

# Strengthen the Roots

Annual Report - Year 1

2022 - 2023



Photo: Natura Bolivia

## A program in Indonesia, Bolivia and Ghana

Wilde Ganzen (Netherlands), IUCN NL (Netherlands), WACSI (Ghana), A Rocha Ghana (Ghana), KKI Warsi (Indonesia), Natura Bolivia (Bolivia)

August 2023



# Table of Contents

1. Introduction <i>Strengthen the Roots</i>	3
2. Main achievements and lessons learnt during Year 1	7
3. Indonesia	10
4. Bolivia	20
5. Ghana	27
6. Financial figures – April 2022 to June 2023	34



# 1 Introduction

## Strengthen the Roots

In mid-2022, *Strengthen the Roots* (StR) was launched in Bolivia, Ghana and Indonesia. For three years, this program will support small, local organisations living in unique and threatened natural areas so they will be better able to diversify their income and mobilise support for their conservation and livelihoods improvement goals.

Thanks to the support of the dedicated civil society organisations in these countries, respectively Natura Bolivia, A Rocha Ghana, WACSI and KKI Warsi, the local organisations will feel encouraged to make their voices heard and start projects based on the collective strength of their community. Through this Annual Report, we want to take you along to the three focus countries and indicate the progress made during the first year of *Strengthen the Roots*.

### Participating organisations

StR is implemented in three countries with three long-time partners of IUCN NL. These civil society organisations have a rich record in projects aimed at the conservation of nature and improvement of sustainable livelihoods. In this report Natura Bolivia, A Rocha Ghana and KKI Warsi are referred to as project partners.

The selection of local organisations participating in this project was made by the respective project partner in consultation with IUCN NL. This has resulted in a wide variety of organisations. In Indonesia, the local organisations are typical community-based organisations like forest-management groups, women groups and village enterprises. In Ghana, small civil society



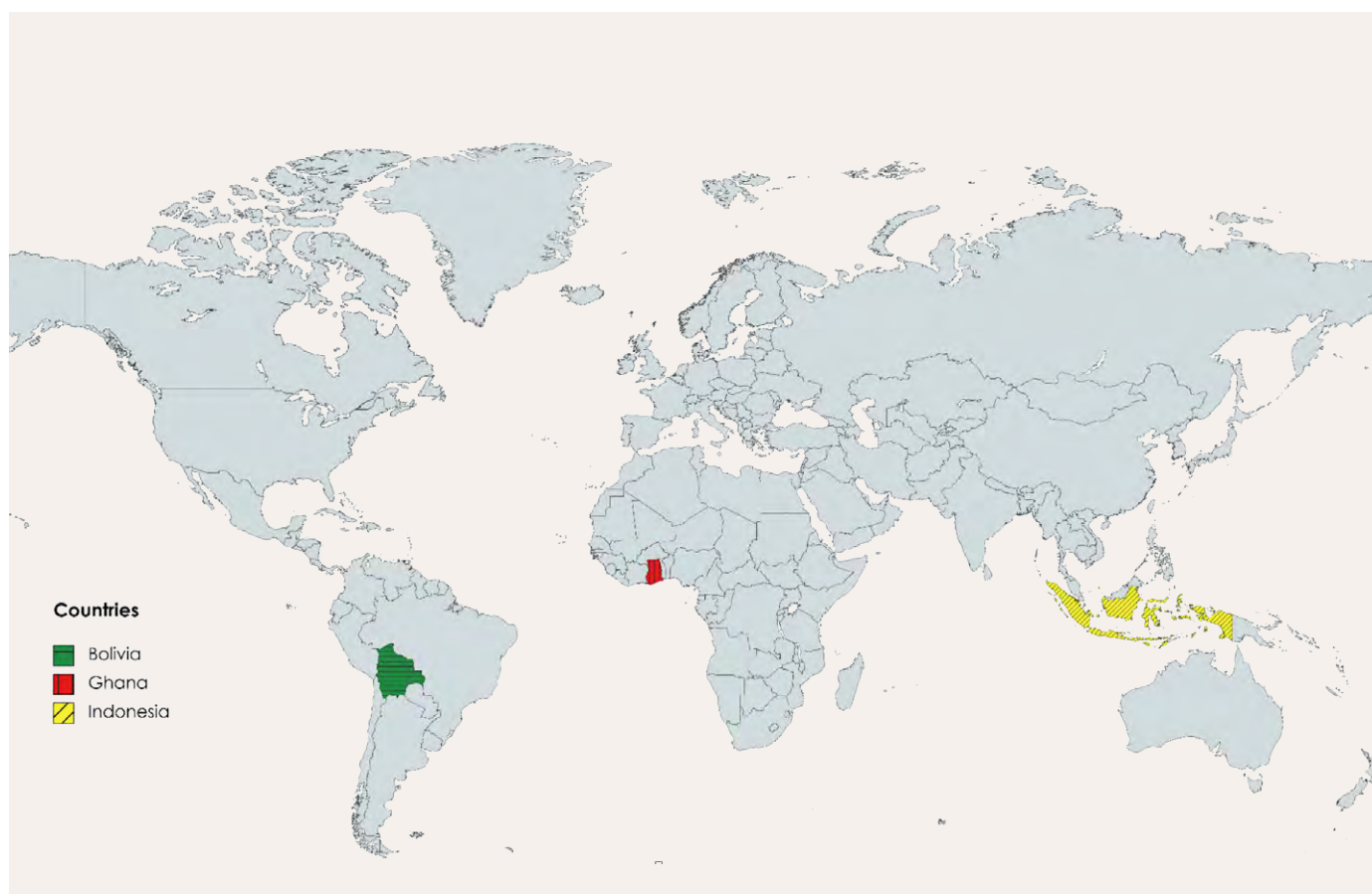
organisations from the capital city of Accra focusing in political campaigning have been included, next to community organisations that focus on more environmental consciousness in their direct surroundings. And in Bolivia, the strategic choice was made to work with the Indigenous Capitanías of Charagua, a new form of local government of the Guaraní people in the Gran Chaco region, while also including local water committees from Roboré that manage the water resources at the grassroots level. We consider it an enriching experience, as we will be able to learn a lot about how the project methodology will be put into practice by these different groups, and about the local projects and campaigns that result from their efforts.

Whereas at the beginning of the project we intended to speak of community-based organisations (CBOs) as the target for capacity strengthening, we now decided to call them local organisations, since the term CBOs no longer represents the wide range of organisations participating in StR.

### Overall context

The selected local organisations are based in specific regions where natural ecosystems and livelihoods of local people are threatened to be undermined by unsustainable activities. Communities often depend directly on the landscape in which they live for their food, water and cultural well-being. However, they face pressure from both outside and within their communities. Non-sustainable exploitation of natural resources results in the degradation of ecosystems and crumbling traditional governance systems.

For many generations, local and Indigenous communities have been the custodians of the landscape. They have a strong connection to nature and a deep knowledge of how to conserve their environment. Yet they are not always able to do so because their land- and management rights are not recognised and their knowledge and traditional management methods are not valued. This lack of recognition is compounded by their difficult access to support, limited networks and poor visibility.



## The Strengthen the Roots-approach

The project is structured so that the selected local organisations first receive training from Wilde Ganzen's [Change the Game Academy \(CtGA\)](#), a proven capacity-building methodology that enables these organisations to diversify their income and mobilise support for their work. With the knowledge gained during the trainings they are to formulate

and implement their own community projects or campaigns. Throughout the process, support will be provided by national project partners in each country, both through coaching sessions and by allowing the incipient local projects to benefit from a match funding component, which ensures that the projects can be implemented.

In their annual report over Year 1 of *Strengthen the Roots*, project partner A Rocha Ghana shared the following insights about how they implement the CtGA-methodology:

*After local fundraising and mobilising support training in Ghana, strengthened Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) are expected to have a positive impact on nature conservation and sustainable livelihoods. The training equips CBOs with the skills to mobilise resources, engage communities, and implement conservation projects. The contributions of these strengthened CBOs include enhanced conservation efforts through activities like habitat restoration and environmental education. They also empower communities by mobilising local resources and encouraging sustainable practices. Strengthened CBOs can create sustainable livelihood opportunities linked to nature and conservation, such as eco-tourism and sustainable agriculture. Collaboration with stakeholders amplifies their impact and facilitates knowledge exchange. Overall, the training empowers CBOs to safeguard Ghana's natural resources, improve livelihoods, raise funds, mobilise support, and promote sustainable development.*

