

The background of the entire image is a close-up photograph of a person's hands reaching down into a dense field of tall, dry, golden-brown grass or crops. The hands are positioned as if picking or examining the plants. The lighting is bright and slightly overexposed, creating a soft, warm glow.

indeg o ★ a f r i c a

**Design for Social Innovation
Final Report**

May 2023
Columbia University

Executive Summary & Table of Contents

This document summarizes the work of Columbia University's Design for Social Innovation (DFSI) team working with Indego Africa and acts as the team's official transition document.

This document provides detail on the solutions the DFSI team developed and highlights what recommendations we have, why we are making these recommendations, and how our recommendations can be implemented by the Indego Africa team in the future.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Project Overview](#)

[Our Journey](#)

[Generate Phase](#)

[Prototype Phase](#)

[Website](#)

[Product Tags](#)

[Infographic](#)

[Conclusion & Next Steps](#)

Project Overview

BACKGROUND

Indego Africa is a non-profit organization that connects artisans in Rwanda and Ghana to a global market for their handmade products. With income generated through product sales as well as donations, they invest in the educational development of these artisans through vocational, business, and technology training programs, promoting economic empowerment and independence.

THE CHALLENGE

The pandemic upended Indego Africa's model of a 50/50 sales to donations ratio as Indego Africa's wholesale clients closed their stores and product purchase orders declined. The pandemic also slowed Indego Africa's ability to solicit donations through in-person fundraising.

The Columbia DFSI team supported Indego Africa in identifying ways to engage more customers and donors, increase brand visibility, and facilitate clearer, more streamlined communication about Indego Africa's work and impact.

How might we get more people to engage with Indego Africa? (both sales and donations)

Our Journey

Over the course of four months, the DFSI team followed the Human-Centered Design process to **explore** Indego Africa's current circumstances, **reframe** the challenge based on stakeholder insights, **generate** ideas for solutions, and **prototype** those solutions.



After conducting **34 stakeholder interviews** and performing a benchmark analysis, we identified several key insights about how customers and donors engage with Indego Africa:

- Customers and donors care about seeing the local and person-level impact
- Distinction between sales and non-profit activities can be unclear and confusing
- Donors need a clear, quick, and enticing reason to support an organization
- Customers care about product first, social impact second; Indego Africa's product line and brand image is perceived as high-end and unique



We reframed our original challenge to better focus on branding and communications:
"How might we encourage customers and donors to tangibly connect with Indego Africa's mission?"

Our design principles sought to ensure that people will want to buy or donate to Indego Africa and will feel like their support directly impacts the lives of the artisans. In addition, Indego Africa will communicate their work in a concise and compelling way through different channels of communication to reach specific audiences and better communicate their message to the right people at the right time.



To address our reframed challenge and the stakeholder needs we identified through interviews, we generated numerous ideas for solutions that would address our chosen "How might we?" statement. We decided to focus on fostering a tangible connection between Indego Africa and its customers and donors.

We brainstormed nearly two dozen possible solutions. We then narrowed them down to the solutions that would be most **feasible** and **impactful**.



We developed prototypes for a redesigned **website**, new **product tags**, and several new approaches for an **infographic**.

We gathered feedback on our prototypes during an in-class solution showcase, as well as by conducting nearly a dozen user interviews. In combination with feedback received from the Indego Africa team, we iterated on these prototypes, focusing most of our attention on developing the website.

Generate Phase Overview

REFRAMED CHALLENGE

How might we encourage customers and donors to tangibly connect with Indego Africa's mission?

Based on our reframed challenge and collected insights from interviews and desk research, we started our "Generate" phase with a brainstorming and ideation session to identify potential solutions.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS SUMMARY

**Product, Packaging,
& Making it
Personal**

- Include tags with artisan's pictures, names, stories, and/or cooperatives on the products they make
- Let customers/donors "follow" a specific cooperative to get updates on their achievements (for donors) or news about new product releases (for customers)
- Give customers the ability to personalize their orders
- Create a blog for artisan or specific cooperative updates
- Include cooperative updates/achievements in newsletters

**Communications &
Marketing
Campaigns**

- Redesign front web page so it better aligns with their communication goals (what they want to communicate, to whom, when, and how).
- Clarify where a donor's donation will go and how it will be used
- Produce a documentary on the story of the artisans and organization's impact
- Use influencers and celebrities as ambassadors

Analogous Solutions

To narrow down our solutions to those that we would later prototype and iterate on, we performed further research on **analogous problems and solutions**. These analogous situations helped us refine our ideas about quick and effective communication of Indego Africa's mission, model and impact.

Shriners Hospital



Shriners
Children's™

Problem 1: How do we tell our story in a meaningful and memorable way?

Solution 1: Use a recent patient as the sole spokesperson (who is also a success story) to show impact. Use the same patient in all ads for consistency and identifiability.

How we can apply these insights to Indego's Challenge?

- Use an internal spokesperson - shine a light on certain artisans and their achievements
- Putting a face to Indego can create a deeper emotional connection

Problem 2: How do we get continuous support from people rather than one-time donations or purchases?

Solution 2: Suggest monthly donations and evidence of where the donation is going/who it's going to affect.

How we can apply these insights to Indego's Challenge?

- Give donors a better idea of where their donations are going
- Specify a threshold amount to give in order to achieve a specific goal
- Include the option to sponsor a cooperative or a specific reason to donate monthly

Analogous Solutions

Timberland's Tags



Sports Franchises



Problem: How do we increase product awareness?

Solution: Create a tag (with logo) that is so special people don't want to remove it, or they keep it to use as something else (ornament, key chain, etc.). It is special enough that the tag itself becomes part of the experience/purchase.

How we can apply these insights to Indego's Challenge?

- Create tag/additional packing material that becomes part of how Indego tells its story (which artisan/cooperative made it, how it was made, etc.)
- Something people think is very special and is also identifiable as Indego's (because of logo or shape, etc.)
- Highlight Indego's handcrafted and natural materials with a small, simple grass-woven lace square/textile and include with hang tag
- Use this as a way to highlight the quality of the product

Problem: How do we encourage our fans to feel more loyal to our team?

Solution: Offering merchandise lets fans feel more loyal to their team and can increase their sense of loyalty with each purchase.

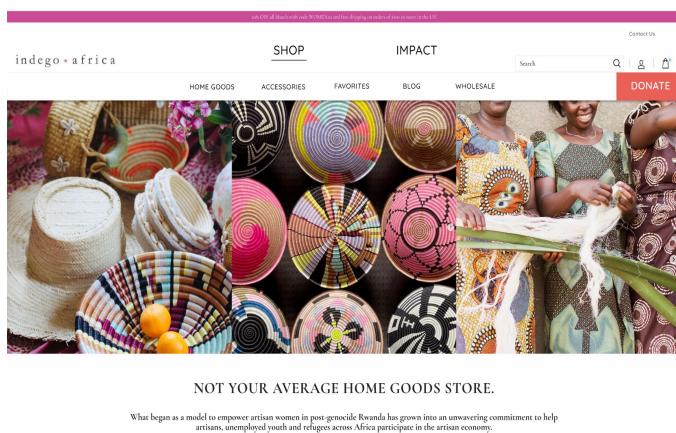
How we can apply these insights to Indego's Challenge?

- Let customers identify with certain cooperatives by specifying which cooperative makes which product and having the option of receiving updates/achievements about the respective cooperatives in newsletters. This way, a favorite product can lead to a sense of loyalty for that cooperative
- Let customers know when new products are coming out from their chosen cooperatives, generating long term commitment in purchasing
- Let donors donate to specific projects with more specific information about where the money is going and how it is being used

Prototype Phase Overview

The DFSI team developed two primary prototypes for tackling the challenge of “creating tangible connections between customers & donors and the organization’s mission.” Recognizing that customers and donors have different priorities, we proposed a **website redesign** and a **product tag** inspired by analogous solutions to appeal to both these groups. After learning that the Indego Africa team would be working on a product tag themselves, the DFSI team focused the remaining time on refining the website prototype.

Website Redesign



Product Tags



Why redesign the website?

Having a well designed website is essential for any organization in communicating its message. This is especially true for Indego Africa because of the more intricate business model. A website redesign allows for improved communication between its two audience types (customers and donors) and better distinguishes between sales and non-profit activities.

