



## **THE MOFASA SENSE OF BELONGING**

The 'Sense of belonging' is a vision that was installed in Jahcub Abraham by God upon his arrival to adulthood. He grew up in communities in Nigeria whose riches were tied to their sense of belonging, from individual families to collective communities. However, upon arriving in Europe, he was struck by the absence of this sense of belonging among the people he encountered. Jahcub observed that many Europeans seemed disconnected from their own cultural roots, which made it difficult for him to experience the true nature and character of the indigenous people in the countries where he lived. This inability to connect with the organic culture and heritage of for example the Danish as well as the Dutch gave birth to Jahcub's desire to foster a sense of belonging within Europe. He believes that true togetherness and unity must be built on a foundation of dignity, integrity, honesty, clarity, sincerity, transparency, accountability, responsibility, appreciation, respect for elders, and equality for all. For any community to truly flourish, this sense of belonging must first take root among the indigenous people of the land, creating a space where everyone can grow together.

The Mofasa Sense of Belonging Project originates from Jahcub's vision to create a space for humanity to come together on a platform that celebrates the organic nature of one's native culture and roots; providing a sense of belonging wherever one finds him or herself. From its origins in Nigeria, London, England, Copenhagen, Denmark, to its expansion in Barcelona, Spain, and now its establishment in Arnhem, Netherlands, the project has consistently promoted a sense of belonging, security and responsibility through active community building and development. It features festivals with music, art, intercultural dialogues, and workshops that highlight the richness of global cultures.

This initiative, built around a festival organized by the participants, nurtures a stronger sense of responsibility and accountability within community members. By fostering a mentality of gratitude and appreciation, it encourages individuals to recognize the community around them and consider how they can positively contribute to their environment.

### **Historic Origins in Copenhagen, Denmark**

The project was first developed in Europe in the city of Copenhagen, Denmark. The project sought to address the growing need for social cohesion amidst Denmark's increasing multiculturalism by creating a sense of belonging in the hearts and minds of his 15 piece Danish band, the band and some Danish citizens made Copenhagen a good place for the project's roots to take hold. The inaugural event focused on creating spaces where refugees or migrants can come together and gain confidence to build their livelihoods within another culture out of a mentality of appreciation, rather than for example emphasizing what one has not or what one is lacking (a victim or passive mentality so to say). This early version of the festival featured collaborative art projects and performances that celebrated different cultural expressions.

### **Expansion to Barcelona, Spain**

After its success in Copenhagen, the project evolved and expanded to Barcelona, Spain. Renowned for its rich cultural heritage, Barcelona's vibrant and diverse communities made it the perfect setting for the second phase of the MOFASA Sense of Belonging Project. By this stage, the festival had grown into a large-scale event featuring international musicians and artists.

Barcelona, with its historical legacy of resistance and multiculturalism, and as a city home to an estimated 100,000 illegal migrants, offered fertile ground for discussions on unity, migration, and social integration. The festival became a vital platform for marginalized groups to develop a mentality of appreciation as well as a sense of belonging and for all participants to engage in programs to develop their skills and talents. It provided an opportunity for both locals and migrants to reflect on the importance of belonging in a globalized world, particularly in a city where the challenges of migration and integration are deeply felt.

### **A New Home in Arnhem, Netherlands**

In its latest phase, the MOFASA Sense of Belonging Project has taken root in Arnhem, Netherlands, with the vision of making the Netherlands its European base. Renowned for its multicultural cities, and acceptance of all, the Netherlands provides an ideal environment for the project to thrive.

Arnhem, like many Dutch cities, has experienced significant cultural shifts, where even Dutch citizens sometimes feel disconnected from the rapidly changing society. The influence of other cultures has grown, leading to a sense of cultural erosion among some Dutch inhabitants. The MOFASA Sense of Belonging Project addresses these concerns by creating a space where refugees, migrants, and native Dutch people can come together, fostering a mutual sense of belonging. The festival celebrates the diverse cultures within the community and ensures that Dutch culture has a prominent place, allowing it to be seen, valued, and preserved alongside others. This project becomes a meeting ground where all can share their experiences, connect through music and art, and build a more secure and warming society together.

### **The Festival as an honest approach to complex societal challenges**

The festival serves as more than just a celebration—it is a catalyst for growth, understanding, and skill development. The Mofasa festivals have always focused on the power of culture to transcend borders and create bridges between people of different backgrounds. From Copenhagen's initial focus on community-building to Barcelona's emphasis on multiculturalism, and now Arnhem's vision of long-term social integration, the festival has become a symbol of togetherness for societies dealing with the complexities of identity, migration, and belonging.

