

# VCA

VOICES FOR JUST CLIMATE ACTION



# ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2022



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the  
Netherlands

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# ABBREVIATIONS

|          |                                                                           |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AMwA     | Akina Mama wa Afrika                                                      |
| Avina    | Fundación Avina                                                           |
| BASE     | Building Approaches to fund local Solutions with climate Evidence         |
| CAN      | Climate Action Network                                                    |
| CBO      | Community Based Organisation                                              |
| CDKN     | Climate and Development Knowledge Network                                 |
| COP      | Conference of the Parties                                                 |
| CPI      | Corruption Perception Index                                               |
| CSO      | Civil Society Organisation                                                |
| DRM      | Disaster Risk Management                                                  |
| DRR      | Disaster Risk Reduction                                                   |
| ESG      | Environmental, Social and Governance                                      |
| FLLOCA   | Financing Locally Led Climate Action Program                              |
| GloPro   | Global Programme                                                          |
| GoNL     | Government of the Netherlands                                             |
| HIVOS    | Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation                            |
| HRD      | Human Rights Defenders                                                    |
| IPLC     | Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities                                  |
| JPT      | Joint Programme Team                                                      |
| LGBTQIA+ | Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual |
| LLA      | Locally Led Adaptation                                                    |
| MoFA     | Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                         |
| MoU      | Memorandum of Understanding                                               |
| NbS      | Nature-based Solutions                                                    |
| NCQG     | New Collective Quantified Goal                                            |
| NLGF     | Next Level Grant Facility                                                 |
| OH       | Outcome Harvesting                                                        |
| PMEL     | Programme Monitoring and Evaluation                                       |
| PoVs     | Power of Voices Programmes                                                |
| RT       | Regional Team                                                             |
| SBs      | Subsidiary Bodies                                                         |
| SDI      | Slum Dwellers International                                               |
| SDI-K    | Slum Dwellers International - Kenya                                       |
| SSN      | SouthSouthNorth                                                           |
| TF       | Taskforce                                                                 |
| ToC      | Theory of Change                                                          |
| ToT      | Training of Trainers                                                      |
| UNFCC    | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change                     |
| VCA      | Voices for Just Climate Action Alliance                                   |
| WASH     | Water Sanitation and Hygiene                                              |
| WWF      | World Wide Fund for Nature                                                |

# 8 PRINCIPLES FOR LOCALLY LED ADAPTATION

Devolving  
decision making  
to the lowest  
appropriate level

Building a robust  
understanding of  
climate risk and  
uncertainty

Providing patient &  
predictable funding  
that can be accessed  
more easily

Ensuring  
transparency &  
accountability

Address structural  
inequalities faced by  
women, youth, children,  
disabled, displaced,  
Indigenous Peoples &  
marginalised ethnic groups

Flexible  
programming  
& learning

Investing in local  
capabilities to leave  
institutional legacy

Collaborative  
action & investment



## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



VCA aligns with the Principles of Locally Led Adaptation and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 13 (Climate Action) and other SDGs by promoting justice, equity and sustainability.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the last two years, the Voices for Just Climate Action (VCA) Alliance has worked with underrepresented groups and local civil society organisations in **Bolivia, Brazil, Indonesia, Kenya, Paraguay, Tunisia and Zambia** to amplify their voices for just climate action. Rooted in its Theory of Change, VCA integrated mutual capacity strengthening, amplified voices, and relentless advocacy to align policies and finance with the needs of those most impacted by climate change, fostering locally-led responses and demonstrating resilience amid a rapidly shifting geopolitical landscape.

To achieve our goals, we increased the **number of contracted local partners from 150 to 189**. The endless diversity of our local partners enriched the Alliance with essential contextual knowledge, expertise, skills, unique capacities, and multiple levels of accountability and legitimacy. We also forged **38 new collaborations**, thus significantly extending our reach and magnifying the impact of our policy work. Illustrative examples include the new alliance between VCA Bolivia and Paraguay and the PULSANTE Platform. Through this new collaboration, the Women's Collective of the Gran Chaco mobilised women from Bolivia, Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil to be part of the **XV Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean**, the main regional intergovernmental forum on women's rights and gender equality within the UN system.

These local partners were **capacitated on areas such as VCA Thematic areas, advocacy, activism and movement building, intersectional feminist approaches, technology and innovation and digital security**. By the end of 2022, **30 local partners** had been directly equipped and supported to adopt and apply an intersectional, diverse, gender- and feminist-based frame of analysis. The rural and urban youth were capacitated to effectively engage in the Conference of Youth in Kenya (LCOY Kenya). As a result, women and youth are now able to speak with a loud, collective voice on behalf of others and the environment; to be able to build and bring forward solid cases and solutions; to be able to communicate effectively and to exert influence on climate-related issues.

The positive impacts of capacity strengthening led to the pioneering of innovative solutions that address pressing environmental and social challenges caused by climate change. By the end of 2022, VCA local partners had identified/piloted **14 locally led solutions focused on nature restoration and protection, water and sanitation and food security**. This has cemented indigenous peoples and local communities as catalysts for locally led adaptation informed by indigenous knowledge and lived experiences.

In 2022, we continued to ensure that our **advocacy efforts are underpinned by strong evidence, reflecting** the Indigenous and traditional knowledge held by our partners. To achieve this, local partners conducted 2 research studies on locally co-created solutions by women (Kenya), 1 research study on the perceptions of urban Indigenous People about climate change and its effects in Santa Cruz (Bolivia), and documentation of locally shaped climate solutions implemented by communities (Indonesia). In Kenya, this information has been used to produce policy briefs presented to county governments for consideration when making policy decisions. The information has also been used in knowledge products and animated videos on climate change, highlighting the voices and demands of women for climate justice.

VCA also engaged in evidence-based advocacy to **secure funds for climate action**. These included a publication of a discussion paper at the global level led by Hivos. The paper provides clear recommendations to governments, international donors, and funds to increase and secure financial resources flowing to the local level. The findings of this study and the resulting VCA policy positions were shared through the African Regional Forum for Sustainable Development in a side event attended by officials from the Zambian Biodiversity Finance Initiative, the Zambian Ministry of Green Environment, and the National Treasury of the Government of Kenya. A national study conducted by VCA Tunisia provided recommendations on strategies for public, private, and civic actors to enhance access to finance by local communities. At the global level, VCA made 2 submissions to the New Collective and Quantified goal on climate finance (NCQG). These efforts demonstrate that VCA is succeeding in generating the urgency needed and capturing the attention of actors with strong influence to address issues related to climate change and livelihoods. Overall, the studies increased Alliance Partners' and local partners' understanding of climate finance and enabled targeted, efficient lobbying strategies. In addition, VCA commenced the development/support of **3 funding mechanisms** to ensure quick, direct access to funds for indigenous and local communities. These are the BASE, Village Funds (Indonesia), VCA's own grown mechanism, the Next Level Grant Facility (NLGF), intended for the hard-to-reach groups.

VCA coordinated to create as many **strategic spaces as possible for local partners to connect and amplify their voices and be heard** in spaces at COP27 (Egypt), Gobeshona Conference, 66th Commission on the Status of Women in Vienna, and Virtual Cafe dialogues. The Youth and Amazon Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities from Brazil attended the Extractivist Youth Meeting II in Amapá state to voice their climate justice demands. They drafted a "Letter from the Forest Youth" to underscore the youth's dedication to the Amazon, biodiversity, Brazilian democracy, and humanity. All these spaces strengthened solidarity and awareness between different local partners from different continents, advanced the rights of women by agreeing to achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, and advancing proposals that accelerate access to finance for locally led climate solutions, and for loss and damage, as well as meaningful engagement of the youth.

Participation in these spaces was complemented by **creative storytelling**. The sharing of testimonies and the untold experiences of unique minorities, women, youth, Indigenous and other rural and urban marginalised groups played a pivotal role in influencing climate agendas. For example, in Bolivia, the digital radio "Ñande ñee" developed 18 programs and 4 reports, which were shared 110 times, with 3330 reproductions and more than 10500 people reached. Communities that had long been treated as silent recipients of climate interventions have become confident narrators of their own realities. Their stories have begun to shape public opinion, influence governance structures, and fuel action.

Empowered with advocacy skills, VCA local partners continued to shape policies that guide climate action. By the end of 2022, VCA movements influenced **the adoption, rejection, or implementation of 22 laws and policies**. For example, VCA Brazil supported the campaign: "The Most Urgent Law in the World" to influence the approval of the admissibility of the Constitutional Amendment 27/2021 (Climate PEC), which would establish climate security as a fundamental right in the Brazilian constitution. The Coalition Voices of Tocantins for Climate Justice and the Tocantins State Public Ministry, in Brazil, also contributed to the support against the Environmental Licensing Law. They successfully influenced the alteration of the text of the law, which violated the constitutional rights of farmers, Indigenous People, and communities. In Homa Bay County, Kenya, VCA influenced the allocation of 2% of the FloCCA Funds towards climate action.

**Way Forward:** We have gained insight into the importance of giving local partners a voice in determining the programme's priorities. In 2023, we will continue to deliver on the three pillars of our Theory of Change, with women, youth, and indigenous communities in the lead.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

This is the second year of the Voices for Just Climate Action (VCA) programme (January 2021-December 2025), whose long-term goal is that by 2025, "local civil society groups have claimed a central role as empowered innovators, facilitators, and advocates of climate solutions." It is funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs Directoraat Generaal Internationale Samenwerking (DGIS) through the DSO Power of Voices policy framework, in partnership with the Inclusive Green Growth (IGG) department. The programme is implemented by four strong Southern CSOs, Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMWA), Fundación Avina, Slum Dwellers International (SDI) and SouthSouthNorth (SSN), and two Global CSOs, Hivos and WWF-Netherlands.

These CSOs work closely with at least 186 local partners at approximately 36 sites across the 7 countries, namely Bolivia-Paraguay (Chaco-Pantanal); Brazil (Amazon); Indonesia (Papua, West Papua, East Nusa Tenggara, DKI Jakarta, DIY Yogyakarta); Kenya (Bomet, Homabay, Kajiado, Kilifi, Kisumu, Kwale, Lamu, Makueni, Marsabit, Nakuru, Nairobi, Narok, Siaya, Turkana); Tunisia (Gabes, Kairouan, Kasserine, Kerkennah Islands, Sejoumi); Zambia (Chikankata, Chirundu, Chongwe, Itezhi Tezhi, Kafue, Luangwa, Lusaka, Rufunsa, Siavonga).

The programme's Theory of Change (ToC) revolves around three mutually reinforcing pathways of change:

- Diverse civil society is collaborating on a shared agenda, cocreating scaled, locally shaped solutions that benefit people and nature.
- Amplified citizens' voices shape public debate on the just transition to low-carbon and climate-resilient futures.
- Civil society's contributions to climate solutions are considered in policy, practice, and budget allocations in our countries.

The programme uses an inclusive, rights-based approach to build widespread societal support for locally shaped climate solutions. This includes building broad-based climate alliances at the country level, bridging divides (urban-rural, gender, youth), and amplifying voices in new, unusual ways. In addition, it influences national and global policies and financial flows (e.g., climate finance and private-sector investments) in support of these locally shaped solutions. VCA aligns with the Principles of Locally Led Action and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 13 (Climate Action) and other SDGs by promoting justice, equity and sustainability.

The first year of the programme was focused on setting up the structures and processes to build a solid foundation for tackling climate challenges. In addition, efforts were put in building strategic and strong partnerships, and this was accomplished by identifying partners, contracting, contextualising the Theory of Change (ToC), defining assumptions and indicators, defining (global) basket indicators from local indicators, baseline analysis on basket indicators and selecting themes, as well as annual planning which was further deepened after onboarding of local partners.