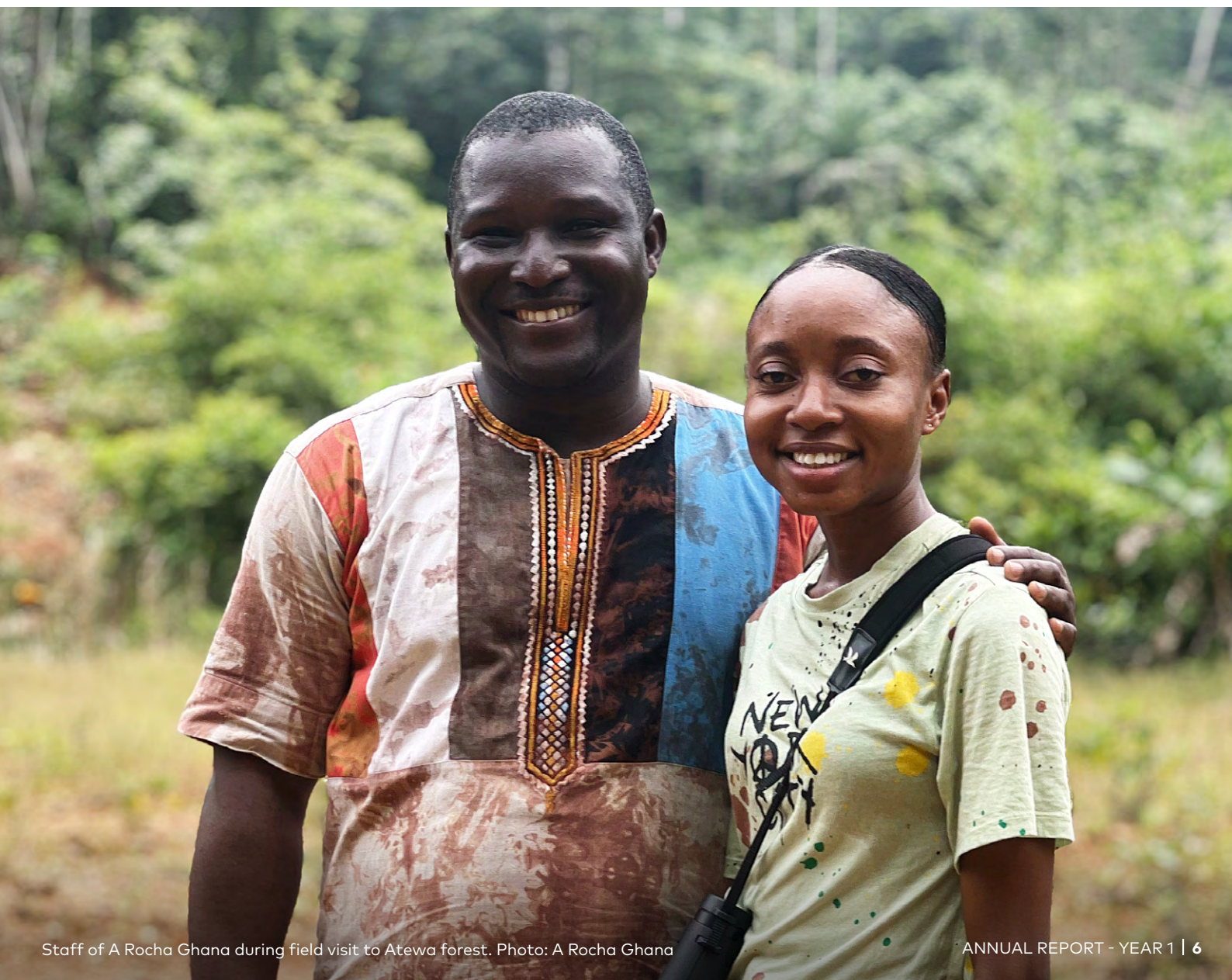
*To ensure effective implementation, national-level organisations will champion local concerns by advocating for policy changes in the capital. They will engage in media interactions and public awareness campaigns to amplify the importance of these issues and their impact on the community.*



In preparation for the CtGA trainings, so-called Training of Trainers (ToT) were organised in Indonesia and Bolivia. During these 10-day ToT's, staff members of KKI Warsi and Natura Bolivia were trained by recognised, international Master Trainers to become certified CtGA trainers. After attending the ToT's, these newly-trained staff members were given the task to adapt the CtGA material to the context of the focus landscapes, as well as the language, knowledge and worldview of the members of the local organisations. Once the contextualisation was completed, *Strengthen the Roots* trainings in Indonesia and Bolivia on Local Fundraising and Mobilising Support could begin.

In Ghana, it was decided not to train the staff of A Rocha Ghana as CtGA trainers, but to use the services of WACSI, Wilde Ganzen's valued national partner in Ghana, who since 2017 have been successfully delivering LFR and MS trainings all over West Africa.

In the following section, we describe the main achievements made this year and the lessons learnt. In the subsequent chapters, we describe for each country the activities and experiences throughout Year 1, as well as the measurable achievements and the bottlenecks, as far as relevant.



## 2 Main achievements and lessons learnt during Year 1

The first year of *Strengthen the Roots* mainly focused on training key stakeholders: both the staff of the national partners in this project, and the members of the local organisations, who are to develop the community projects and public campaigns. As such, during this first year we can confidently say that the foundations were laid for the various community-based initiatives that will lead to bottom-up nature conservation and strengthened livelihoods driven by the collective strength of community organisations. Below we list the main achievements during Year 1, as well as several issues we learned within this new coalition of organisations collectively implementing the StR project:

- **Two Trainings of Trainers took place**, one in Bolivia and the other in Indonesia. This was a big time investment by the project partners Natura Bolivia and KKI Warsi, as a significant part of their staff, during a two-week period, participated in the ToT to gain the knowledge and skills to become a Local Fundraising trainer

or Mobilising Support trainer. The intense, participative modules of the CtGA material resulted in committed new trainers, who are to train and coach the local organisations to the best of their abilities during the coming years. A total of **ten people were trained in Bolivia** (eight staff members from Natura Bolivia and two community leaders) and **twelve staff members from KKI Warsi in Indonesia**.

- A total of **128 individuals** from nineteen local organisations in Indonesia and Ghana **have been trained in Local Fundraising and Mobilising Support**. 52 of these are women, and 56 are under the age of 35. These are the people who will dedicate themselves during the next few years to raise funds locally and to engage their constituencies in initiatives to bring about social change and more effective nature conservation. The figures for the amount of people trained in Bolivia are not yet in but will be communicated shortly.



- Over the past seven years, the Change the Game methodology has mainly been used for community-based social development issues. The **contextualisation of the LFR and MS trainings** by KKI Warsi and Natura Bolivia means that, for the first time, the CtGA content reached new target groups: **local communities living in or around threatened natural areas, empowering** them to conserve and sustainably use their natural resources.
- The various trained local organisations set out to work with the knowledge gained. **Nine projects have now been set up in Ghana**, incorporating both the political advocacy component and the local fundraising component. These projects will be implemented with the support of national project partners A Rocha Ghana and WACSI. **In Indonesia, the local organisations have formulated action plans**, which form the basis of the community projects. These projects will start in Q3 and Q4 of 2023. In Bolivia, projects will be developed directly after the trainings, that take place in Q3 of 2023.
- The CtGA methodology is considered very valuable by KKI Warsi, and thus they are looking to raise funds to **also provide the LFR and MS trainings to community-based organisations that are not included in StR**. Also, IUCN NL would like to scale up the methodology to other countries. In collaboration with Wilde Ganzen, IUCN NL would like to provide ToTs for other partner-CSOs and LFR and MS trainings for local organisations that want to work on locally led adaptation (LLA) and other community-based initiatives to conserve nature and improve livelihoods.

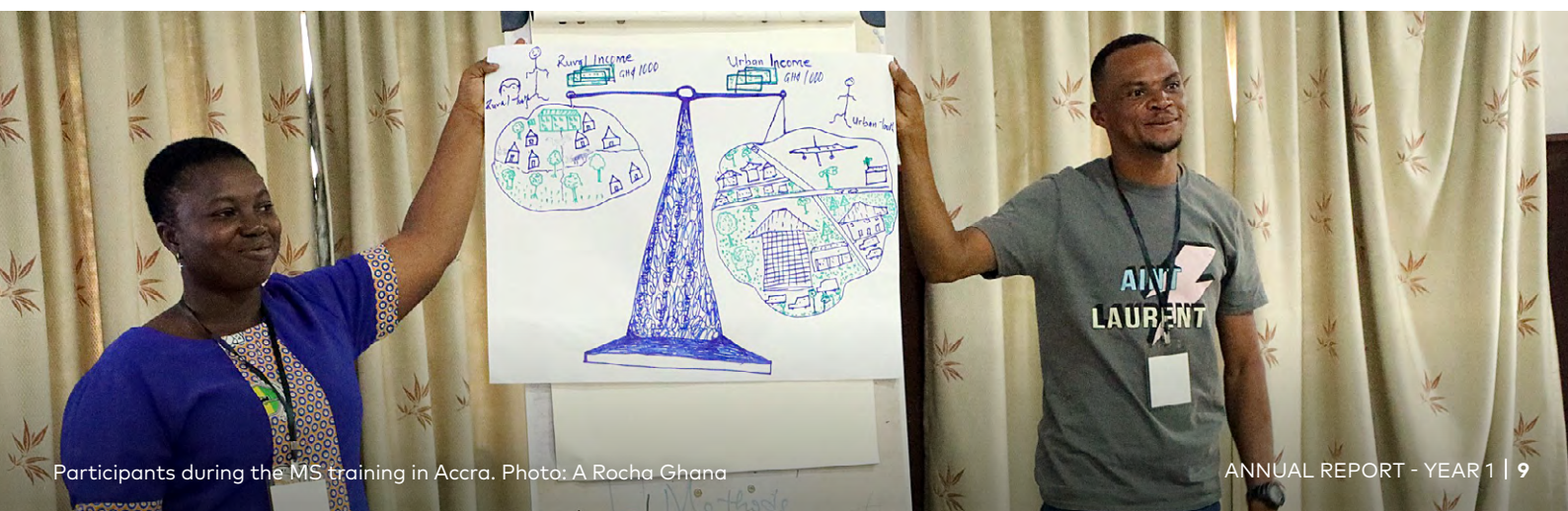


Natura Bolivia trainer Tamara during the LFR training in Roboré. Photo: Natura Bolivia



