

Strengthen the Roots

Annual Report - Year 2

2023 - 2024



Organic rice in Sumpur Kudus, West Sumatra. Photo: Stephanie Broekarts/IUCN NL

A programme in Indonesia, Bolivia and Ghana

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1 Introduction

In mid-2022, the Strengthen the Roots (StR) programme was launched in Bolivia, Ghana, and Indonesia. Running until the end of 2025, this programme aims to support community organisations from unique and threatened natural areas. During the first year, renowned NGOs from these countries worked to enhance these organisations' capabilities in lobbying and fundraising while assisting them in developing multi-annual projects focused on grassroots nature conservation and improving the livelihoods of their communities, based on their own mission and unique role in these landscapes.

This report focuses on the implementation of Community-Based Organisation (CBO) projects during the second year of the programme. Given the diverse range of initiatives developed both within and across the three countries, we will not

cover every project but instead highlight the most innovative and impactful ones that, even within their first year, have already generated significant positive change in the communities they serve.

We chose to organise the report by country to reflect the distinct characteristics of the organisations, their specific relationships with the implementing partners, and their unique approaches to applying the techniques learned in fundraising, lobbying, and advocacy.

We are eager for the next phase of the programme, where we hope to see these CBOs become increasingly self-sufficient in implementing their own mission and achieve greater success in protecting the beautiful natural areas around them while significantly improving the living standards of their communities.



2 Main achievements and lessons learnt during Year 2

In its second year, the programme concentrated on implementing the CBO projects across all three countries while simultaneously continuing to strengthen capacities of these organisations.

Following the original plan, CBOs began raising cash funds and gathering in-kind support to finance their projects. The majority of the project budgets in this second year still came in the form of 'match funding': the CBO raised part of the funds, which were matched by our local implementing partners: **KKI Warsi** in Indonesia, **Fundación Natura Bolivia** in Bolivia, and **A Rocha Ghana** in Ghana. A key aspect of the projects was to increase community and broader societal support for the CBOs' conservation efforts to ensure their long-term sustainability. Efforts to strengthen the organisations included a range of activities, from civic journalism workshops to financial management training and refresher courses based on the "Local Fundraising" and "Mobilising Support" modules from the Change the Game Academy.

Below, we highlight the main achievements of Year 2 and outline some of the lessons learned during this period that should be taken into account for the remaining year and a half of the Strengthen the Roots programme.

- Most of the participating CBOs have actively begun implementing their own project ideas and have made **significant progress towards their project's objectives**. While fundraising remains a challenge, the new techniques they have learned are helping them better understand how to secure their financial sustainability in the long term.
- The local implementing partners **disbursed the majority of the match funding budgets to the CBOs**, demonstrating their confidence in the

CBOs' leadership, capabilities, and the urgency of their projects.

- KKI Warsi's positive experiences with the Strengthen the Roots approach in West Sumatra led them to want to replicate it in other communities. Together with IUCN NL and two other local NGOs, they submitted a proposal to the EU to this end, which was approved.
- In Ghana, three participating organisations were able to successfully raise funds from external donors through the submission of project proposals. This will boost their confidence while enhancing their credibility, visibility and sustainability.
- In Bolivia, three indigenous communities have united to launch a campaign to safeguard the Parapetí river, a lifeline that holds deep significance for them. Driven by a shared commitment, they are engaging with upstream communities and regions, rallying support to achieve protection for the entire river. Their efforts aim to build a powerful coalition that can champion the river's preservation for generations to come.

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 like-minded programs:

- The process of strengthening CBOs is lengthy and often slow, and local contexts and dynamics don't always align with the ambitious goals set by this programme. These high ambitions are strongly supported by the local implementing partners, who are also keen to see the CBOs become more independent. While this process is unlikely to be completed by the end of 2025, a solid foundation

will have been established throughout the duration of this programme.

- KKI Warsi, A Rocha Ghana and Fundación Natura Bolivia appreciate the opportunity to directly support CBOs and local CSOs by providing flexible funding for their projects, something that is rarely allowed or possible in most international development programmes.
- The participating community based organisations have varying levels of experience in areas like project management and fundraising. Most of these organisations in Ghana and Bolivia have some experience in these areas, while the CBOs in Indonesia had never previously developed a project with a corresponding budget and had only occasionally raised funds for specific activities. These differences highlight the need for tailored capacity-strengthening approaches that address the unique challenges and strengths of each group. Recognizing and accommodating these differences is key to ensure that all CBOs can grow at their own speed and be more effective in achieving their goals.
- After two years, overall spending has been relatively lower than originally budgeted, largely due to a slower than anticipated start in Indonesia and Bolivia. For the CBOs in West Sumatra, but also for the water cooperatives of Roboré, it took longer than expected to help them fully understand the concept of a project, resulting in a delay in the actual launch of their initiatives.

To address this, we applied for a budget-neutral extension, allowing the CBOs additional time to implement the different phases of their projects.

- In Bolivia the slow start was also related to the regional strike in Santa Cruz from October 2022 to January 2023, as noted in the previous annual report. In 2023, political disputes within the highest governing body of the indigenous authorities in Charagua further exacerbated delays, preventing agreements with the capitanías needed to start the StR projects. However, relative stability was restored in September 2023 with the [appointment of indigenous leader Delcy Medina](#). This led to a swift push to finalise agreements with the four capitanías in Charagua for their respective projects and created positive political conditions for these projects, e.g. the law on protected areas. The extension of the StR program will allow these CBOs in Bolivia and Indonesia to recover some of the lost time and implement their projects effectively.
- The initial match funding system created by Wilde Ganzen and IUCN NL, which required CBOs to raise funds for three project phases — starting with 10%, then 40%, and finally 60% of their project costs — in most cases has proven difficult to achieve within the local contexts. We are collaborating with local partners on adapted approaches for distributing the remaining available match funding budget in each country, to ensure it fits with the needs of the community organisations.



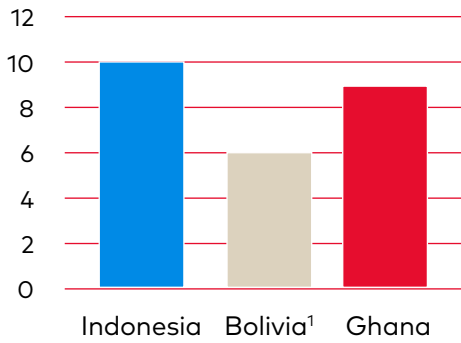
Members of the CBO 'KUPS Beras Organik' in West Sumatra. Photo: KKI Warsi

3 Strengthen the Roots in figures



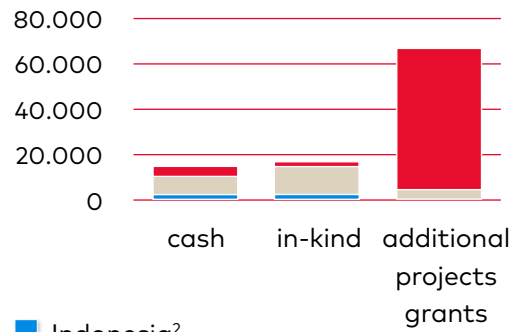
Number of CBOs

Number of CBOs that receive support



Financial & in-kind support

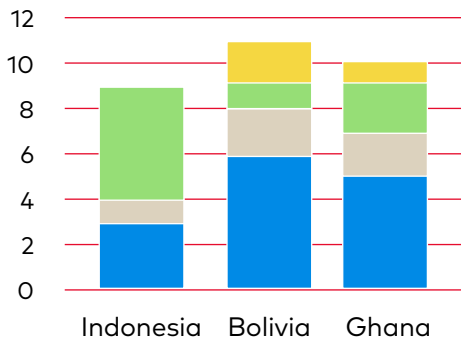
Local fundraising result € 96.247 total



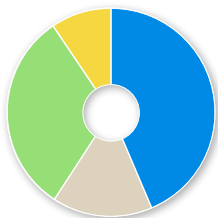
- Indonesia²
- Bolivia
- Ghana

Category of CBO projects

Main focus areas CBO's



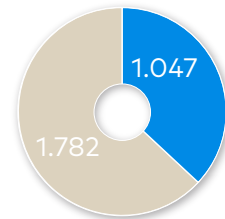
Impression of main focus areas of CBOs



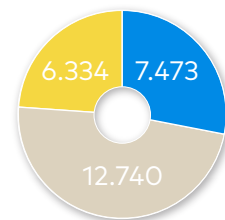
- nature conservation
- water management
- sale agroforestry products
- ecotourism

Local Fund Raising

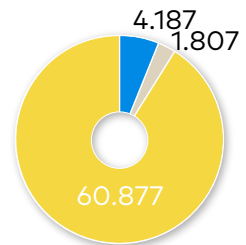
• Indonesia
€ 2.829 total



• Bolivia
€ 26.547 total



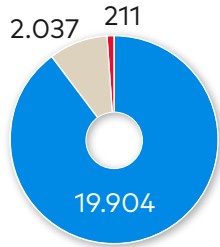
• Ghana
€ 66.871 total



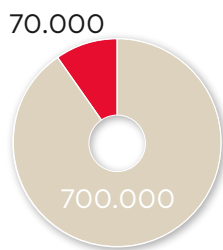
- cash
- in-kind
- additional project grants