## AIM & SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

This report provides an overview of the progress made by the Voices for Just Climate Action Alliance in 2022, the second year of programme implementation. It describes the results and outcomes achieved so far and reflects on which aspects of the programme are on track and where more attention is needed. This report aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the programme's current position and how we are operationalising our Theory of Change. This report is the consolidated result of the annual reports of the seven countries where VCA is implemented, one report focusing on activities in the Netherlands and one on the VCA global programme. All these reports used input from outcome-harvesting exercises conducted with the teams in the first months of 2023.

The VCA Alliance has developed into a very rich programme, operating at many different levels across and beyond its implementation sites. It should be noted that this report can never reflect all the results and outcomes achieved in 2022. Although this report aims to provide a comprehensive overview, it cannot reflect the actual spread and distribution of the work done by the Alliance Partners across the regions. Throughout the report, examples are generally attributed to the implementing 'VCA regional teams' comprising all active Alliance members collaborating in the site. In some instances, a specific Alliance member is mentioned when deemed appropriate. However, most examples are considered collaborative achievements.

## 2. CHANGES IN CONTEXT AND RISKS

### 2.1 DEFORESTATION AND OTHER ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES

In **Brazil**, increased use of aerial spraying of pesticides was reported in several areas in the Amazon. Illegal gold mining intensified in Indigenous territories, unleashing high levels of mercury in water bodies, endangering both people and nature. Among the most affected are the Mundurucu people in the Tapajós river basin (Pará State) and in Yanomami's region, in the Orinoco – Amazonas basin bordering Venezuela.

**Bolivia** was ranked second amongst Latin American countries with the highest advance of **deforestation**. Gold mining (legal and illegal) and hydrocarbon exploitation in protected natural areas and Indigenous territories have increased. In December 2022, the National Forestry Institute of Paraguay released official deforestation figures for the 2017-2020 period. These official figures recognise deforestation of 667,076.5 hectares during this period in the Paraguayan Chaco, although unofficial figures are even higher. The Paraguayan government, through the updated NDC, rather than committing to significantly reducing emissions from deforestation, proposes a trajectory of increasing deforestation-related emissions (mainly in the Chaco) **up to 27% by 2030**.

## 2.2 CLIMATE INDUCED PRESSURES

In 2022, almost all the VCA-implementing countries reported severe flooding and droughts. Flooding and resulting landslides, and severe drought affected urban centres and rural areas, leading to soaring injuries and fatalities in the population living in risk areas. Climate disasters such as floods, drought and overheating create hunger and poverty. As such, governments may not allocate funds towards climate change but may prioritise programmes to reduce hunger and malnutrition.



Zulma, from the Yshir community in Paraguay, showing how her territory is under threat.

In **Bolivia and Paraguay**, there were severe droughts, leading to uncertainties in crop yields and timelines, causing losses in production systems. The Chaco Region is currently experiencing the most intense drought of the last 80 years, linked to the "triple episode" of the 'La Niña' phenomenon (2020, 2021 and 2022), which is generating a worrying humanitarian situation in various areas of Paraguay and Bolivia, with consequences to food security and the livelihoods of the populations residing in this region. According to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the drought is expected to extend until the end of the first quarter of 2023. Drought increases the vulnerability of communities, especially Indigenous communities in the region.

At the beginning of 2022, a big flood hit Jayapura-Papua, **Indonesia**, and extreme weather was also noted in the East Nusa Tenggara Province. The impact of extreme weather resulted in flooding, landslides, high waves, and intense winds in several areas, which were also influenced by Tropical Cyclone Ellie. Those areas are the sites where the VCA Alliance and its partners operate. At the national level, 1,524 flooding events have been recorded in 2022. This amount is equivalent to 43.1% of the total national disaster events. There were also 1,062 extreme weather events, including 634 landslides, 252 forest and land fires, 26 tidal waves/abrasions, and four drought events.

**Kenya** has experienced one of the toughest droughts in a lengthy period, and the adverse impacts have been devastating, with reported deaths of human beings, wildlife, and biodiversity loss. Some of the rivers and lakes are in a bad state.

In **Zambia**, **heavy rains and flash floods** caused widespread damage to homes, farmland, and livestock. Many communities were isolated, without adequate healthcare and access to education. Furthermore, sanitation facilities had been completely submerged, exposing the population to an elevated risk of waterborne diseases. It is estimated that nearly **15,000** people from 3,500 households were affected by flooding in Southern Province by January 2023. Zambia also experienced two major **cyclones**, Cyclone Ana from January 23-25, 2022, and Cyclone Gombe from March 8-14, 2022. The cyclones in Zambia increased the vulnerability of the affected communities to climate change, leading to the loss of property and livelihoods. The Alliance, through budget tracking, aims to build a case for creating a climate fund to address issues of building adaptation, resilience, and disaster risk reduction and management, thereby increasing communities' resilience to the impacts of climate change to come.

## 2.3 POLITICAL CONTEXTS

The year 2022 was politically challenging. In October 2022, the much-anticipated general election was held in **Brazil**. This was undoubtedly a challenging year for CSOs in Brazil, marked by the intensification of the political dispute for the presidency, characterised by polarisation and extremism. Lula's election bodes a stark change in economic, environmental, and socio-political vectors, offering promising outcomes to promote inclusive and active civic spaces. Indigenous Peoples, women and the LGBTQIA+ community were actively engaged in the electoral dispute and in the post-electoral period. Indigenous women were nominated to higher-echelon mandates in the Legislative and Executive houses, both at the national and subnational levels. Notwithstanding, those vulnerable groups still suffer from persistent and even deepened socio-economic vulnerability because of years of segregation policies and economic crisis.

In **Kenya**, a new government was also ushered in. Voters elected the President, members of the National Assembly and Senate, county governors and members of the 47 county assemblies. The current President of the Republic of Kenya, elected in August, has embraced climate change mitigation as a priority issue and is the leading light in the Committee of African Heads of State and Governments in the sector. He created a State Department of Environment and Climate Change, led by a Principal Secretary, demonstrating the government's commitment to addressing the impacts of the climate crisis. To show its commitment to the region, Kenya will host the Africa Climate Summit in September 2023. This is an opportunity for VCA to showcase its work and influence the meeting agenda by participating in the planning platforms. Further, many counties in Kenya have passed climate change-related laws, which will be pivotal in addressing climate change-induced pressures at the devolved level. Civil society organisations, including partners under the VCA programme, have played a crucial role in enacting these legislations. This is evidenced by the membership of the various committees that were developed as a result, including the Ward Climate Change Committees, which have provisions for the inclusion of youths, people with disabilities, special groups, minorities, and CSOs at the ward level.

At the time of reporting, **Indonesia** was preparing for the general election that would take place in February 2024. During this time, most of the office bearers hold interim positions. This has been affecting VCA advocacy efforts, as they will be reluctant to make policy changes while holding temporary positions. It is widely perceived that the level of democracy has decreased, and there is little room for citizens to express their opinions and concerns or to undertake peaceful actions. This perspective was reiterated by Indonesia's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), which showed a 4-point decrease from 38 in 2021 to 34 in 2022. The significant decline was recorded by Political Risk Services (PRS), which indicated a setback for democracy, exacerbated by extra payments and bribery related to export-import permits, conflicts of interest between politicians and businesses, and corruption in the political system. Hence, considerable effort is needed to cut an extraordinary conflict of interest and open a larger civic space in policy formation. In addition, the parliament passed a new criminal code in December 2022, which, according to experts and activists, will undermine environmental protections and facilitate the prosecution of environmental defenders. The code contains a prosecution exemption for companies violating environmental laws, reduced punishment, the increased possibility of choosing a fine over a jail sentence for convicted violators, and a higher burden of evidence for environmental crimes. The code could also be used to prosecute environmental defenders who protest public works projects on the pretext of insulting the president.

**Tunisia** is undergoing a difficult democratic transition since the 2011 revolution. Yet 10 years after the Arab Spring, the establishment of a sustainable democracy remains a struggle despite the progress made. In 2021, Tunisia experienced a radical change at the political level in which the parliament was frozen, and all powers were held together, putting at risk the newly democratic pathway. In 2022, many political events happened, including adaptations of the CSOs' legal framework and the environmental framework. Between January and March 2022, the Tunisian government launched an online public consultation to gather recommendations on public services provided and how to improve them. Furthermore, on July 25<sup>th</sup> 2022, a referendum was held in which Tunisian citizens voted on a new constitution proposed by the president. In December 2022, legislative elections took place to establish a new parliament. The president has made many changes to the electoral process and legal framework, and proceeded with random new decrees and laws. At the economic and social levels, the situation is getting worse than in 2021. The annual inflation rate in Tunisia soared for the 15th straight month to 10.1% in December 2022, from 9.8% in November, reaching the highest point since December 1984.

The social and economic crisis in Tunisia has led to a shortage of essential livelihood products (oil, milk, cereals, coffee, etc.) and a fuel crisis. Obviously, social stability has been hugely affected by the economic crisis. According to official Italian figures, more than 32,000 migrants, including 18,000 Tunisians, arrived in Italy illegally from Tunisia in 2022. Civic space has been affected by the president's official position regarding foreign funding and administrative controls on CSOs. The most affected CSOs are those working on democracy-related matters (governance, elections, monitoring of the parliament activities, etc.).

Since the change of the **Zambian** government in 2021, the government has continued to support and produce positive policies and strategies, such as a Green Growth Strategy and a review of climate change-related policies, maintaining a vision of engaging citizens. This has positively impacted civic engagement on policies of interest, public debate, open lobbying, advocacy, as well as information sharing and knowledge brokering. Some examples of platforms that have supported civic engagement include social media, Ward Development Committees (WDC), District Development Coordination Committees (DDCC), Provincial Development Committees (PDC) and Constituency Development Fund (CDF) committees.

## 2.4 THREATS AGAINST ACTIVISTS AND INFRINGEMENT ON RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

[Front Line Defenders' Global Analysis 2022](#) provides a panorama of threats faced by Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) in all regions of the world. A large share of this concerned HRDs who are actively working on Indigenous, tenure and environmental rights, usually in the context of economic (exploitation) initiatives. *"In a grim milestone, for the first time, we saw more than 400 targeted killings of human rights defenders in 2022. Latin America remained the deadliest region in the world for human rights defenders."* Defenders working on land, Indigenous Peoples' and environmental rights were the most frequently targeted group, accounting for almost half (48%) of the total killings. Brazil accounted for 26 murders. In December 2022, a well-known activist was murdered in the Amazon, Brazil, and the incident garnered a lot of media coverage. This inadvertently led to more apprehension and threats against the VCA's communication and legal advisory services.

Despite an assault on human rights and the rule of law in many countries, HRDs showed remarkable courage and persistence in advocating for more democratic, just, and inclusive societies in 2022. Partial mitigation measures were adopted by VCA **Brazil**. These included financial support for transferring family members to safer locations. Three member organisations of the VCA coalitions suffered cyber-attacks. Tapajóss de Fato and Suraras do Tapajós suffered an attempt to invade and hack their social networks, and the COIAB account was hacked during the event Acampamento Terra Livre - ATL. Activist security and protection investments have been forecasted, given the complexity that this challenge represents.

President Lula's walk into office positioned Brazil back in the global climate fora. At COP27, weeks before walking into office, elected President Lula highlighted challenges on Amazon deforestation, the importance of multilateralism, global governance and climate justice at COP27. Lula also proposed the 1st Summit of Member Countries of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty, proposed Brazil to host COP30 in 2025 in an Amazonian city and proposed an agreement with Indonesia and Congo on tropical forests, bringing back the importance of South-South cooperation.