This brings us to the following **lessons learnt and insights**, which will be taken into consideration for the remainder of *Strengthen the Roots* and for future likeminded programs:

- It was very worthwhile and enriching to include staff from non-profit organisations that are not part of StR to join the ToTs in Indonesia and Bolivia. This led to an interesting exchange of ideas on the training material, different visions on how to implement it, and it facilitated contacts with people from outside the own organisation with whom in the future the outcomes of the trainings can be shared and/or evaluated.
- The contextualisation of the LFR and MS trainings that has taken place in Bolivia and Indonesia ensured that the content of the CtGA training immediately captured the imagination of the local organisations. This process of contextualisation has taken more time than initially anticipated, but it has proved to be a very meaningful process. The decision not to train staff from project partner A Rocha Ghana as CtGA trainers (since a pool of CtGA-trainers were already available in Ghana) has made the overall *Strengthen the Roots*-process in Ghana much faster, but at the same time has made the training more standardised, and less focused on the distinctive perspective of nature conservation.
- During the next year, the implementation of the community projects and advocacy campaigns will be closely monitored in connection with the development of a dedicated *Strengthen the Roots* version of the online Change the Game Academy courses. The experiences and learnings from the three focus countries will hopefully serve the contextualisation of the current training material, creating special e-learning modules on Local Fundraising and Mobilising Support aimed at nature conservationists by local communities all around the world.
- The local organisations that are part of StR are truly diverse. They encompass not just the typical community-based organisations, but also include small urban CSOs, local autonomous indigenous governing bodies, youth collectives, entities dedicated to water management, regionally focused NGOs with local conservation goals, and more. This diversity underscores the necessity for individualised guidance and support by KKI Warsi, A Rocha Ghana and Natura Bolivia for each distinct local project and campaign. A uniform approach would not be suitable due to these varying organisational contexts.
- The co-financing aspect of the local projects is still quite challenging, given that it places a substantial demand on local organisations to raise funds for a significant portion of their budget within a limited timeframe. As we progress in the coming months, we will closely observe the strategies adopted by these organisations in terms of local fundraising. It is our hope that through this process, they will accumulate valuable experience to achieve their objectives, which will subsequently be matched by the *Strengthen the Roots* budget.



Participants during the MS training in Accra. Photo: A Rocha Ghana

# 3 Indonesia

## Context

The focus landscapes for this project in Indonesia are the Mudiak Baduo and Sumpur Kudus landscapes in the West Sumatra province, an area that stretches along the Batanghari watershed, the second largest watershed in Indonesia. The ecological function of these landscapes is important to the West Sumatra province and influences ecological conditions in the adjacent provinces of Bengkulu, Jambi, and Riau. The forests in Mudiak Baduo and Sumpur Kudus are habitats of several animal species found only there, such as the Sumatran tiger. Most of the people who live in West Sumatra are ethnic Minangkabau who have strong ties to the land and its natural resources.

Indigenous Peoples and local communities all over Indonesia depend on state forest land for their livelihoods, although the government does not recognise their rights to use or manage these resources. This has been a major source of conflict and tenure insecurity for decades. In response, the Indonesian government took on the ambitious goal to provide communities with formal rights to manage 12.7 million hectares of state forest lands between 2014 and 2019, through its Social Forestry programme. This project's local NGO-partner, [KKI Warsi](#), with offices in the cities of Jambi (Jambi province) and Padang (West Sumatra), has been working in the Mudiak Baduo and Sumpur Kudus landscapes with Village Forest Management Groups, supporting them in obtaining Social Forest Management Permits, in order for them to manage forests themselves and to develop sustainable livelihoods based in and around them. In this context, it is worthwhile mentioning that a [new Presidential Decree on Integrated Planning for the Acceleration of Social Forestry Management was issued on May 30, 2023](#). The goal of this Decree is to support de acceleration and improve coordination

on Social Forestry management in an integrated and comprehensive manner between ministries and agencies, provincial governments, district governments and related parties. This will hopefully resolve the unclarity regarding responsibilities of districts in dealing with forestry issues, and make sure that community development objectives will be integrated into forest mapping and special planning at the provincial and district level. All parties will now have clear references to consult when carrying out Social Forestry development as part of regional developments that are aimed at realising a more prosperous society based on sustainable forest management.



## Local organisations participating in the project

KKI Warsi (from here onwards: Warsi) initially selected ten local organisations (Village Forest Management Groups, Village Enterprises and Women's Groups) in ten villages to participate in the *Strengthen the Roots*-project. In the past years, Warsi already facilitated these in acquiring a social forestry permit (supported by the IUCN NL through the [Green Livelihoods Alliance](#)). Warsi conducted in-depth discussions with each organisation to

understand the focus and needs of the group. As a result, several needs for organisational improvement were identified, including:

- Capacity to assess and analyse potential management areas such as biodiversity, NTFPs, zoning areas, and environmental services
- Networking with stakeholders
- Development of work plans and business plans
- Simple institutional monitoring and reporting (activities and finances)
- Roles and responsibilities within the organisation (position in the structure)



By training them in Local Fundraising, Mobilising Support, media skills and organisational development, Warsi expects that these local organisations will be better able to develop concrete plans that lead to improved livelihoods for communities and sustainable management of the natural environment. Concretely, these plans should result in new business opportunities and conservation initiatives based on local wisdom in the communities and at the same time by increasing the outreach of communities to attain support from stakeholders like the government and market parties. The participating organisations are:

#### **Village Forest Management Groups,**

whose focus is forest conservation and PES (Payment for Ecosystem Services)

1. LPHN Sumpur Kudus, from Sumpur Kudus (8 women, 17 men)
2. LPHN Sirukam, from Sirukam (2 women, 13 men)
3. LPHN Unggan, from Unggan (9 women, 23 men)

#### **Village Enterprises**

(Social Forestry Business Group - KUPS)

4. KUPS Kompos, from Pakan Rabaa - Compost fertilizer business (20 men)
5. KUPS Beras Organik Simancuang, from Alam Pauh Duo (Simancuang) - Organic rice business (4 women, 11 men)
6. KUPS Bukik Godang, from Tanjung Bonai Aur - Eucalyptus oil business (5 women, 15 men)
7. KUPS Bukik Batu Bolang, from Lubuk Karak - Honey Bee Business (8 women, 21 men)

8. KUPS Marola Mutiara Suliti, from Pasir Talang Timur - Coffee business (15 women)
9. KTH Putra Harapan, from Padang Laweh - Gaharu leaf tea business (7 women, 10 men)

#### **Women's Group**

10. KP Selembar Daun, from Indudur - Candlenut oil business (69 women)

The members of these community organisations are farmers, primarily with rice and rubber as main commodities.

After valuing the content of the trainings and the enthusiast reactions from the participants in these trainings, Warsi decided to invite three more local organisations from the two landscapes to participate in the StR-project. In another project supported by IUCN NL (through [the Green Livelihoods Alliance](#)) these organisations have already been trained in forest management and village businesses and secured a social forestry permit. The socialisation of the project is ongoing, and it is expected for the trainings of these other groups to take place in the second half of 2023. The three organisations (with a focus on agroforestry) are:

11. KP Jahe Merah, Women Group from Pakan Rabaa
12. KWT Maju, Women group from Lubuk Karak
13. HKm Indudur, Social Forest Business Group from Indudur

All three organisations will also be supported to elaborate community projects after receiving the trainings.



## Key actions carried out during the first year

### 1. Training of Trainers, November 2022, Padang

During the preparation of StR, it was decided that first Warsi staff would be trained in the Change the Game Academy-courses Local Fundraising and Mobilising Support during a so-called Training of Trainers (ToT). This ToT was given by experienced African and Asian Master Trainers from Wilde Ganzen's international training pool. Following the ToT, Warsi staff contextualised the material, which broadly means that it was translated into the local language, and concepts were developed in such a way that they could link to the experiences and perceptions of the members of the local organisations.

In addition to the participation of selected staff members from Warsi, it had been decided to also invite representatives of Wilde Ganzen's national partner in Indonesia, [Yayasan SATUNAMA](#), as well

as members of the Cambodian CtGA partners [CCC](#) and [API Institute](#). This way, the ToT would be more cost-effective, and the Warsi staff would also get the opportunity to establish a relationship with CtGA-partners from their own country and from the region, which could be valuable in the future to exchange ideas. The entire ToT was organised by Warsi and took place in the city of Padang (capital of the West Sumatra province) between November 14-25 with the participation of 27 persons, including 12 Warsi staff members (6 women, 6 men). During the first week, participants were trained in either Local Fundraising (LFR) or Mobilising Support (MS), while the second week focused on teaching them the skills that would serve them to impart the newly acquired knowledge with the local organisations. Apart from a minor COVID-19 outbreak during the second week, which prevented one trainer and a few participants from attending classes physically, the ToT went very smoothly and was greatly appreciated by all participants.