A well-designed website not only provides a comprehensive overview of Indego Africa's mission, values, and impact to potential donors, but also enhances the shopping experience of customers. By establishing a unique and thoughtful website with more enriching content, Indego Africa can better connect customers and donors to their mission.

Why product tags?

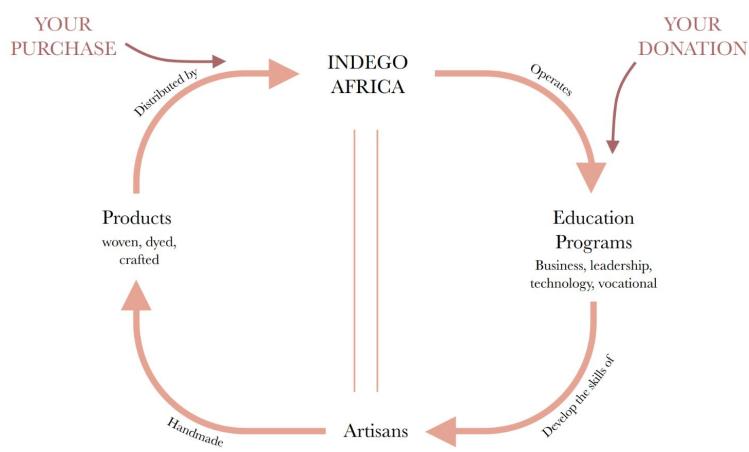
Product tags serve as a crucial means of identification and point of contact for customers, and can provide a snapshot of information at first glance. Since customers care about the quality of Indego Africa's products, a well designed product tag can function as a medium to showcase this quality while also introducing the customer to Indego's story.

By providing clear and concise information about the product and the artisan who made it, a product tag can highlight Indego Africa's impact. It can help educate customers about the value Indego brings to communities while building an emotional connection that can promote brand loyalty. A well designed product tag could also educate customers about ethical and sustainable production practices and increase their awareness and interest in buying socially responsible products. With a product tag, customers could share their positive experiences to friends and family, enhancing brand image.

Prototype Phase Overview

The DFSI team developed an **additional prototype for an infographic** based on conversations about how Indego Africa's model might further be clarified for customers and donors. The goal is to provide customers and donors with a clear understanding of Indego Africa's mission and impact. The infographic complements the other prototypes to present a comprehensive understanding of Indego Africa's work.

Infographics



Why an Infographic?

Infographics are like storyboards: they have the power to convey information in a simple and engaging way, enabling an organization to communicate ideas quickly. With a thoughtfully designed infographic, Indego Africa can quickly and succinctly communicate its message to customers and donors, even showing them the impact that their support would have.

The role and benefit

Infographics on product tags: Including an infographic on product tags can effectively demonstrate the connection between customers/donors, Indego Africa, and the artisan partners. It can engage customers, potentially generating greater interest in the organization and its mission. By visually presenting complex information in a clear and concise manner, infographics simplify the messaging and can quickly introduce customers to Indego's story.

Infographics on Indego Africa's website: Infographics on the website provide a visually appealing and (potentially interactive) way for customers and donors to learn about Indego Africa's mission and impact. By combining a clear overview of the infographics with in-depth information about the brand's mission, history, and values, the website can establish trust among both customers and donors. Another way of using infographics on Indego's website is by making things interactive, such as introducing certain things when hovered over, to maximize engagement.

Website

FEEDBACK OVERVIEW

During interviews with customers and donors, we received the following main points of feedback on Indego Africa's website:

- The current website is not intuitive to navigate and things for donors are hard to find
- Customers want this to be a “feel good,” meaningful experience when buying a special, handcrafted basket
- Both customers and donors want to feel that they are really making a difference

KEY PRINCIPLES FOR DESIGN

- Be **concise**. Keeping information in bite-size chunks generates interest in an easy-to-consume way. Great if this can be done interactively
- Customers want this shopping experience to be a **meaningful, “feel good” experience**, not just something to check off their to-do list
 - Keep it visual
 - Make things interactive (hovering, carousels, etc.)
 - Show that their purchase/contribution is creating real impact
- **Including the artisans** increases both customers and donors’ sense of connection (images, quotes, stories, data points of how their lives have changed)

Website

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CHANGES

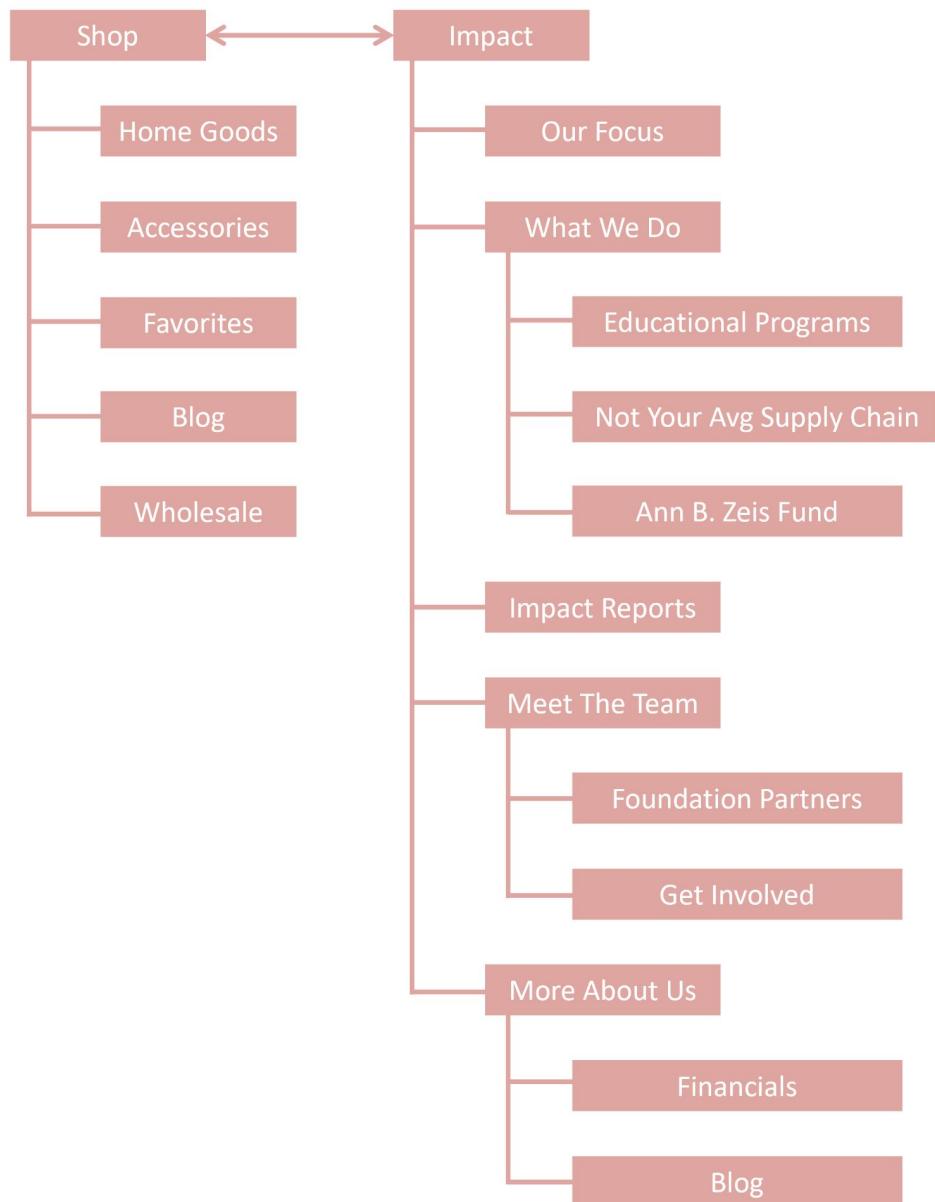
- **Homepage**
 - New homepage layout, more inline with other retail websites
 - Distinguished the Donate button from other customer pages
 - Added Luxury brand section for credibility that links to draft of page that “click here” would take you to.
 - Brought the tagline up above the fold, reframed it for customer’s perspective
 - Included images/sketches to existing quotes, some way to build on the connection that supplements the quote. (number of children, age, etc.)
- **Luxury Brand Collaborators page**
 - Example of what this could look like. Needs additional information on other collaborations.
- **Donation Page**
 - Greater focus on the artisan Community
 - Included incentivization tiers next to each \$ amount to satisfy donor’s wish to see their impact as well as encourage upselling
- **Product Page**
 - Broke up chunks of text
 - Introduced interaction - hovering over icons
 - Could include images of the back/bottom of products to help communicate quality
- **Donor’s IMPACT side of website**
 - Designed a visual hierarchy for where & how users can find information
 - Congregates distant pages that are currently several clicks away into one visual structure that users can easily navigate. The structure lets the user know where they currently are and where they can go

Website Architecture

NEW INFORMATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL HIERARCHY

During our initial interviews with customers and donors, we heard that Indego's website is hard to navigate and that it is difficult to find information.