Hectares of protected forest

Hectares of village forests - benefiting directly



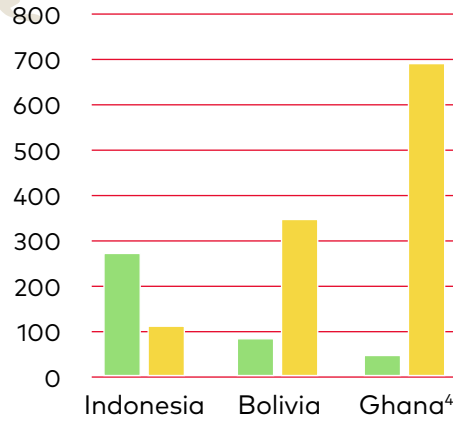
Nature areas benefiting indirectly³



■ Indonesia
■ Bolivia
■ Ghana

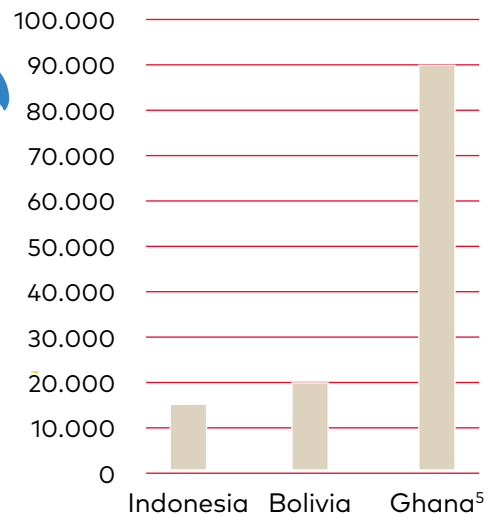
Beneficiaries

People benefiting directly from CBO projects



■ trainings
■ direct benefit

Estimated number of people indirectly benefiting from ecosystems services



Notes

1. In Bolivia some CBOs dropped out, and those remaining need a lot of support to achieve their goals. More details in the Bolivia chapter.
2. Cash and in-kind support in Indonesia is low, because the CBOs here have limited experience; in addition living standard is low, so conversion into euros doesn't tell the whole picture.
3. This also occurs in Indonesia, but we don't have the figures.
4. The figures for Ghana are high because certain CBO projects benefit the livelihoods for entire communities.
5. The figures for Ghana are high, because all people who benefit from less polluted landscapes are included.

4 Indonesia

Context

Between 2001 and 2022, Indonesia [lost 29 million hectares](#) of primary forest, 18% of its total forest cover. To halt deforestation and to enhance the welfare of forest-dependent communities, the Government of Indonesia launched the Social Forestry program, under which indigenous peoples and local communities are able to obtain a 35-year management permit for state forest. Social forestry can play an important role in the protection of forests by involving communities in the management of the forest.

Within the Strengthen the Roots (StR) programme, KKI Warsi is working with ten CBOs in communities that already have a Social Forestry permit under which they have to protect their village forests. Among these ten communities, a total amount of 19.904 hectares of forest are managed (ranging from 240 to 5.080 hectares).

As indicated in last year's report, the CBOs that are part of StR consist of three Village Forest Management Groups (LHPN, in its Indonesian acronym) and seven Social Forestry Business Groups (KUPS), of which two are women groups (KUPS Putra). After having been trained in Local Fundraising and Mobilising Support by KKI Warsi between November '22 and May '23, and subsequently in media skills and organisational development, the local organisations were invited to initiate community projects that lead to improved livelihoods for communities and sustainable management of the natural environment. More precisely, these projects are aimed at creating new business opportunities and conservation initiatives grounded in local wisdom within the communities. At the same time, they aim to expand the

communities' reach, enabling them to secure support from stakeholders like the government and market parties. In the next subsection, we will go into more detail regarding the initiatives set up by the CBOs for nature conservation initiatives and livelihood improvement.

During Year 2 of the StR program, West Sumatra faced several serious landslides that disrupted life. In March '24, torrential rains triggered flash floods and a landslide in the district of Pesisir Selatan, killing at least 19 people. In May '24, heavy rain caused flash floods and lahars in the regencies of Agam and Tanah Datar, killing at least 67 people. More than 4,000 people were displaced.

A study by KKI Warsi shows that the three principal factors leading to floods and landslides are soil type, land cover and rainfall. West Sumatra generally has landslide-prone soil types, and at the time of the disasters the whole province experienced extreme rainfall (roughly 400 millimetres per day). Only the land cover differs from place to place and is therefore the main factor that determines the occurrence of disasters. In the communities that collaborate with KKI Warsi, where village forests are sustainably managed, the forest cover tends to be very good. As a result these communities were hardly affected by floods and landslides, highlighting the protective benefits of effective forest management. Nevertheless, project activities had to be postponed due to damaged road infrastructure and the ongoing rescue operations. One organisation had to cancel a training because the trainer from East Java Province could not travel. Other CBOs could not place all boundary markers because of the heavy rains and in March and May the KKI Warsi staff was hampered in reaching the communities and the head office in Jambi.



Romi Febriandi. Photo: Eduardo Martinez/IUCN NL

Interview with Romi Febriandi, head of the government of the village of Sirukam, about the importance of social forestry for protecting their forest and maintaining the community's livelihood.

'Forests are extremely important to sustaining livelihoods here,' Febriandi explains. '90% of the population of Sirukam depend on rice fields for their livelihoods, and the rice fields need water. A healthy forest regulates year-round availability of water. This is why it is so important to protect the forests: it means protecting life. People in Sirukam want to contribute to the climate through protecting the village forest.'

Before the introduction of social forestry, it was illegal for the community to access the forest because its formal status was 'protected area'. However, protection was not really effective. With the permit for social forestry, the community can sustainably manage the land and benefit from the forest.

KKI Warsi supported the Sirukam government in creating a Village Forest Management Group (LHPN) to manage the forest. The LHPN is under the authority of the village government, and together they manage and protect the forest. The LHPN established four community enterprise groups: coffee, honey, ecotourism and compost. Through agroforestry, coffee and honey can be safely harvested without deforestation. The compost is used for organic rice cultivation, and ecotourism provides jobs for young people. By introducing these alternative sustainable livelihoods, the need for logging is removed. Through its forest guards, the LHPN also does monitoring and evaluation of the forests, and reports illegal activities to the village government and the district Forest Management Unit.

The social forestry programme is a success, Febriandi says. 'The awareness of people in the village regarding the importance of the forest has increased enormously. Before, some of them cut trees without any concern for the ecosystem or its biodiversity, nor the importance of the forest for irrigation of their rice fields. Protection of the forest was not on their mind. But through socialisation and meetings about the social forestry programme they have become more aware and sensible about their interactions with the forest.'



▶ *'What has changed is the focus of the LHPN. Before the establishment of the four community enterprise groups, the LHPN focused on forest patrols to track and catch perpetrators of illegal logging, poaching or mining. Thanks to the Strengthen the Roots programme, the LHPN is also focusing on reducing the underlying poverty by introducing sustainable livelihood options and supporting alternative sources of income. So, the approach became more holistic and as a result more effective.'*

[Here](#) is the full interview with Romi Febriandi on the IUCN NL website.

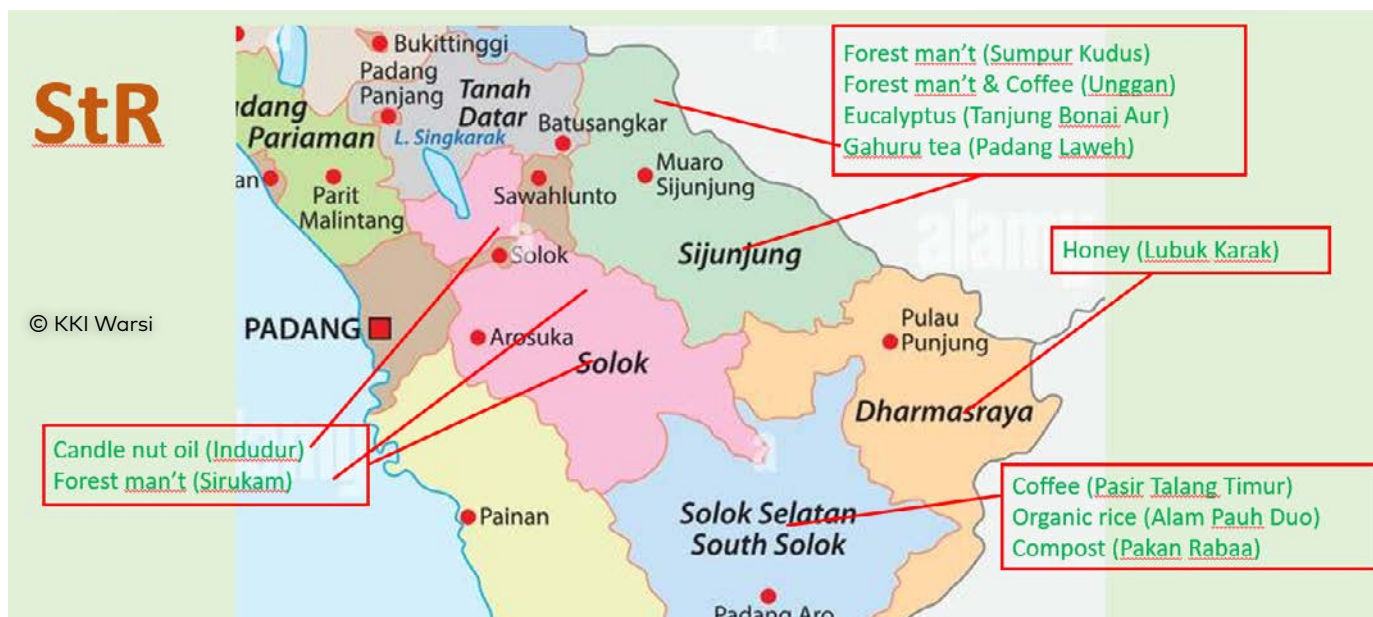


CBO projects

Ten CBOs in Mudiak Baduo and Sumpur Kudus landscapes the developed projects to protect the forests and improve livelihoods. Three of these CBOs are Village Forest Management Groups and seven

are Social Forestry Business Groups, of which two are women groups . The table below gives a concise description of the ten CBO projects; a full description of the projects implemented by the ten participating CBOs in West Sumatra can be found in Annex 1. In the area of nature conservation, we can highlight