## 2. Contextualisation of Change the Game Academy materials

Immediately after the training Warsi started with their first contextualisation process, which took two weeks. In this period the 12 new trainers from Warsi discussed the course materials, which were then adapted to the local context by considering the socio-economic conditions of each local organisation, by simplifying specific language and terminologies, as well as adjusting time estimates and tools required for a community training process. Mid-January 2023, Warsi carried out a first pilot, training the first two local organisations in the process, and using the experience to learn and evaluate their contextualisation efforts. This led, among other things, to adjusting case examples to the specific activities of the local organisations; for example, for the Village Enterprises, experiences with business issues such as expansion of the candlenut oil market and promotion of organic rice were used.

## 3. Training the local organisations on Mobilising Support, Local Fundraising, Citizen Journalism and Organisational Capacity

Between January and May Warsi implemented the trainings to the ten participating local organisations; these were conducted for a maximum of six consecutive days, taking into account the daily occupations of the selected persons. In addition to the LFR and MS trainings, Warsi also included a Citizen Journalism training, which was given by their in-house communications specialist. In total 107 persons were trained in the scope of this project, of which 44 are women and 46 persons below the age of 35:

	Local organisation	Total participants	Women	Participants <35
LFR	10	48	22	20
MS	10	49	18	16
Citizen journalism	10	10	4	10



Field visit to the Sumpur Kudus village by staff from Warsi, IUCN NL and Wilde Ganzen. Photo: KKI Warsi

The selection of participants for the LFR and MS trainings was based on the results of meetings conducted by each local organisation, emphasising criteria such as commitment, youth and women representation, institutional core members and experience in LFR and MS. Even more than was to be expected, participants expressed their enthusiasm about the training sessions, which was evident, among other things, by their commitment to draw up a follow-up plan and a timeline of activities. Warsi asked the participants to give feedback on the trainings, and a selection of opinions were bundled in their first annual report (see next page with quotations).

The 4-day Citizen Journalism-training was based on tools developed by KKI Warsi; it explained concepts like basic journalism, journalistic code of ethics, features, basic theory of videography, pre- & post-production stages, free writing, and mind mapping issues based on the local context. The participants learned to create journalistic products such as articles, videos and photos, which will be published as campaign tools on social media and other platforms. All participants in this training are under 35 years and already have some previous skills in videography and writing.

Divided over 4 groups, the organisations also received capacity building training on thematic issues such as public speaking, organisational management,

administration, financial SOPs, institutional mechanisms, Memorandum of Association/ Articles of Association, and forest area patrols.

Throughout the entire process Warsi encouraged the local organisations to involve women and youth in the project. From the organisations' feedback, it appears that women are very committed to stop illegal activities and are interested to develop village enterprises based on natural resources. Youth are seen as important for their knowledge of modern communications and technologies. Both women and youth are seen as important for the regeneration of these organisations.

#### **4. Elaboration of action plans by local organisations, as the basis of community projects**

After receiving the trainings, local organisations started to prepare their action plans. This decision is based on the cultural and livelihood practices, needs and sensitivities, as the concept of a project is new to most local organisations while making action plans is common practise. By July 2023, six local organisations had completed their action plans, which reflect their needs and are focused on topics like Forest Conservation, Business Development and Payment for Environmental Services. Warsi will support the organisations to improve and finalise the action plans which will be the basis for the community projects to be implemented in the following two years.



Here some reactions from those who participated in the LFR and MS trainings in West Sumatra:

**"We already did local resource mobilisation and made efforts to influence others to support our organisation, but it was done without a plan. The methods and knowledge provided during the training provide new directions and new awareness for the community to do local fundraising and to mobilise support in a structured manner."**

**"The trainings were very relevant to our local context. They provided opportunities and solutions that help us formulate appropriate strategies to resolve our problems. We learnt to plan the project activities by conducting problem analysis, stakeholder analysis, selecting suitable tactics and techniques, and forming LFR and MS teams."**

**"This capacity building will greatly help us in planning the development of the candlenut oil business as an effort to save the forest area and as an additional economic source for the community, especially the women."**

**"We always thought that advocacy meant protesting against something, that it was about confrontational actions. During the MS-training, we learnt that engagement with government can be through a dialogue instead of through a demonstration with banners and a megaphone."**

**"We received information on how we can contribute to solving problems in our villages, especially those related to illegal activities in the forest area caused by economic pressure. With this capacity building, we will begin to strengthen planning related to initiatives to develop alternative economic sources for our community."**

**"We learnt that we need to match the group's mind-set with that of the identified donors. We also need to organise a team to do this local fundraising; previously, it was done by only one member."**



Trainers and participants of the training in Padang Laweh. Photo: KKI Warsi



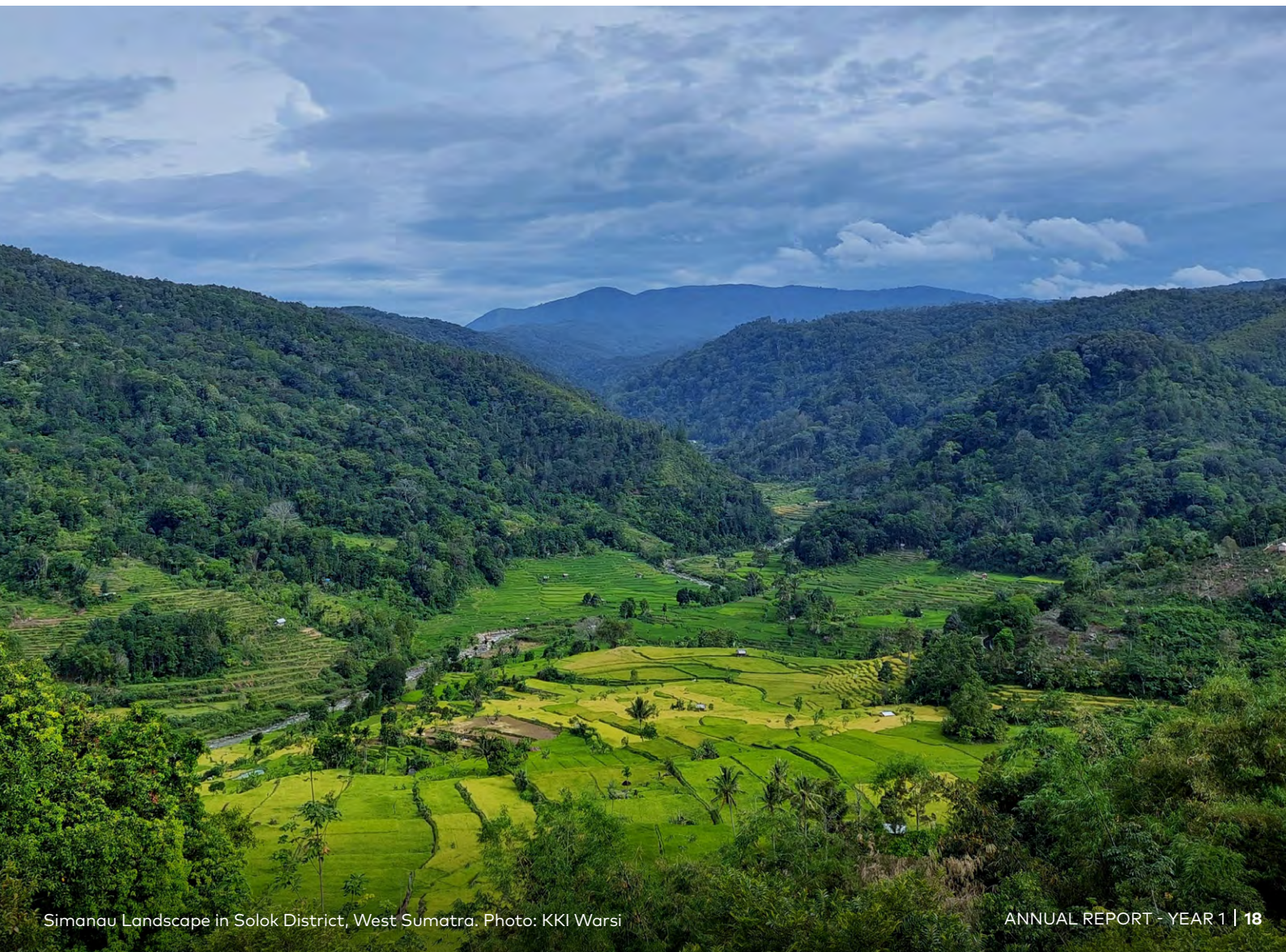
## Main results and key learnings during the first year

- Warsi highly values the *Strengthen the Roots* project, as it works on nature conservation that is not performed top-down but is driven by the collective strength of community organisations. As such, this project helps Warsi to encourage independence and initiative among the local organisations to improve livelihoods and conserve the forest for its [intrinsic, material and relational value](#). When empowered communities and their organisations are self-reliant in raising funds and mobilising support, Warsi can turn its attention to other communities in the province to first acquire a Social Forestry permit and consequently replicate the LFR and MS trainings to their organisations.
- The Minangkabau culture of West Sumatra harbours respect for nature that is expressed in customary agreements on forest zonation into prohibited forest areas, reserve forests, rice fields, agroforestry and settlements. The Minangkabau proverb 'We should not leave a legacy of tears but of springs' means that protecting the water sources is seen as very important. However, limited livelihood options make people go into the forest and unsustainably exploit its resources. During the trainings, representatives from rural communities in West Sumatra showed their enthusiasm for the project, as they understand its potential to protect the forests and to identify opportunities of how forests can contribute to the improvement of their livelihoods.
- The translation of the CtGA-material into the Indonesian and Minangkabau languages and its contextualisation towards the realities of the rural communities of West Sumatra has been a lot of work for the Warsi-staff, but has so far proved to be particularly useful.
- As a result of the positive experiences during the first year, Warsi and IUCN NL are currently looking for extra funds to replicate the StR-interventions in other communities in the provinces of West Sumatra, Jambi and Bengkulu.
- Due to the different capacities of the local organisations participating in StR, Warsi decided not to equally distribute funds to organisations during the implementation of the community project-phase. The allocation of match-funding will be based on the project needs developed by each local organisation.



