

A young girl with dark skin and curly hair is in a classroom. She is wearing a white t-shirt and has her right hand covering her eyes. Her left hand is held out flat, palm up. In the background, a chalkboard is filled with various mathematical problems, including algebraic equations like $x^2 + 5x + 6 = 0$ and $x^2 - 3x + 2 = 0$, and word problems like "Solve for x" and "Find the area of a rectangle".

PALA

**See the
world
better**

Impact Report 22/23

Pala's more sustainable eyewear changes lives by funding eyecare projects in Africa.

We're proud to share what we've achieved with our customers, partners and communities in our first ever Impact Report as a Certified B Corp.

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Welcome from our founder

“Life would be radically different for many of us, myself included, without access to eye tests and eyewear, but that’s the shocking reality for millions of people around the world.”

Welcome to our first ever Impact Report - what a journey it’s been getting here!

When I set up Pala in 2016, it was to create beautiful, sustainable eyewear that would channel funding to support eyecare provision in Africa. We’re hugely grateful for the commitment of our remarkable customers, investors and partners to this mission. Over 11,000 people have now had their lives transformed by receiving prescription glasses or corrective surgery through our partnership with Vision Aid Overseas.

At the same time we’re a business, and we know the business world must urgently rethink how it does things. Our choices will be felt for generations, if not forever. With our frames made in small batches using plant-based materials and our sunglass cases woven in Ghana, our business model gives me hope, but there’s so much more room for improvement.

Our dream is to fund eyecare centres at a far greater pace and to give our weaving communities in Ghana more work than we

currently do. For that to happen, we need to grow. We need to collaborate with like-minded brands who will bring global visibility to our mission. We need to build a community of advocates who share our story. And we need to innovate and explore opportunities to reduce our impacts with others.

Our next goal is to fund a new eyecare centre in the Northern Province of Sierra Leone, a country where there are just five qualified optometrists serving a population of 7 million people. You can find more details on our ambition and how you can help on the final page of this report. If you have any ideas, questions or feedback based on what you’ve read, we’d love to hear from you. We can’t do any of this without you.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'John Pritchard'.

John Pritchard, Pala Founder

About Pala

Our ethos, values and partnerships connect deeply with our mission.



Our ethos

We're a small, friendly team based by the sea in lovely Brighton and supported by awesome partners around the world from Italy to Ghana.

OUR VALUES

Restoring vision – Pala was founded to create opportunity by funding eyecare projects in Africa. Every pair of glasses we sell contributes funding to projects delivered with our charity partner, Vision Aid Overseas.

Sustainable design – Our sunglasses are handcrafted in Italy in small batches using eco-friendly materials. The unique cases that come with every pair of Pala sunglasses are hand-woven from waste plastic by artisanal weavers in Ghana.

Climate justice – We aim to support the people who are most affected by climate change. As well as sustaining livelihoods in Africa, we offset our emissions by investing in environmental projects in countries most at risk.

COMMITTED TO TRANSPARENCY

We became a B Corp in 2020. It confirms we look beyond profit to focus on people and the planet and helps us continuously improve.

> **Read more on page 31.**

DELIVERING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The UN SDGs are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives of everyone, everywhere.

We're proud to contribute to nine of these goals. Look out for the icons over the next few pages and read more on our website.

**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS**

How we do things

We aim to do business differently by carefully considering our impacts at every stage of Pala's value chain.

Purpose

Everything starts with our mission to see the world better. We partner with NGOs who have the expertise and relationships on the ground to help us to change lives.

Design

We use design to create more sustainable, beautiful and durable eyewear. Co-branded sunglasses and design collaborations enable more people to step into the world of sustainable eyewear.

Materials

Choosing the best materials is our foundation. We use materials that reduce reliance on plastic, increase circularity and are 100% vegan.

Manufacturing

Pala's frames are handmade in Italy and our cases are hand-woven in Ghana. This small-batch approach means we can grow with our suppliers and produce only what is needed.

Customers

Our customers are our world and they give us the best ideas. We're building a community of advocates who love for our sunglasses and believe in our mission.