Village	CBO	Source of income	Project title	Area Village Forest (hectares)
Sirukam	Village Forest management Group	Adopt a Tree, avocado, coffee, other crops	Protect the forest and adopt a tree for the sustainability of springs	650
Sumpur Kudus	Village Forest management Group	Adopt a tree	Strengthening forest management as an effort to strengthen sustainable NRM	3862
Unggan	Village Forest management Group	Coffee	Strengthening community-based village forest protection and security	5080
Pasir Talang Timur	KUPS Marola Kopi Mutiara Suliti	Coffee	Prospering the coffee farming community	2395
Tanjung Bonai Aur	KUPS Bukik Godang	Eucalyptus oil	Improving community economy through the development of eucalyptus flagship crops in social forestry areas	366
Lubuk Karak	KUPS Bukik Batu Bolang	Honey	Galo-galo honey for nagari change	1708
Indudur	KUPS Putra Selembar Daun	Candlenut oil	Economic improvement of Indudur women	240
Padang Laweh	KUPS Putra Harapan	Gaharu herbal tea	Gaharu (Agar wood) as the economic source of nagari	693
Alam Pauh Duo	KUPS Organik Simancuang	Organic rice	Improving farmers' economy towards sustainable and environmentally friendly agriculture	650
Pakan Rabaa	KUPS Kompos	Compost	Improving the community's economy through the development of compost business to realise environmentally friendly agriculture	4260



the following promising initiatives by participating CBOs:

- The Village Forest Management Groups in Sumpur Kudus and Unggan installed boundary markers around the village forest and received capacity building in the use of mapping tools (GPS and Avenza Map).
- The Village Forest Management Group in Sumpur Kudus acquired equipment to strengthen forest patrol activities: machetes, forest shoes, first aid kits, backpacks, head lamps, sleeping bags, stoves, tarpaulins, uniform vests (institutional identity) and the group has built a patrol hut which is used as the their base camp.
- The Village Forest Management Group in Sirukam has reforested two hectares of critical area in the village forest with plants that have an economic value for the community (Archidendron pauciflorum, Parkia speciosa, avocado and coffee).

To improve the communities' livelihood options, Social Forestry Business Groups had been set up in coordination with KKI Warsi staff. During the first year of the StR project implementation, we can identify these positive developments:

- KUPS Putra Selemba Daun has mapped about 3000 candlenut trees spread over circa 55 hectares. After a training on candlenut oil aromatherapy, they developed candlenut oil



Rice paddies between the forests of Sumpur Kudus, West Sumatra.

Photo: Stephanie Broekarts/IUCN NL

products into three variants: original, lavender, and cajuput. The CBO received packaging support in the form of free packaging design and sticker printing from the Solok District department Cooperative and Small and Medium Enterprises.

- KUPS Kompos constructed a drying floor. As a result, the drying process was accelerated and the production of compost increased to three tons.
- The women's group KUPS Putra Harapan has built a washing place for agarwood leaves, enabling them to improve the quality of the agarwood-leaves herbal drink through a more hygienic manufacturing process.

Mobilising Support initiatives by CBOs

During Year 2, CBOs put into practise the knowledge that they gained from the Mobilising Support training provided by KKI Warsi during Year 1. CBOs carried out problem and solution analyses, stakeholder analyses, and composed action plans. Consequently, the CBOs organised activities such as direct meetings, negotiations, proposals and courtesy visits to attempt to obtain support for their cause. In many cases, however, CBOs had difficulties

achieving support, because a) 2023-2204 were years characterised by election campaigns, elections and the instalment of new government officials; b) Departments' budgets were already exhausted. The CBOs however did receive commitments that support will be given in the coming year.

In West Sumatra, CBOs targeted the following government agencies and businesses for support:

Village Governments, requests for village-owned enterprise funds, for instance:

- KUPS Marola Mutiara Suliti received a commitment from the village government of Pasir Talang Timur to provide business development capital through the village-owned enterprise funds.
- The village government of Pakan Rabaa promised KUPS Kompos to provide capacity-building activities in digital marketing training for the group in 2025.
- KUPS Organik Simancuang received a commitment from the village government of Alam Pauh Duo regarding support for training in compost processing, equipment and materials for making compost, and KUPS operations.



Organic rice farmer in Sumpur Kudus, West Sumatra.
Photo: Stephanie Broekarts/IUCN NL

District Forest Management Unit (KPHL), requests for support for community forest guards:

- The Village Forest Management Group of Sirukam approached the Forest Management Unit (KPHL) of Solok district for patrol equipment. The decision has been postponed to 2025.

District Agriculture Department, requests for support from agricultural extension officers regarding coffee cultivation and rice cultivation:

- KUPS Marola Mutiara Kopi Suliti in Pasir Talang Timur lobbied agricultural extension officers in South Solok district regarding coffee seedling support from the South Solok Agriculture Agency. The Agricultural Extension Center will facilitate KUPS to meet and discuss with the South Solok Agriculture Agency regarding the needs for developing coffee cultivation.
- KUPS Beras Organik Simancuang in Alam Pauh Duo advocated for support from the agriculture department in South Solok district, in the form of agricultural tools, product packaging, compost processing training, livestock support and intense assistance from agricultural extension officers for the development of Simancuang organic rice.

The Head of the Food Crops sector has signed a commitment to provide the support.

District Trade and Cooperative Department, requests for training for product promotion.

West Sumatra Provincial Forest Agency, requests to facilitate measures to facilitate the legal requirements of the Village Forest patrol teams.

Provincial Department of Small and Medium Enterprises Cooperative, Industry and Trade, requests for support for product packaging design:

- KUPS Putra Selembar Daun in Indudur has received support for product packaging design from the department of Medium Enterprises Cooperative, Industry, and Trade Agency in Solok district.

Perum Perhutani - State-Owned Enterprise, requests for community assistance in sustainable and beneficial Forest Management and knowledge sharing to develop products (nurseries, distillation, and marketing):

- Perum Perhutani will provide KUPS Bukik Godang in Tanjung Bonai Aur with knowledge to develop eucalyptus products, especially regarding nurseries, distillation, and marketing.



CBO in the picture

Padang Laweh- KUPS Putra Harapan

The CBO in Padang Laweh has seventeen members (ten women and seven men, incl. five youths).

The goal of this community enterprise is to cultivate marketable products from the gaharu trees (agarwood) in the forest. The women produce herbal drinks from the leaves and the men extract essential oil from the stem. They started some ten years ago with the mission to build alternative livelihoods for people who are illegally mining for gold in the forest and river. The business is not yet yielding the expected benefits because they lack the capacity to properly use the drying and distillation machines and to produce good products. Last year they sold only 50 packs of gaharu herbal drinks for Rp. 15.000,-/ pack (approx. € 1).

The group members have met with the village head to discuss and convey the group's activity plan and the need for a more hygienic manufacturing process to improve the product quality. They discussed opportunities for financial support from the village government, especially for training activities. This discussion will be followed-up in 2025. In the past three years they received financial support from the

Forest Management Unit (KPHL Sijunjung), which was used for the construction of a production house where the drying and distillation machines are housed. The village head (the Wali) hopes that the CBO will be strong and thriving within four to five years.

Last year, with StR funds, they could pay the Essential Oil Network for a training on the use of the distillation equipment and KKI Warsi provided trainings on organisational capacities. Time management is a challenge for the group members. The funds were also used for gaharu leaf choppers, production tables and chairs and the construction of gaharu leaf washing stations and guard posts that comply with production standard operating procedures.

Furthermore, with support from KKI Warsi, and using the skills they obtained in the Local Fundraising and Mobilising Support trainings, the CBO is busy to get the legality permits for harvesting and marketing the gaharu products:

- A 'Certification of Cultivation of Gaharu Plants' from the West Sumatra Natural Resources Conservation Centre (BKSDA) for which ground checks of gaharu cultivation locations have to be



done. Officially the community has to pay for these ground checks but in this case BKSDA promised to give financial support for this process. The ground checks were planned for May '24 but postponed to later this year.

- A licence from the Agency for Drug and Food Control (BPOM) to sell the gaharu products. This legalisation effort is still in process.

In February '24, two staff members of IUCN NL visited West Sumatra and they were warmly welcomed by the CBO in Padang Laweh. The group members had prepared a PowerPoint about their social enterprise and served herbal drinks from gaharu leaves (very tasty!). The enthusiasm of the people, the well-tended gaharu trees and the production house with the machines are promising signs for a future thriving community business.



Networking

KKI Warsi is looking for collaboration with the three district governments on community empowerment through social forestry schemes. At this stage relevant district departments for collaboration are identified. Preparations are made for the establishment of a Social Forestry Acceleration Working Group to ensure that the plans prepared by CBOs are included in the district government's development plans and regulations that accommodate community needs in terms of policies, funding, and infrastructure.

Local fundraising initiatives by CBOs

After having been equipped during the first months of 2023 with skills to increase their capacity to raise funds and garner support at the local level, the ten

CBOs in West Sumatra each developed their fundraising plan, targeting community members, the village government, the District Agricultural Department, and others. As agreed at the beginning of the program, KKI Warsi provided the CBOs with additional match funding to ensure that their projects could be carried out.

Overall, the ten CBOs raised € 2,829 (28.2% in-cash, 62.3% in-kind contributions and 9.5% from increase in product sales; see Annex 2). In-kind contributions consisted of tree seeds, resource persons providing training on how to use equipment, training on eucalyptus cultivation and marketing, and equipment for forest guards (phones, tents, sleeping bags).