## Planning for '23-'24

- Based on their action plans, throughout the second half of 2023 all trained local organisations will design and start implementing projects to locally raise funds and mobilise support. The Warsi staff that has been trained in LFR and MS will facilitate these organisations in topics like project formulation and implementation, network-building and developing a participatory monitoring system. Warsi staff will also continually be available to provide coaching on LFR and MS issues to the organisations.
- A joint campaign will be launched with the communities, show-casing good community initiatives concerning sustainable natural resource management.
- During the second half of 2023 the three additional organisations will receive the MS and LFR training and will start elaborating their action plans and projects.
- Warsi established a collaboration with *Aliansi Jurnalis Independen (AJI) Padang*, a professional organisation for journalists, which will assist local organisations in their engagement with media to promote the campaigns that result from this project.
- Warsi will organise meetings between the trained local organisations from the StR-landscapes to build networks and learning systems and collaborate with other West Sumatran civil society organisations to strengthen policy advocacy in support of community plans.





Aided by KKI Warsi, the village of Sirukam in West Sumatra obtained a social forestry permit in 2014 and subsequently established their Village Forest Management Groups (VFMG) to manage the forest area in and around the village. Among the VFMG's tasks is to patrol the forests to prevent illegal activities, such as logging, and preserve water sources.

"The social forestry permit changed the way our communities see the forest," forest patroller Jasmir Jumadi explains. "They used to merely see it as a place to get wood, but now they appreciate it as a source of life that protects the springs of life. They realize the importance of sustainable forest management and truly live up to the old Minangkabau saying: 'Do not leave a legacy of tears, but of springs.'"

"When we started the patrols, there were only three people to secure the forest area which covers more than 3900 ha. Now there are 25 of us." At regular times, and when they are alerted by [detection devices](#) in the forest, the forest guards walk through the forest to prevent illegal activities like logging or gold panning.

[Click here to read the whole interview](#) with Jasmir Jumadi.

## 4 Bolivia

### Context

The Gran Chaco ecoregion covers parts of Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay and is the largest contiguous dry forest in South America. As a whole, it has one of the highest deforestation rates in the world, especially in Paraguay and Argentina, where forests are making way for mechanised soy farming and cattle ranching. The conversion of forest cover to agricultural and cattle ranching land puts the ancestral territory of the original inhabitants at risk. The Bolivian side of the Gran Chaco is home to pristine biodiversity, including animal species such as the jaguar, anteater and giant armadillo. The indigenous Guaraní people also inhabit the area, as well as the self-isolating Ayoreo tribe. The Bolivian project partner for *Strengthen the Roots*, [Fundación Natura Bolivia](#) (hereafter: Natura), has a long trajectory in working with Bolivian communities in the Gran Chaco, implementing initiatives to prevent further deforestation, while directly working with communities to improve their livelihoods.

While the *Strengthen the Roots* project got underway with the Training of Trainers (see below), Bolivia was confronted with an enormous political crisis between the lowland Santa Cruz department (where this project is implemented) and the national government, based in La Paz. At stake was a redistribution of financial resources available to the departmental government. The conflict culminated

in a [36-day strike between October 22 and November 26](#) in the city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra and some neighbouring areas. During this strike all roads were blocked, which limited the daily activities of all sectors of the Santa Cruz population. The social pressure came to an end when President Arce signed Decree 4824, which orders the realisation of a census in 2024, on which the redistribution of financial resources and parliamentary seats will be based. Nonetheless, the 36 days of the strike led to considerable economic losses, as well as an ever-increasing polarisation between different departments. The arrest in of Santa Cruz governor Luis Fernando Camacho in January 2023 sparked further unrest and confrontations in the Santa Cruz department. The unstable political situation is likely to continue for the foreseeable future, but the direct impact on the implementation of this project will hopefully be minimal.



## Local organisations participating in the project

Natura decided to carry out the *Strengthen the Roots* project in two focus areas in the Bolivian Gran Chaco landscape; the municipalities of **Roboré** and **Charagua**, both in the Santa Cruz Department. In Roboré, Natura selected three *comités de agua* (water committees), while in Charagua four indigenous 'captaincies' and an organisation of indigenous craftswomen was selected. The participating organisations are the following:

### Roboré - water committees:

1. Comité de Agua Santiago
2. Comité de Agua Chochis
3. Cooperativa de Agua Roboré COSEPUR

### Charagua:

4. Capitanía Charagua Norte
5. Capitanía Alto Isoso
6. Capitanía Parapitiguasu
7. Capitanía Charagua pueblo
8. Organización de Mujeres Kapeatindi - Alto Isoso

A baseline study commissioned by Natura showed that the water committees' main necessities for the communities include investments in areas such as the rehabilitation of water tanks, the construction of a water treatment plant and groundwater exploration projects, while the indigenous *Capitanías* are set on implementing projects that focus on protection of water sources and the conservation of forests within their territories.

It is important to point out once again that the Guaraní people of Charagua were the first indigenous group to obtain the rights of indigenous autonomy in Bolivia. This allows the Guaraní people, via the indigenous "captaincies", to exercise control over their territory – called *territorio autónomo Guaraní Charagua Iyambae* – and natural resources. In this sense, the Charagua focus region is the only focus region in the project where local organisations are at the same time part of the local government.



## Key actions carried out during the first year

### 1. Training of Trainers, November 2022, Sucre

As in Indonesia, *Strengthen the Roots* was designed with the idea of first training Natura's staff in the Change the Game Academy-components of Local Fundraising and Mobilising Support. Natura would then contextualise this material to better suit the selected local organisations. However, Natura felt it was important that the Training of Trainers (ToT) would not only include their staff members but also key persons from the local organisations, which would make the process of replicating these trainings at the local level easier. Therefore, prior to the ToT, Natura visited the *captaincies* of Charagua and the municipality of Roboré to reconfirm the commitment of the local organisations to the project and to select participants (on the basis of criteria such as local leadership experience and experience in project formulation).

Also as in Indonesia, the ToT would consist of participants from *Strengthen the Roots'* project partner Natura, as well as representatives from organisations selected by Wilde Ganzen's regional Change the Game Academy partners Podion (Colombia), [CESE](#) (Brasil) and [Club de Fundraising](#) (Argentina).

Due to the above-mentioned major political upheaval in the Santa Cruz department in November 2022, which would potentially create a dangerous situation for the participants of the ToT, its proposed location in Santa Cruz had to be changed just a few days before it was set to start. This required quite some last-minute logistical improvisation from the organising committee of Natura and from the four Master Trainers that came from Argentina and the Netherlands. Nevertheless, Natura was able to make the necessary arrangements and fortunately managed to get the training to take place on the originally planned dates in the ancient Inca city of Sucre, high in the Bolivian Andes.

Between November 7-18, a total 30 persons participated in the ToT, eight of them being members of Natura and two representatives of local organisations from the focus areas. As in Indonesia, the participants were trained in either Local Fundraising or Mobilising Support. Each course had its own contents and timetables, which had been prepared by the trainers. During the second week, plenary classroom sessions were held focussing on gaining skills to be able to replicate these LFR and MS trainings to local organisations. To reinforce the training, participants carried out visits to two civil society organisations from the city of Sucre, and were given the possibility to discuss the fundraising and advocacy strategies with members of these CSO's.