Circularity

Our eyewear is designed to last and we use TerraCycle to recycle old eyewear into new products. All our packaging is plastic-free, reusable and recyclable.

Giving back

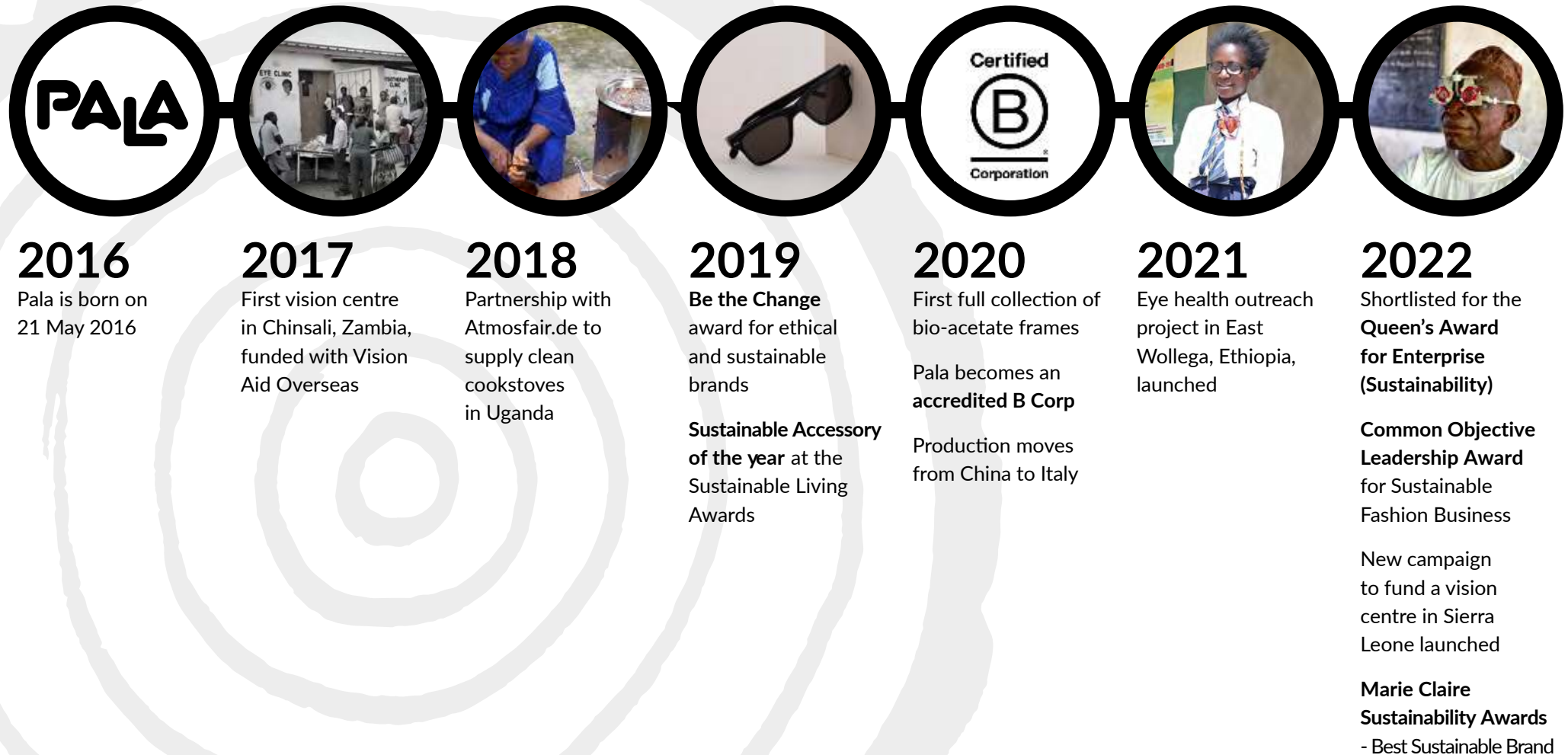
Every pair of sunglasses sold channels funding to eyecare projects and carbon offsetting initiatives in Africa.