In **Indonesia**, there has been no significant progress on the bill related to Indigenous rights. The Alliance of Indigenous Peoples of the Archipelago (AMAN) highlighted the growing pressures on Indigenous Peoples resulting from Indonesia's new Transmigration schemes and Food Estate Programme, both threatening irreparable harm to Indigenous Peoples due to the reported massive seizures of traditional Indigenous lands.

In Paraguay, protests by Indigenous peoples denouncing encroachment on their territories have been recurrent throughout the year in the region. **Conflicts over land** have continued in Paraguay, where between November 1st, 2021 and October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022, 13 evictions occurred that affected approximately 5,755 people, of which at least 87 people were prosecuted. Many of these evictions were in Indigenous communities where the state has violated acquired land rights.

## 2.5 DUTCH POLICY

The Africa Strategy of the Dutch Private Sector was launched on Tuesday, November 26th. The Africa Strategy document strongly reflects the local African context and contains solutions that have been successfully initiated, tried, and tested by African organisations and citizens. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is encouraged to integrally involve African citizens and CSOs in implementing the Dutch Africa strategy. Only then will the strategy have a chance of contributing to that bright future for the African continent.

In 2022, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced it is working on a feminist foreign policy. The policy is important because women make up half the world's population. Yet, it is rare to find a place where they are equally represented in areas where decisions are made about their lives (in politics and management boards, for example). The Netherlands is keen to reduce inequality and achieve gender equality all over the world. The Dutch Feminist Foreign Policy provides an opportunity to ensure an intersectional and decolonial approach in promoting demilitarisation, conflict prevention and non-violence. Women worldwide must be able to claim their universal rights and know that they are safeguarded from violence.

The focuses of feminist foreign policy are rights, representation, resources, and reality checks:

- They must be represented and take part in political decisions (representation).
- There must be sufficient resources to achieve these goals (resources).
- Circumstances differ worldwide, and a particular approach will not have the same effect everywhere.

## 2.6 GLOBAL CONTEXT

In 2022, the priority theme of the 66th Commission on the Status of Women was “Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies, and programmes”. This theme was instrumental in driving an increase in the analysis of a wide range of gender issues related to the climate crisis. Further, it opened opportunities for women and girls in all their diversities to engage with key gender policy-makers at the national, regional, and global level.

There is a confluence between Biodiversity and Climate at both UNFCCC COP27 and CBD 15, and both were strong on financing local climate and biodiversity action. CBD proposes to phase out or reform harmful subsidies by 2030 by at least \$500 billion per year and to increase \$200 billion per year of the domestic and international flow of funding for biodiversity from developed to developing countries to reach at least \$20 billion per year by 2025 and a total of 30 billion per year by 2030. The challenge is to track these funds and the ability to land at the local level.

The Bridgetown agenda introduced at COP27 by Prime Minister of Barbados, Mia Mottley, to reform the global financial systems gained momentum. Still, it is also receiving criticism from CSOs for not going far enough to change World Bank's power and risks consolidating it. The need improve equity within global climate financial systems is recognised, and debates on different models are advancing.

Over 80 governments, leading global institutions and local and international NGOs have already endorsed the Locally Led Adaptation (LLA) principles and are advocating their endorsement by others. This is a welcome condition; it enhances the scope for the VCA network to influence their effective implementation, and accountability. The primary focus for VCA regards the quality and scale of implementation to avoid tokenism and symbolic pronouncement.



Brazilian local partners campaigning for the defence of their territories.

### 3. MUTUAL CAPACITY STRENGTHENING FOR CO- CREATING LOCAL SOLUTIONS

In 2022, we prioritised building coalitions, collaboration, collective action, and multi-stakeholder forums to amplify our voices for just climate action. At the global and country levels, the six VCA Alliance Partners have maintained a synergistic way of working and coordinated programme implementation to advance climate justice tactics and support the delivery of local solutions. This has been done through regular meetings and check-ins where partners continue to reflect on how they are working, and share experiences and best practices for improved functioning. The Alliance collaborated on numerous engagements, including joint advocacy efforts. Alliance Partners work to complement each other in influencing the climate agenda.

Over the past year, climate and human rights actors were brought together, creating a vibrant network of CSOs generating knowledge on climate justice and climate action. At the time of reporting, the number of contracted local partners had increased from 150 to 189. The VCA is conscious that the relationships we build with our partners and collaborators allow us to leverage resources and extend our reach, nurture the capacity of marginalised groups and widen the impact of our policy work. These local partners bring on board inherent knowledge, skills, and capacities; organisational and personal connections; geographic and thematic diversity and

expertise; access to policy arenas; links to marginalised groups; legitimacy and synergy. Working together, supporting each other, and developing long-term relationships allow the VCA to achieve far more than it could on its own.

The graph below shows the number of contracts with CSOs, the number of CSOs that have received grants and those that are in the process of being contracted as of 31st April 2023. All the regions, except for Indonesia, recorded an increase in the number of contracted local partners.

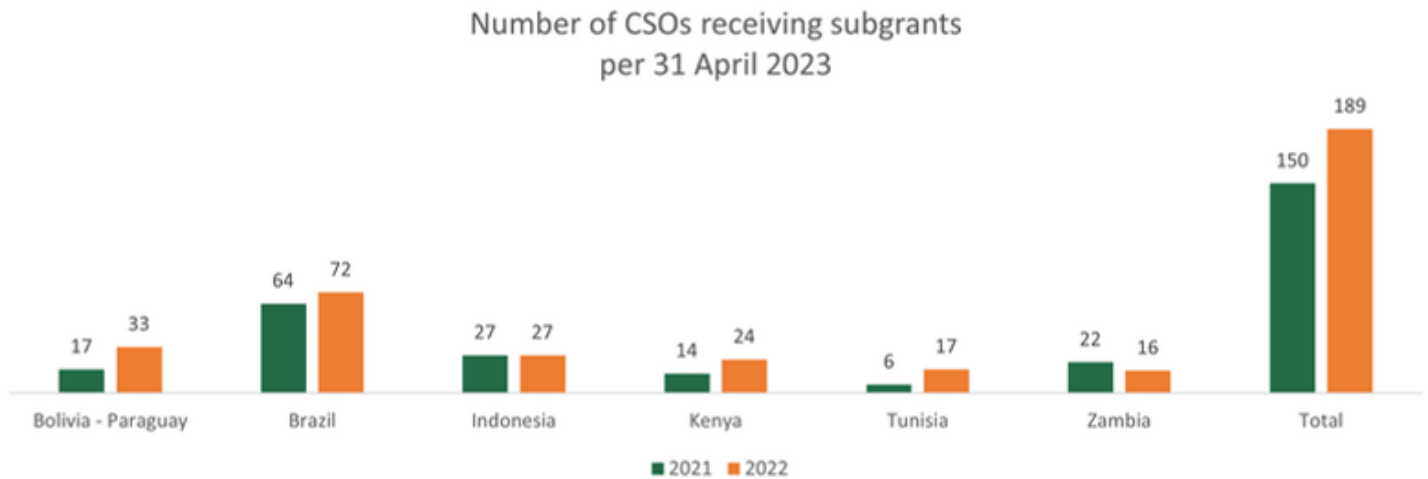


Figure 2: Number of CSOs receiving subgrants per 31 April 2023 across the Alliance

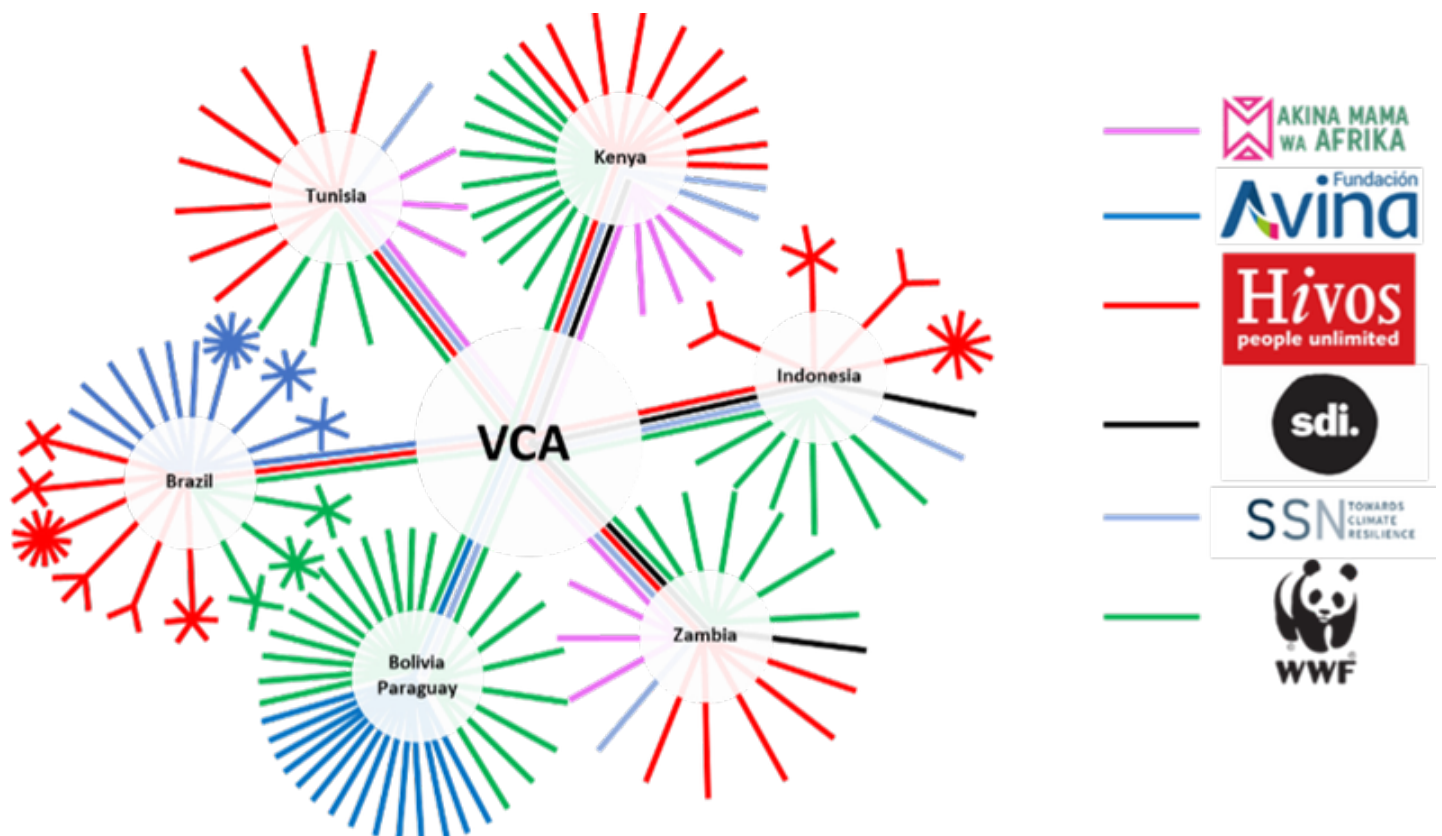


Figure 3: Number of CSOs receiving subgrants as of 31 April 2023, per region. Each line ending depicts a contracted CSO. Colours indicate which Alliance member they have been contracted by. The clusters of lines in Indonesia and Brazil show the collaborations of multiple CSOs through coalitions.