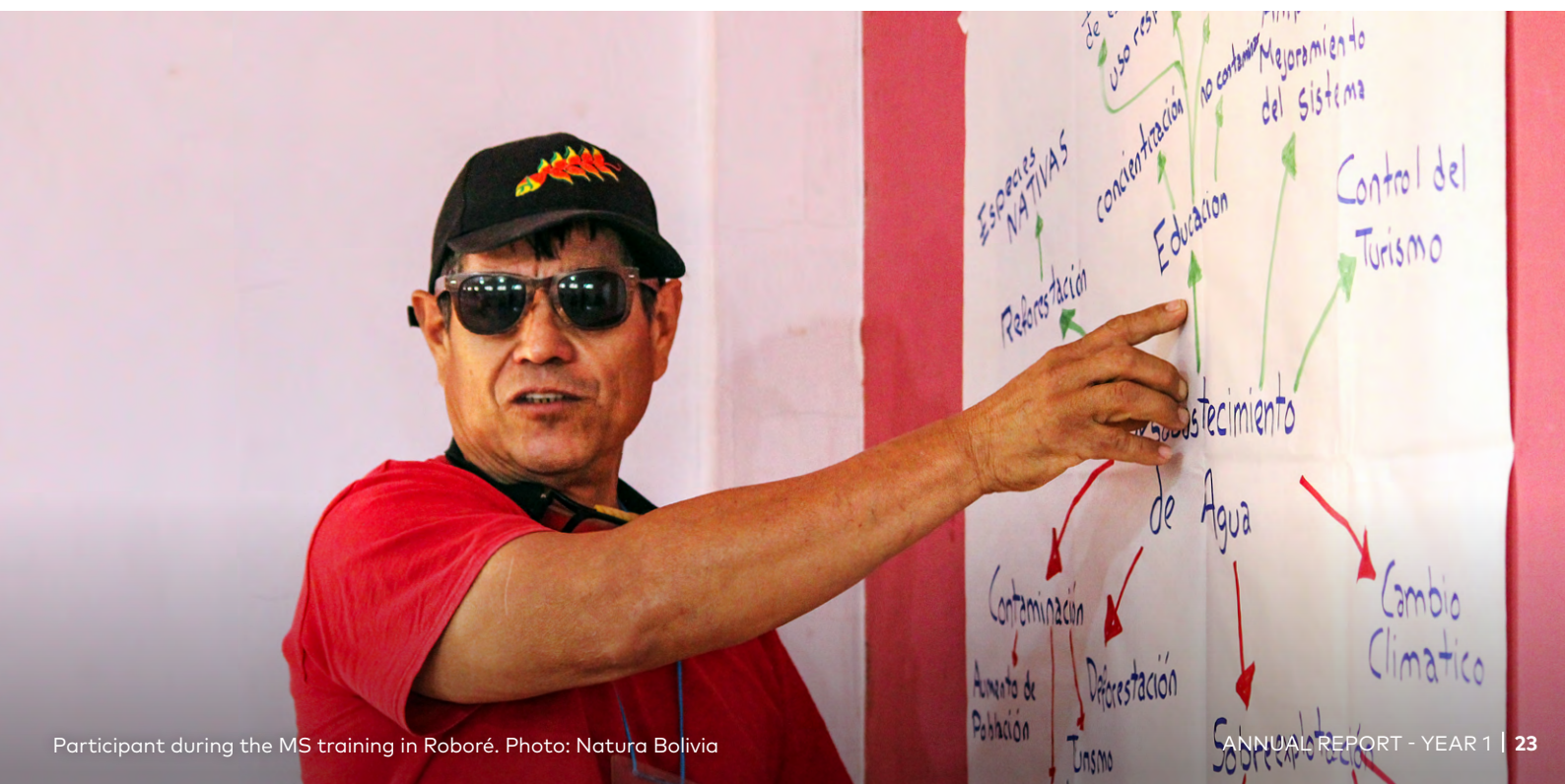
## 2. Contextualisation of Change the Game Academy materials

The contextualisation was carried out collaboratively by the Natura participants of the ToT in the months following the training. Due to the profile of the target group to be trained, it was decided that the trainings in Roboré and Charagua would be conducted in shorter sessions of maximum three days. Subsequently the team analysed what would be the content per training day, while focusing on how to adjust the material to the knowledge, experience, language and customs of the representatives of the local organisations. Having included a Guaraní-speaking local leader in the ToT will be key to assure the materials will be fully understood by the indigenous representatives of Charagua that do not feel comfortable speaking in Spanish. Amongst other decisions, the team argued it should exclude certain topics from the curriculum, such as Theory of Change in MS and web-site management for LFR, while including other, new topics such as how to manage financial resources and analyses of Bolivia's forest framework and regime for the management of resources in indigenous territories and national and local protected areas, within the framework of territorial planning and governance of indigenous and peasant autonomies. Finally, Natura decided to also

integrate the planned trainings on Participatory Video and Media into the curriculum during the third session.

## 3. Preparation for the MS and LFR trainings of local organisations

Seeking to assure total commitment from the local organisation representatives, Natura used the first half of 2023 to discuss the relevance and potential impact of the *Strengthen the Roots* project with the local organisations in Roboré and Charagua to get their buy-in. During March and April 2023, Natura staff paid several visits to the organisations, during which the scope and different phases of *Strengthen the Roots* were presented, and subsequently the organisations were commissioned to select participants to partake in the training and to subscribe their commitment to the entire process (see Annex 1 and 2 for the presentation of the project to the local organisations in Charagua and the schedule of the upcoming LFR and MS trainings). The actual trainings were scheduled to take place in June (in Roboré) and August (Charagua). Reporting on these trainings will be done during next year's report, but fortunately we can already share some pictures from the training in Roboré in this report.



## Main results and key learnings during the first year

- The trained Natura-staff is highly committed to replicate the CtGA training methodology with local organisations in Roboré and Charagua; the staff is keen to see how an increased capacity within local organisations to fundraise locally and present initiatives to protect their forest and water sources will bear fruits during the upcoming two years.
- All eight participating local organisations indicated their interest in the process and have signed pledges of commitment.
- The efforts of *Strengthen the Roots* have fortified the partnerships between Natura Bolivia and the community organisations, to propel their shared mission of safeguarding water sources and preserving nature. With enhanced financial autonomy and organisational strength, these groups are expected to yield greater influence and impact in their endeavours.
- The process to contextualise the CtGA material took longer than expected because Natura staff felt that it was very important that all training materials would appeal to the perceptions and knowledge of the selected participants.
- The CtGA-methodology has the potential to achieve a cultural shift in the way local organisations operate. This required a careful approach by Natura to convince the organisations to participate in the process. Unfortunately, this also caused some delays in getting the trainings started.
- While Natura has a history of collaboration with the Capitanías, the *Strengthen the Roots* project delves even deeper into unravelling their unique and pivotal role in the Autonomous Indigenous area of Charagua. As being integral to the traditional indigenous governance fabric, the Capitanías are both part of civil society in Bolivia and, within Charagua's context, shoulder certain governmental responsibilities. The program aims to fortify their capacities to catalyse enhancements within the indigenous governance framework, particularly concerning the vital domains of water and nature conservation.





## Planning for '23-'24

- Natura will carry out and finalise the MS, LFR and Participatory Video and Media trainings for the selected organisations in Roboré and Charagua.
- After having concluded the trainings, organisations will be supported in the development and implementation of their projects. During this process Natura staff will be in continuous communication with the organisations, they will carry out virtual or direct coaching sessions with its representatives and assist them to achieve the fundraising and advocacy goals they expressed in their projects.
- Additionally, Natura staff will set up a monitoring system with indicators that allow identifying the project's progress over time, which are based on the priorities that they themselves established, such as management of local protected areas, access to water and productive development for food security.
- Exchange of experiences will be promoted between all participating organisations. For this, Natura will organise at least one face-to-face meeting in Bolivia and has also expressed its interest in linking and learning from the other organisations that are part of *Strengthen the Roots*.



Natura trainers with their CtGA Certificates after completing the ToT in Sucre. Photo: Natura Bolivia



In June 2023, Natura Bolivia organised the two Change the Game Academy trainings for the three selected water committees in the municipality of Roboré, Santa Cruz. During the trainings, the experiences were documented, which were then shared with Natura Bolivia's supporters and followers via videos on Instagram and TikTok. [In this video](#), trainer Tamara talks about the content of the course, while in [this video](#), communications officer Darly interviews the participants, who explain why the trainings are important to them.

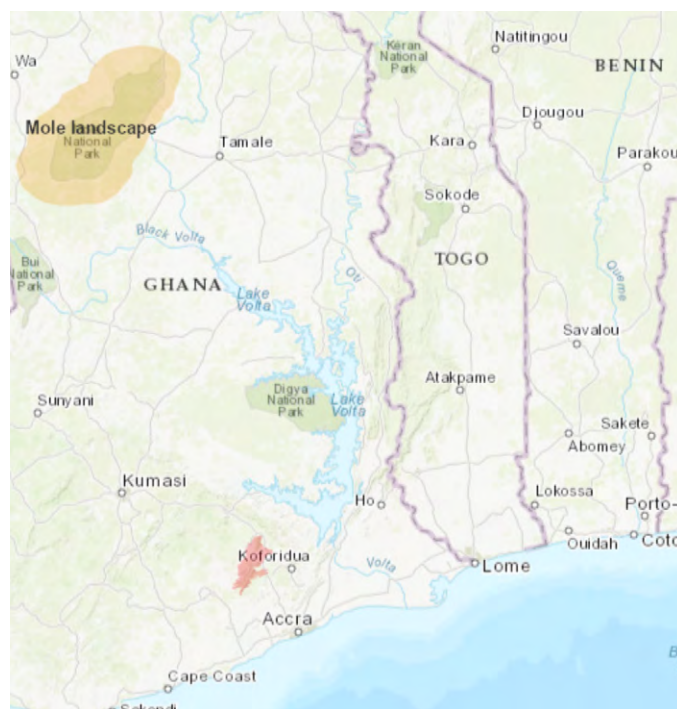
# 5 Ghana

## Context

Unlike the other two countries where *Strengthen the Roots* is implemented, in Ghana our local project partner A Rocha Ghana opted to include political advocacy at the national level as a goal of the project, besides targeting conservation and livelihood improvement in the Atewa rainforest and woodland savanna landscapes. This means that StR involves a broad range of actors, varying from civil society organisations that want to influence national-level policies concerning forests and the preservation of water resources, to small community-based organisations that hope to create sustainable livelihood opportunities linked to nature and conservation in their direct surroundings.