Our journey

Pala was born out of a need to help solve the eyecare problem in Africa and we had to learn an entirely new industry fast. We've made mistakes and learned lessons along the way!

Our commitment to sustainability is a journey that will continue based on making small, positive changes as we grow.



Enabling access to eyecare



Restoring sight is one of the most valuable and cost-effective ways to tackle poverty, but the gap between what currently exists and what is needed is huge.

According to research by Vision Aid Overseas, the solution is clear:

- **78%** of adults who received treatment or glasses saw improved quality of life and household income
- **73%** of children who received corrective eye surgery or glasses improved at school⁴

Every time you buy a pair of Pala sunglasses, you'll help fund vision centres and programmes in Africa run by Vision Aid Overseas. We've supported projects in four countries so far – Zambia, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Ethiopia – and this is just the start. Each project has a solid strategy involving NGO's and local governments to ensure it continues to develop and change lives for decades to come.

> **Discover our impact on page 15.**



Did you know?

- **10%** of people globally are unable to access the eye-care they need¹
- There are **73%** more blind and visually impaired people in Africa than the rest of the world²
- **12 million** children struggle to learn simply because they need glasses to read³



¹ World Health Organization 2019

² International Agency for Prevention of Blindness

³ United Nations 2019

⁴ Vision Aid Overseas 2019

Sustainable design



The fashion industry has a problem that it needs to fix fast.

Our approach is based on sustainable design and small batch production that is good for people, planet and profit.

Sustainable design can safeguard our planet by designing products that can be used for longer, are made from safe recycled and renewable materials and can be reused or recycled.

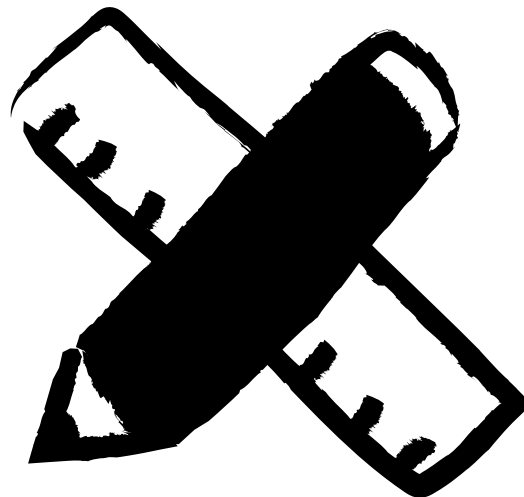
But we need to do much more.

We design our sunglasses to be worn for years, choosing planet-friendly materials from our frames to our packaging. Handcrafting our plant-based frames in small batches in Italy minimises waste and you won't find our unique sunglasses cases which are woven from waste plastic in Ghana anywhere else.

> **Discover our impact on page 15.**



⁵ <https://unece.org/forestry/press/un-alliance-aims-put-fashion-path-sustainability>



Did you know?

- The fashion industry is a climate change culprit, accounting for 8-10% of global carbon emissions⁵
- The old way of making eyewear uses fossil fuel-based plastic. This contains harmful Diethyl Phthalate and is not biodegradable
- Pala uses bio-acetate for our frames. Plant based and biodegradable, with a lower carbon footprint

A woman in a blue and white patterned dress is sweeping a dirt path with a broom made of dried grass. In the background, a young child is sitting on a wooden bench. The scene is set in a dry, rural environment with tall grass and a dirt ground.

Climate justice

Climate change is widening the gap between the global north and south in a scary way – destroying habitats, lives and livelihoods. Pala stands up for climate justice to create a fairer, more just world.

Climate Justice shines a spotlight on the needs, voices and leadership of those who are affected – putting people and equity at the centre of climate action.

Our case weavers have suffered the devastating impacts of climate change on their food security and livelihoods. The elephant grass they traditionally use has moved south due to drought and crop failure has affected farming.