Examples of new collaborations in 2022: VCA Brazil joined the PULSANTE platform, another programme of the Avina Foundation, and selected proposals to strengthen social mobilisation for climate justice in the Brazilian Amazon. Through cooperation between VCA and PULSANTE, the Women's Collective of the Gran Chaco mobilised women from Bolivia, Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil to be part of the XV Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, the main regional intergovernmental forum on women's rights and gender equality within the UN system. VCA Paraguay collaborated with the Union of Indigenous Communities of the Yshir Nation (UCINY), to recover and preserve ancestral Yshir territories. VCA Kenya has been working with 563 climate Action Groups in Kisumu, Nairobi, with a total membership of 10,134 persons. These groups are primarily engaged in climate actions, including river and forest rehabilitation, waste management and recycling, eco-schools, urban farming, and arts.

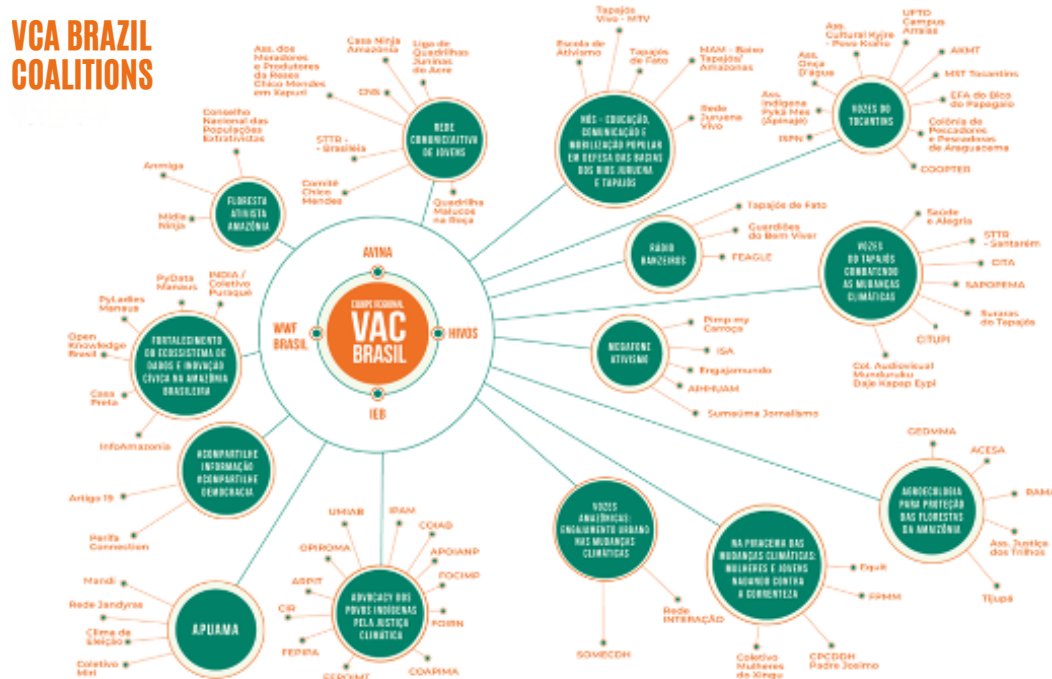


Figure 4: In 2022, VCA Brazil secured 13 coalitions, + 100 partners organisations

In Indonesia, eight climate networks or forums were established or reactivated to initiate dialogues with the government, amplify the voices for locally shaped climate solutions, and strengthen collective action for climate action. Furthermore, these established networks and fora came together in several multi-stakeholder forums and initiatives, such as a joined secretariate to advocate for the climate agenda in Lembata District, a climate change multi-stakeholder working group in Rote Ndao District, a climate change task force in East Nusa Tenggara Province, and a Disaster Risk Reduction Forum that addresses climate change and maladaptation issues in East Nusa Tenggara Province. Establishing and reactivating these networks and forums is important to expand opportunities in amplifying marginalised groups' voices and discussing challenges related to climate justice to influence the narrative and policy.

VCA Kenya, through AMwA facilitated the mobilisation and creation of three community networks and fora that have leveraged existing formal and informal spaces to contribute to climate discourse and action. This was done through various interventions, for example, by facilitating eight alumni of the African Women Leadership Institute (AWLI) with seed grants

for implementing Community Action Projects (CAPs). Through this process, the alumni were able to transfer the knowledge and skills they gained from the feminist and transformational leadership development training. Consequently, the alumni created a network of over 600 young women and climate activists who are champions of feminist climate justice in their different counties. Furthermore, a team of 15 community women champions was built in Rusinga and Mfangano that will lead the grassroots mobilisation and organisation of women through community self-help and women groups into climate action debates.

Additionally, Siaya County CSOs formed an advocacy network for joint approaches in shaping climate action in Siaya County through engagement with the County Government. A partnership in Lamu with the Kenya Civil Society Platform for Oil and Gas (KCSPOG) was also established to work with the community on the impacts of oil and gas extraction and coal power mining. Discussing the impacts on the environment and exploring how the community can work together to hold the government and prospective investors accountable.

VCA Tunisia partnered with the Heinrich Boell Foundation, the Social and Economic Rights Forum, Tunisie Verte Network, Stop Pollution, and many other organisations to spread climate justice principles. Also, an unusual partnership between a youth movement, VCA partner Cinema Pour Tous and six media channels was established for joint advocacy. VCA Zambia partnered with the Institute of Architects and People in Need, two member organisations of the Governance cluster under the 'Gender Is My Agenda Campaign' (GIMAC) of the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) with Oxfam. The partnerships are advocating energy poverty, gender, food security and resilient infrastructure development. At the global level, VCA increased collaboration with the Global Resilience Partnership, Race to Resilience, CAN, CDKN, Locally Led Adaptation Community of Practice, Women and Gender constituencies and other alliances within the Power of Voices Framework.

The VCA Movement component saw an increase in the number of youth activists or organisations, from 50 to 65, who have reached out to collaborate. They connect internationally to enhance their power and reach. They span across both the Global North and South and beyond the VCA countries. Thus, they provide a broader ecosystem of CSOs that connect through VCA, which can reach 250 if we add the subcontracted partners. To maintain their engagement, VCA convened bi-monthly dialogue sessions among them and with VCA to determine actions to collaborate. These have largely revolved around capacity building, joint lobbying efforts and representation in forums such as the Global Youth Summit and connecting with each other on, for example, youth in Valuing Water Initiative by RvO, as well as the Women and Gender Constituency.

### 3.1. CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

The VCA adopted a multifaceted approach to building capacities of target groups. The activities are need driven and conducted in partial fulfilment of the overall goal of the VCA to ensure that the target groups are empowered innovators, facilitators, and advocates of climate solutions. Figure 4 shows the number of partners that reported an increased capacity per capacity area. The blue colour denotes organisational capacities, and green relates to VCA specific capacity needs. Figure 4 shows the number of partners that reported an increased capacity per capacity area. The blue colour denotes organisational capacities, and green relates to VCA specific capacity needs.



Figure 5: Number of partners that reported an increased capacity per capacity area. *Blue indicates organisational capacities strengthened. Green refers to VCA-specific capacity needs.*

Recognising the challenges faced by **women and girls** due to climate change, we continued with our commitment to ensure “gender justice” by applying intersectional approaches that centre the diverse needs, experiences, and leadership of people most impacted by discrimination and oppression. We continued to advocate for and prioritise the inclusion, engagement and participation of women and other minority groups in creating, developing, implementing, and monitoring policy responses to and plans on climate change and disaster relief. We do this through facilitating capacity strengthening of climate actors on feminist advocacy and movement building, as well as feminist leadership development. Through this process, we hope to develop a critical mass of feminist and transformational leaders who will challenge and transform power relations for a just and sustainable climate transition.

VCA Kenya, through AMwA, facilitated consciousness-raising activities which enhanced the capacity of 25 actors working on climate justice to adopt and integrate feminist approaches to their work for a just climate transition. This was also done through mediums such as caravan roadshows, radio talk shows, arts and creative initiatives such as puppet shows, local arts groups, and social media such as TikTok. Through this, we have seen more awareness of climate change impacts with community members engaging in environmentally friendly actions, such as proper waste management and recycling. This activity reached approximately 5117 people. A workshop was organised for women in the Volta Grande do Xingu (State of Pará) to discuss and lobby against the illegal mining on the Xingu River. The women were able to influence men, and this change in behaviour is significant for the change in dynamics between genders, due to the promotion of environmental and collective care.

We contributed to the institutional strengthening of the organisations of the Agroecology Coalition for the Protection of Forests in the Amazon. This enabled the creation of the Popular Observatory of Socio-biodiversity and Climate Policy of Maranhão. With the presence of 57 participants, mostly young people and women, from 32 civil society organisations, the creation of the Observatory is an unprecedented initiative of consultation and listening to civil society that intends to consolidate an agenda based on the climate debate. This is an important milestone for

future articulations of joint actions in defence of public policies and social interventions against climate change and for the dissemination of organisational and productive practices that respect socio-biodiversity.

Within the context of the UNFCCC, the VCA coordinated three main processes: i) Enhancing the capacity of VCA local partners to effectively participate through enhanced knowledge about process, agenda and formal requirements; ii) Creating spaces at the COP for local voices and messages either in person or virtually; and iii) Coordinating key messages to achieve impact. Since VCA has a wide network of local partners (at the time, 100), a survey was conducted to understand their experiences with global advocacy, priority events, and the support or capacity strengthening needed to engage at the global level. 60 local partners responded, representing all the regions. Learning how to engage with the UNFCCC COP was prioritised for capacity strengthening, and this informed the VCA COP27 strategy. GloPro coordinated information webinars, advocacy, and knowledge support, and logistics and travel coordination.

The Kenya Climate Change Working Group (KCCWG) was supported by WWF Kenya to develop a manual on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and climate diplomacy. After the manual was developed, a national UNFCCC simulation and training on climate diplomacy was held just before COP27. This provided stakeholders with a practical feel for negotiations, as the workshop also incorporated a role-play, giving them an experience of how negotiations take place. The recipients of this training are now spreading their knowledge, following the training of trainers (ToT) principle.

VCA **Kenya**, through Hivos and WWF Kenya, supported rural and urban youth to effectively engage in the Conference of Youth in Kenya (LCOY Kenya). As a result of their participation in this conference, the youth were able to hold the government accountable for the lack of progress on Kenya's energy transition and climate goals, as well as to strategise ahead of the global LCOY and COP27. The youths drafted a position paper that would feed into the Conference of Youth at the UNFCCC negotiations. With the assistance of Hivos, a VCACOP27 Champions for Climate Justice grant was launched in collaboration with the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). The grant was used to build the capacity of at least 287 youths across the country on COP policy processes. Three youth and the local partner, YWCA, were then supported to attend COP27 and deliver this messaging through participation in YWCA-organised events and youth movements. This group produced a position paper on the Kenya COP27 position and presented this to the Ministry of Environment – Climate Change directorate.

Local partners trained to develop and deliver locally led climate solutions. For example, VCA **Tunisia** conducted workshops on new techniques for water harvesting, use, and preservation, as well as composting in Tozeur. A designer who benefited from a training cycle developed a natural cooler that can mitigate the effects of climate change in urban areas by reducing emissions and energy consumption in summer, thereby strengthening citizens' resilience to heat waves. This solution can be scaled and adopted by cities. The VCA **Zambia** conducted 40 training sessions for local communities across all 10 VCA districts. A total of 2,547 people participated in these capacity strengthening activities. Topics of these trainings included specific adaptation practices such as water management, forest management and sustainable agriculture, as well as social influencing, participatory slum upgrading, rights (WASH, Gender), climate finance, leadership, and climate justice. They also facilitated six training sessions for women-led cooperatives, focusing on creating linkages with extension services in energy, food systems, water, agriculture, and community development. A total of 89 women participated in the training. The women-led cooperatives are

now incorporating green ideas into their applications towards accessing the Constituency Development Fund.