We realized we could improve the navigation and streamline how Indego communicates its work by reorganizing the information hierarchy. Below is our proposed information and organizational hierarchy, corresponding to the site's pages.



Website: Homepage

The screenshot shows the Indego Africa homepage. At the top, there's a purple header bar with the text "indegree + africa". Below it is a white navigation bar with tabs for "SHOP" (highlighted with an orange box), "IMPACT", "HOME GOODS", "ACCESSORIES", "FAVORITES", "BLOG", and "WHOLESALE". A red "DONATE" button is located in the top right corner of the navigation area. The main content area features a large image of various handwoven baskets and a woman working with thread. Below this, a box contains the text "NOT YOUR AVERAGE HOME GOODS STORE." and "What began as a model to empower artisan women in post-genocide Rwanda has grown into an unwavering commitment to help artisans, unemployed youth and refugees across Africa participate in the artisan economy." To the right of this box are four product categories: "SUN HATS", "SIGNATURE PLATEAU", "WOODEN ACCENTS", and "FLOOR BASKETS". Below these are "BEST SELLING PRODUCTS" featuring four items: "Woven Trinket Basket", "Mini Plateau Neon", "Mini Pink Diamond Plateau", and "Mini Pink Geo Plateau". Further down, there's a section titled "INDEGO AFRICA COLLABORATORS" featuring logos for LOEWE, Madewell, SHINOLA, TORY BURCH, and ANTHROPOLOGIE. A link "To learn more about our partnerships, click here." is provided. At the bottom, there's a section titled "WHAT OUR ARTISAN PARTNERS ARE SAYING" with three quotes from women, each accompanied by a photo. The quotes are:

- "Education means so much to me. It is the most important legacy we can leave our descendants & the most powerful tool we can use to change people's lives." — Marie Rose, Akoko Cooperative
- "One thing I've learned is that we can achieve so much more together than we ever can alone." — Esperance, Akoko Cooperative
- "I've learned to think big! My self-esteem has gone up and I am proud of the dignified and empowered woman I've become." — Jacqueline, Twigiboko Cooperative

At the very bottom, there are links for "INDEGO AFRICA", "MENU", "NEWSLETTER", "LET'S BE FRIENDS", and footer information including payment method icons (PayPal, American Express, Visa) and copyright text.

Moved and changed the Donate button to differentiate it from the other sub-pages. While on the SHOP side of the website, this acts as a reminder that Indego Africa is not, in fact, your average home goods store. Or, if the customer does not know Indego's real mission, then this is a prompt to learn more.

In response to feedback about how navigating the website was difficult, we redesigned the layout to clearly segregate between customers' needs and donors' needs with a SHOP side and an IMPACT side for each, respectively.

In response to feedback that "non-profit" was clinical in the tagline in addition to receiving mixed messaging overall, we reframed this for an e-commerce customer's perspective—that of someone approaching this e-commerce website as an e-commerce customer, looking to buy home goods, unaware of any other organizational activities. This reframe gently guides them from their current understanding of Indego Africa (a home goods store) to their larger mission behind selling these products.

We introduced a luxury brand partners section to the homepage for additional credibility, both in terms of style/design but also that this is a well run, responsible organization that you can trust. There is a small amount of context here with a link to learn more if interested.

We added images of the artisans to the quotes already on the homepage in response to feedback that having an image of the person helped create a greater sense of connection.

Website: Collaborator Details

INDEGO AFRICA COLLABORATORS

Indego Africa works with iconic brands to create specially tailored products—continuing our efforts to empower women artisans in Rwanda and Ghana, and promote sustainable economic development in these communities.

LOEWE

Madewell

SHINOLA

TORY BURCH

ANTHROPOLOGIE

To learn more about our partnerships, [click here](#).

The screenshot shows the Indego Africa website's "IMPACT" page. At the top, there is a purple banner with the text "20% OFF all March with code WOMEN20 and free shipping on orders of \$100 or more in the US". Below the banner, the Indego Africa logo is on the left, followed by navigation links: SHOP (with sub-links HOME GOODS, ACCESSORIES, FAVORITES), IMPACT (with sub-links BLOG, WHOLESALE), and a search bar. In the center, there is a large orange box containing the Tory Burch logo and the Indego Africa logo. To the right of this box is a yellow callout box with the following text: "From the home-page, users can click to learn more about Indego Africa's partnerships with luxury brands. Partnership-specific pages, like this one for Tory Burch, can be built out to provide more context on each partnership and whether and how customers can shop from these partnerships."

Tory Burch collaborated with Indego Africa, an Artisan Guild member, to create the Reva Straw Tote Bag. The tote bag was handwoven in the Bolgatanga region of Ghana using locally-grown elephant grass. The collaboration provided steady income for 25 Bolga weaver women for three months and helped to empower women through craft-based employment. The partnership is a commitment to sourcing from artisans and consistent orders that have a positive impact on the women and their communities.



INDEGO AFRICA

Indego Africa's market-driven approach to artisan empowerment helps transform the lives of women, youth, and refugees across Africa.

MENU

Financials
FAQ
Wholesale
Stockists

Get Involved
Shop All
Shipping & Returns
Contact Us

NEWSLETTER

your@email.com

Subscribe

LET'S BE FRIENDS

Website: Product Page

Moving these alternate images to the side allows for the impact section to be raised further up on the page, reducing scrolling and increasing what is visible above the fold.

The screenshot shows a product page for an "Abstract Form Plateau Blue" basket. On the left, there's a vertical sidebar with five small images: a circular basket, a woven bowl, a blue t-shirt, a vase with flowers, and two women. The main product image is a large, circular, handwoven basket with concentric bands of blue, black, and tan. To the right of the product image, the product title "ABSTRACT FORM PLATEAU BLUE" is displayed with a heart icon. Below it is a star rating of 4.5 stars and a link to "9 Reviews". The price is listed as "\$65.00 USD" with a quantity selector set to 1 and an "Add to cart" button. A secondary box on the right contains icons for "ARTISAN CRAFTED", "HANDWOVEN", "NATURAL FIBERS", "RWANDA", "SUSTAINABLE", and "WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT". Below these icons is a text box stating: "Indego Africa's products are handmade by talented artisans, reflecting cultural heritage while supporting sustainable development." At the bottom of the page are social sharing links for Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Google+, and Email. A red "DONATE" button is located at the top right of the page.

The screenshot shows a section titled "Support women artisans in Africa by purchasing Indego Africa's handmade products - every purchase makes an immediate difference in empowering communities in need". Below this is a photograph of a woman working with woven materials. To the right are three boxes containing statistics:

- 82%** of our artisan partners are able to save money for the future.
- 90%** of our artisan partners can afford to send their children to school.
- 94%** of our artisan partners have health insurance for their entire families.

To the right of these boxes is a vertical column of text: "This section could also be made into a carousel with additional data points (and an arrow to click through to add interaction while continuing to keep information in bite-size chunks.)".

In response to feedback about how seeing their personal contribution/purchase will make an impact makes it more likely that they will buy or donate. Since this is on the SHOP side for e-commerce customers, these data points are directly related to how the artisans' wages have improved and how this has in turn improved the artisan's lives. It does not mention Indego Africa's educational programs because of the distinction between donations going to educational programs and purchases going toward raw materials and artisan wages.

Website: Product Page (continued)

The screenshot shows a product page for a basket. At the top, there are three tabs: "DESCRIPTION" (which is active and highlighted in orange), "IMPACT", and "CARE INSTRUCTIONS". Below the tabs, the product description is displayed, followed by a bulleted list of features and a note about size variation.

One of our best-selling signature plateaus baskets made in Rwanda with a one-of-a-kind handwoven design.

