specific target groups, messages and activities.

Financial strategy

Although Arisa works on many different projects and programmes, mostly in alliance with other organisations, our main donor is the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). Over



95% of our funding originates with this ministry. We are very happy with the fact that the MoFA offers long-term funding for 4-5 years, which makes it possible for us to establish longstanding relationships and plan ahead. Nevertheless, our dependency on one donor is a risk. Therefore, Arisa aims to identify other funding sources in the coming years, for example within the European Union and private funds.

Arisa depends on subsidies and project funding, only a very small part of our income is generated through gifts and donations. This means that a large share of the budget is earmarked for specific activities within the framework of projects and programmes, and flexibility for tackling new issues and developing new proposals is limited. We have observed that there is a need for more core funding for the organisation, and we will actively take this up in 2021. Nevertheless, within the framework of projects and programmes, Arisa always includes some flexibility to respond to new developments.

An important aspect in this respect is the independent and critical position of Arisa. Arisa does not accept money from companies for the activities of the organisation. Arisa is increasingly involved in joint projects with companies, but the funding for our activities derives from third parties. In relation to potential private funding, Arisa will always examine the relationships these funders possibly maintain with businesses and we will analyse the potential risks for Arisa.

Summarising: in the coming strategic period we have some priorities:

- Increase the budget from other donors, such as private donors and the European Union, to 15-20% of the total budget of the organisation;
- Arisa will search for more structural core funding for the organisation
- Analyse the possibility to participate as full partner in one or more Strategic Partnerships 2026-2030 as this will give us the possibility to fund our critical work for a period of five years.



Annex I: More elaborate plans per sector

1. Garments and textile

Background

Arisa started working on the garments and textile sector in the early 1990s, when we became a member of the Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC) in The Netherlands. In 1996, Arisa (as ICN) published the report *Child and adult labour in the export-oriented garment and gem polishing industry of India*, the first of several reports on this sector. Especially since 2011, Arisa has been constantly involved in the garments and textile sector. Our main focus was on South India, specifically Bangalore and Tamil Nadu (India). In 2018, we expanded activities to North India as well, to the National Capital Region (NCR), starting with research on textile recycling in Panipat, the largest textile recycling hub of India.

Arisa has been closely involved in the development of the Dutch Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textile (AGT) that was officially launched in 2016. Arisa is an active party in this MSI, and we are a member of the complaints and disputes working group. Advisory meetings with garment and textile brands, and collective projects fall under our activities for the AGT. The AGT has brought forward professional contacts with garment brands, which are used to initiate constructive dialogue on labour and human rights in the sector, or as a basis for collaborative projects. In the AGT, Arisa is known for its specific expertise on the garments and textiles industry in India and different stakeholders regularly approach Arisa in that capacity. In 2021, the AGT will end its first term, and discussions about a second term of the AGT are now taking place. We support the idea of a second term, yet we are also critical about the conditions for its continuation. An important issue is how impact on the ground can be increased, such as including workers' voices in the various stages of due diligence. Discussions on cooperation with the NGO caucus of the German Partnership for Sustainable Textile have started in 2020 and will continue in the coming years.

We have engaged in the development of tools on child and forced labour, supply chain mapping, and social dialogue and stakeholder engagement. Arisa has supported brands that wanted to gain insight in their supply chains and connected them to relevant local workers' organisations. Furthermore, together with local partners, we have facilitated trainings for textile factory and spinning mill workers and management. Additionally, we have helped establish mandatory worker committees in a number of factories. In Tamil Nadu, a strong and solid foundation for addressing labour and human rights for workers in the garments and textile industry has been created. A network of various stakeholders has been formed, it has developed activities that focus on supporting workers and creating a responsible working environment. In Bangalore, Arisa focused on the position on migrant workers in the garment sector.

Arisa has also brought forward complaints as urgent appeals, assisting local NGOs and trade unions in their efforts to address urgent labour rights violations in textile factories and



spinning mills. This is an important aspect of our work, and we will continue to support these cases. In addition, we will make efforts to improve access to remedy mechanisms for workers, by enhancing the visibility of the complaints mechanism of the AGT, and by actively disseminating relevant information to local partners that may help them to solve labour rights violations in global supply chains.

Looking forward

The garments and textile work of Arisa targets three areas in India: Bangalore, Tamil Nadu, and the National Capital Region (NCR). In the coming years, we will expand our work in the NCR and we aim to identify new local partners and we will explore supply chains of European and Dutch companies in this region.