## 3.2. CLIMATE SOLUTIONS (INNOVATIONS) CO- CREATED FOR THE BENEFIT OF PEOPLE AND NATURE

In 2022, VCA Partners piloted and tested some of the ideas identified in the first year of programme implementation. These solutions are categorised into those that protect, manage, and restore ecosystems; ensure food security; and provide safe water for domestic consumption and sanitation, i.e., the provision of sanitary facilities, hygiene, and housing in informal settlements, etc.

### 3.2.1. Documenting concrete evidence on local climate solutions to underpin policy and advocacy efforts

In 2022, all VCA countries continued their efforts to build evidence to influence policy. They conducted scoping studies to identify opportunities for locally led (nature-based) climate solutions. These studies contribute to the design of a vast database of initiatives that can be matched to funding mechanisms and used for joint lobbying to increase public finance for local climate action in 2023 and the following years.

Two research studies on local solutions co- created by women (Kenya), a research study on the perceptions of urban Indigenous People about climate change and its effects in Santa Cruz (Bolivia) Documentation of locally shaped climate solutions implemented by communities including traditional practices of conservation to protect marine areas (Indonesia), baseline studies on NBS ( Bolivia and Paraguay ), dialogues (1 Paraguay) and (6 Zambia) were conducted on agro- ecology, water and waste management, socio-ecological assessments (Kenya) and 30 capacity assessments were conducted of Beach Management Units to document the gender composition and women leaders to improve gender mainstreaming. They developed a baseline study report on Gender and Climate Change Vulnerability in Kwale, West Pokot and Nyandarua counties (Kenya), highlighting the state of gender and climate change. Finally, case studies of Indigenous climate solutions were documented. From this baseline, a policy brief was developed, which has been presented to the different County governments for consideration when making policy decisions. In addition, several knowledge products were developed, such as an Intergenerational Climate Change Education Guide in English, Kiswahili, and Braille to reach diverse groups, animated videos on climate change, and a documentary highlighting the voices and demands of women regarding climate justice.

### 3.2.2. Piloting Locally Led and Nature-Based Solutions

VCA is empowering local stakeholders to lead in adaptation. This gives communities on the frontlines of climate change a voice in decisions that directly affect their lives and livelihoods. Shifting power to local stakeholders, without expecting them to shoulder the burden of adaptation, can catalyze adaptation that is effective, equitable, and transparent.

#### Nature-Based Solutions

Just as climate change causes numerous risks to vulnerable people, nature and biodiversity are susceptible to its effects. The continuing loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystems weaken their ability to provide essential services that many communities depend on. This is why

we work on Nature-based Solutions, which aim to address major societal issues, while also strengthening natural ecosystems, biodiversity, and human well-being.

In Indonesia, communities have taken steps to enhance marine ecosystems by creating artificial coral reefs and planting mangroves along the coast. These endeavours demonstrate a holistic approach to environmental conservation and climate resilience in the region.



Mangrove restoration is an important locally led, nature based, climate solution in Indonesia

### Food Security

Many of the VCA implementing countries are experiencing food insecurity. To address this challenge, local partners in Kenya, Indonesia, Paraguay, and Zambia successfully implemented an impactful rainwater-harvesting technique. In Kenya, these techniques include Zai pits, rainwater-harvesting ponds, drip irrigation systems, climate-smart farming, and participatory rangeland management. In Paraguay, the food security of five Indigenous communities (Guarani, Whenayek and Tapiete) was enhanced through supporting local agroecological gardens and implementing efficient water management techniques. This sustainable agricultural production model, which incorporates rainwater-harvesting systems, is now being replicated in other communities (e.g., Yerobiarendá and Tentami) under the leadership of Guaraní women, in coordination with the Autonomous Regional Government of the Gran Chaco.

Collaborating with the Climate Smart Agriculture Alliance (CSAAZ), a local partner with VCA Zambia, the communities of Musaya (Chikakanta district) have reconstructed water harvesting structures using contour trenches from a natural spring. These structures capture and store rainwater during the wet season, and by replenishing groundwater, they provide a reliable source during drier periods. In Maranhão State, Amazon, the VCA Partners constructed a cistern with a capacity of 52 thousand litres to collect rainwater. This serves to provide access to potable water in

an agricultural school allowing the irrigation of agroecological systems whose production is used in school meals. These initiatives have yielded significant improvements in both water security and food production. By adopting rainwater harvesting techniques, communities have enhanced their ability to collect and store water during rainy seasons, reducing dependence on erratic rainfall patterns. This has led to increased water availability for irrigation, livestock rearing, and domestic use, ultimately contributing to improved food production and livelihoods.

In Zambia, the Green Agriculture Youth Organisation (GAYO) established local seed banks and drought-resistant farming methods in Kanakantapa and Kasis. The women and youth of Kanakantapa use various climate-smart solutions, such as organic fertiliser, climate-resilient crops like cassava and cowpeas, and energy alternatives like fire blocks made from maize cobs and ash.

### **Water and Sanitation**

Water and Sanitation initiatives form an important part of the VCA portfolio, and VCA local partners have made efforts to demonstrate the efficacy of locally based WASH initiatives. In Indonesia, water management is closely intertwined with all partners and project areas, as water is a fundamental need for people. For instance, in East Nusa Tenggara, many climate actions advocated by the community and VCA partners are related to water conservation as well as inclusive water and coastal-related infrastructure. In the Sukapura Ward of Indonesia, the VCA team successfully influenced the North Jakarta City Government to allocate funds for the community construction of three communal wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) facilities, costing around EUR 5,600. In addition, it persuaded Yogyakarta City to use its government's funds to construct biopores as a locally based initiative to conserve rainwater in the ground. The biopore cost was around USD 170 per package, with each urban village receiving two biopores. SPEAK Indonesia (SDI's partner) has a strong focus on improving access to WASH, especially in informal and slum areas of Jakarta and Yogyakarta city. This involves advocating for the connection between climate change and basic services such as WASH and communities' water rights, particularly those living in slum areas.

VCA Zambia provides a success story on sanitation in informal settlements. The Zambia Homeless and Poor People's Federation is now a key stakeholder in the Kanyama Participatory Slum Upgrading Project, spearheaded by the Government of Zambia and UN-Habitat. The inclusion of the Federation in the project is a giant step towards inclusive and participatory urban planning. The partnership will see over 1,000 federation members participating in various slum-upgrading activities, including slum greening and livelihood support. Furthermore, VCA Zambia is also jointly advocating for Inclusive City-Wide Sanitation as a climate-adaptive measure, focusing on the urban poor and vulnerable communities.

Paraguay focuses on water governance and management through the MIAS-Chaco (Mesa Intersectorial de Agua y Saneamiento para el Chaco), and on access to drinking water for Indigenous communities through the strengthening of community governance and sanitation committees. To further expand water and sanitation efforts, VCA, through the RVO budget for the UN Water Conference, identified at least 20 local partners addressing challenges in water and sanitation. The Alliance will continue to work closely with these partners to enhance the delivery of these solutions through targeted technical and financial support, using known and yet-to-be-explored funding mechanisms.

## 4. AGENDA SETTING AND MOVEMENT BUILDING ON CLIMATE ACTION

The VCA is set to influence the public agenda in 2022 by raising public awareness about climate change and its impacts, centring and mainstreaming climate justice debates and demands, and involving local people and communities, as well as minoritised groups in policy and decision-making processes.

### 4.1. CREATING SPACES FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The VCA team coordinated to create as many strategic spaces as possible for local partners to connect, amplify their voices, and be heard at COP27 (Egypt) and the Gobeshona Conference. This strengthened solidarity and awareness among local partners from different continents; for example, linkages could be made through shared struggles of both rural and urban-based partners. Creating the first foundations for strengthened urban–rural connections within the program. Overall, many community members felt that their voices were being heard, and this provided the right momentum to sustain their engagement to achieve the desired decisions. Voices of women, youth and Indigenous communities were amplified through the presentation and showcasing of videos at side events as well as through engagement with decision-makers, donors, other organisations and stakeholders. Furthermore, in the event 27@27, raw video messages from VCA local partners and associated youth movements were shown, illustrating the variety of local solutions implemented by these grassroots organisations.



At COP27, the Alliance was represented by at least 31 participants from local partners and grassroots organisations. At these forums, the VCA delegation had clear demands and asks to the international community. For more detailed information on VCA engagements during COP27 & the UNFCCC, see annexe 12.4.

VCA was represented at the 66th Commission on the Status of Women, where the priority theme focused on agreeing on steps that the world must take to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes. To advance African women and girls' positions, AMwA under the auspices of the VCA and together with African feminists and women's rights organisations in Africa collated a which AMwA presented to delegates from the European Union Commission, Germany, Poland, Israel and Liechtenstein during the Vienna Virtual Cafe dialogues held on 9th, 16th and 23rd March 2022 that were organized by the Commission on the status of Women global secretariat. During the Vienna Cafes, AMwA presented proposals that called upon the delegates to prioritise the issue of climate finance and advance proposals that accelerate access to finance for locally led climate solutions, and for loss and damage.

An important milestone was achieved in Brazil by enabling Youth and Amazon Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities to voice their climate justice demands. "Letter from the Forest Youth" In November 2022, the Extractivist Youth Meeting II took place in Amapá state, bringing together representatives of various youth groups, including extractivist, riparian, landless, Indigenous, Quilombola, and traditional communities from across the Amazon region. They crafted the "Letter from the Forest Youth" to underscore the youth's dedication to the Amazon, biodiversity, Brazilian democracy, and humanity. Relevance: • The letter was submitted to the Ministry of the Environment, urging them to ensure the meaningful engagement of youth in Youth Councils, Climate Forums, the development of the National Youth Policy, and all Public Policies. • Additionally, it called for the allocation of national and international funds dedicated to safeguarding the Amazon, such as the Amazon Fund, to support youth-focused initiatives.

Finally, during the last quarter of the year, VCA applied for and was granted a sum of 30,000 EURO to enable the participation of grassroots communities at the UN 2023 Water Conference (UNWC). As co-host of the UNWC, the Government of the Netherlands (GoNL) emphasised the importance of inclusiveness in the preparatory activities and of the meaningful participation of all groups, also of those whose voices are usually not heard in international (UN) Conferences. The GoNL acknowledged that targeted actions are needed to ensure that the needs and best practices of youth, women, Indigenous and other grassroots groups, within and beyond the water sector, could be shared and would influence the results of the Conference. Also, it is recognised that involvement of those groups in the 2023 process contributes to their longer-term empowerment and influence capacity.

## 4.2. ALTERNATIVE STORYTELLING AND ITS POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO AMPLIFYING VOICES

In 2022, VCA local partners continued to use various modalities to tell alternative stories thus challenging dominant narratives, fostering empathy and understanding across cultures, empowering marginalised voices, driving social change, and promoting deeper self-reflection and community connection by offering diverse perspectives on shared experiences. The sharing of testimonies and the untold experiences of unique minorities, women, youth, Indigenous and other rural and urban marginalised groups played a pivotal role in influencing climate agendas. A few successes are highlighted here. In Bolivia, the Indigenous initiative "Step by Step with Charagua Iyambae Autonomy" was launched. Having generated 50 articles, 49 reports and 81 live broadcasts, this initiative achieved more than 600 new followers, articles shared more than 25

times, more than 3200 reproductions and reached almost 14,000 people. The Bolivian digital radio "Ñande ñee" has developed 18 programmes and 4 reports, which have been shared 110 times, with 3330 reproductions and more than 10500 people reached.