- 12" W x 9" H
- Hand-dyed in a variety of colors including light blue, black, and natural
- Made from strands of sisal and raffia wrapped around bunches of sweetgrass
- Includes a loop on the back for hanging
- Made from locally sourced fibers
- The ideal housewarming gift and the perfect shape and size to be used as a fruit basket hung in a cluster on a gallery wall or simply placed as an accent piece in your favorite nook around the house or office.

*Due to the handmade quality, some size and color variation may occur.

We propose that the current “Description” and “Care Instructions” tabs do not change and that they stay in the same place. However, we propose removing the “Impact” tab in the following way...

The Impact tab would be broken up into six bite-sized chunks with an interactive component—as you hover over any of the six icons, a single sentence or sentence fragment will appear. This breaks up the two paragraphs currently under the “Impact” tab, making it easier to read (and thus more likely to be read), and adds an interactive feature, focusing on creating a unique and memorable experience.

This was in response to interview feedback that customers are not going to read large chunks of text while shopping. Also, it takes into consideration the feedback that this point in the customer journey is an opportune time to educate the e-commerce customer about Indego’s mission. If an Indego Africa customer is unfamiliar with the organization’s mission, having the “Impact” tab broken up into tiny, easily digestible pieces is a good way to give them a brief overview without interrupting their shopping experience.

The screenshot shows the same product page as above, but with the "IMPACT" tab removed. Instead, there are six small icons arranged in a grid, each with a corresponding label: "ARTISAN CRAFTED", "HANDWOVEN", "NATURAL FIBERS", "RWANDA", "SUSTAINABLE", and "WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT". Each icon has a small description text below it. The "ARTISAN CRAFTED" icon is highlighted with a larger image below it showing a close-up of the basket's texture.

ABSTRACT FORM PLATEAU BLUE

★★★★☆ 9 Reviews

\$65.00 USD

Quantity 1 Add to cart

ARTISAN CRAFTED

HANDWOVEN

NATURAL FIBERS

RWANDA

SUSTAINABLE

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Indego Africa's products are handmade by talented artisans, reflecting cultural heritage while supporting sustainable development.

SHARE

The “Description” and “Care Instructions” tabs stay the same on the product page. This image shows what it looks like when the mouse is hovering over one of these six icons.

Website: Donation Page

“Community”-focused visual, above the fold, in response to feedback about liking to see the evidence of their donation in a community setting.

Incentivized tiers, in response to both small and large donors better responding when they can really understand (and believe) that their donation will make a difference.

The screenshot shows the Indego Africa website's donation page. At the top, there's a purple banner with a discount code and a 'Contact Us' link. Below it is a navigation bar with links for 'SHOP', 'IMPACT', 'Search', and a red 'DONATE' button. The main content area features a large image of a classroom where women are attending a business training session. To the right of the image is a 'MAKE A DONATION' section. This section includes a brief mission statement and a 'Donate Today!' form. The form offers four donation levels: \$25, \$35 (which is selected), \$50, and \$250, each with a description of how the funds will be used to support artisan partners in Ghana and Rwanda. A 'Custom Amount:' field is also available. The entire donation section is highlighted with a thick orange border.

WHY DONATE TO INDEGO AFRICA?

Purchasing Indego Africa products directly supports and enables the work of our artisan partners in Africa. Our unique education and skills development programs provide artisan woman as well as young people in Africa with the training they need to build and sustain independent livelihoods.

To read more about our education programs and their impact, click here.

Indego Africa is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. All donations are tax-deductible. EIN: 20-5874831

Provides more context on this page in response to feedback about easy access to information and not having enough context otherwise.

Indego Africa
helps transform
Africa.

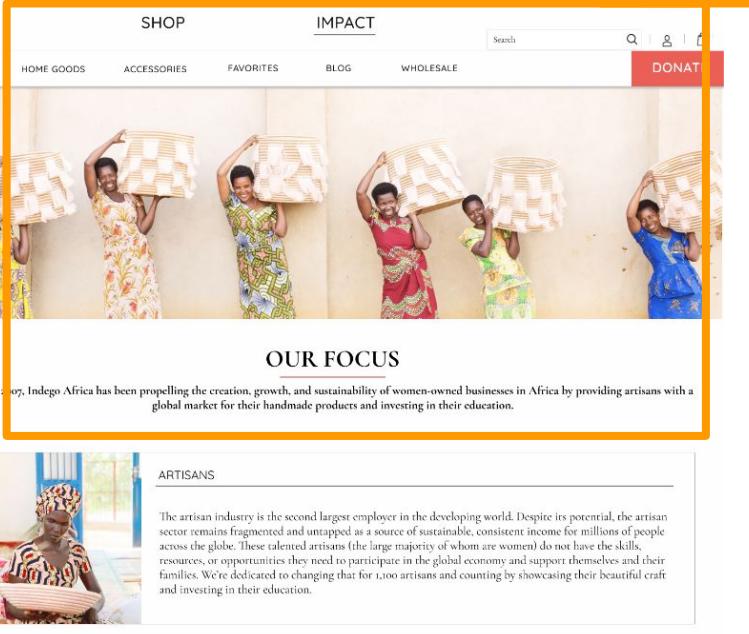
NEWSLETTER

LET'S BE FRIENDS

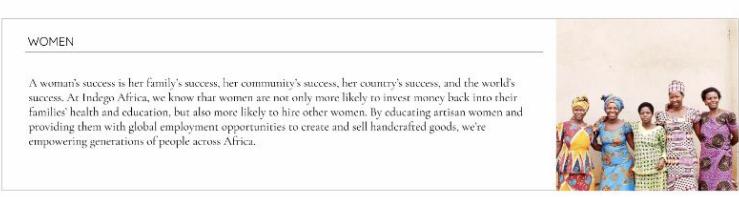
[Facebook](#) [Pinterest](#) [Twitter](#) [Instagram](#)

Website: The New “About” Page

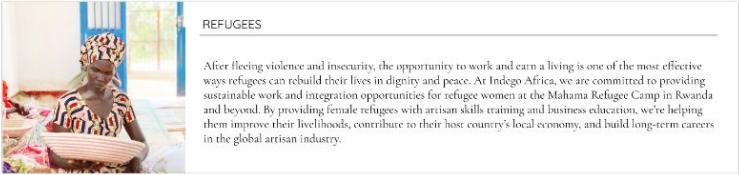
With CTF, all Marches funds WOMEN and the shipping method of your choice in the US.



The Impact section features a large image of women artisans holding woven baskets, followed by a heading "OUR FOCUS" and a brief description of the organization's mission to support women-owned businesses in Africa.



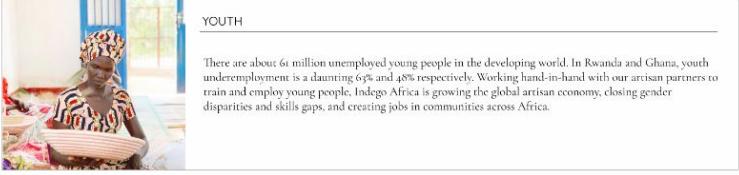
The Women section includes a photo of a woman working at a loom and a heading "ARTISANS". The text discusses the artisan industry's role as the second largest employer in developing countries and the challenges faced by artisans.



The Refugees section features a photo of a woman in a refugee camp and a heading "REFUGEES". The text highlights the organization's commitment to providing sustainable work opportunities for refugee women.



The Africa section includes a photo of a group of women and a heading "AFRICA". The text describes the organization's partnership with artisan partners in Africa and the criteria for selecting partner countries.



The Youth section features a photo of a woman working and a heading "YOUTH". The text discusses the high unemployment rates among young people in developing countries and Indego Africa's efforts to train and employ young artisans.

Redesigning the layout of the website created two new “hubs,” one for customers and another for donors. This page acts as the new homepage for donors. It quickly describes Indego Africa’s purpose, strategy, and impact with a clear path to learn more.

Another response to feedback that the current website was not easy to navigate and/or find certain information, this new organizational and visual hierarchy clearly lays it all out for the user.

Website: Impact Subpage

SEARCH SEARCH AND FILTER SEARCH AND FILTER SEARCH AND FILTER

indegoo • africa

SHOP IMPACT

SEARCH

HOME GOODS ACCESSORIES FAVORITES BLOG WHOLESALE DONATE

Our Focus: Women Artisans Africa Youth

What We Do: Artisan Partners Not Your Average Supply Chain Give & Zeta Fund

Impact Report

Meet the Team: Artisan Partners Give & Zeta Fund More About Us: Financials Staff

NOT YOUR AVERAGE SUPPLY CHAIN

From local, raw materials to handcrafted, finished products - we're supporting the integrity of artisan-made goods and creating opportunities for the women who make them.