The development towards a stronger and solid base for the garment and textile sector in Tamil Nadu, as described above, may mean Arisa will have less to contribute to this region. In the coming five years we will carefully monitor if an added value for our work still exists in this region and we might decide to reduce our activities. An important development is that the training of factory workers and management has become commonplace, and that local labour inspections are present and functioning.

After working on India for many years, Arisa will expand its work on the garments and textile sector to neighbouring countries, starting with Pakistan and Sri Lanka. We have made a first inventory of possible partners in both countries, and we have reached out to several of them. By exchanging information on the work of Arisa and discussing potential cooperation, we will gain better insight into the added value of Arisa in these countries and for these partners. Arisa will continue to raise awareness on the importance of investigating abuses beyond first tier suppliers and the meaningful engagement of rightsholders and the organisations representing them, in textile and garment brands' human rights due diligence policies. Brands should assess risks in their entire supply chains. Through research and specific programmes, Arisa will provide insight in the working conditions of textile workers also in the lower tiers, including outsourcing and homeworking. Local partners will play an important role in this respect.

In June 2020, the report *Textile recycling unravelled* was published by Arisa, in a joint effort with Dutch textile collector Sympany. It reveals that social risks can be part of textile recycling, and this should be included in discussions on recycled material, in addition to environmental considerations. Developing further research and activities on working conditions and the prevalence of child labour in pre- and post- consumer textile recycling are topics that Arisa wants to work on in the coming years.

Activities

Within the context described above, Arisa will undertake the following activities, with the aim of improving working conditions and protecting human rights in textile supply chains:

- a. **Participation in several programmes and projects** aimed at improving the working and living conditions of garment and textile workers and eliminating child labour in the garment and textile industry.

- b. At least one **research project carried out in collaboration with local researchers** on working conditions in garment/textile supply chains in India, specific topics to be determined (e.g. textile recycling; working conditions and caste-based discrimination).
- c. Supporting **urgent appeals** brought forward by local partners and actively disseminating relevant information about grievance mechanisms to partners and other local organisations, which will contribute to **improved access to remedy** mechanisms for workers.
- d. Participation in the **Dutch Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textile (AGT) until 2021**. Arisa will continue to share knowledge and expertise on specifically the Indian context of the garments and textile industry, and international standards on business and human rights. It will provide input on CSR policies of member brands and will explore possibilities for sharing the knowledge and advice more collectively. Arisa will continue to participate in the complaints and disputes working group, aimed at improving access to remedy mechanisms for textile workers in various tiers of the supply chain.
- e. Engage in and actively contribute to discussions on a **second term of the AGT**, and if the necessary conditions are met, potentially participate in a second term.
- f. **Cooperation with the German Textile Partnership**, through sharing of information on projects and taking up urgent appeals collectively, if applicable.
- g. **Further strengthening and expanding its network of local civil society organisations in India**, specifically looking for possibilities in the NCR region.
- h. **Expanding activities to Pakistan and Sri Lanka**. This will include:
 - An inventory of risks through (desk) research
 - Mapping possible cooperation opportunities for Arisa based on risk inventory and meetings with local organisations
 - Building relationships with local organisations and exploring new possible local partners
- i. Supporting **campaigns** from organisations within our network, such as the CCC.
- j. Create awareness about issues deeper in the supply chain (see also section on cotton seeds)

Expected outcomes

- a. Working conditions in garments and textile supply chains in India and South Asia have improved.
- b. Various stakeholders in Europe, and Dutch garment and/or textile companies have increased their awareness about working conditions in the textile industry in South Asia. Improved knowledge of how to address identified issues in their supply chains.
- c. More constructive dialogue between buyers and suppliers, based on trust and openness about input from both sides, and joint discussions on social topics.
- d. Social issues in textile recycling are being acknowledged by policy makers and businesses.

2. Natural stone

Background

The first time Arisa investigated the working conditions in the natural stone sector in India was in 2005, in a research project on the sandstone industry in Rajasthan, which resulted in the report '*Budhpura, ground Zero*'. This report led to increased awareness about the risks in the sandstone sector in Rajasthan, more specifically the cobblestone industry, among a number of natural stone businesses both in India and the Netherlands. In 2013, Arisa initiated a Child Labour Free Zone project in Budhpura together with a local partner and a Belgium-based natural stone company. This project is still running and has expanded to different areas involving more local partners and companies.