Innovating with recycled plastic waste has provided a readily available material which means they don't have to travel long distances into the bush. The income it provides means they are more resilient when crops fail and enables them to invest in small businesses.

We take responsibility for our emissions by investing in certified carbon offsetting projects in Central America and Africa, the two regions most vulnerable to climate change.

#fashiondeclares

We've signed up the five commitments of the Fashion Declares movement – read more here.

> Discover our impact on page 15.



Did you know?

- The world's 50 least developed countries produce less than **1%** of global emissions⁶
- **30 million** people lost their homes in 2020 due to weather-related disasters⁷
- Global CO₂ emissions need to be cut by **45%** by 2030 and reach net-zero by 2050⁸

⁶ UNCTAD 2021

⁷ Global report on Internal Displacement 2021

⁸ UN Net-Zero Coalition

Our impact

Positive impact for Pala
means transforming
lives in Africa and
making choices that
safeguard the future
of our planet.



Restoring vision

We're humbled and proud of what we've achieved and we're determined to do more.



£43,327

grants to eyecare
projects in Africa



11,000+

people received
prescription glasses
or corrective surgery



25,000

vitamins to prevent
blindness among
children in Kenya



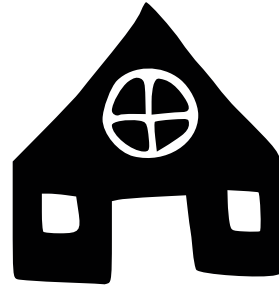
Setting our sights on Sierra Leone

Our new goal is to fund a new vision centre in northern Sierra Leone. We can't do this alone. Find out how you can help on page 35.

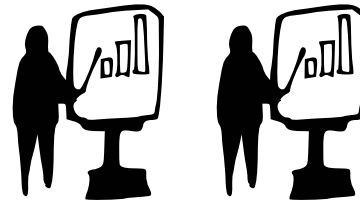
Empowering a community in Ethiopia

We launched our eye health outreach project at Abalo Janko Primary School in East Wollega in 2021. It trains teachers to provide initial screening and mobile eye clinics provide specialist eye examinations and prescriptions for both children and adults.

As part of the project, we also funded a fully functioning vision centre at Wollega University Referral Hospital.



One school



2 teachers



Hundreds of children screened

- 88 children and 9 teachers received eye drops
- 9 pairs of glasses prescribed



Thousands of family members reached with messages about good eye health

- 380+ members of the community screened

Transforming lives in Zambia

Our first fundraising project was the vision centre in Chinsali, Zambia in 2017. At the time there were only five eye health practitioners serving a province of over 75,000 people! The centre opened up access to eye health services and has changed thousands of lives, now seeing 2,500 people a year.



11,722

people screened
(47% male and 53% female)



4564

prescriptions given



5219

pairs of glasses issued,
50% to women and girls



1347

pairs of glasses given
to local school children

Sustainable materials

The materials we use will always have an impact, which is why we're constantly looking for better solutions and new innovations.



PLANT-BASED FRAMES

Our frames are 100% biodegradable plant-based bio-acetate. Mazzuccheli's M49 Bioplastic is made of 68% renewable cellulose acetate and uses a vegetable-based plasticizer. It performs better than standard industry acetate in all impact areas across the product life cycle and generates 54% lower CO₂ emissions.⁹

⁹ EssilorLuxottica 2022

For a plastic-based material to be biodegradable, it must reach 90% biodegradation in under six months. Our M49 bioplastic exceeds 90% biodegradation in under four. Happy days.

Did you know?

**54%
lower
CO₂
emissions**



produced by our
bio-acetate compared
with standard
acetate frames

**4.72
tonnes**



of plastic diverted
from landfill thanks
to our recycled cases

100%
direct suppliers
signed Code
of Conduct



INNOVATING LIKE OUR PLANET DEPENDS ON IT – OUR MAIN MATERIALS

64-68% plant-based frames

70% recycled acetate black frames

39% plant-based resin standard non-polarised lenses

70% recycled plastic bottles (PET) soft bags

100% recycled plastic waste cases

100% vegan-friendly inks

We love our suppliers!