During the Pan-Amazonian Social Forum (FOSPA) in Bolivia, 57 Indigenous organisations met to discuss common agendas on themes such as collective rights to water and forests, the self-governance of territories, and free, prior, and informed consent. As a result, the "Trinidad Letter" was elaborated and presented to the World Assembly for the Amazon and to the Tribunal of Justice and Defence of the Rights of Pan-Amazonian and Andean Women. Another significant milestone of the FOSPA event was the "Belém Dó Pará Letter", which includes the demands and proposals of Indigenous organisations. This was presented to the President of Bolivia, demonstrating the value of partnerships towards achieving common agendas.

In Indonesia, youth representatives made great efforts in creating podcasts and YouTube channels to raise awareness about climate change and food-related issues. In Paraguay, the Network of Indigenous Radios, which unites community Indigenous radios in the Chaco, was strengthened with the implementation of a work plan, including technical assistance for five radios (Enxet Sur, Enlhet Norte, Nivaclé and Angaité IPs). In addition, 11 Chaco communities (six in Paraguay and five in Bolivia) accessed internet connectivity, indirectly benefiting 5,000 people.

SDI-Kenya supported KYCTV (Know Your City Tv) to train young people from Kisumu, Nairobi, and Nakuru Counties in videography, photography, and writing skills. The young people have started to document and showcase stories of change and amplify community voices on various aspects of climate change. The use of their skills for economic stability was also emphasised. One of the films on the effects of floods in the informal urban settlement of Nyalenda, Kisumu County, was recognised during the Journalism Awards festival organised by the Association of Grassroot Journalists Kenya (AGJK) in the Environment and Climate Change Category.

SouthSouthNorth (SSN), Arid Lands Information Network (ALIN), Pan African Media Alliance for Climate Change (PAMACC), ThinkOut and Africa Uncensored hosted a knowledge-sharing session on Understanding Communication and Media in the context of VCA Kenya. The aim of this session was to better understand how communication and media are used within the VCA programme and the Kenya region, and to unpack how these tools can amplify the work of the Kenya regional team and local partners. PAMACC has recruited participants who have engaged in climate change solutions to be involved in long-form journalism pieces. This was done in Eastern Kenya (Meru County), North-eastern (Garissa), Nyanza (Kisumu), in the coastal region (Mombasa), and Western (Kakamega) Kenya. The stories are to be rolled out in 2023. Leveraging on media engagements, several partners engaged the media, be it local, mainstream or digital, to reach out to community members and other stakeholders in their areas of operations.

VCA Kenya, through Caritas Maralal, held 14 radio talk shows in collaboration with several duty bearers like the meteorological department, National Droughts Management Authority, Agriculture, livestock, and tourism departments. Some of the topics that they had discourse on during the shows included early warning and preparedness, weather forecasting, and the interconnectedness between the environment and human life, Indigenous conservation practices and opportunities available for integration. The organisation also used bulk SMS to reach over 11000 people with messages around climate change mitigation.

Meanwhile, in Marsabit County, PACIDA, with coalition member Thinkout Kenya, played an instrumental role in documenting the impacts of the long-term drought in the arid county. Marsabit is the largest and most Northern County in Kenya, and the communities and local government are quite marginalised from national government structures and media, as well as funding for climate adaptation and mitigation. The partnership resulted in the production of several stories on the drought, on climate finance, and policy at the county level. The organisations also ensured amplification of these stories in national broadcasts and media features. This included up to 10 minutes of prime airtime, usually dedicated to politics, for features to highlight the impacts of the drought. This directly spurred national government response to the drought in Marsabit and led to follow-up from international media stations ITV (UK), The Guardian, and Reuters, which then went on to produce their own stories. All the stories are also captured on the dedicated platform Voices for Climate.



Rogerio Mendez from Brazil recording a message from the Amazon: "When we take care of our forests, we take care of the whole world".

Following a study done on gaps, barriers, and opportunities for effective climate communication in Kenya, VCA Kenya media partner, Africa Uncensored over 2022 trained 97 journalists (over 50 % being women) from several counties (Kisumu, Mombasa, Nairobi, Uasin Gishu, and Machakos Counties) on climate change communication including psychology of climate communication; framing of climate change issues; covering policy and climate justice issues; pitching climate stories, covering the climate finance landscape in Kenya and policy and environmental governance. This fellowship programme led to the production of a documentary on climate refugees, six video climate explainers and seven media stories from more than 50 pitches by the trained journalists. The latter, which was supported by a storytelling grant from Africa Uncensored, saw four women out of seven journalists being supported. Five of the stories produced touched on the gender dimensions of climate change.

In Tunisia, the Alliance co-hosted a session with Cinema Pour Tous on Climate justice and amplified storytelling for Alternative and Associative Media during a Climate Camp in Southern Tunisia. This was an opportunity to initiate debate on local climate solutions and local narratives that have not yet been heard or shared in the media. In addition, the Association for Promoting Digital Culture (ATDCE) produced videos targeting young people (ages 18-25) on climate change and its relationship to religion. Those videos and discourses have reached more than 12,000 followers on digital platforms, including Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. The video has gathered more than 6,000 interactions and comments. Experts in climate, sociology, and activism were engaged to increase knowledge exchange on climate action.

In Zambia, the Alliance strengthened the capacity of 60 journalists and 45 youths in Lusaka, Chongwe, Kafue, Itezhi-tezhi, Chirundu, Mazabuka, Chikankata, Siavonga, and Rufunsa to use social media to raise climate change concerns. This resulted in more journalists and youths covering climate change issues from communities on Facebook, in WhatsApp groups and on KYCTV. Media partners such as Free Press International and Kalemba began writing or presenting climate change stories in a more captivating way, ensuring higher engagement.

Together with 15 other CSOs, WWF Paraguay published the report “Derecho Al Futuro” or “the Right to a Future”. Through VCA, the team then decided to take this further and contracted a team of local investigative journalists to compile a dossier of 20 specific cases in which the state is not guaranteeing the human and environmental rights of its citizens in Paraguay. The Right to a Future dossier is a powerful advocacy tool. It can be used as a pressing mechanism to raise awareness on climate justice.

In the Netherlands, VCA collaborated with the Climate Crisis Coalition to organise the Climate Action Conference and the Climate March, which brought over 10,000 people together in Rotterdam in June 2022 to call for climate justice. At the global level, VCA developed online communication tools to amplify the Alliance's work. The current platforms include: the Voices for Just Climate Action website, a “Voices in Action” bi-monthly newsletter, the @WeAreVCA Twitter account, a LinkedIn page, and a YouTube channel. From May to December 2022, the website had a total of 441 visits. 178 were returning visitors. The “Voices in Action” is a bi-monthly newsletter. Since its inception in 2021 until December 2022, the newsletter mailing list has grown to 397 subscribers, although at the time of reporting, the number had already risen to 463 subscribers. Six Newsletter editions were distributed during 2022. From March to December 2022, the LinkedIn page had 1,034 page views, 376 unique (new) visitors and 602 followers. Our page currently has a total of 727 followers. From January to December 2022, the YouTube channel had a total of 1,192 views, 35.1 watch time hours and gained 64 subscribers. The Communications task force is exploring introducing additional social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, to further amplify the work done within the Alliance.

## 5. JOINT LOBBYING AND ADVOCACY TO MAKE POLICY AND FINANCE RESPONSIVE TO LOCALLY SHAPED CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

The climate finance report by the Climate Change Association & Finance for Tomorrow indicates financing for developing countries still falls below 100bn. While finance for adaptation increased by 53% to 7.5%, it still falls significantly short. Mitigation still counts for 90% of the financing. Developing countries face various challenges in accessing climate finance for local climate solutions, including overly complex application procedures, prohibitive demands for co-financing, and knowledge and capacity constraints in accessing funds. By connecting CSOs across different levels and fostering unusual partnerships and multistakeholder collaborations, VCA can bring actors with diverse expertise and local knowledge closer together. This approach enables VCA to lobby and advocate together to make policy and financial flows responsive to locally led climate solutions. Presenting VCA thematic issues collectively/partnering with coalitions to achieve solidarity in engaging powerful interests.

### 5.1. REVIEW OF NATIONAL LAWS AND POLICIES

As a result of VCA CSO engagement, the programme successfully contributed to blocking, adopting, and implementing several national policies and laws. VCA Brazil supported the campaign: "The Most Urgent Law in the World" to influence the approval of the admissibility of the Constitutional Amendment 27/2021 (Climate PEC), which would establish climate security as a fundamental right in the Brazilian constitution. In addition, Quilombola leaders mobilised the populations of the territories Santa Rosa dos Pretos and Santa Maria dos Pinheiros in Itapecuru-Mirim to elaborate the Community Consultation Protocol. VCA Brazil, in collaboration with the Coalition Voices of Tocantins for Climate Justice, with the Tocantins State Public Ministry, contributed to the support against the Environmental Licensing Law. They successfully influenced the alteration of the text of the law, which violated the constitutional rights of farmers, Indigenous People, and communities. The changes in the law contribute to addressing major socio-environmental impacts, such as indiscriminate aerial spraying of pesticides, deforestation, and many other negative socio-environmental impacts. In Morros, Maranhão State, farmers presented a proposal for a Municipal Law on Agroecology and Organic Production to the Municipality. In the second half of 2022, the proposal was submitted. This is a popular initiative that demonstrates the protagonist role and awareness of farmers and highlights that agroecology guarantees healthy and sustainable food systems, besides promoting climate justice. This process was started in 2019, but it was the VAC-BR Programme that funded the mobilisation and promoted engagement through meetings, workshops, and technical advice.

In Indonesia, local partners successfully advocated for two regulations to include recommendations from CSOs and marginalised groups to support just climate transitions. Firstly, the Head of the Asmat District in Papua Province signed the District Decree on the recognition and protection of the Asmat Indigenous People and the Pomar Sirau Clan's customary territory. This decree is critical to protecting Indigenous rights and managing sustainable natural resources. Furthermore, on the local level, the Head of Womom Village issued Decree No.1 about

the Womom ecotourism group formation. The Head of Tanah Merah Village approved a recommendation from the fishing community to formulate village regulations for mangrove protection.

VCA Kenya has been working with its partners to influence sub-national policy through joint lobbying and advocacy. In anticipation of FLLOCA funds incoming in 2023, counties have been establishing policies and regulations to support community participation in climate finance flows. VCA has undertaken efforts in several counties, including Homabay, Marsabit, Nakuru, Narok and Samburu counties. Hivos partner CUTS was able to mobilise and sensitise Homabay county community members and the political class (newly elected County Assembly Members) on the need for a climate change policy in addressing the adverse impact of Climate Change in the County. They were also inducted for their role in policy formulation and implementation. As a result of these engagements and collaboration with like-minded organisations, Homabay County was able to put in place a robust Climate Change Act and anchor a fund in it. The fund ringfenced 2% of the total County development budget towards climate action. In Samburu County, WWF Partner Caritas Maralal facilitated, through capacity strengthening, supporting public participation and strong collaboration with the county government officials, the passing of two key policies on Climate Change, Sustainable Forest Management and Tree Growing. These policies will contribute to a policy and regulatory environment that supports adaptation actions for the arid county, as well as participation of citizens in anticipation of FLLOCA funding.

Simultaneously, PACIDA, a Hivos partner working in Marsabit, was able to put in place and build the capacity of 10 Ward Climate Change Planning Committees as stipulated in the Marsabit Climate Change Act. This structure is critical in channelling climate finances to the grassroots for climate action. In addition, they have developed the Mulika Tracking Tool, which will be used for follow-ups and tracking of expenditures at the ward levels. The tool has already been shared with the ward climate change planning committees.