The total amount of CBO contribution during the first phase of the CBO-project period stands at only 25% of the anticipated target. This shortfall can be attributed to the delayed start of the CBO projects and the challenge to bring the learned skills



in practice. Most notably, the CBOs needed time to familiarise themselves with the new concept of a project, which includes defining objectives, outcomes, outputs, and budget, and to formulate a feasible project proposal. Secondly, the project proposals were finalised and approved in November '23, and gained significant momentum only in February '24, effectively shortening the first project period to five months instead of the planned ten months. In the aftermath of the LFR training sessions from Year 1, CBOs still struggled to develop practical scenarios and identify effective strategies and concrete activities to actually raise funds, which is something that KKI Warsi is addressing during their regular check-ups and coaching visits to the communities.

All in all, the ten Indonesian CBOs received € 27,402 in match funding, averaging nine times the amount of the CBO contribution, slightly more than the planned eight times. In the first year of CBO projects, 27% of the reserved match funding has been used.

Citizen journalism and community communication

During Year 2, ten young people (four women, six men between 17 and 27 years old) from the South Solok district, Solok district and Sijunjung

district were trained to improve their writing and video-making skills through online meetings and *Wanacerita* activities. The [Wanacerita](#) is a citizen journalism platform developed by KKI Warsi for young cadres to enhance their knowledge related to social forestry. The purpose of *Wanacerita* is to implement the cadres' post-training knowledge, starting from building concepts and collecting data, giving them the possibility to produce journalistic products, as well as to strengthen their knowledge on social forestry issues. The youth collect information and make journalistic products in each other's village regarding natural resource management. In offline and online meetings, they had lively discussions about the experiences and challenges they faced in the communities and the role of citizen journalism in campaigning for issues in the village. In addition, the data collected by the young journalists are also used for strategy development.

During the past year, nineteen journalistic products in the form of articles and short videos on community enterprises and forest security and protection have been published. The cadres have built their own channels to disseminate their content on platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, as well as websites, thereby significantly expanding the reach of campaigns (see Annex 3 for a list of the communicational products).



Capacity strengthening of CBOs

From July to November '23, KKI Warsi organised participatory sessions with members of the ten CBOs (46 women, 59 men, incl. 43 youth). During these sessions, participants received follow-up sessions on the Local Fundraising and Mobilising Support trainings, in order for them to practise skills such as delivering presentations and communicating with donors, as well as revising the stakeholder analyses and redefining their advocacy plans. They were also coached in developing and formulating feasible projects, including expected outcomes, planning, implementation, and accountability.

On a broader level, the organisational capacities of CBOs were analysed by KKI Warsi's staff, and -

based on the result of the analysis - specific support was provided. All in all, the outcome was that all ten CBOs had a need for strengthened capacities on Financial Standard Operational Procedures (SOP), institutional mechanisms, formulation of forest management plans, program and financial management and legal institutional requirements such as a Memorandum of Association / Articles of Association, Production SOP, Asset Management SOP, and Business Management SOP. So far, six CBOs (48 women, 38 men, incl. 26 youth) received training on public speaking, organisational management, administration and finance.

At the end of the Year 2, KKI Warsi confirms that the CBOs were able to compile narrative and financial reports in accordance with the standards that were



set by KKI Warsi. The CBOs have also made revisions to their Memorandum of Association to strengthen their institutional governance.

Gender and youth inclusion

The process of gender and youth integration involved identifying and engaging women and young people through discussion forums focused on environmental issues. Women are integrated into village institutions such as Village Forest Management Groups and the Social Forestry Business Group and are involved in roles like product promotion, financial management, data collection, and village forest zoning. They actively contribute ideas for group action plans, manage project activities, and participate in village-level meetings on development planning. To further support women's engagement, KKI Warsi uses the Feminist Participatory Action Research approach to build their capacity, aiming to enable them to advocate for their needs to stakeholders. This process began in Sumpur Kudus village and is being expanded to other villages, where two of the ten CBOs are women-led.

To promote youth integration, KKI Warsi organises young people into forums such as '*Pemuda Penggerak Nagari*' (meaning '*Youth Driving the Village*'). These forums serve as communication platforms, empowering youth to take active roles in the sustainable management of natural resources. Through youth schools, KKI Warsi strengthens

their capacity, empowering them to engage in village forest management and voice their needs to stakeholders. Pemuda Penggerak Nagari is expected to be a forum that boosts awareness and involvement of youth in villages related to inclusive sustainable natural resource management in the entire province of West Sumatra. Currently, the forum is a combination of eighteen youths from thirteen communities in West Sumatra where KKI Warsi is active.

Scaling up in West Sumatra

The StR project with ten CBOs in West Sumatra has been upscaled and replicated with the approval of the project '*CSOs standing shoulder to shoulder in defence of forest livelihoods*', funded by the EU (January '24 - December '27). The four consortium partners KKI Warsi (coordinator), [Walhi](#), [Aksi](#) and IUCN NL will implement the programme in the provinces of Jambi, West Sumatra and Bengkulu, targeting CBOs in 70 villages - 40 Village Forest Management Groups and 30 Community enterprise groups - and fifteen local CSOs. The experiences from StR with Local Fundraising, Mobilising Support, match funding and citizen journalism (engaging youth in 35 target villages) will be used to build the capacities of CBOs and CSOs, to strengthen networks, to influence (local) governments regarding forest and natural resource management policies and to engage in public policy dialogue at local, national and international levels.

5 Bolivia

Context

For the StR programme, the implementing partner Fundación Natura Bolivia is active in the Roboré and Charagua municipalities, which are part of the Santa Cruz department in eastern Bolivia.

In the municipality of **Roboré**, particularly in the villages of Chochís and Santiago de Chiquitos, the main focus lies on the protection of water resources and the promotion of tourism due to the scenic beauty of the Tucabaca Valley Protected Area. Local cooperatives, along with water and tourism committees, have played a key role in revitalising the local economy through these natural assets. However, the region faces significant challenges, including forest fires and droughts, which have

recently been worsened by the El Niño phenomenon. The droughts of '23-'24 are expected to continue until 2026, with rising temperatures further diminishing water availability for both residents and tourists. Given the local economy's heavy reliance on water, there is an urgent need to prioritise the conservation of forests, as these play an essential role in ensuring the availability, quality and regulation of water resources. This is particularly important in the Tucabaca Protected Area, which serves as the region's primary water source.

This situation has underscored the necessity for the CBOs - in this case, the *cooperativas de agua* of Chochís and Santiago - to strengthen their institutional capacities and secure funding for improving water systems. These efforts are closely



tied to the conservation of water recharge areas in the region. Although leadership changes within the water cooperatives in late 2023 and early 2024 caused delays, the CBO projects have continued in response to the pressing local needs.

In **Charagua**, the StR programme operates within a dynamic context of indigenous social governance. The indigenous authorities are making significant progress in conserving over 70% of its territory - roughly 50.000 km² - through protected areas and other conservation units, and with support of StR as well as other actors, the first indigenous Protected Area Law was approved in 2024 (more below).

These conservation efforts include community forest guardians, the conservation of the Parapetí River and the Bañados de Isoso (Isoso wetlands) protected areas, and efforts to connect these areas with Kaa Iya National Park and the Guanaco Protected Area (Guajukaka). The ongoing conservation of the

Irenda Protected area through reciprocal water agreements is also a priority. Despite these positive developments, significant environmental challenges remain, particularly, the drying up of the Parapetí river, the increase in deforestation and forest fires in Alto and Bajo Isoso.

In conclusion, two years of strengthening the CBOs in Roboré and Charagua has created positive opportunities, leading to the successful launch of six projects in the communities of Chochís, Santiago de Chiquitos, Charagua Norte, Alto Isoso, Bajo Isoso and Parapetiguasu. These organisations, now bolstered by local fundraising and lobby capacities, have designed projects that address their social, environmental, and economic needs. Additionally, the CBOs are enhancing their technical and administrative capacities, improving financial reporting, technical execution, communication, and project visibility.



CBO projects

In Roboré, Natura Bolivia collaborates with two water cooperatives that ensure water supply to local villages by protecting the forests, which are the source of the water. In Charagua, Natura Bolivia works with four indigenous governance bodies and one beekeepers association to safeguard the [Irenda Protected Area](#) and the Parapetí River while promoting sustainable livelihoods. One water cooperative and one capitanía discontinued their

involvement due to misalignment in timing and project dynamics. Consequently, the programme's capacity-building efforts and support were not sufficient to help them jointly develop follow-up projects eligible for the available match funding.

The table below gives a concise description of the six CBO projects; a full description of the projects implemented by the water cooperatives of Roboré and CBOs and indigenous authorities in Charagua can be found in Annex 4.

Village	CBO	Source of income	Project title	Area Village Forest (hectares)
Roboré				
Chochís	Chochís Water Co-operative R.L.	Water fee	Improvement of the drinking water system, conservation of the Chochís and Motacusito community water recharge area.	558
Santiago de Chiquitos	Cooperativa COSEPUSAL R.L.	Water fee	Improvement of the drinking water system, conservation of the water recharge area in the community of Santiago.	479
Charagua				
Charagua North	Association of North Charagua beekeepers "Eirenda".	Honey	Strengthening the conservation of the forests of the Irenda protected area with the association of producers of honey	1238 and 149.972 indirectly
Parapetiguasu	San Antonio de Parapitiguasu community	Recreational fee	The recovery of the recreational area next to the Parapiti river of the San Antonio community	400
Alto Isoso	Organización Económica Comunitaria Originaria de Mujeres (OECOM) Mujeres Recolectoras de la comunidad Ibasiriri (MURI)	Algarrobo flour	Conserving Algarrobo Forests: Sustainable Management and Market Development for the Ibasiriri Community	1000 hectares
Jointly: Parapetiguasu, Alto Isoso, Bajo Isoso	Indigenous authorities of all three communities	Water availability	Save the Parapetí river	Whole river and riverbanks covering over 500.000 hectares

In the area of nature conservation, we can highlight the following initiatives by the water committees, associations and indigenous authorities:

- The inhabitants of the Chochís community have specific agreements with the water cooperative to ensure the conservation of 558 hectares of forest in the areas of influence of the Tucabaca Protected Area. The same goes for the inhabitants of the community of Santiago de Chiquitos and their water cooperative with regard to the conservation of 479 hectares of forest in the areas of influence of the Tucabaca Protected Area.
- The Eirenda beekeeping association in North Charagua is in the process of being strengthened. Through their actions to protect the forest for beekeeping and forest monitoring, they are contributing to the conservation of the Irenda Protected Area (149.972 hectares), with a specific commitment to protect 1,238 hectares for a period of fifteen years in the buffer zone next to the Irenda Protected Area.
- Through the programme's efforts, three *capitanías* (indigenous territorial authorities) in Charagua - Parapitiguasu, Alto Isoso, and Bajo Isoso - have joined forces to advocate for the conservation of the Parapetí River, which is threatened by upstream pollution and overuse

of water. Their campaign seeks to advance legal measures for the protection of the Parapetí River, which covers more than 500,000 hectares, and to coordinate local and regional advocacy efforts aimed at municipalities in the river's Upper Basin. The ultimate goal is to persuade departmental and national authorities to create a comprehensive master plan for the river's conservation.