Several research reports on issues in the natural stone sector have since been published by Arisa. The attention generated through these reports stimulated discussions on a sector-wide approach to address the risks identified. From 2016 onwards, Arisa participated in negotiations for an Agreement in the natural stone sector with the Flemish and Dutch governments, which led the parties involved, including Arisa, to sign the TruStone Initiative in May 2019. This multi-stakeholder initiative will run till 2024. Arisa is part of the Steering Committee and various working groups. Within TruStone Arisa plays both an insider and an outsider role, as both a constructive partner and a critical watchdog. In addition, Arisa is involved in two projects in India with natural stone companies, both projects expire in 2024. An initiative like TruStone is very relevant because most of the natural stone companies are small to medium-sized enterprises. Therefore, most mandatory due diligence legislation in Europe does not apply to them, as it focuses mainly on large companies. Furthermore, the natural stone industry as well as its consumers, in comparison to other industries, are relatively unfamiliar with due diligence requirements and human rights risks. Responsible public procurement, especially at the municipal level, remains a very important aspect to stimulate natural stone companies to work more sustainably.

As of now Arisa is the only NGO in Europe that has a constant focus and expertise on the working conditions in the natural stone industry. It is important to involve other organisations in the work on natural stone, including local organisations in other risk countries besides India.

The COVID-19 crisis has also had its impact on the natural stone industry: not only have factories and quarries been closed, the price of transport from Asia to Europe has increased dramatically resulting in quarries reopening again in Europe (especially Spain and Portugal) and a growing interest in alternatives such as composites. What this means for the work of Arisa is hard to predict. For now, it seems natural stone from India will remain in demand in Europe and labour and human rights issues in the factories and quarries will continue to demand attention.

Activities

Given the background described above, Arisa will engage in the following activities to improve human rights and labour conditions in the natural stone sector in India:

- a. Participation in **activities in Rajasthan, India**, as part of a programme aimed at eliminating child labour;
- b. Participation in **several projects with Dutch and Belgium natural stone companies** in three areas in India;
- c. Participation in the **TruStone Initiative**; its steering committee and several working groups. Arisa will continue to share expertise and knowledge about the working conditions in the natural stone sector in India and how to work towards improving these conditions;
- d. Lobby activities directed at **public procurement authorities** within the Netherlands and the EU.
- e. **Build a network of civil society organisations** in Europe that will focus on human rights issues and working conditions in the natural stone industry in risk countries. Share expertise among these civil society organisations on how to set up and conduct risk analysis in risk countries;
- f. **Raise awareness and build relationships** with natural stone companies in the Netherlands and other European countries, including Germany, France, Italy, Belgium and the United Kingdom;
- g. Initiate and implement a **joint project** with companies to address human rights risks and set up a **grievance mechanism** and assist in setting up a **local grievance mechanism in Rajasthan, India**.
- h. Network building and sharing of expertise with European **audit / certification initiatives**;
- i. Maintain **relations with (international) organisations**, including the International Labor Organization (ILO), the American Bar Association; Centre for Human Rights, (international) the media;
- j. Initiate at least one **research** project on working conditions in the natural stone sector, most likely marble, and/or limestone in India;
- k. Initiate and facilitate **stakeholder dialogue** among others with international and local natural stone companies, rightsholders, NGOs and trade unions in India.

Expected outcomes

- a. Working conditions in natural stone supply chains in India have improved;
- b. Awareness of different stakeholders in the Netherlands and Europe about working conditions in the natural stone industry will increase;
- c. Expansion of the network of NGOs or other organisations in Europe that focus on working conditions in the natural stone sector in risk countries worldwide;
- d. Natural stone companies are aware of the impact on working conditions through their business practices and they have taken steps to improve this.

3. Seed production

Since 1994 Arisa focuses on working conditions in the vegetable seeds and cottonseeds production in India. Arisa published several research reports in collaboration with local researchers. With a few exceptions, most seed companies produce either vegetable seeds or cottonseeds. The supply chains and stakeholders in both types of seed production differ from each other. Arisa will therefore address vegetable seed production and cottonseed production separately in the coming years.

Vegetable seeds

The Netherlands is one of the world's leading countries in the production and trade of vegetable seeds. Many companies based in The Netherlands source their seed production from India. The seed companies based in the Netherlands are represented by the Dutch association for plant reproduction material, Plantum. The Dutch government has the ambition that by 2023 90% of the large companies in the Netherlands, including several seed companies, will endorse the OECD guidelines for Multinational Enterprises as a framework for their international activities.