## **The MOFASA Sense of Belonging Project incorporates:**

**Workshops and Panels:** The project offers talent development workshops that cover a wide range of skills. Participants can take classes in musical instruments, sound engineering, music recording and production, IT and technology, media and graphic design, marketing, engineering, fashion, art, bike repair, dance, and more. These workshops are designed to nurture creativity and provide practical skills, empowering individuals to develop their talents and apply them within their communities.

**Cultural Performances:** Music, dance, and theatre from various countries and traditions, showcasing the richness of the world's cultures.

**Art Exhibitions:** Collaborative projects where artists from various backgrounds create pieces that reflect the diversity of their experiences and viewpoints.

**Food Festivals:** Culinary stalls and demonstrations offering traditional foods from around the world, providing an opportunity for cultural exchange through cuisine.

**Mentorship and Skills Transfer:** In addition to workshops, the project emphasizes mentorship and skill training, offering guidance and support for individuals and groups eager to learn new skills and grow in their chosen fields.

## **Legacy and Future Impact in the Netherlands**

With the festival now rooted in Arnhem, the MOFASA Sense of Belonging Project aims to expand its influence across the Netherlands. The project hopes to establish year-round programs that promote a sense of appreciation, responsibility, accountability and belonging. In the future, the festival will continue to grow, potentially expanding to other cities in the Netherlands and further into Europe, spreading its message of belonging and responsibility to a wider audience.

The Netherlands, with its historical legacy of tolerance, trade, and openness to other cultures, provides the perfect environment for the MOFASA Sense of Belonging Project to flourish. By making Arnhem its home, the project ensures that the festival will continue to serve as a beacon for social cohesion, bringing the good people of all races, backgrounds, and faiths together to celebrate the richness of humanity.

## **Project 2024**

The Mofasa Sense of Belonging train is making a stop at your station! Connect with other people from your neighborhood and join the upcoming Sense of Belonging project. This project creates a platform to develop and share your talents and skills with people in your community. This project not only offers workshops to develop your individual skills; we are also looking for people who want to share their interests and talents with others in the Rijkerswoerd, Kronenburg and Vredenburg neighborhoods. Think for example of music, sound engineering, media, design, event organization, promotion, dance, comedy, hosting and writing. Together we are working towards a free festival on September 21, 2024.

In preparation for the festival we are Gathering on the 31st of August at the Madser, to get to know each other.

The MOFASA Sense of Belonging Project has already organized a few gatherings. The next one will be between 3pm to 8pm on the 31st of August. In our previous gatherings, the people in the community took care of the food and the drinks, but feel free to introduce us to your kitchen.

At this gathering there will be live music, and the stage is free to join when the jam session comes on.

Come over and meet each other with your dancing shoes, make music, enjoy the food, and create a nice vibe together!

The Mofasa Sense of Belonging Train makes a stop at your station! Come with other people from the area and be part of this Sense of Belonging project. This project creates a platform to develop your talents and skills and to share them with, and give back to, the other people in your community. This project offers workshops to develop individual skills we are also looking for people who want to share their interests and talents with others in Rijkerswoerd, Kronenburg and Vredenburg. For instance: Music, sound engineering, Media, Design, Eventorganization, Promotion, Dance, and Hosting.

Together we work to a free festival on the 21st of September 2024.

## **Conclusion**

The MOFASA Sense of Belonging Project embodies a Godly, morally upright response to the challenges of a rapidly changing world. From its origins in Nigeria to its expansion in Barcelona, and now its establishment in Arnhem, the project has consistently provided a platform for people from all walks of life—migrants, refugees, and native citizens alike—to find a sense of belonging. In a time when even Dutch natives can feel disconnected from their own culture due to societal shifts, this project offers a space where all cultures, including Dutch heritage, can be celebrated and preserved.

By fostering unity through shared experiences in music, art, and skill development, the MOFASA Sense of Belonging Project is not just a festival; it's a movement toward a strong community in which its members can discover, develop and fulfill their own potential. As it takes root in the Netherlands, the project will continue to bridge divides, promote mutual understanding, and ensure that everyone has a place and is of value to their own community. The festival's journey is a testament to the power of honesty in what it takes to bring people together. Regardless of differences amongst people - when focusing on and fostering a mentality of gratefulness and responsibility- there is room and place for everyone to belong, and whilst everyone is welcomed, not every character is.