To improve the communities' livelihood options, various options were explored:

- The water infrastructure system for the hamlet of *Motacusito* in the Chochís community was improved, both through the replacement of the water pipe network and the conservation of upstream forest areas to ensure the quality and quantity of water.
- The water infrastructure for the Santiago de Chiquitos community was improved through the refurbishment of the water collection chambers to prevent infiltration and water loss, as well as the conservation of upstream water sources to ensure water quantity and quality.
- The "Eirenda" beekeeping association is being strengthened to enhance honey quality and production, improve branding and marketing, and build organisational capacity.



Community members from Charagua during a refresher course on Local Fundraising and Mobilising Support. Photo: Natura Bolivia

A milestone in Indigenous-led nature conservation: The Charagua Protected Areas Law

In a historic step for Indigenous-led nature conservation, the Law of Protected Areas and Conservation Areas of the Guaraní Charagua Iyambae Indigenous Autonomy was enacted on July 23, 2024. This ground-breaking law serves as a crucial tool for the management, control, and surveillance of protected areas, reinforcing the protection and governance of over 5 million hectares of vital forests and ecosystems - an area nearly twice the size of the Netherlands.

Lucía Sánchez, vice-president of the Charagua Iyambae Autonomous Assembly, reflects: "As inhabitants of Isoso, Charagua, we recognized the need for laws to protect our natural areas. It was then that we began to envision a larger territory that would ensure the conservation of our resources."

The law is based on the governance structure and guiding principles of Charagua Iyambae, including *Yaiko Kavi Pave*, its vision of living in harmony with nature. The Charagua Iyambae experience demonstrates to the world the potential of indigenous communities to protect their natural and cultural heritage and contribute to the sustainable development of their territories.

This law today stands as a beacon of hope for the Guaraní people who seek to manage and strengthen the functioning of their protected areas to safeguard their ecosystems and guarantee a sustainable future for future generations.

Charagua Iyambae, Bolivia's first autonomous Indigenous territorial entity, has set a precedent by developing this law from the grassroots level, with the active involvement of community and zonal leaders, elders, and representatives from the three governing bodies of Charagua: the Executive Body (Tëtarembiokuai Reta), the Legislative Body (Mborokuai Simbika Iyapoa Reta), and the Large Collective Assembly (Ñemboatiguasu). A more detailed article on this law can be found on the [IUCN NL website](#).

Advocacy, networking and campaign initiatives by CBOs

The recent increased Mobilising Support initiatives have resulted in various advocacy activities across Roboré and Charagua that have yielded initial results for forest and water conservation.

In Roboré, two water cooperatives—the Cooperativa de Servicios Públicos de Agua Potable y Alcantarillado Sanitario Chochís R.L. and COSEPUSAL R.L.—focused on enhancing communication with local residents to raise awareness about the critical link between water use and forest health, particularly within the Tucabaca Protected Area.

In Charagua, the Eirenda Beekeepers Association has made significant strides in conserving the Irenda Protected Area. Through institutional strengthening, the association has secured resources for the conservation of 1,238 hectares surrounding Irenda. This effort was supported by successful participation in competitions promoting beekeeping, further solidifying their operational capacity and ensuring long-term preservation of the area. Meanwhile, the *capitanía* of Parapitiguasu has focused on restoring the lower Parapetí River basin. This initiative includes legal protections for riparian forests and the sustainable use of 400 hectares of a very popular recreational area. The efforts also involved local communities in educational and maintenance activities, reinforcing the importance of environmental stewardship.



Saving the Parapetí: A Community's Fight for Their River

The Parapetí River originates in the Andes mountains, specifically in the foothills of the Cordillera Central, near the town of Azurduy in the Chuquisaca Department. From there, it flows southeast through the Chaco region, eventually disappearing into the vast wetlands of the Bañados de Isoso, an important ecological area in the Gran Chaco. The river's upper basin is characterised by a mix of montane forests and dry valleys, while its lower reaches flow through the semi-arid plains of the Chaco.

The Parapetí River has long served as a lifeline for the Indigenous communities of Charagua. Today, however, this vital waterway is under severe threat from deforestation, water overuse, and pollution, pushing its ecosystem to the brink of collapse. Encouraged by the Mobilising Support trainings and coaching within the StR programme, the "Salvemos el río Parapetí" (Save the Parapetí river) campaign has emerged as a grassroots movement, led by local people whose survival depends on the river. Their fight goes beyond protecting the river's health; they are reclaiming their cultural heritage, safeguarding the unique biodiversity of this ecosystem, and ensuring a future where their children can continue to live in harmony with nature.

A recent inter-institutional assembly brought together leaders from across Charagua, resulting in a historic decision to designate the riparian forests as a legally protected conservation area. This marks the beginning of their journey, as they continue to mobilise support and raise awareness among upstream communities, villages and municipalities – in the provinces of Santa Cruz and Chuquisaca – hoping to breathe new life into the Parapetí. The campaign is expected to generate departmental and national advocacy for a comprehensive Master Plan for the Parapetí River Basin and to influence the approval of the draft law on conservation and sustainable development for the river basin.



Charagua's Exchange: Gaining Insights from Acre for Environmental Governance

In February '24, Natura Bolivia organised an exchange between representative of the Autonomous Indigenous Government of Charagua Iyambae and the Government of Acre, Brazil, which provided an invaluable opportunity for the Charagua delegation to [learn from Acre's 14-year experience with REDD+](#) (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) and sustainable environmental governance. The visit focused on sharing best practices in forest conservation, community engagement, and carbon credit management.

The Charagua delegation met with Acre's key governmental bodies, including the Secretariat of Indigenous Peoples and the Institute of Climate Change, learning about Acre's integrated environmental programs, such as the Ecological-Economic Zoning and the REDD Early Movers program. Field visits showcased successful initiatives like the sustainable production of palm hearts and honey, which have not only reduced deforestation but also improved local livelihoods.

The exchange highlighted the importance of community participation, transparency, and long-term governance structures in managing natural resources. Through this collaboration, the indigenous authorities of Charagua now have more insights to potentially implement similar carbon projects, benefiting from Acre's lessons in balancing environmental conservation with economic growth. The Strengthen the Roots programme contributed to this exchange, empowering the Charagua Indigenous communities to take informed steps toward sustainable development and environmental preservation.



Members of the Autonomous Indigenous Government of Charagua, of Natura Bolivia and representatives of state institutions of Acre, Brazil. Photo: Natura Bolivia.

Overall, these activities demonstrate the growing capacity of the supported CBOs in Bolivia to be an actor in important conservation initiatives, and ensure sustainable management of natural resources.

Local fundraising initiatives by CBOs

As a result of the provided training, fundraising efforts were significantly strengthened in both Roboré and Charagua.

In **Roboré**, the two water cooperatives enhanced their actor mapping and advocacy with institutions such as the NGO World Vision and the Food and

Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the UN. They organised visits to these institutions to request financial support and hosted fairs and social lotteries. Additionally, they evaluated the potential of incorporating the conservation of the Tucabaca Protected Area into their fundraising campaigns. The cooperatives also explored alternative fundraising strategies, focusing on small sponsorships, corporate memberships, and leveraging social media to increase visibility and reach a wider audience at the departmental level. Moreover, the two water cooperatives maintained their practice of collecting a water fee from local users, a portion of which has been allocated as co-funding for the project activities.



The water cooperative of Santiago de Chiquitos discussing the water infrastructure construction plans. Photo Natura Bolivia

In **Charagua**, the beekeeping association held meetings with various local institutions, resulting in solidified support from FAO and governmental agricultural and livestock farming entity SENASAG. They also positioned their products as linked to forest conservation and the protection of the Irenda area. Additionally, the communities of Parapetiguasu, Alto Isozo, and Bajo Isozo secured additional resources from local communities and the Indigenous Autonomous Government, enabling them to fund projects from their budget related to the conservation of the Parapetí River.

A total of € 26,547 was raised during the first phase of implementing their enhanced fundraising capabilities, € 16,640 in Roboré and € 9,907 in Charagua, see Annex 5 for the full list. Most of this funding came from local public funds and water fees collected by the water cooperatives, with additional contributions from external sources like World Vision and the FAO. While this is a modest start, it is viewed as a positive initial result, with the goal of significantly increasing this amount in the programme's next year. Through StR, Natura

Bolivia matched the resources generated by the organisations with an amount of € 41,859.

Citizen journalism and community communication

In the recent efforts to strengthen community communication and citizen journalism, significant strides have been made across various initiatives, particularly focusing on water cooperatives and environmental advocacy.