A Rocha Ghana (from here onwards: A Rocha) chose the Atewa rainforest as a focus area in the project, because it constitutes a forest ecozone with an incredible biodiversity, as well as an important source of water for around 5 million Ghanaians, including residents of the capital of Accra. The Atewa forest is currently marked as a location for a large bauxite mining project, and this has generated large opposition from environmentalists and neighbouring communities. Other activities,

such as illegal logging and goldmining, also affect the area. The woodland savanna eco-zone of north-western Ghana is suffering from forest degradation due to increased charcoal production, as it provides energy for cooking and heating in cities and is an important source of income for residents in rural areas. Ownership and use rights in relation to trees and (degraded) land are unclear, leaving no control over logging and its negative impacts on the environment.



## Local organisations participating in the project

During the project's inception phase, A Rocha pre-selected a number of organisations and carried out a needs assessment for each organisation by gathering and analysing information on general capacities, past projects or initiatives and funding sources. The profiling also involved assessing the threats present within the selected landscapes, evaluating the organisational capacity, and identifying both challenges and opportunities that can be harnessed to address the identified threats. Additionally, past advocacy efforts and campaigns were taken into consideration.

The assessment served A Rocha to make an informed decision concerning the final selection of the organisations to participate in the project. It also strengthened their conviction to support these organisations in mitigating threats, enhancing their organisational capacity, and effectively utilising available opportunities to achieve their conservation and sustainability goals. The following nine civil society organisations were selected:

1. Ghana Environment Advocacy Group (GEAG)
2. North Code Ghana
3. The Environment Report
4. Concerned Citizens of Atewa Landscape (CCAL)
5. Facilitating Learning of Women in Emerging Regions (FLOWER)
6. Social Initiative for Literacy and Development Programme (SILDEP)
7. Ghana Youth Environmental Movement (GYEM)
8. Youth Volunteers for the Environment (YVE)
9. Youth Alliance for Green Ghana (YAGG)

As was agreed during project design, training these organisations in LFR and MS would be commissioned to Wilde Ganzen's regional partner West African Civil Society Institute (WACSI), an organisation with a long trajectory of strengthening the institutional and operational capacity of civil society in West Africa. Since 2017, WACSI has been involved in the Change the Game Academy and has trained organisations in West Africa in Local Fundraising and Mobilising Support. This is a different process than in Indonesia and Bolivia, where local staff of the project partners were trained to impart the CtGA-trainings.

On September 29, 2022, a day-long induction meeting on the StR-project was organised in the country's capital of Accra with the participation of the nine local organisations. The sessions were facilitated by project leads of both A Rocha and WACSI. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the project to the leaders and executives of the targeted organisations, to present the plan of activities and ways of working and, most importantly, to obtain organisational buy-in from the leaders. When they affirmed their commitment to the project, the agenda for the upcoming trainings to be imparted by WACSI was jointly agreed upon.



Participants and trainers during the MS training in Accra. Photo: WACSI

## Key actions carried out during the first year

### 1. Contextualisation of Change the Game Academy materials

For contextualisation purposes, A Rocha prepared for the LFR and MS trainings by sharing with WACSI case studies of organisations whose work is contributing to the conservation and sustainable management of forest resources in Ghana. Examples were taken from community advocacy initiatives and other forest conservation activities that resulted in positive gains for conservation (for example, a community advocacy-campaign against lithium mining by traditional authorities in the Central Region). These experiences were included in the training material to guide participants to reflect on their own experiences within the landscapes where they are active, and to use these as a basis to create strategies for local fundraising and the mobilisation of support for their work.

### 2. Training the local organisations on Mobilising Support and Local Fundraising

In November 2022, WACSI gave a six-day LFR training in Accra to all selected organisations. As indicated by the participants of the training, the session was highly interactive, allowing them to get a better understanding of how to identify specific problems they aim to address, how to visualise potential funding opportunities, how to create a comprehensive funding plan, how to communicate in a compelling way to attract possible donors. Between March 13 – 15 March 2023 and on 21 March

2023, WACSI offered virtual coaching sessions with representatives of the selected organisations; which are followed-up by organisation-expressed and demand driven check in sessions. As WACSI stated in its report: *The virtual coaching sessions reinforce the knowledge acquired and they help the organisations strengthen their implementation tactics and plans. The face-to-face coaching sessions will further strengthen the implementation process and help document successes and potential challenges.*

The subsequent Mobilising Support training was an eight-day engagement split into two training sets, a five-day training (Starter) and a three-day training (Perfection skills), conducted four months apart. The Starter training took place at the end of March 2023, and it focused on building the knowledge and skill set of organisations on leveraging the right actors, stakeholders, and resources for effective advocacy action. The training utilised mini lecture approaches, plays, case studies, quizzes, mini discussions, activities, and presentations to effectively equip participants for impact. Before the training, WACSI sent out a needs assessment and baseline survey for participants to fill out to benchmark their individual and organisational needs. The findings set a mark from which to conduct evaluations, but it also informs facilitators and coordinators on how best to respond to the individual and organisational needs of participants.



In total, the attendance of the training sessions consisted of 31 participants, of which twelve are women and 20 persons are under the age of 35. Since its inception, A Rocha has ensured that all organisations would prioritise involvement of women, with a minimum requirement of at least one woman per organisation. These women play a crucial role as points of contact for fostering engagement with other women at the project implementation and community levels. Consideration is given to the timing and location of workshops, meetings, and training sessions, ensuring that they are scheduled at times when women can freely participate and contribute to the learning process. When necessary, additional support such as transportation and child care was provided to enable women to fully engage in the programs and training.

	Local organisation	Total participants	Women	Participants <35
LFR	9	18	7	10
MS	9	13	5	10

### 3. Elaboration of action plans by local organisations, as the basis of community projects

Following the MS-Starter course, A Rocha prioritised the development of projects by the local organisations, which are to receive match funding within the scope of StR. First drafts of the project proposals were received by May '23. After review by A Rocha and WACSI staff, there was a work-session where feedback and comments on the proposals were provided, as well as clarification

of the administrative guidelines. This collaborative session aimed to help the organisations refine and strengthen their proposals, ensuring they are solid and clearly articulated. By July 2023, all nine organisations had submitted their definitive project proposals, and their implementation will start following the formal approval of the plans and budgets by A Rocha in consultation with IUCN NL.

A first assessment by IUCN NL and Wilde Ganzen shows that all projects are fairly well aimed at environmental and conservation issues. The geographical location of the portfolio is diverse, with two partners in the Atewa landscape (CCAL and FLOWER), two in the Northern Mole landscape (North Code and SILDEP), one partner in Western landscape (GEAG), one in the Eastern Landscape (YVE), and 2 in Accra. The project ideas are definitely ambitious and the budgets relatively low but all organisations seem very committed. A full list of project proposals can be found in Annex 3.

### 4. Preparation of the Organisational Capacity Strengthening-trainings

Additionally, A Rocha has contracted the services of Ghanaian NGO [Participatory Development Associates](#) (PDA), a social development and consultancy organisation in Ghana that supports processes of empowerment and self-determination in individuals, organisations, and communities. For 20 years PDA's work has focused on organisational development, capacity building, social research, evaluations, and impact assessment. PDA will assess the nine selected organisations regarding their needs for capacity strengthening. As organisations begin to implement their project, PDA – in collaboration with A Rocha – will carry out face-to-face training workshops to support them.



Participants during the MS training in Accra. Photo: A Rocha Ghana

## Main results and key learnings during the first year

- The most significant achievement has been the successful Local Fundraising and Mobilising Support trainings to nine highly committed organisations. In the words of A Rocha: "The trainings fostered a mindset of adaptability and innovation, encouraging participants to explore new approaches, leverage emerging technologies, and adapt strategies to changing circumstances. Insights were gained into staying responsive to local challenges, identifying opportunities, and continuously improving their fundraising and advocacy approaches."
- The nine proposed projects all have a strong conservation or environmental element; some are focussed on long-term impacts at the policy level, while others focus more on concrete community activities regarding ecosystem restoration, sustainable management of natural resources or livelihood improvements.
- The selected organisations in Ghana are very diverse; they are active in different landscapes, concerning different issues and with different approaches. This provides many opportunities for exchange and "linking and learning", once they have started implementing their projects. However, it will also be challenging for A Rocha to provide a proper coaching trajectory to all these different organisations. A workable solution needs to be found for this, in collaboration with WACSI.
- In hindsight, it would have been better to start with the mobilising support training, and plan the local fundraising training afterwards. Especially during the latter training, organisations became aware of the specific problem or situation they wanted to target with their project. A better sequence would have been to first analyse the issue during the MS training, and then develop strategies on how to raise funds for the proposed initiatives.
- WACSI has been a valued partner organisation for many years and has a lot of experience in delivering CTGA trainings. However, this was the first time they delivered training to organisations specifically on environmental and conservation issues. The specific issues around nature conservation could have been better incorporated into the CtGA training materials if there would have been more synergy and cooperation between A Rocha and WACSI at the start of the project.
- Nonetheless, the LFR and MS trainings played a crucial role in facilitating mutual understanding among organisations. Participants gained insights into each other's work, jurisdictions, and organisational focuses. Moreover, they provided a platform to discuss challenges, draw inspiration from one another's strengths, and foster collaboration.