Our super-simple supply chain is one of the things we love about the way we do business. Unlike most eyewear brands, our eyewear is not made in China where transparency can be a challenge. We know our suppliers well and they share our high standards.

> **Read more about our supply chain on our website**

> **Have a look at our Code of Conduct for suppliers**

WHAT NEXT?

Innovation happens fast and we must constantly explore material innovations with our suppliers. Like the more eco-friendly lenses we're seeking out to go with our frames!

Handmade in Italy

Famed for its excellence in eyewear, we love Italy. But many brands have been lured away by the lower costs of mass production in China. We turned that equation on its head in 2019 when we shifted to small batch production in Italy.

Pala's frames are handmade at a small, boutique factory in the hills of Frinco where owners, Gabriele and Eleonora, take great pride in their design and craftsmanship. We plan to grow together as a small brand and a small manufacturer with our shared commitment to doing things ethically.

Watch the video in the link below to see small batch production in action and discover the values we share.

[View Pala production here](#)

Did you know?

- It takes 26 steps spanning one month to hand-produce our frames
- The team in Italy consists of five relatives, three women and two men
- Waste materials are stored and collected by a specialist recycling company twice a year

Handmade in Ghana

ON THE CASE
Woven by

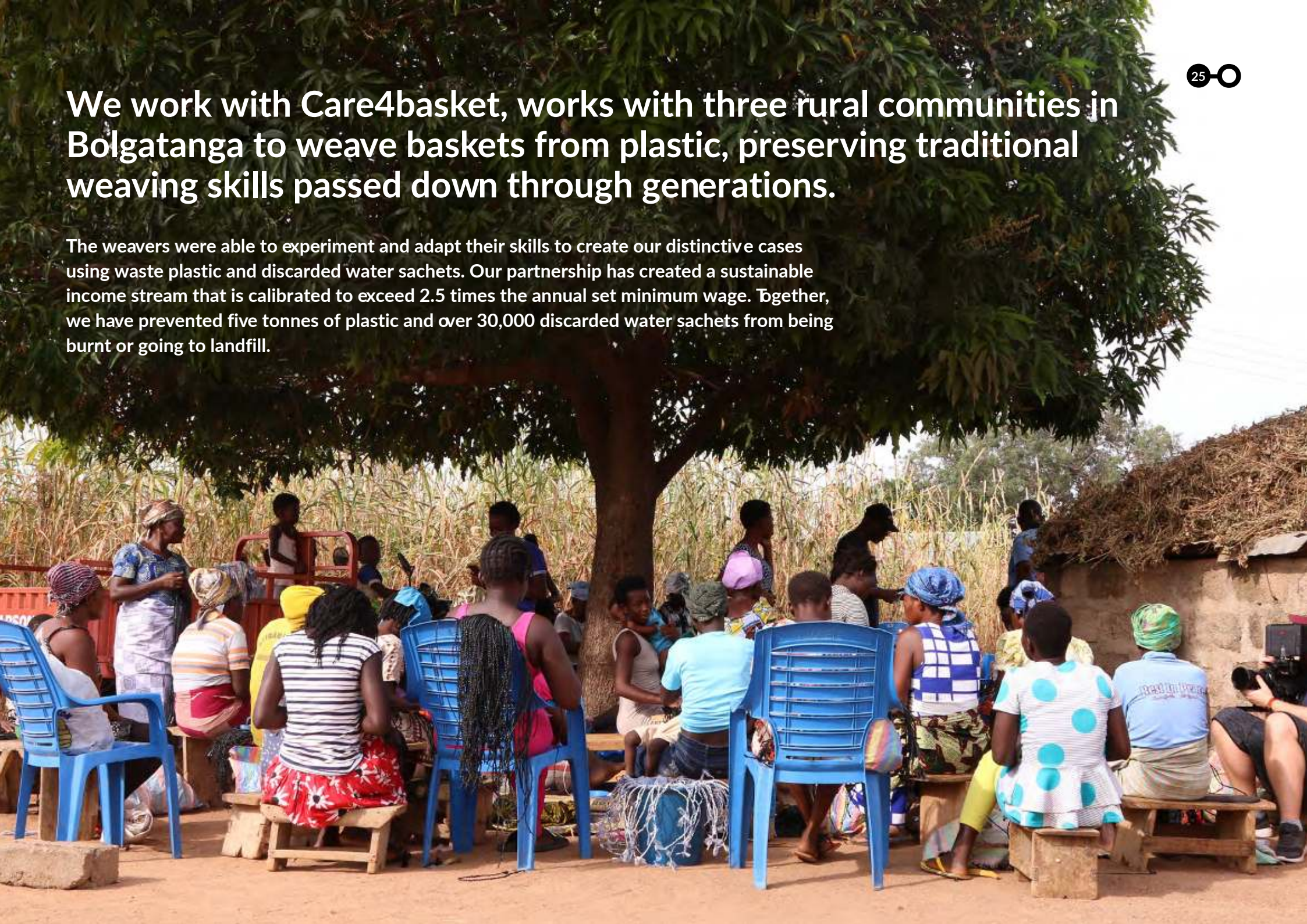
Nsabila Akenra

“Using recycled plastic waste materials for hand woven sunglasses cases, the weavers are able to bridge the income gap when crops fail, which due to climate change is becoming more frequent.”

Jib Hagan, Founder of Care4basket

We work with Care4basket, works with three rural communities in Bolgatanga to weave baskets from plastic, preserving traditional weaving skills passed down through generations.

The weavers were able to experiment and adapt their skills to create our distinctive cases using waste plastic and discarded water sachets. Our partnership has created a sustainable income stream that is calibrated to exceed 2.5 times the annual set minimum wage. Together, we have prevented five tonnes of plastic and over 30,000 discarded water sachets from being burnt or going to landfill.



Watch the weavers at work.
Find out more about Care4Basket.