In **Roboré**, the Chochís and Santiago de Chiquitos water cooperatives received comprehensive training by the staff of Natura Bolivia in communication tools, equipping their members with the skills necessary to effectively advocate for water system improvements. This training included the appointment of dedicated communication officers within the cooperatives, the development of audio-visual materials, and the creation of tailored advocacy plans. These efforts are designed to reconnect water users with the local environment, emphasising the critical role that forest ecosystems play in water provision. Additionally, both cooperatives started their own facebook pages: [Redes Santiago de Chiquitos](#) and [Chochís](#).

In April '24, the Parapetí River Basin campaign in **Charagua** took a proactive approach by training



Developing audiovisual materials for the Santiago de Chiquitos water cooperative.
Photo Natura Bolivia

communication officers from the *capitanías* of Alto Isoso, Bajo Isoso, and Parapitiguasu. These officers are responsible for developing and executing communication strategies, including creating content for social media platforms like TikTok and Facebook and to raise awareness about ongoing conservation efforts, such as the "Salvemos el río Parapetí" [campaign](#). The captaincies have collaborated to produce scripts and [artwork](#) for social media, ensuring a consistent message across different platforms. Communication has also been crucial for the Eirenda Beekeeping Association, especially in marketing, branding, and labelling efforts. The association's new logo and brand identity were created through a collective brainstorming session, ensuring that the final design aligns with the community's values and supports the association's objectives.

Overall, technology and social media are playing a key role in these initiatives, while there is still ample opportunity for improvement. The focus remains on boosting the visibility of the programs and attracting additional support. To educate the community on the importance of conservation and sustainable development, informational materials such as brochures, posters, and videos have been created, reinforcing the crucial messages across multiple platforms and reaching a broader audience.

Capacity strengthening of CBOs

Up until the end of '23, CBOs from Charagua and Roboré participated in refresher courses and coaching sessions of the Change the Game Academy methodology. Workshops were tailored to the unique contexts of each region, focusing on resource management and mobilisation of their communities. Participants from four CBOs in Charagua and two in Roboré received hands-on training, leading to the development of project profiles and comprehensive field data surveys.

In '24, a structured organisational strengthening process was launched, focusing on key areas such as governance, financial management, and communication. The workshops highlighted the importance of clear statutes, by-laws, and reinvestment strategies to achieve economic sustainability. Additionally, CBO members received training in basic accounting, administration, and the principles of accountability and reporting.

In **Roboré**, the workshops led to substantial progress, with several participants now serving on the new board of directors for the Chochís Cooperative, significantly enhancing the cooperative's organisational capacity and its ability to implement sustainable projects. Strengthened communication



tools have provided the cooperatives with effective channels for advocacy and member engagement, providing timely updates on water supply, maintenance, and other critical issues.

In **Charagua**, the initiative focused on retraining leaders from the Alto Isoso, Bajo Isoso, Charagua Norte, and Parapitiguasu *capitanías*. Natural resource technicians from Natura Bolivia were assigned to each zone to support the development of project profiles through field visits and data collection. This included capacity building in organisational and administrative management, which led to the consolidation of annual operating plans and the revision of regulations. Communication tools were also improved to enhance advocacy efforts, marketing strategies, and the branding of local products, such as those from the Eirenda Beekeeping Association. These efforts have raised awareness about the importance of conserving the Parapetí River and strengthened the commitment to sustainability within the CBOs' organisational practices.

Gender and youth inclusion

Women and youth empowerment remains a key priority for the StR programme in Bolivia, with

Foundation Natura Bolivia actively promoting their inclusion at all stages of the project. The programme offers training and leadership development opportunities to enhance the participation of these groups and ensure a more inclusive approach to community development. For instance, within the Eirenda beekeeping association, considerable effort is made to include women, particularly those who are most marginalised. Notably, women constitute 30% of the association's membership, with a focus on engaging women's groups from the San Lorenzo community in the processing of bee products. This initiative not only creates employment and economic opportunities for women but also provides training that empowers them to develop skills, earn income, and achieve greater autonomy and well-being.

The programme also emphasises the inclusion of youth, ensuring they are consistently involved in various training activities, such as those focused on communication tools, basic accounting, and community mobilisation. Young people are actively engaged in the planning and implementation of CBO projects, promoting their professional development and participation in environmental conservation and sustainable development. This approach helps them acquire valuable skills, fosters their leadership, and strengthens community cohesion.



6 Ghana

Context

In Ghana the StR programme focuses on local conservation and livelihood improvement as well as on political advocacy at the national level. Therefore, there is a wide variety of organisations involved in StR, ranging from small non-governmental organisations seeking to influence national-level policy on forests and water resource conservation, to community based organisations hoping to create sustainable livelihood opportunities linked to nature and conservation in their immediate environment. Hence, this chapter refers to the participating organisations as CBOs and small NGOs.

These organisations vary greatly in their composition and the types of initiatives they implement within their projects. For instance, the Accra-based civil organisations—GYEM and The Environment Report—represent urban, educated youth who are deeply committed to environmental issues. They frequently reference international climate and biodiversity treaties and engage in current political debates on topics such as environmental justice and intergenerational equity.

In contrast, smaller NGOs like FLOWER, YVE, SILDEP, and Northcode are deeply rooted in their local communities, with a strong understanding of the unique needs and challenges of their area of work. Through their relationships with traditional power holders, they can effectively contribute to improved local realities. Additionally, typical community-based organisations, such as Concerned Citizens of Atewa Landscape and GHEAG, play a vital role in raising environmental consciousness within their communities. As members who originate from the same areas, they are well positioned to engage and inspire their peers, fostering a deeper commitment to conservation efforts.

That said, all organisations do share a common need to enhance their self-sufficiency and organisational effectiveness to improve their fundraising and advocacy results. By applying the lessons from the Change the Game Academy, receiving ongoing mentoring from WACSI and A Rocha staff, and learning specific skills related to leadership and governance from external experts, these organisations gain new tools they can use immediately, yielding both short- and long-term benefits.



Members of GYEM during an activity of their Ban Single-Use Plastics campaign. Photo: GYEM

CBO projects

At the start of Year 2, all nine participating CBOs and small NGOs had submitted their definitive project proposals and were able to start with these once formal approval of the plans and budgets was given by A Rocha Ghana (from here onwards: A Rocha), between July and August '23. As noted previously, all projects are fairly well aimed at environmental and conservation issues, with a very diverse geographical location of the portfolio.

The CBOs and small NGOs will implement their project in three phases, each with distinct activities and specific budgets. After each phase, there will be an opportunity to review and adjust the project to enhance its effectiveness. Phase 1 of the Ghanaian projects was carried out from August '23 to March '24. The table below provides a brief overview of the nine projects; a detailed description of their activities, outputs, and outcomes can be found in Annex 6.

Organisation and website	CBO	Source of income	Project title
Ghana Youth Environment Movement (GYEM), https://gyemgh.org/	Single-use plastics campaign	Based in Accra, but national campaign	Empower community members to reduce their plastic footprint and promote sustainable alternatives. Long term goal is a ban of Single-use Plastics (SUPs) in the entire country.
NORTHCODE Ghana	Jelinkon Riparian buffer restoration and forest fringe community livelihoods improvement project	Based in Damongo, Savannah Region, but project focus on the Jelinkon Community Resource Management Area in Sawla, the district capital of Sawla-Tuna-Kalba District	Nature conservation and biodiversity improvement in Jelinkon CREMA and developing green value-chains based on shea-nuts, cashew-nuts and apiculture in four communities.
Social Initiative for Literacy and Development Program (SILDEP), http://www.sildep.org/	Mobilising for afforestation project	Four communities of the Sissala West District, Upper West Region	Shift farmers' focus from harmful and improper agronomic practices (such as bush burning, unsustainable logging, overgrazing) to conservation agriculture and promotion of efficient post-harvest practices, which could contribute significantly to the protection and restoration of agricultural lands and forest cover.
Ghana Environmental Advocacy Group (GHEAG), https://gheag.org/	Empowering communities to conserve and protect	Atronsu & Assemkrom, Western North Region	Raise awareness on the impact of illegal mining and mobilise people to combat this activity - also by training 10 persons in legal actions.
Youth Volunteers for the Environment (YVE), https://www.facebook.com/p/Youth-Volunteers-for-the-Environment-YVE-Ghana-100070701751294/	Eco-conservative Initiative to protect the natural resources of Atokora mountain toward sustainable ecosystem	Communities of Tokokoe and Likpe Bale in the Volta Region	Promote environmental consciousness and sustainable farming practices among community members so they manage their natural resources in a sustainable way.

Organisation and website	CBO	Source of income	Project title
THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT, https://ghenvironment.com/	Media advocacy on environmental degradation	Greater Accra Region	Enhance nature and environmental conservation through targeted media campaigns that raise awareness about specific critical issues, such as deforestation and biodiversity loss, leading to tangible policy changes and increased public engagement.
Youth Alliance for Green Ghana (YAGG), https://www.facebook.com/youthallianceforgreenghana/	Action for posterity: Advocacy for intergenerational equity policy and legal framework for Ghana	Accra	Strengthen the protection of Ghana's environment and regulation of natural resources from an intergenerational equity perspective, through public education and sensitization, stakeholder consultations, and advocacy for the passage of an Intergenerational Equity Law in Ghana.
Concerned Citizens of Atewa Landscape (CCAL), https://www.ccalgh.org/	Mobilising support for the creation of the Atewa National Park Agenda	Atewa Forest Reserve Landscape, Eastern Region	Create community awareness within the landscape to achieve their active participation in conservation efforts and advocate against mining and logging in the Atewa landscape. Long term goal is the creation of a National Park in the Atewa landscape.
Facilitating Learning Of Women in Emerging Regions (FLOWER), https://www.facebook.com/flowerghana/	Re-orienting community members on the long-term negative impact of illegal mining.	Three communities of the West Akim Municipal District, Eastern Region	Reduce galamsey (illegal artisanal gold mining) in three communities of the Eastern Region (and beyond) by improving the knowledge of community members on the negative impact of illegal mining and how they can contribute to curbing the related problems (especially deforestation, land destruction, reduction of agricultural land). FLOWER also plans to engage relevant government agencies to provide alternative livelihoods training and secure capital support for the youth.