Field visit from A Rocha and IUCN NL staff to Atewa forest.

Photo: A Rocha GhanaGhana

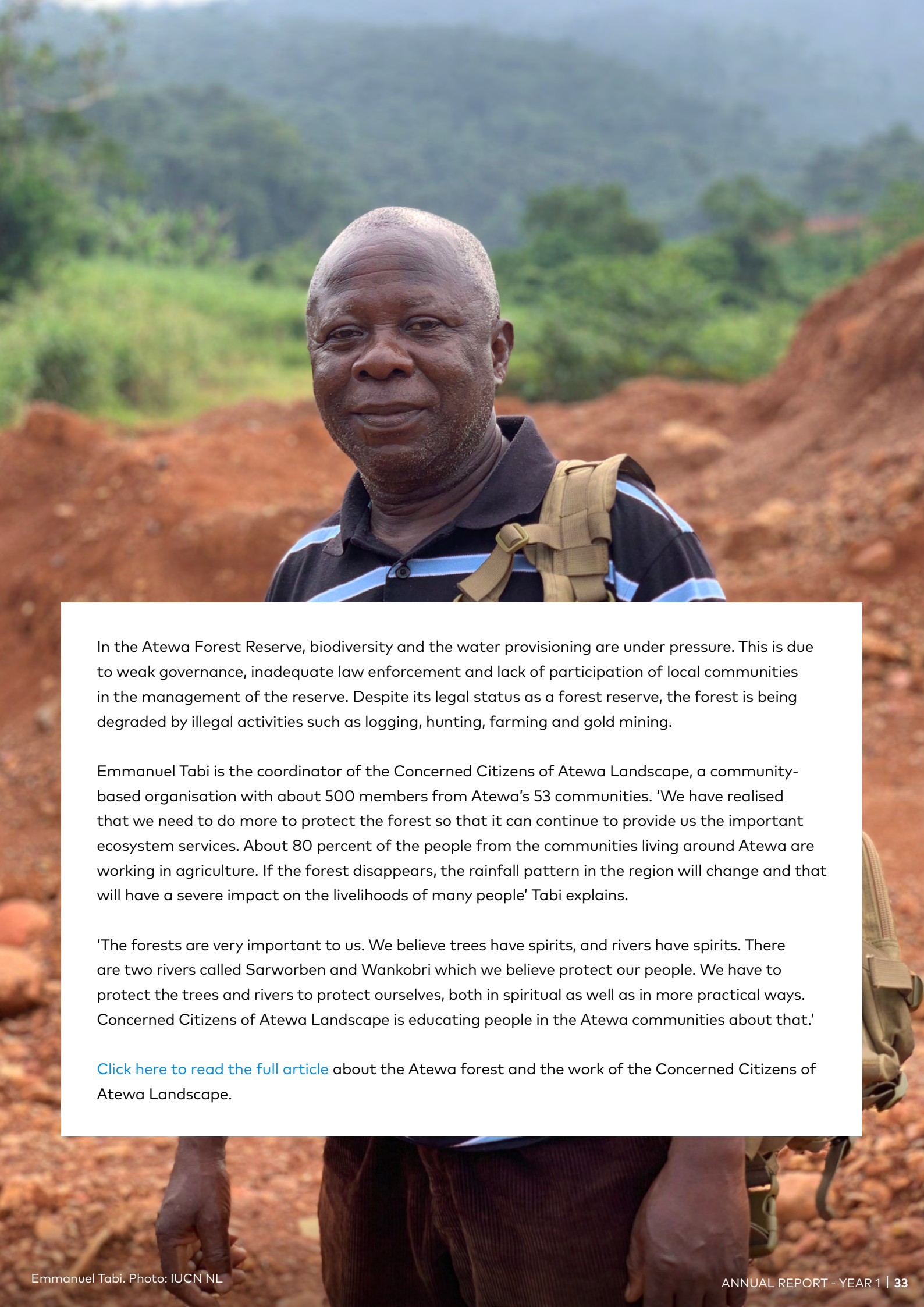
## Planning for '23-'24

- In Q3 of 2023, A Rocha and the nine local organisations will sign contracts for the implementation of environmental or conservation projects to be carried out by the local organisations during the next 20 to 24 months. The contract will include financial targets for the organisations, as well as a match funding component provided by the project.
- A Rocha has prepared for trainings on participatory video and media to local organisations. The trainings start in August 2023, and its aim is to enhance the communication skills and capacities of the organisations, so they can engage with their communities and stakeholders through various media platforms, such as video production, storytelling, and social media. Additionally, they will improve their skills to share their experiences, mobilise support for their projects, and raise awareness about nature conservation and sustainable practices.
- Throughout July and August 2023, WACSI will have virtual coaching sessions with the participants of the MS-training. This will be followed in September 2023 by the three-day Perfection Skills course, which is the second classroom session of the MS-course. During this training, WACSI-staff and participants will jointly assess the organisations' advocacy activities and strategies, and seek ways to improve effectiveness for each organisation.
- Ghanaian NGO PDA will carry out its training workshops to strengthen organisational capacities of the local organisations.
- Throughout the next year, A Rocha will support the selected organisations in the implementation of their projects, including the financial planning and the achievement of their fundraising targets. Also, they will encourage organisations to participate in networks and alliances for joint national or local level advocacy and natural resource sustainability-oriented interventions.



Participants during the LFR training in Accra. Photo: A Rocha Ghana





In the Atewa Forest Reserve, biodiversity and the water provisioning are under pressure. This is due to weak governance, inadequate law enforcement and lack of participation of local communities in the management of the reserve. Despite its legal status as a forest reserve, the forest is being degraded by illegal activities such as logging, hunting, farming and gold mining.

Emmanuel Tabi is the coordinator of the Concerned Citizens of Atewa Landscape, a community-based organisation with about 500 members from Atewa's 53 communities. 'We have realised that we need to do more to protect the forest so that it can continue to provide us the important ecosystem services. About 80 percent of the people from the communities living around Atewa are working in agriculture. If the forest disappears, the rainfall pattern in the region will change and that will have a severe impact on the livelihoods of many people' Tabi explains.

'The forests are very important to us. We believe trees have spirits, and rivers have spirits. There are two rivers called Sarworben and Wankobri which we believe protect our people. We have to protect the trees and rivers to protect ourselves, both in spiritual as well as in more practical ways. Concerned Citizens of Atewa Landscape is educating people in the Atewa communities about that.'

[Click here to read the full article](#) about the Atewa forest and the work of the Concerned Citizens of Atewa Landscape.

## 6 Financial figures - April 2022 to June 2023

Between April – June 2022, after receiving the grant from the Nationale Postcode Loterij to implement the *Strengthen the Roots* project, Wilde Ganzen drafted the partner contracts with co-implementers IUCN NL and WACSI. It was further agreed that IUCN NL would draw up contracts with their three selected project partners Natura Bolivia, A Rocha Ghana and KKI Warsi for their work in the country in question. By July 2022, all contracts had been signed and the project could officially begin.

The budget overview for Project Year 1 shows some deviations, as these account for one-third of the entire budget. In some cases, such as with WACSI

in Ghana, the vast majority of costs are incurred during the first year. In other cases, as with Natura Bolivia, not all of the trainings have been given to local organizations during the first project year, even though they had all been budgeted for Q2 of 2023. For the next project year, the main challenge will be to guide and monitor the 27 projects of the local organizations and double the funds they will raise with the available match funding.

The table below shows expenditures by organization during the 3-month start-up phase and the first project year (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023). A detailed Excel-sheet of the expenditure during Year 1 of *Strengthen the Roots* is shared in Annex 4.

Partners		Budget Year 1	Expenditures	Actual Expenditures vs Budget	Payment
A Rocha Ghana		86.675	59.601	69%	150.259
KKI Warsi Indonesia		122.375	75.922	62%	114.921
Natura Bolivia		109.375	59.591	54%	176.130
IUCN NL		166.750	98.340	59%	463.587
Matchfunding projects Indonesia		26.325	662	3%	
<b>Total IUCN NL + Partners</b>		<b>511.500</b>	<b>294.117</b>	58%	
<b>Wilde Ganzen</b>		235.490	203.195	86%	
<b>WACSI Ghana</b>		44.534	86.804	195%	72.750
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>791.524</b>	<b>584.116</b>	74%	<b>536.337</b>