<https://vimeo.com/481180184>



3

weaving communities



2.5 times

the minimum wage



13,860

cases



30,000

discarded water
sachets collected

Circularity

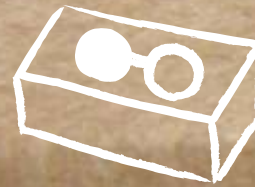
How we design, make and use things needs an urgent rethink. We must build a circular economy to fight climate change, protect biodiversity and reduce pollution.



For Pala, this means creating eyewear that lasts and is repairable, using renewable and recyclable materials, and keeping products and packaging out of landfill.



5 tonnes
of plastic diverted
from landfill to
make our cases



100%
plastic-free,
recyclable
packaging



675
old frames sent
back to us to be
responsibly
upcycled

PALA

RECYCLING OLD FRAMES WITH TERRACYCLE

Our recycling service in the UK means we send old frames on to TerraCycle where they are broken down and upcycled into new products like watering cans and nuts and bolts. It might not be fully circular in the sense of making new frames – there's work to do before that is commercially viable – but at least they don't end up in landfill!

CIRCULAR PACKAGING

Our packaging has been plastic-free and recyclable for years. We use Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified cardboard boxes and our padded envelopes are both recycled and recyclable. Our frames used to arrive wrapped in plastic so we asked and supported our supplier to switch to 100% corn starch biodegradable bags.

Did you know?

Old frames can't be put in your kerbside recycling meaning millions of pairs of glasses are disposed of to landfill every year in the UK.

WHAT NEXT?

There's no doubt our industry needs to move faster; most frames are not designed to last or be recycled. For durability, we stand by the quality of eyewear but we also want to be able to offer replacement parts so they can last even longer.

Climate impact

Tackling our climate impact starts with understanding and reducing our emissions. While we work on that, we offset our emissions by investing in projects that protect the communities and ecosystems impacted by climate change.

Compared with larger companies, Pala has a tiny carbon footprint. Our small team works from a co-working space powered by 100% green energy. Our sunglasses come from Italy to the UK by road, generating far fewer emissions than shipping from China. Our website is hosted on carbon-zero servers and built to be more carbon-efficient.