Member of Northcode during a community training. Photo: Northcode

Looking more specifically at the focus of the projects, it appears that all projects focus on 'lobby & advocacy'; eight focus on 'nature conservation'; four focus on 'water management'; two focus on 'sale of agroforestry products'; and two focus on 'ecotourism'.

Mobilising support initiatives by CBOs and small NGOs

As indicated above, in all projects the participating organisations included lobby and advocacy activities. Given the variety in contexts of the projects, as well as the difference in capacities of the CBOs/small NGOs, it is hard to provide generalised data on the main actors that were targeted during the implementation of the projects. Nevertheless, we can distinguish the following actors with whom the local organisations have had

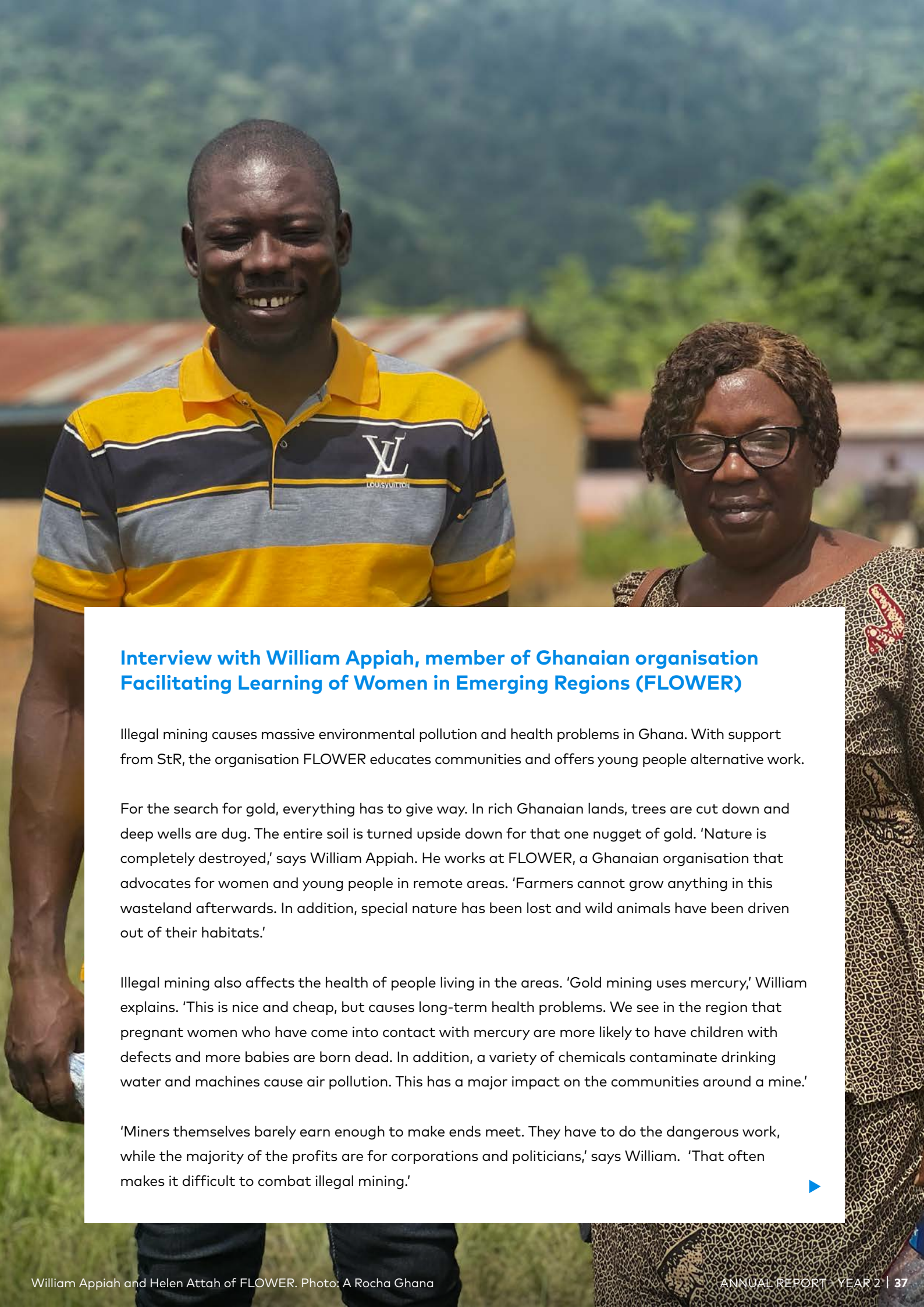
a lot of contact and have actively lobbied to gain support for the organisations' demands:

- Community leaders and traditional leaders, often elders, or 'chiefs', who often have the capacity to steer the will of the local population in a certain direction.
- Governmental agencies at the district level, regional level and national level.
- Members of the community at large, with the aim to create a more critical group of people that support the conservation or livelihood improvements propelled by the organisation.

Other target actors for the organisations are youth groups, local media, and local businesses, in order for these to change their behaviour, their outlook, or their ability to support the specific cause.



Community members during an advocacy gathering organised by GHEAG on the topic of illegal mining in the Western Region. Photo: GHEAG



Interview with William Appiah, member of Ghanaian organisation Facilitating Learning of Women in Emerging Regions (FLOWER)

Illegal mining causes massive environmental pollution and health problems in Ghana. With support from StR, the organisation FLOWER educates communities and offers young people alternative work.

For the search for gold, everything has to give way. In rich Ghanaian lands, trees are cut down and deep wells are dug. The entire soil is turned upside down for that one nugget of gold. 'Nature is completely destroyed,' says William Appiah. He works at FLOWER, a Ghanaian organisation that advocates for women and young people in remote areas. 'Farmers cannot grow anything in this wasteland afterwards. In addition, special nature has been lost and wild animals have been driven out of their habitats.'

Illegal mining also affects the health of people living in the areas. 'Gold mining uses mercury,' William explains. 'This is nice and cheap, but causes long-term health problems. We see in the region that pregnant women who have come into contact with mercury are more likely to have children with defects and more babies are born dead. In addition, a variety of chemicals contaminate drinking water and machines cause air pollution. This has a major impact on the communities around a mine.'

'Miners themselves barely earn enough to make ends meet. They have to do the dangerous work, while the majority of the profits are for corporations and politicians,' says William. 'That often makes it difficult to combat illegal mining.'





- ▶ Yet that is exactly what he is trying to do with his organisation FLOWER: convince residents that this industry is harmful. 'Often people do not know at all what the health risks are. They also have no idea how environmentally polluting it is. That is why we organise information sessions and involve the whole community in solving this problem. We see that the population is divided. One group is in favour of illegal mining, because they still earn a small income from it. And there is a group against mining, because of the dangers it poses.'

That solution is not easily found. 'Illegal mining continues to attract young people because of the quick money. Only by continuously hammering on the long-term negative effects on their own health and nature can we convince them to take a different path. But that is slow going.' So what is that other path? William: 'Investing in young people. By giving them training to become farmers, for instance. Growing black pepper is one such option. As is growing bamboo and setting up rubber plantations. With FLOWER, we give them information on nature management, offer technical support and distribute seeds. We work with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture in Ghana on this.'

Change will not come quickly, William thinks. 'It is quite a challenge, on the one hand, to convince the population to stop working in mines and, on the other hand, to get the government to stand up for people's health and for the conservation of nature. But this work motivates me enormously, knowing that with good education people will make better choices. It might take another 20 years before illegal mining stops, but perseverance wins.'



Networking and campaigning

The Networking and Learning Meeting, organised by A Rocha and WACSI on 27 November, '23, in Koforidua, Eastern Region, was a significant event under the StR project, bringing together all nine participating CBOs and small NGOs. The meeting served as a platform for participants to exchange knowledge, share updates on project achievements, discuss challenges, and explore solutions. Key activities included presentations on project progress, financial reporting, and the formation of a committee to launch a joint environmental campaign. The meeting resulted in strengthened connections among organisations, enhanced understanding of financial management, and the adoption of best practices in fundraising and project implementation, fostering a culture of collaboration and knowledge sharing.

A Rocha also took the lead in the development of the Ghana Environment Manifesto 2024. This

manifesto outlines key environmental priorities, including biodiversity conservation, sustainable land use, climate change mitigation, and community empowerment. The CBOs and small NGOs that are part of StR played a vital role in shaping and endorsing the manifesto and are now actively engaging politicians and stakeholders to advocate for the adoption and implementation of its policies, leveraging their grassroots networks to promote positive environmental change in Ghana. More information, please see the [A Rocha website](#).

On World Environment Day, 5 June '24, A Rocha and the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) co-hosted a national forum on "Journalism, Agroecology, and Environmental Sustainability in Ghana" to raise public awareness and stimulate debate on sustainable practices and challenges in the extractive sector. The event brought together stakeholders from the media, government, NGOs, and the agroecology sector, highlighting the importance of agroecology and advocating for policy

changes to promote environmental sustainability. Representatives of organisations participating in StR were also present and participated actively. A recording of the event is available [here](#).

Local fundraising initiatives by CBOs and small NGOs

During the project's first phase, participating organisations implemented fundraising techniques that they had been taught by WACSI during the previous year. The results are mixed; while some organisations met or even exceeded their targets, others were not yet able to engage local stakeholders or leverage written requests effectively. The challenges that some organisations still face to assure cash and in-kind support have been discussed on a frequent basis among the implementing partners A Rocha and WACSI, together with representatives of IUCN NL and Wilde Ganzen, and specific measures have been taken. These include on-site coaching visits to the organisation in question, or virtual meetings on specific fundraising techniques, such as proposal writing. The latter is especially

relevant for organisations that operate in remote, impoverished communities, where cash support by community members is rather unlikely, and where there are also no local businesses that organisations can turn to.