Local Materials

We help preserve traditional craft by sourcing natural fibers from the communities where we work.

Craft matters. Each of our products is carefully handcrafted using time-honored, heritage techniques. From raffia-sewing and wood-carving, to hand-embroidery and wool-spinning, we collaborate with our artisan partners to create products that support their incredible talents, showcase the storied histories of their crafts, and demonstrate Indego's African ancestry, and celebrate Indego's dedication to high-quality, modern design. Our artisan partners take pride in the production of our handcrafted products, and their skill ensures the reliable quality of our brand.

Time-Honored Techniques

We celebrate handcraft work by investing in rich cultural traditions and diverse artisan skills.

Sustainable Impact

We're carving out an ethical space for artisans in the retail industry and creating a more sustainable future for all.

Indego is here to stay. We reduce waste in our production process by using recycled, upcycled materials, repurposed fabric scraps, and other salvaged items. We've cut our carbon emissions by scheduling large batched shipments from Africa to New York in order to reduce our carbon footprint, and we pay our partners fair, consistent wages for their work. On average, our partners earn 40% of the wholesale price of our items, vs. 5-10% in traditional retail. That's enduring impact.

Transparent Partnerships

We're creating jobs for artisans and educating women & youth across Africa.

Our artisan partners have big dreams and big plans. We invest 10% of our profits into their education because we believe in their ability to achieve (and exceed) their goals. We mentor them with the innovative designs, skills training, and market opportunities they need to succeed and grow their own businesses. It's because of the long-term, transparent relationships we build with our artisan partners, that we can deliver beautiful and consciously-crafted products to customers around the world.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HOW DO YOU FIND THE ARTISANS AND COOPERATIVES YOU WORK WITH?

Our local roots are on our eyes, and on the ground! They are constantly seeking out new partners to work with and playing sandwicher between our design, client voices, and artisans throughout Rwanda and Ghana. We are always looking for new raw materials and artisanal skills. We rely on word of mouth, recommendations from our current partners, and the truly expert knowledge of all-things-around us from our teams in Rwanda and Ghana to discover new techniques and materials. We identify potential partner cooperatives based on their skills and our product needs, and encourage our Vocational Training students to form their very own cooperatives!

HOW DO YOU ENSURE THAT THE ARTISANS YOU WORK WITH ARE PAID FAIRLY?

Providing income-earning opportunities for our artisan partners is at the heart of Indego's mission. We provide our partners with fair, steady wages that honor their time and skill that go into making each and every product by hand, with heart. Price per item is agreed upon between our artisan partners and production teams when a purchase is placed, taking into account the cost of materials and the number of days it takes to make each product.

YOUR MISSION IS TO EMPOWER ARTISAN WOMEN, BUT I SEE SOME PICTURES OF MEN ON YOUR SITE. WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH THAT?

You're right—our mission is to empower artisan women in Africa who lack access to resources and opportunities simply because of where they were born and often because of their gender. The vast majority of the artisans that we work with in Africa are women. That said, we're all about inclusion, and don't discriminate against men in the communities where we work. Other people in the communities where we work are often women, but we do see men working there, too. One reason is that some groups that are made up of men like this is because of the unique history of craft-making there... read more about it [here!](#) While we are excited to work with these talented male artisans, our core mission remains to empower and support artisan women. Moving forward, we are keeping our focus to integrate more women into the artisan scene in Ghana and helping Ghanian women become entrepreneurs and start their own artisan businesses.

WHAT DOES YOUR DESIGN PROCESS LOOK LIKE?

Part of Indego Africa's mission is to preserve the integrity of traditional craft and collaborate with the artisan women in creating beautiful, modern pieces that appeal to a global audience. In developing new shapes and colors for our apparel, accessories, and home decor collections, we are always looking for ways to incorporate traditional elements into our designs. Each collection is also designed to speak to our ever-expanding collection. Our procurement team on the ground in Rwanda and Ghana work closely with each cooperative to realize Indego's products. We're proud to be able to showcase the unique women's among all in each unique Indego product and bring that vision to the homes of customers globally.

The **IMPACT** side of the website congregates all the information about Indego Africa's mission, operations, and impact into one place. This makes it easier to find things as you can rely on everything being here in a labeled, structured hierarchy, within one of the drop down tabs on the left.

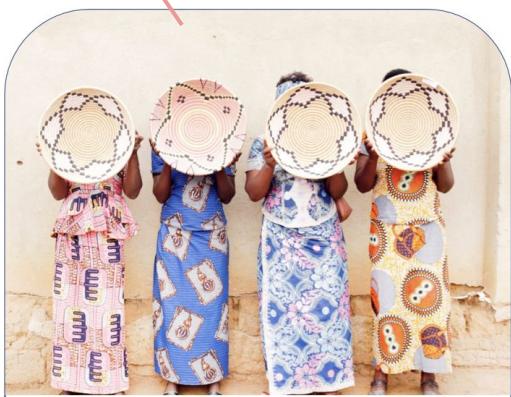
This page illustrates how the relevant FAQs (those unrelated to shipping/returns/etc.) can be included in this half of the website, the **IMPACT** half. Currently, they are only accessible from the bottom of the page combined with shipping/return questions.

The most important part of this side of the website is that it congregates distant pages/information and gives the user a visual hierarchy they can navigate.

Product Tags

Mock Up 1: Product Tag with Infographic

Picture of artisan community



in de go * afri ca

We invest in education and skills development programs to women-owned cooperatives.

Your purchase just helped women artisans in Africa rebuild and improve their lives.

An infographic on product tags can quickly convey Indego Africa's mission to customers and donors.



Clear and concise introduction of Indego's mission, in addition to how the customer's purchase would support the artisans

A short description coordinated with the infographic indicates "we are not your average home goods brand", and connects to the website to learn more and/or donate.

Feedback from potential customers

- The picture conveys a strong sense of connection to the community and provides a compelling representation of Indego Africa's mission and impact.
- While the infographic design resonates, it should emphasize the integral role of artisans in Indego Africa's impact.
- The message, "not your average home goods brand", and the impact is persuasive.

Product Tags

Mock Up 2: Product Tag with Artisan's Story

Simple colorful background

Artisan representation on product tags humanizes the brand and creates a personal connection

in de go * a fr i c a

We invest in education and skills development programs to women-owned cooperatives.

Your purchase just helped women artisans in Africa rebuild and improve their lives.

Hi, I am Claudine and I made your basket.

"Participating in Indego's Africa training program replaced the feeling of isolation from fleeing my country by trust and self-confidence. I love working together with other women while I weave to provide for my family and give them everything they need".

Mahama Refugee Camp

Same as mock up 1

Artisan stories on product tags further create a personal touch, highlight the impact of purchases on their lives and community and show partnership with refugee camp

[Learn more](#)

Feedback from potential customers

- The colorful background of the left picture is uninteresting as it lacks of meaningful content.
- Expect to see that every element on the product tag carries significance.
- The image of the artisan on the product tag makes the Indego africa brand feel more personal, which attracts customers to learn more about the artisans through the QR code.

Product Tags

Mock Up 3: Product Tag with Data

Picture of an artisan making Indego's product

indego * africa

Your purchase just helped women artisans in Africa rebuild and improve their lives.

Providing important information on Indego's cooperative partnerships and the impact on artisans and their families, supported by reliable and quantitative data.

This product was made by Congolese women artisans in the Akeza Cooperative.

-

Craft Matters

- 47% of our artisan partners are the sole breadwinners of their families.
- 94% of our Artisan Partners earned a steady income from working on Indego Africa purchase orders in the past 12 months.

Scan to find out more

Simplified text compared to mock up 1 and 2

Feedback from potential customers

- The picture of artisans crafting Indego Africa's product effectively showcases the handmade nature of the product and illustrates a positive outcome of the artisans' work.
- Several interviewees expressed that they found large numbers (like 94%) to be compelling, even without knowing specifics.

Product Tags

Further Iteration Based on Feedback

According to privacy laws in Rwanda, it is not permissible to display an artisan's appearance and name together on the product tag...