UNDERSTANDING OUR IMPACTS

As a small company, we're at an early stage of understanding our full carbon impacts. Unlike many of our competitors, we don't claim to be carbon neutral or carbon negative because we think those claims should be robust and backed up by science to avoid misleading our customers. We also think claims like this should take account of our full carbon impacts including raw materials and manufacturing (Scope 3 emissions), not just the direct impacts of running our business (Scope 1 and 2 emissions). Read our journal article about this topic.

OFFSETTING OUR EMISSIONS

While it's not perfect, investing in projects that promote climate justice is the least we can do to offset our emissions. Rainforests are the lungs of the planet and the natural solution to climate change. We partner with One Tribe to protect rainforest trees with every purchase you make. We've also purchased Wonderbox cookstoves for families in Uganda and Rwanda, providing 80% more efficient cooking meaning less wood and improving health conditions.

> Discover our impact on page 15.



12,080
trees protected



2,088
tonnes
of carbon stored



70
trees replanted
in Madagascar



115
cookstoves
purchased,
offsetting 59
tonnes CO₂

WHAT NEXT?

We have committed to work towards net zero carbon emissions by 2030. This feels like a realistic time frame to understand and tackle our impacts across the entire value chain – right from the raw materials we use to what happens to our sunglasses at the end of their useful life.



Growing as a B Corp

Joining the inspiring B Corp community in 2020 was a natural next step in our commitment to doing business the right way.

What does being a B Corp mean?

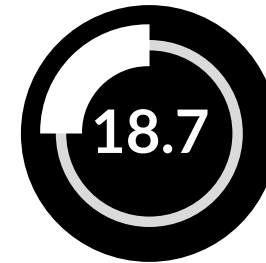
In short, that we legally commit to have a materially positive impact on society and the environment and not just shareholders.

Certified B-Corps are verified to balance profit with purpose through an in-depth assessment every three years. The emphasis is on ongoing improvement to better this score at each recertification.

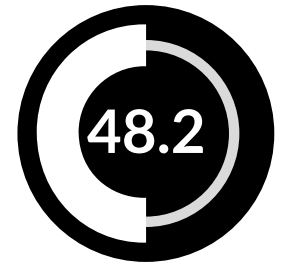
We got a score of **84.1** in the B Impact Assessment. The median score for an average business is currently **50.9**.

Each B Corp pillar is rated against a different total depending on the questions. We're a competitive lot here and our commitment is to keep increasing our score every time we recertify. We'll share our progress next time that comes around in 2023.

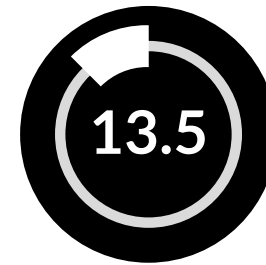
You can find our official B Assessment score [here](#) and delve into the details.



Governance



Community



Environment



Customers

Let's change lives

For our next project, we've set our sights on building and equipping a new vision centre in Sierra Leone where there are currently only five qualified optometrists for a population of 7 million people.



In addition to the critical shortage of qualified optometrists in Sierra Leone, cultural barriers, prioritisation of male over female health, and a lack of understanding around the importance of diagnosing eye issues means education and engagement is required.

Pala is committing to finance the refurbishment and equipping of the eye centre in the Northern Province and Vision Aid Overseas will secure additional partners to fund the training of optometrists and nurses as well as education and outreach activities. This will ensure long-lasting outcomes and benefits.

“To meet our commitment, we need to sell over 5,000 pairs of sunglasses. You can help change thousands of lives by choosing to buy a pair of Pala frames or partnering with us on our mission to see the world better.”



Did you know?

- Sierra Leone is one of the poorest countries in the world
- It is ranked 182 out of 189 based on health, education and living standards¹⁰
- Life expectancy is just 54 years and over half the population lives on less than \$1.25 a day¹¹

¹⁰ UN Human Development Index

¹¹ United Nations Development Programme



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