All in all, the nine CBOs and small NGOs in Ghana were able to raise an amount of **€ 5,994** (€ 4,187 in cash and € 1,807 worth of in-kind contributions) through local fundraising initiatives. This means that four organisations met the target amount for the first phase of projects, while most others also showed moderately positive results for their incipient fundraising efforts. Some techniques used include submission of project proposals, fundraising during community gatherings, fundraising through diaspora communities, social media campaigns requests for sponsorship through in-kind donations. The full list of results of local fundraising initiatives is available in Annex 8.

The Ghana Environmental Advocacy Group (GHEAG) from the Western Region stood out among the organisations participating in StR. Their project significantly raised community awareness and



A Rocha's public event during World Environment Day. Photo: A Rocha Ghana

mobilised youth advocacy against illegal mining, which strengthened the overall community resistance efforts. Through their effective use of social media, engagement of the regular media and their clear fundraising requests, they were able to obtain the most cash (€ 1,084) and in-kind contributions (€ 504) of all organisations, underscoring the strong support from the communities.

As noted by A Rocha staff, most organisations from rural areas find it easier to raise in-kind resources, particularly at the community levels, which helped the implementing team to redefine expectations regarding cash income during this first phase. With specific, tailored coaching, as well as the introduction of peer-to-peer sharing in order for organisations to present their (successful) fundraising efforts to others, the assumption is that the brunt of the organisations will raise significantly more resources during phase 2 of their StR-projects.

In addition, A Rocha supported three StR partners in competing for a Call for Proposals on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Actions issued by the Danish Embassy in Ghana. All three applied,

and two — **Concerned Citizens of Atewa Landscape and Ghana Youth Environmental Movement** — had their proposals approved, each receiving € 15,652. Additionally, **Northcode**, operating in Ghana's northern regions, secured two grants: € 16,530 from the NGO STAR-Ghana to support the livelihoods of vulnerable community groups while addressing illegal mining and €13,043 from the UK-based NGO Conciliation Resources to promote integrated land use. In total, these three organisations obtained € 60,877 through successful applications. These grants not only provide funding for impactful climate and land management initiatives but also enhance the credibility and visibility of the organisations. As such, this achievement will boost their financial resilience and sustainability and will hopefully ensure that they are well-positioned to continue their valuable work in the community after the StR program ends.

A Rocha provided match funding through the programme's budget, contributing €101,696 to supplement the resources generated by the organisations. This amount covers both the first phase of the projects and the second phase, for which the match funding was advanced on a trust basis.

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7 Die In Galamsey Pits

FROM Emmanuel Opoku, Bankata

SCORES OF uncovered pits left behind by illegal miners are posing serious threat to residents of some mining communities in the Nzema areas of the Western Region.

About seven of the residents have recently fallen into the pits, leading to their untimely deaths.

Four of the deceased were from Nkroful, two were from Anwia and one from Telekubokazo.

Mrs. Elizabeth Allua Vaah, Executive Director of Ghana Environmental Advocacy Group, revealed this at a press conference and sensitisation programme organised over the weekend by the group at Bankata in the Ellem-belle District.

It was on the theme: "Our Dying Rivers - An Uncertain Future," and was organised in conjunction with local environmental advocates in the Nzema area



Elizabeth Allua Vaah addressing journalists

Newspaper article as a result of GHEAG's advocacy initiative on illegal mining.

Citizen journalism and community communication

In February '24, A Rocha, together with communication experts of [5Fifty Documentaries Limited](#), led the 'Media and Participatory Video training'. This training was aimed to equip organisations with skills for effective advocacy through strategic media engagement. It covered various aspects such as filmmaking, storytelling, citizen journalism, and social media branding. At a venue in Accra, participants from all nine CBOs and small NGOs learned about different filmmaking genres, equipment selection, scriptwriting, storyboarding, and practical techniques in photography and videography. The concept of citizen journalism was explored, highlighting its potential for advocacy, particularly for marginalised communities. The program also included a field excursion to the Atewa Forest Reserve for hands-on practice and a collaborative editing session. Overall, the training enhanced participants' ability to use media strategically for social impact.

Throughout the year, the Ghanaian organisations have shown an improved ability to aptly bring the themes they focus on to an audience through videos, photos and social media posts. Annex 7 shows a list of the journalistic content that has been created

by the organisations, as well a reflection on their respective communication capacity.

Capacity strengthening of CBOs

As planned to take place simultaneously with the implementation of their projects, A Rocha contracted Ghanaian NGO [Participatory Development Associates](#) (PDA) to lead the Organisational Capacity Development component of the program. This process, which aims to strengthen the capacities of the nine CBOs and small NGOs involves an Organisational Capacity Needs Assessment, targeted training, capacity building, and growth monitoring. A learning session, including WACSI, enabled organisations to share project updates, experiences, and lessons learned, fostering a collaborative environment for mutual learning.

The training addressed key weaknesses, such as high staff attrition, lack of internal controls, and financial management challenges. It also focused on effective communication strategies to help organisations attract support. Participants shared local fundraising techniques, and WACSI gained insights for refining its training content.

PDA conducted comprehensive assessments in seven areas: leadership and governance, management practices, human resource management, financial



Field excursion to Atewa Forest during the Media and Participatory Video training.
Photo: A Rocha Ghana

management, mission competence, sustainability, and networking. Based on these assessments, PDA provided tailored training to improve governance, management, and strategic planning, resulting in significant improvements in these areas. Feedback from the organisations highlighted the positive impact of PDA's support in enhancing their operational effectiveness and promoting sustainable development. PDA published an [article on their website](#) at the start of the process.

Gender and youth inclusion

Both A Rocha and WACSI employed several strategies to engage women, particularly from marginalised backgrounds, and to integrate youth into all StR-related initiatives. Both organisations prioritised gender balance in all training sessions, ensuring that women have equal opportunities

to participate and contribute meaningfully. Additionally, they worked to overcome community resistance that initially favoured male involvement by actively promoting the inclusion of women in projects. They emphasised the vital roles women can play in challenging existing norms, empowering them to take on more active roles in community activities.

A significant portion of the NGOs/CBOs participating in StR is youth-led, which enhances efforts to engage other marginalised groups. Inspired by successful youth-led initiatives, they support young leaders in advocacy and project implementation, amplifying the voices of marginalised communities and contributing to a more equitable society where diverse perspectives are valued and represented.



Representatives of YVE during a community gathering. Photo: YVE

7 Virtual course "Change the Game Academy Green"

Aligned with the original proposal's objective to integrate the knowledge gained from the StR program into an online e-learning platform, we began adapting the English version of the online Change the Game Academy in the spring of '24. This contextualization ensures that the platform's content is tailored specifically for individuals interested in or actively involved in nature conservation. This means that all examples, techniques, exercises and illustrations need to be relevant for this target group.

So far, the Local Fundraising course has been fully reviewed, and non-relevant examples have been replaced with ones that better suit the type of CBOs involved in the StR program. However, some original videos still need to be changed, and this task will be assigned to the agency that produced these videos for the original online course. In autumn '24, the Mobilising Support course will also be thoroughly reviewed, and the example

case study that runs throughout the course will be completely changed; in the new version, it will be based on the case of the CBO 'Concerned Citizens of Atewa Landscape' from Ghana.

We aim to organise an initial pilot of the **"Change the Game Academy Green"** (as it will be called) online course in early '25, with a Southern partner of IUCN NL as the first participant. During this pilot, staff from the partner organisation will engage with the teaching materials, supported by two certified coaches who will guide them through the content and the assignments. The goal is to enhance the partner's skills in local fundraising techniques and advocacy strategies, and to develop clear, actionable plans by the end of the course. At the same time, the pilot allows for feedback on the training materials and further improvements of the materials. Funds from the original StR budget will be allocated for coaches to supervise this trajectory.



8 Financial figures – July '23 to June '24

The table below shows expenditures per organisation for the period between July '23 and June '24. While WACSI reports to Wilde Ganzen, KKI Warsi, Natura Bolivia and A Rocha all have contracts with IUCN NL and consequently report to them. The entire match funding budget was included by IUCN NL in the contracts with the local partners. These NGOs decide whether the CBOs show enough progress to claim the match funding contribution. In some cases, notably Ghana, a percentage of the match funding contribution for phase 2 of the CBO projects was advanced on a trust basis.

After last year's spending was significantly below the originally planned budget for Year 1, this year's

expenses, except for one item, were in line with the planned budget. The only item with significant overspending is 'match funding,' which is due to the fact that this item already includes a substantial portion of the match funding for the second project phase to the Ghanaian CBOs. Since all partners (except for WACSI, which incurred the vast majority of their expenses during the first year of StR) spent significantly less than planned in Year 1, these financial resources have been reserved for a budget-neutral extension of the programme, allowing us to complete spend the available financial resources by the end of 2025. A detailed Excel-sheet of the entire expenditure of Year 1 and 2 of Strengthen the Roots, as well as an outlook for the last reporting period is shared in Annex 9.

Partners	Budget Year 2	Expenditures	Actual Expenditures vs Budget	Payment
A Rocha Ghana	87.875	93.022	106%	117.648
KKI Warsi	92.625	81.613	88%	113.623
Natura Bolivia	94.625	88.284	93%	83.354
TOTAL PAYMENT <i>from IUCN NL to A.Rocha/WARSI/Natura Bolivia</i>				314.587
IUCN NL (payment from Wilde Ganzen)	127.520	107.595	84%	463.587
Match Funding to CBOs	146.250	170.957	117%	
Total IUCN-NL + Partners	548.895	541.471	99%	
Wilde Ganzen	136.120	119.159	88%	
WACSI (payment from Wilde Ganzen)	47.250	33.266	70%	43.650
TOTAL	732.265	693.896	95%	507.237