One possible solution to dealing with Rwanda's privacy laws is to use a sketch as a substitute for the original image of an artisan.



indego * africa

Hi, I am Claudine and I made your basket.

"Participating in Indego's Africa training program replaced the feeling of isolation from fleeing my country by trust and self-confidence. I love working together with other women while I weave to provide for my family and give them everything they need".

Umuco Cooperative



Learn more

indego * africa

We are not your average home goods brand.
We invest in education and skills development programs to women-owned cooperatives.
Your purchase just helped women artisans in Africa rebuild and improve their lives.



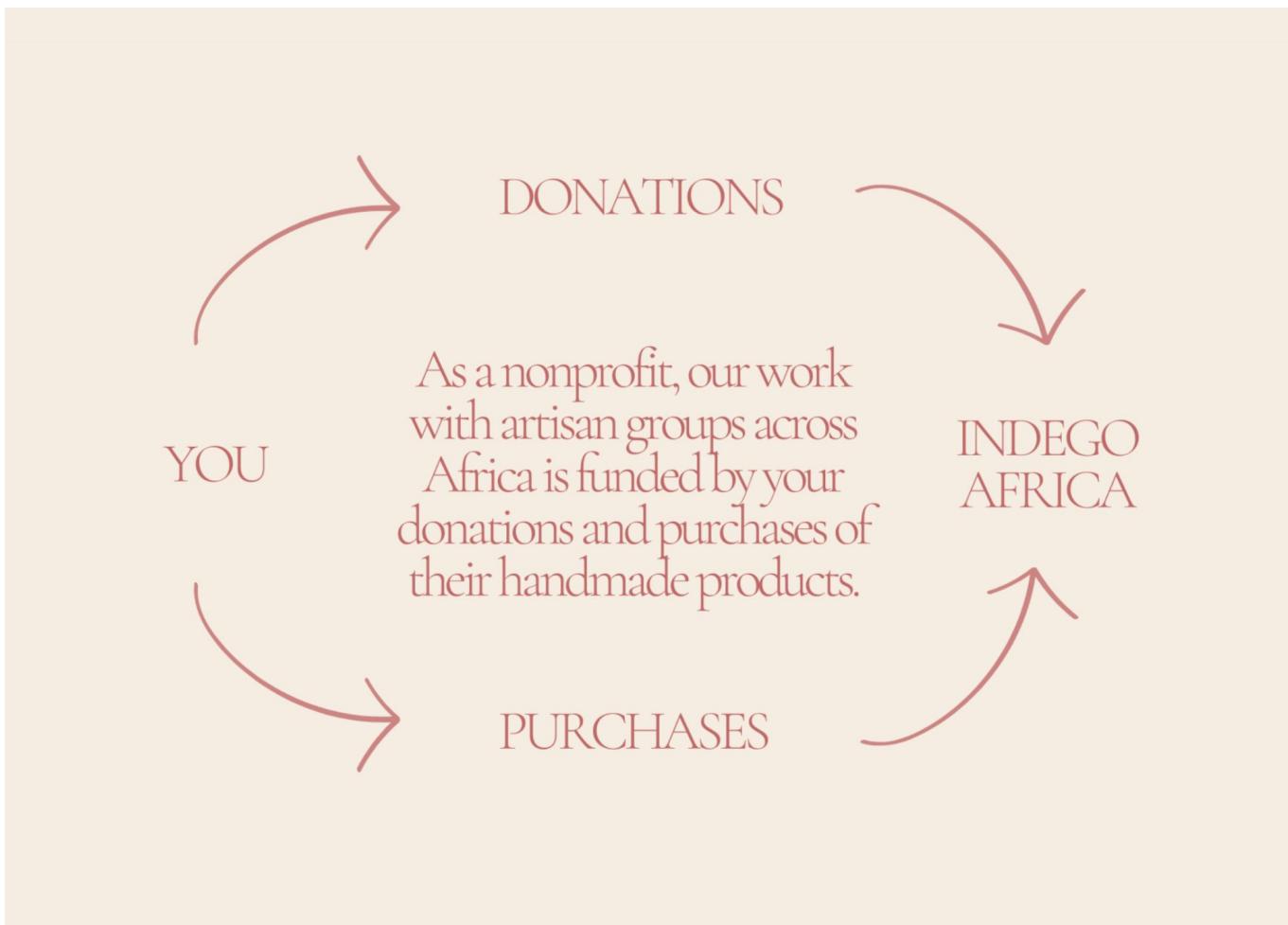
Scan to find out more

A straightforward design and simple message on the tag introduces customers to Indego's story without interrupting their shopping experience.

Infographic

In discussing how to better communicate Indego Africa's model to customers and donors and facilitate their feeling of connection to Indego Africa's mission, the Indego Africa team suggested designing a simple infographic that succinctly illustrates how both customers and donors enable Indego Africa's work.

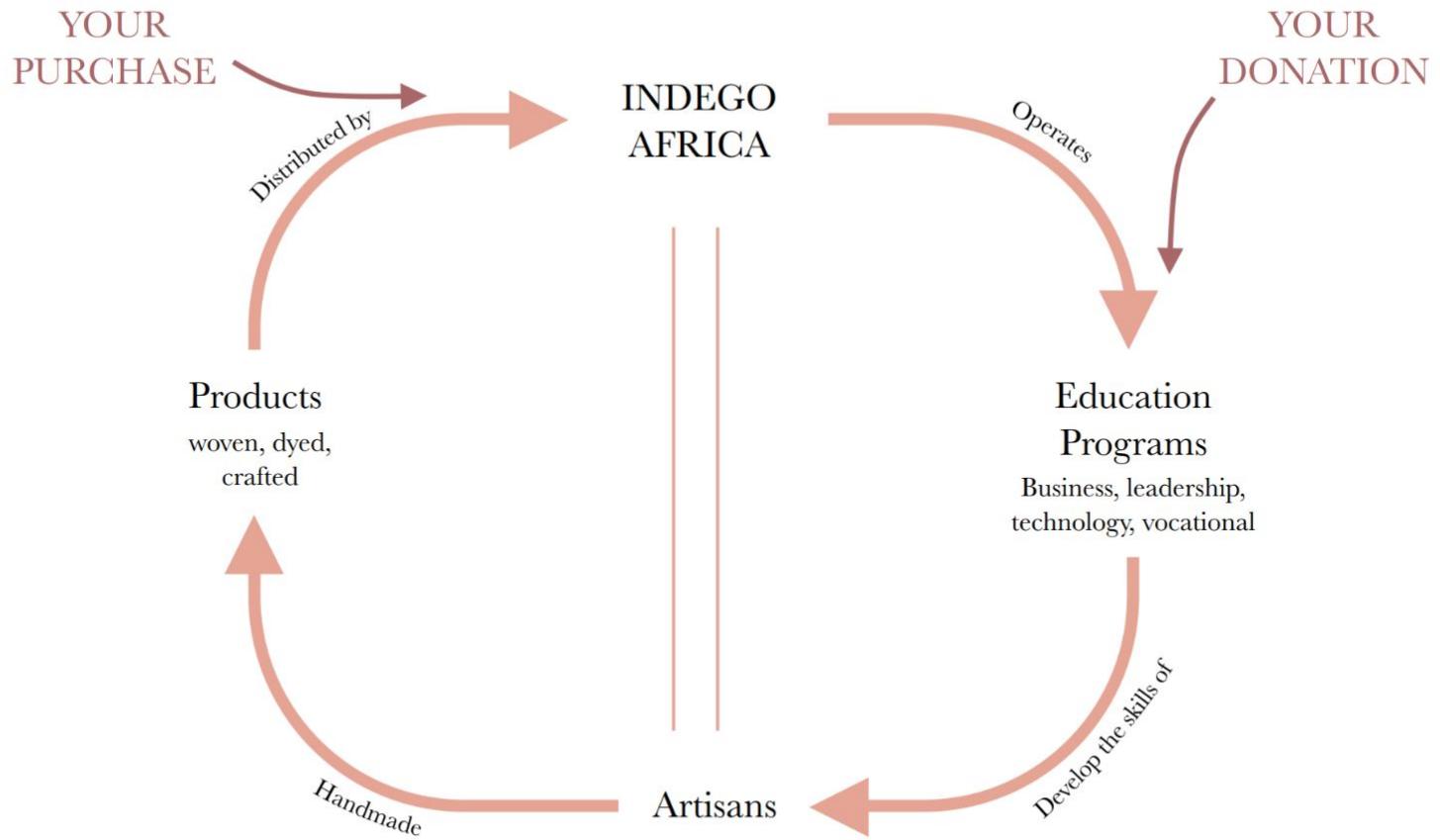
The original Indego Africa infographic, shown below, is too simple, not providing information on how donations and purchases support the work of Indego Africa or Indego's artisan partners.