In Nakuru County, VCA Alliance members and local partners collaborated to influence the Nakuru County Government to establish Ward Climate Change Planning Committees (WCCPCs), a mechanism that enables communities to directly influence climate finance flows. ADA Consortium, ALIN, NACOFA (all WWF partners), SDI Kenya, Muungano wa Wanavijiji, and WWF jointly worked to train government officials on the need for participatory planning and supported the establishment of the County Climate Change Fund regulations. The team has also jointly supported the formation of 55 WCCPCs, a requirement of the regulations that ensures that local communities understand the purpose of the WCCPCs and are committed to supporting their establishment. In addition, a member of Muungano wa Wanavijiji has been elected to one of the WCCPCs. The ADA Consortium also undertook a similar exercise in Narok County, which has led to the formation of one WCCPC as well as the capacity strengthening of government officials on the importance of citizen inclusion in climate processes. This will continue into the next year.

The Human Rights Commission of the Upper House of Parliament in Paraguay agreed on a draft version of a public policy for the Integral Protection of Defenders and Journalists. VCA in Paraguay has also contributed strongly to the dossier, The Right to a Future, which contains 20 pressing stories about the environment, development, and human rights in Paraguay. The report was elaborated in the aftermath of the UPR cycle, where a shadow report was published, focused on Human rights and the environment. The dossier was developed in a multi-actor way with CSOs, grassroots organisations, independent investigative journalists, and alternative media for the graphic design.

In Tunisia, VCA has joined national organisations and coalitions to influence legal frameworks related to the environment and climate change, including the Environment Code, climate law, and the Low Carbon Strategy. VCA has succeeded in bringing together climate and non-climate civil society organisations in Tunisia and has a unique climate brand.

The VCA Alliance has made two submissions to the New Collective and Quantified Goal on climate finance (NCQG) based on broad discussions within the Alliance and informed by the lived experiences of the women and rights holders VCA represents, considering their needs and priorities. The submissions were made on October 10th 2022 and the 20th of February 2023 to the Ad-hoc working programme on NCQG based on decisions CMA.3 and CMA.4. The submissions recognise that locally led solutions should be at the centre of the global response to climate change and the imperative to adequately finance, connect and scale up local solutions to respond to climate change and achieve the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

In the Netherlands, VCA, in collaboration with other PoVs, provided comments in response to the Dutch international climate strategy. It was noted that the Netherlands is dependent on other countries to achieve its climate goals, as expressed in the letter to the House of Representatives. What the Dutch government missed was the recognition that other countries depend equally on the Dutch commitment to achieve their goals. As a rich and densely populated trading country, the Netherlands has moved many of its production processes abroad, resulting in a huge impact on the environment and human rights beyond its borders. The global Dutch climate and environmental footprint is the largest in the EU. By signing the Paris Climate Agreement, the Netherlands has committed itself to several crucial principles, such as "the polluter pays" and "common but differentiated responsibilities". These principles are of great importance in defusing the climate crisis.

## 5.2. EVIDENCE-BASED ADVOCACY FOR CLIMATE FINANCE

During the period under review, the VCA strengthened its efforts in evidence-based advocacy for the purpose of securing funds for climate action. To begin with, in early 2022, the VCA Global Programme and SSN hosted a workshop on climate finance, consulting experts from SSN to inform and refine the VCA climate finance strategy. Three major areas of focus emerged from this workshop: i) the need to bridge the demand and supply side through alternative funding mechanisms for locally led solutions; ii) Influencing UNFCCC frameworks and processes, specifically providing input to the NCQG on Climate Finance; and iii) Strengthening civil society engagement with the Green Climate Fund.

Hivos published a [discussion paper](#) on climate justice in climate finance. This paper strongly argues why finance should flow to local levels by demonstrating good examples of locally led climate solutions. The paper provides clear recommendations to governments, international donors, and funds to increase and secure financial resources flowing to the local level. This study highlights that African countries, specifically, face numerous challenges in accessing climate finance for local solutions. A set of demand and supply side barriers to accessing these finance flows was identified. It was found that the current incentive system continues to favour the funding of large, centralised projects that manage to navigate the complex climate finance disbursement architecture within many countries. The findings of this study and the resulting VCA policy positions were shared through the African Regional Forum for Sustainable Development, in a side event that was attended by officials from the Zambian Biodiversity

Finance Initiative, the Zambian Ministry of Green Environment and the National Treasury of the Government of Kenya. During the event, policymakers showed keen interest in CSOs facilitating learning on best practices among African countries.

VCA **Tunisia** conducted a study on national climate finance flows, which provided recommendations on strategies for public, private, and civic actors to enhance access to finance by local communities. This study was conducted in a participatory way, consulting key public climate actors. This study served as a basis to inform VCA capacity strengthening activities as well as collaborations with climate actors. At COP27, the study led to a GCF focal point verbally committing to collaborate with VCA partners and include some local partners in the funding available.

VCA **Zambia** conducted an analysis of the Constituency Development Fund (2 million USD) set up by the Zambian government. Policy gaps have been identified, and evidence-based recommendations for the allocation of climate funds to the local levels are being made.

### 5.3. ALTERNATIVE FUNDING MECHANISMS FOR LOCALLY LED CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

VCA **Paraguay** is implementing a Payment for Environmental Services mechanism for Indigenous Peoples, which secures funding and territorial security to several Indigenous Communities in the Gran Chaco and Pantanal Ecoregions. This has been a major step towards establishing a funding mechanism that guarantees the certification of forest reserves. With funding from Conservation International, WWF-PY supported the certification of **112.256** hectares of forest reserve benefitting six different Indigenous Peoples (Guarani, ñandeva, Ayoreo, Ishyr, Nivacle, Guarani Occidental, toba-Maskoy) in four Ecoregions. This system provides the communities that are the guardians of the vital bio- and culturally diverse ecosystems with an opportunity to generate an independent alternative income.

Several examples of significant efforts to allocate funds to local actions come from **Indonesia**. Civil society and marginalised groups successfully influenced the funding and budget allocation from village funds and local government budgets for climate action. For example, Hokeng Jaya Village (in the East Flores District) allocated IDR 25 million (EUR 1,550) to a sustainable food garden programme to promote local food production for climate change adaptation. Similarly, Kawalelo Village (in the East Flores District) allocated 20% of village funds to supporting communities in growing local foods. Furthermore, the head of the East Manggarai District allocated funds to purchase seeds for 400 hectares of land to support sorghum and other local foods cultivation to increase food security conditions and enhance resilience towards climate change, following VCA partners and communities' input.

VCA co-developed the '*Building Approaches to fund local Solutions with climate Evidence*' (BASE) fund, serving to articulate advocacy messages and to mobilise additional funds for partners on the ground. VCA initiated a concept for fundraising to build on BASE to mobilise funds for implementing local climate solutions, especially those amplified through VCA. A Press Conference was held on the 11th of November to launch the fund. This initiative works collaboratively to promote funding of locally driven solutions using approaches that will ensure rigorous climate rationale, simplicity, and speed to generate evidence of climate impact and

promote collective advocacy for changing climate financing practices. The initiative is coordinated by Avina and Partners include VCA, the United Nations University, the Institute for Environment and Human Security, REOS Partners, GFLAC, SKOLL, IPRIGHTS and BRAINFOREST.

Building on the consultation in 2021 the setup of the Next Level Grant Facility (NLGF) in the VCA Alliance was initiated. The NLGF is a funding mechanism specifically designed to direct funding to the hardest to reach target groups of the VCA programme. It is developed in such a way that informal groups, informal or grassroots CSOs and activists or environmental human rights defenders can easily apply for small grants that are quickly disbursed. In 2022, consultation with the Regional Teams resulted in the definition of the purpose, beneficiaries, governance, roles, process, budget, including Risk mitigation. The first half of 2023 will focus on the selection of fund managers and adapting the NLGF frameworks to the specific VCA regions, so that they reflect locally apt, inclusive, fair, and transparent decision-making processes and outcomes. The local NLGF frameworks are developed collaboratively and should be supported by the regional VCA Alliance.

## 6. COLLABORATIONS

### 6.1. COLLABORATION WITH MOFA, EMBASSIES AND OTHER POVS

Formal and informal meetings between the VCA and MoFA were held during the year. The Annual Policy Dialogue was a platform to deliberate on MoFA developments, the BHOS policy note, and multi-annual plans. Other key topics were discussed, such as EHRDs, locally led adaptation, climate finance and youth engagement. All parties agreed on collaboration at COP27 and the UN 2023 Water Conference. In addition, VCA was invited to contribute to the various policy documents, including the International Climate Strategy, the Africa strategy and the Embassy toolkit concerning human rights.

### 6.2. ENGAGEMENTS WITH EMBASSIES

The VCA values the collaboration with the Dutch Embassies in all the implementing countries. While there has been considerable success in developing the relations in some countries, a few have experienced challenges.

**Bolivia:** At the end of 2022, VCA Bolivia had not yet had an opportunity to contact the respective embassy. This is complicated by the fact that there is no Bolivian embassy. The VCA Bolivia team appreciates the Embassy's invitation to meet and is available to participate in meetings as deemed necessary and to coordinate joint activities.

**Brazil:** During the years 2021/2022, the VCA Brazil team had three conversations with the Embassy. Staff from the Embassy participated in the launch event of the VCA programme in 2021.

Since the Embassy's focal point has changed, the team has scheduled a meeting for the first quarter of 2023. In addition, the VCA Brazil team expects to maintain a close relationship with the Dutch focal point responsible for human rights in Brazil, as agreed at the Annual Policy Dialogue with VCA-MoFA in October 2022.

**Indonesia:** VCA Indonesia usually holds an annual meeting with all PoV partnerships and the Embassy (16 partnerships in the country) to discuss potential collaborations. VCA Indonesia has managed to collaborate with one of the other PoV partnerships (Green Livelihood Alliance) in the Asia-Pacific Climate Week. After that, no tangible collaboration with the Embassy or other PoV partnership has formed. In Indonesia, the Embassy also has its own specific grant (using a similar framework to PoV) directly managed by them for climate issues. Their partner for this grant, Pattiro, is more involved with the Embassy, such as their involvement in the EU climate week in Indonesia. By the end of this reporting period, VCA-Indonesia was in discussion with Pattiro to search for collaboration opportunities. For 2023, VCA Indonesia aims to get more involved with the Embassy and host joint webinars or discussions, especially around the climate and rights nexus.

**Kenya:** The momentum for engagements with the Embassy has come from the Embassy. They have held several Partner Days, which have focused on discussion of issues such as synergies between Power of Voices programmes and elections, including assessing ways in which the Embassy can provide support. In addition, the Embassy has reached out to VCA specifically for support when organising field trips and events, seeking to link our creative partners and representatives from informal settlements, and for input on strategy, such as the Dutch government's involvement in the World Bank's Financing Locally Led Adaptation (FLLoCA) programme. The collaboration with the embassy is going smoothly, and the embassy has given VCA several chances to highlight its work.

**Paraguay:** Paraguay does not have a Dutch Embassy, yet it has been in contact with the Embassy in Buenos Aires. In November 2021, the former ambassador, Mr Niewenkamp and his committee, together with the Dutch counsel in Paraguay, made a field visit with the VCA team to the remote Municipality of Bahía Negra, in the Paraguayan Pantanal, where they met several local partners, including Ishyr Indigenous communities. Unfortunately, the diplomatic team in Buenos Aires has rotated in August 2022 and contact with the current ambassador has not yet been established. Yet the team is planning to do so.

**Tunisia:** VCA Tunisia has continued to pursue engagement with the Dutch Embassy. While the Alliance has yet to constructively engage officials at the Embassy, it remains hopeful for future opportunities to co-create and advance climate justice in Tunisia. A meeting with the Dutch Embassy took place in 2022 to present the VCA programme and the progress so far. The VCA focal point for Tunisia met the Ambassador of youth and education in June 2022 in an informal meeting. Notable challenges are that the contacts are temporary, and climate change is not a priority for the Embassy in Tunisia.