Until now, Arisa focussed on issues such as child labour and payment of minimum wages in the production of seeds in India, but there are many other risks involved in the sector that we have not touched upon. These risks are linked to the use of pesticides, the role organisers play, the payment of advances and the prevalent use of hybrid seeds. We see opportunities to focus on these risks in the coming five years.

Cottonseeds

Cottonseeds are an essential part of textile supply chain. Although in the sector there is increased attention for the materials used in garments and textile, this usually does not encompass the level of cottonseed production. Cottonseed farmers and their workers are the first stakeholders of a very long and complex supply chain that affects the producers and suppliers of garments and textile. For many years, Arisa has researched the issue of child labour and the non-payment of minimum wages in the cottonseed sector and we want to continue this and raise awareness about these issues in the garment and textiles supply chain. Furthermore, the global demand for organic cotton is growing. Organic seeds are needed for the production of organic cotton. Little is known about this production, let alone the labour issues affecting the production of these seeds. Furthermore, in organic cotton production, brands, certifiers and civil society actors have not paid a lot of attention to the social conditions workers and farmers face. This might be an issue where Arisa can play a role. We will explore this issue and will actively involve local organisations.

Activities:

- a. Initiate at least one **research** project on working conditions in the cottonseed and/or vegetable seed sector;
- b. Conduct supply chain mapping to identify whether there is a link between cottonseed production in India and companies in the Netherlands and Europe;

- c. Maintain relations with the Fair Labor Association (FLA), Mondiaal FNV and Plantum;
- d. **Raise awareness and build relationships** with vegetable seed companies in the Netherlands and other European countries;
- e. Participation in a project on vegetable seeds production in India, together with two seed companies, with a focus on child labour, price setting and wages;
- f. Establish and strengthen relationships with organisations that focus on organic cotton.

Expected outcomes:

- a. Improved working conditions in the vegetable seeds and cottonseeds sector in India;
- b. More awareness of working conditions in the seed sector among Dutch and European companies;
- c. Increased insight into price setting mechanisms of vegetable seeds companies;
- d. Increased network of stakeholders in India, the Netherlands and Europe.

4. Leather

Background

In 2017, Arisa published the report *Do Leather Workers Matter?* It highlights the working conditions for leather workers and the prevalence of child labour in the leather industry in India. In 2020, Arisa was able to further engage the leather sector through the programme *Together for Decent Leather*. This programme, implemented together with six other organisations, aims to improve working conditions for workers in the leather industry in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Arisa will participate in developing research on working conditions for leather workers in the selected project area in India, together with the local project partner. Arisa will also focus on discrimination based on caste and religion related to the leather industry in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Furthermore, Arisa will conduct supply chain research and will advocate for change with identified brands and with governments in the Netherlands and Europe.

Looking forward

Arisa is motivated to further explore this sector in the coming period and to find opportunities for research and collaboration with local organisations in South Asia.

A sector study on the use of leather in the garments and textile industry might be a possibility and would be reinforced by Arisa's knowledge of and engagement in the garments and textile sector.

In the coming years, Arisa will explore possibilities of expanding to other South Asian countries for work on the leather sector.

Activities

Using the above-mentioned context as a framework, Arisa will engage in the following activities:

- a. Continuation of participation in the *Together for Decent Leather* programme;

- b. **Sharing relevant knowledge and information** with the AGT and other relevant parties. Arisa will share knowledge and information with the AGT and aims to put 'leather on the agenda' within the AGT in the coming years, providing a second term of the AGT will be realised. Collaboration with the German Textile Partnership regarding leather may also be an option to explore.
- c. Arisa will emphasise the importance of including **caste and/or religion** discrimination within the leather industry in its interactions with third parties;
- d. A possible further **research** project on caste- and/or religion-based discrimination in the leather industry in India;
- e. Exploring **possibilities to expand to Pakistan and/or Bangladesh** for activities in the leather sector.

Expected outcomes:

- a. Working conditions of leather workers in the selected project areas have improved;
- b. There is more awareness among a diversity of stakeholders, such as brands and governments, on the working conditions of leather workers in South Asia, including caste- and/or religion-based discrimination;
- c. Clarity on opportunities for Arisa to increase activities on the leather industry in India;
- d. Clarity on opportunities for expanding activities on the leather industry outside of India.