The DFSI team's redesigned infographic options, shown on the following pages, clarify how donations and purchases enable Indego Africa's work and show customers and donors how their contribution leads to real impact for Indego's artisan partners.

Infographic

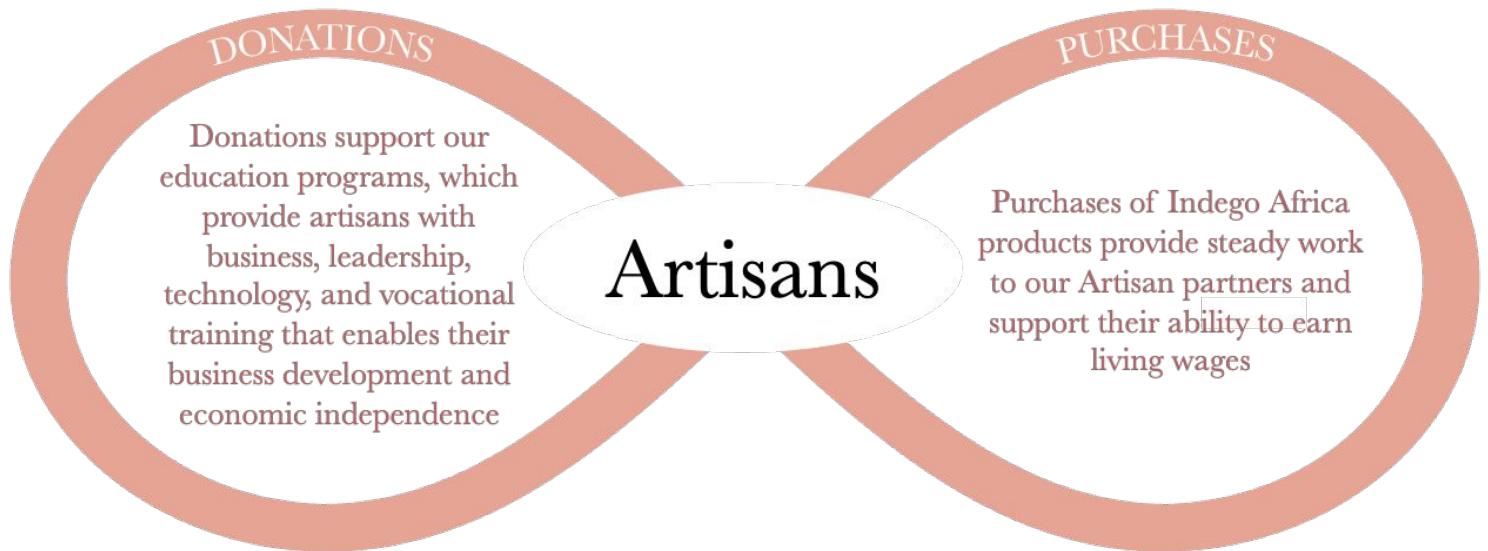
OPTION 1: Indego Africa Cycle



This infographic redesign option takes inspiration from Indego Africa's original infographic, borrowing its circular graphic motif. It identifies the entry points at which customers ("Your Purchase") and donors ("Your Donation") enter the cycle generated by Indego Africa's work. It further clarifies how Indego Africa's education programs and product sales are not distinct activities, but rather they are connected in that they support the development and independence of Indego's artisan partners.

Infographic

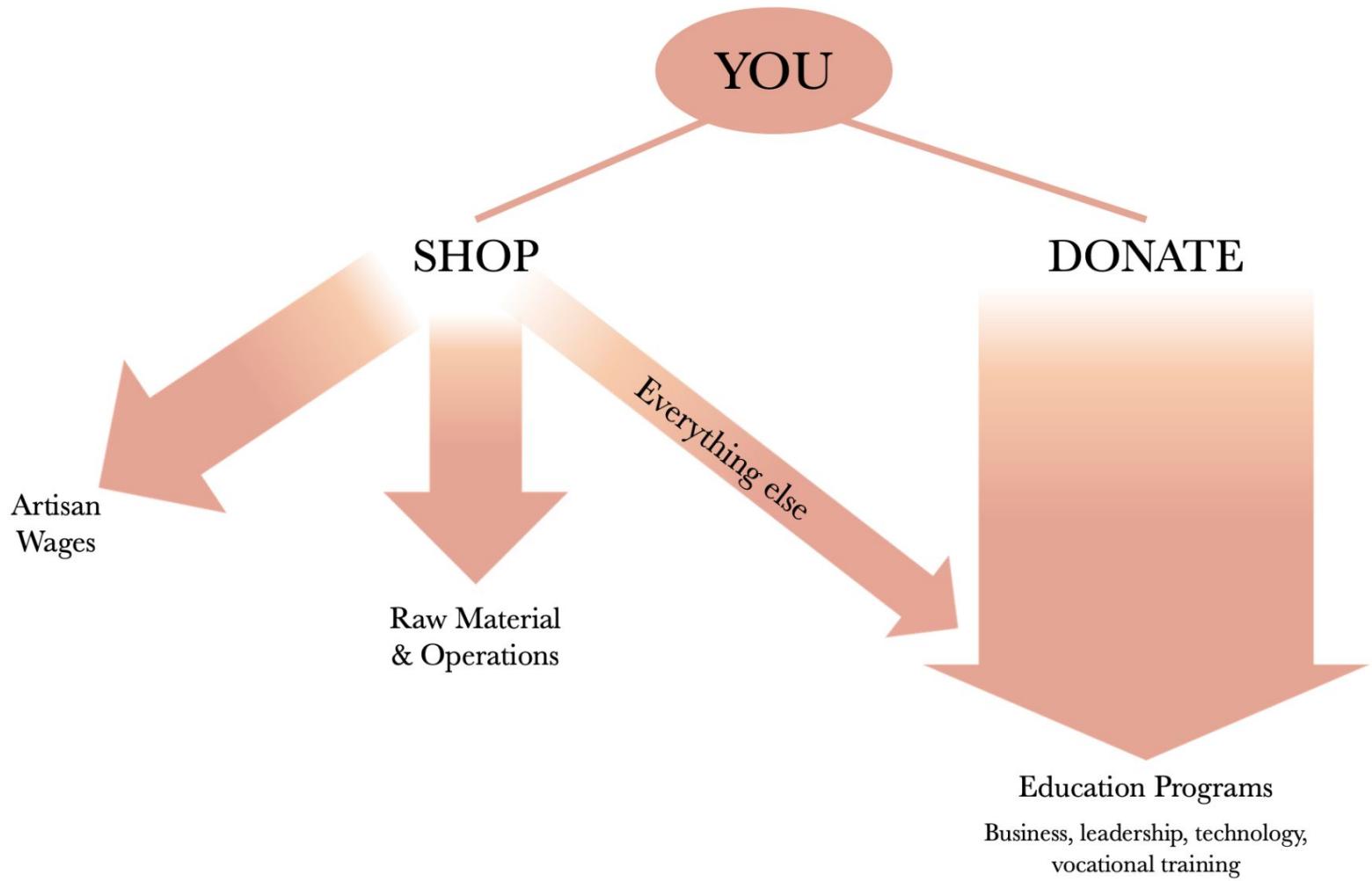
OPTION 2: Artisan Infinity Loop



This infographic redesign centers Indego Africa's work around Artisans and shows how, both through donations and purchases, individuals can make an impact on their lives. The infinity loop graphic motif shows Indego Africa's model as one that is interconnected and perpetually in motion.