**Zambia:** The Embassy in Harare indicated its willingness to receive regular updates on the programme implementation. VCA Zambia welcomes this suggestion and would be glad if a contact person could be shared for frequent provision updates. Quarterly updates and virtual meetings can be held for this purpose.

Plans are in place to help improve communication and collaboration. It is worth noting that the

VCA invited all the respective embassies to the Annual Consultation Planning Meeting between VCA and MoFA. This is an important platform for all embassy representatives to have an insight into the plans developed for their countries as well as to appreciate what other countries are doing.

### 6.3. CONNECTING ACROSS PVP CLIMATE JUSTICE CONSORTIUMS IN THE NETHERLANDS

Comprising VCA, Oxfam Novib, Defence Milleu, African Activists for Climate Justice, led by PACJA and in consortium with Natural Justice, FEMNET and Africa Youth Commission, the PVP Climate Justice Consortium has convened quarterly meetings. Initial meetings focused on sharing information about our programmes, countries where we work and opportunities for collaboration and synergy.

### 6.4. COLLABORATION WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Most of the countries do not yet have tangible partnerships with the private sector. However, VCA Indonesia recently finalised research on climate finance, including an analysis of philanthropic funding for climate, to bolster climate finance that can reach local levels. This will be pursued further in 2023. In Zambia, mechanisms to leverage green private investments are key to improving long-term climate action. To scale up successful project cases into programmes of sustainable market-level green growth, it is important to adopt a holistic approach to private-sector engagement in climate change. This approach will focus on supporting a range of policy reforms and regulations to promote climate change mitigation and adaptation, and improved environmental performance, an enabling policy environment for private climate investments, along with the use of limited public finance for mechanisms to leverage green private investment. The Alliance is focusing on mobilising green investments, promoting green private-sector development, and harnessing skills and knowledge for green growth.

### 6.5. GLOBAL ALLIANCE COORDINATION

Internal coordination and collaboration among the VCA partners remained positive throughout 2022. The Alliance Partners continued to work closely together to deliver the programme. The structures and processes that were put in place at the beginning of the programme were strengthened using a flexible and adaptive learning centred approach and project governance structure. These include the Steering Committee, Joint Programme Team (JPT), Programme Advisory Committee (PAC), National Advisory Committees (NAC) and several key Task Forces (TF) such as Finance, Communications, and Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (PMEL) as well as the Regional Teams (RT) and the Global Programme Team (GloPro). The programme notes the ever-increasing need to strengthen the local to global approach by ensuring that advocacy messages are informed by the needs and priorities of local people.

Efforts have been made to ensure that RTs are consulted, either via meetings or surveys, when the GloPro has prepared plans and strategies in the different workstreams, to ensure linkage and

relevance. Events at the global level where VCA has been engaging have been jointly shaped by regional and global-level staff and have had local partners as speakers. Concrete example of this was the task force for COP27, which had a mix of regional and global-level staff who co-created the strategy, side events and engagement plans. The same has been the case for the planning of the UN 2023 Water conference. The Alliance convened the first in-person meeting that brought together VCA staff from across the Alliance countries and task forces. The meeting was held in Cape Town, South Africa and was hosted by the Alliance Partners South Africa, namely SDI and SSN. The meeting was held from 5 to 9 September 2022 and was attended by at least 45 participants. Participants were drawn from all the implementing countries of the programme and made up of at least 16 different nationalities. The meeting achieved the following objectives:

- Outlined the perspectives of Alliance Partners on their contributions to the programme and the added value of the Alliance organisations and the programme.
- Articulated the progress made in delivering the programme at the local and global scale.
- Exchanged experiences in applying key concepts at local and global scales for better insights, further collaboration, and synergy across and beyond individual partners and regions.
- Examined the importance of the VCA methodologies and measures for improvement.
- Discussed the framework, process, and accountability measures as well as next steps for VCA small grants for the purposes of further enhancing local ownership.
- Defined what it means to lead from the south and the steps to fulfil this core pillar of the VCA vision.
- Explored modalities for aligning messages and using the partners' diversity.

However, there is a clear need to do more to enhance the local-to-global approach. Further defining initiatives and procedures in the overall management of the programme are some of the issues that the programme will take forward. The improvement of listening processes, with the adoption of previous consultations with and involvement of RTs, which capture suggestions and questions from grassroots organisations and territories, can be a way to overcome this gap. There is also a need for opportunities to exchange more experience, for example, between regions on specific thematic issues such as successful advocacy methods, human rights and locally led approaches.

## 7. COMMUNICATIONS

In 2022, we continued to implement our communication plan to solidify our advocacy efforts at all levels. We built storytelling capacity through a communications package and tools, including the branding and communications guidelines and storytelling workshops. The local stories were published in the media at an international level.

In addition to the Voices for Just Climate Action website, the “Voices in Action” bi-monthly newsletter, the @WeAreVCA X (formerly Twitter) account, the LinkedIn page, and the YouTube channel, we have expanded our communication platforms to include Instagram and Facebook pages. Through these efforts, we are amplifying the voices of the local communities, aligning with our local-to-global impact call.

## 8. PLANNING, MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING

The VCA uses outcome harvesting (OH) as the primary monitoring methodology for the programme, for its qualities to capture the complexities of L&A results and for the involvement of local partners in monitoring. In early 2022, the PMEL working group organised a training on OH for a group of 30 people, consisting of representatives from local partners in each region. These subsequently worked with local OH consultants to further train local partners in the methodology during 2022, resulting in 64 CSOs reporting an increased capacity on OH. In preparation for the Mid-Term Review to be conducted in July/August of 2023, the VCA developed the TOR and engaged the services of the same consultant who conducted the baseline study.

## 9. COMPLIANCE, INTEGRITY, RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

In 2022, the Alliance continued to adhere to the highest standards it had set for itself at the beginning of the programme. We have endeavoured to ensure that our internal policies and procedures are in line with the Ministry's requirements as reflected in the ORIA.

The Alliance has ensured that all stakeholders are aware of the VCA grievance mechanism and email address ([grievance@voicesforclimateaction.org](mailto:grievance@voicesforclimateaction.org)) since its introduction in September 2021. During the inception of the programme, as well as during the Annual Reflection and Planning Meetings, stakeholders were taken through various grievance management processes, and partners have been encouraged to include the grievance email on their website and information materials. During the reporting period, two complaints were raised against local partners in Tunisia and Zambia. The matters were addressed by the respective Alliance Partners and were also brought to the attention of the Ministry.

By the time of compiling this report, no incidents of misconduct or sexual abuse were reported by any of the Alliance Partners. Webinars on Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESSF), Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA), and Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIA) have been conducted. The Alliance has monitored and updated the risk matrix regularly, using relevant information discussed within each Alliance organisation, in the Joint Programme Team, as well as the Steering Committee. Section 2.0 on context has elaborated on the environment in which the programme has been operating over the past year.

## 10. LESSONS LEARNT

Notable progress was made in 2022. The VCA will continue to look for more impactful interventions to expand its influence and achieve significant outcomes. Over the past year, important lessons were learned:

**Lessons learned on coalitions and networks:** The programme utilised an existing network to develop or strengthen a multi-stakeholder forum focusing on climate justice issues. At the same

time, it also engaged with the existing multi-stakeholder forums to incorporate climate justice issues into their agenda. The aim was to ensure the issue was more inclusive while accounting for the context and power dynamics in each location. For public narrative changes and campaigns for a just transition, we learnt that to reach public audiences and non-conventional stakeholders, we need to use their interests as the entry point. Creative campaigns (such as art, culture, music, film, etc.) were beneficial to reach/approach a non-conventional audience.

**Lessons learned on capacity strengthening:** conceptualising some concepts remains a challenging task that VCA Alliance and local partners must address. Key concepts of the VCA programme should be contextualised and translated into local languages, tailored to the specificities of each country. The regional teams and local partners required more capacity building to be able to transfer knowledge and provide more evidence. In 2023, the profiling and promotion of local climate solutions are considered a key objective. There is also a need for in-depth discussions to create more tangible connections between the urban and rural constituencies.

**Lesson learned on amplifying voices:** despite the progress made in having a great presence in public spaces and making proper VCA narratives, the sustaining and dissemination of knowledge and stories need more effort to reach a wider public. To guarantee accurate climate information, CSOs and media need more capacity to avoid disinformation and misinformation, and to enable new narratives where inclusiveness of climate action policies is a key indicator. Media should be able to facilitate debates on just transition, climate finance accountability and just climate action. Generally, the UNFCCC COP space is becoming less inclusive, and CSO spaces have shrunk due to the restrictions put in place by host countries. A report by Global Witness, together with Corporate Accountability and Corporate Europe Observatory, has identified at least 636 fossil lobbyists who were granted access to COP27, 26% more than COP26, a greater number than the ten most impacted countries' delegations altogether and twice as many fossil fuel lobbyists as delegates from the official UN constituency for Indigenous Peoples. Hence, COPs are becoming a space for doing business, just another frontier for capitalistic opportunism. This negatively impacts the broader public's perception of the efficiency of negotiations, CSOs' advocacy and the entire process around it.

**Lessons learnt on diversifying funding opportunities to implement locally shaped climate solutions:** It remains a challenge for (especially smaller) CSOs to diversify their funding base, and a key lesson in this regard is that, in the capacity strengthening support, it is essential to specifically focus on capacities related to resource mobilisation. Funding ensures legitimacy and continuation – building on the foundations that are built or strengthened. The funding to the local level is still quite difficult to track from the Netherlands since a substantial part goes through multilateral agencies and the private sector.

**Lessons learnt on documentation:** VCA partners implement many successful interventions which are not documented. There is a need to enhance the knowledge management at all levels of the Alliance and enhance knowledge-sharing activities to ensure that both global and regional teams are aware of the valuable work that is being undertaken in the different areas. Time needs to be dedicated to analysing the many successes in light of the greater VCA impacts, contributing to an even stronger and comprehensive narrative on climate justice.

# 11. CONCLUSION

VCA recognises that, due to the scale and complexity of the programme, it is not possible to show all the significant results. Hence, the VCA is working to consolidate and synthesise the ambitions for key aspects of the programme to be more impact-driven, clearer, and more specific, thereby challenging and transforming. VCA will ensure that we continuously check that each reform is not simply seeking change within the current system but is a step towards the vision of change, resulting in a formidable movement.

The UNFCCC COP27 was held against the backdrop of the most severe impacts of climate change recorded in a year. The VCA implementing countries were not spared from the devastation. VCA focused on local emerging civil society, CBOs, CSOs, groups and associations, premised on the belief that investments in early-stage activities and targeted support can help elevate emerging CSOs to become change agents that, if empowered and supported, can yield positive results for their communities and constituencies. In most countries, results have been impressive, and a strong basis for further lobby and advocacy work has been built, paving the way for local organisations to take the VCA legacy forward.

By implementing this programme, we have gained insight into the importance of giving local partners a voice in determining the programme's priorities. Alignment on approach and key messages, and agreement on branding, is critical to ensure productive collaboration and reduce tensions. It is vital to establish clear mechanisms for decision-making and approval processes for the Alliance or other collective action work. There is strong recognition that Indigenous Peoples have their own voices and prefer to communicate their experiences themselves: supporting the participation of these groups in civic decision-making spaces concomitantly with the articulation of the climate justice network to make their voices visible is a prerequisite. Narratives about climate change must reflect territorial realities. Decolonising, simplifying and respecting are necessary to maintain vibrant partnerships. Finally, there is no climate justice without linguistic justice. VCA and regional teams strive to ensure linguistic inclusion in events, always considering translation from/to Brazilian Portuguese, Indonesian Bahasa, Spanish, and French. Even though this can be challenging and costly to facilitate at times.