Infographic

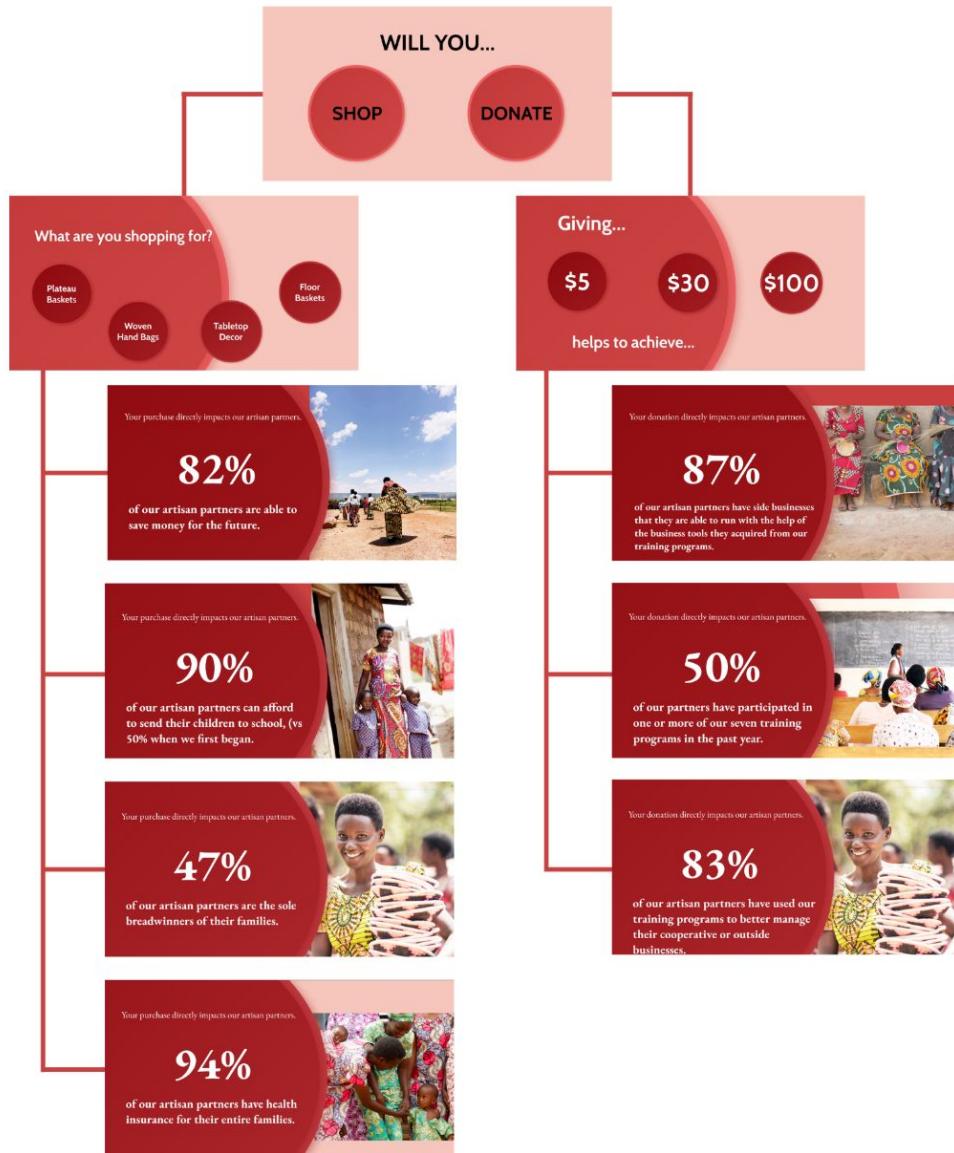
OPTION 3: Audience-centric Impact



This infographic redesign centers around the individual, who is either a donor or a customer. It explains how support of Indego Africa, either through shopping or donating, translates in terms of impact. The thickness of the arrows is intended to correspond to the breakdown of how funds are used (i.e. % of product sale revenue that supports artisan wages, % of product sale revenue that supports raw material and operations, etc.).

Infographic

OPTION 4: Interactive ([link here](#))



While the previous infographic redesign options were static infographics that could be showcased through all of Indego Africa's communication channels, we also developed an interactive infographic that could be hosted on Indego's website. By clicking through this interactive infographic, a user can become better informed on the ultimate impact of Indego Africa's work.

Conclusion & Next Steps

With this document, the DFSI team transitions its work to the Indego Africa team for further development and implementation. This document is accompanied by Figma mockups further detailing the design specifications of our website redesign solution.

To implement our solutions, Indego Africa can:

- Work with a web designer to update the Indego Africa website in accordance with our design, organization, and content suggestions
- Design, produce, and attach product tags to each Indego Africa product sold through both wholesale and e-commerce channels
- Incorporate the redesigned infographic into social media content, newsletters, and impact reports

In addition to providing concrete recommendations, our solutions can spur further conversation on how Indego Africa might rethink its approach to its other communication channels – newsletters, impact reports, social media, logo – to better engage customers and donors. For example, in the future, Indego Africa might consider:

- Developing a social media strategy that is rooted in (1) highlighting the quality of Indego Africa products, (2) creating an emotional connection through the sharing of artisan impact stories, and (3) clearly conveying the uniqueness of Indego Africa's model
- Designing a new impact report template that follows a logical structure and flow, similar to the new organizational structure of the Impact website page
- Make it easier for customers to donate to Indego Africa by incorporating an option to donate at the moment of product purchase (i.e. incorporate a donation option within Indego's Shopify setup)
- Redesign Indego Africa's logo to be more easily incorporated into various media and/or on products to be identifiably Indego's.

Design Team



Caroline Leighton
GS BA 2024

Caroline is pursuing her BA in Computer Science at Columbia University's School of General Studies. Before Columbia, she studied architecture and biology at Northeastern University, pausing her studies to gain experience at veterinary hospitals, dog shelters, and a primate refuge in Argentina. At the refuge, she helped capture injured/exploited Howler monkeys, aided in their recovery (before re-introducing them to the wild), and led tours to help finance the refuge. Caroline also worked in luxury retail and restaurants for over 6 years. Her diverse experiences spanning architectural design, client interaction, and travel taught her that she thrives in high pressure situations that demand creative, collaborative solutions despite limited resources. These experiences also allowed her to recognize her passion for understanding and improving the "user experience." She looks forward to combining her love of design, instinct for innovative problem solving, and enjoyment of teamwork at the intersection of UX/UI and human centered design.



Samantha Zalewska
SIPA MPA 2024

Samantha is a first-year Masters of Public Administration student at Columbia's School of International and Public Affairs. She is concentrating in economic and political development and specializing in leadership, innovation, and design. Before coming to SIPA, Samantha received her bachelor's degree in economics from Princeton University and worked as a consultant in Deloitte's Government & Public Services practice. Part of Deloitte's Customer Strategy & Applied Design group, Samantha supported U.S. federal and state government agencies in better understanding the needs of residents, leveraging human-centered design principles and artifacts (journey maps, personas, and market maps) to develop recommendations for targeted government interventions and investments. Samantha also served on the board of the Deloitte-sponsored pro-bono social impact program, D2international, where she worked with organizations in Ghana and India to expand their impact and reach.



Mariana Justice
SIPA MIA 2024

Mariana is an impact driven professional and huge problem-solver and innovation enthusiast. She is fascinated by how policy making paired with new methods and technologies are helping to shape the future - unlocking a potential to drive system change and bring solutions to many of the world's most pressing challenges. She is currently a Master in International Affairs at Columbia School of International Affairs with a focus on Economic and Political Development. Prior to SIPA, she accumulated 4 years of experience in management consulting and Corporate Social Responsibility at Accenture in Brazil where she has worked in projects in industries such as Financial Services, Media & Communications and Non Profit Sector through business design, product ideation and portfolio, financial modelling and workshop facilitation using human-centered design.



Keith Leung
SEAS BS 2023

Keith is a senior at Columbia SEAS studying mechanical engineering. He is passionate about human-centered design and developing solutions for real-life problems. Additionally, he brings a strong background in hands-on project experience, combining theoretical understanding with practical application utilizing his expertise in mechanical engineering and a creative approach to problem-solving. Currently, Keith is collaborating with agriculture researchers and local farmers to design and build a pure mechanical, autonomous polymer and seed dispenser for small-scale farms as part of his senior design project. Outside of school, he is interested in coffee science and enjoys experimenting with different coffee varieties. Keith plans to start his own business, or continue to pursue his education on MBA in the future. He hopes to gain more experience and knowledge through this course by working with entrepreneurs and social organizations. Keith has completed a BA degree in Applied Mathematics with a concentration of physics at CUNY Queens College.

