



# ACTIVITY REPORT 2021



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## FOREWORD FROM OUR INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR

The year 2021 was again impacted by the global Covid pandemic, with many of our offices and partner organisations having to work online. This situation bluntly highlighted the digital gap between countries, genders and age groups effecting our network. It also brought to the forefront the further increased burden of care-work that women have in all our societies, as many of our partners are women and working from home with additional care tasks for family members. The pandemic with its lockdowns also led to a strong increase of gender-based violence. Overall, the pandemic has rolled back women's rights for several decades and seen [significant democratic backsliding](#). We addressed these risks in our lobby and advocacy campaigns and actions, in close cooperation with feminist networks and collectives, including in the Feminist Covid-19 Response collective. Maybe the only hopeful aspect of the pandemic is that some of our partners working with local forest and indigenous peoples communities, saw a growing interest in their traditional knowledge in particular of medicinal plants and honey production, to strengthen the health and immunity of communities where vaccines were not or hardly available.

In addition to the Covid pandemic, our partners faced a global climate crisis, which worsened the situation of women and environmental rights defenders in many countries, and an increase in draughts, floods, forest fires and hurricanes. At the same time we note a growing trend towards so-called 'false climate solutions' with the expansion of plantations linked to biofuels and other carbon-capture investments, that lead to land-grabbing from indigenous peoples and forest communities, and further destroy biodiversity and polluted rivers with chemicals. Often it are women in all their diversities, that stand at the forefront of fighting against deforestation, mining and agro-industrial

expansion, while at the same time they carry the additional burden caused by the pandemic. With an office in the Netherlands, a country with a huge climate-footprint in the world, we feel it is important to increase our mobilization in the Netherlands to advocate for a rapid change away from our unsustainable policies and practices.

And as I write this, we are faced with another global energy and food crisis caused by the Russian invasion and war against Ukraine. As a network of civil-society feminist networks and non-governmental organisations, we are extremely saddened and shocked about the brutal invasion of Ukraine. We have worked since our creation almost 30 years ago, with civil society partners from Russia, Ukraine and all the former Soviet Union countries on sustainable development, climate protection, democratic environmental governance through peace and cooperation. We stand in solidarity with our Ukrainian and other civil society partners in the region, and are supporting local eco-feminist organisations in Ukraine through our Eco-Feminist movement-building fund, supported by the Netherlands Postcode Lottery.

Despite the adversity, we have continued to build a strong team of colleagues, cooperating with our offices in other countries, and creating new strategic partnerships that provide financial stability for the coming years. Our team showed great resilience during the corona pandemic and we were able to adapt our organization, for example by leading in an inclusive digital transformation where we create safe-spaces for civil society activists. We were able to continue to advocate and lobby for climate justice and gender equality, supported by the dedicated members of our Board of Trustees and International Advisory Board. Thank you for your dedication, energy, and hard work to bring us closer to a more sustainable and gender equal world!

In 2021, we are proud of the successful finalization of our 5-year Women2030 program, our Framework Partnership Programme with the European Commission DG International Cooperation, with a budget of €6 million. For Women2030 we worked with our strategic partners from Women Environmental Programme (WEP) Africa, Asia Pacific forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) and the Global Forest Coalition with over 2000 grassroots partners in 50 countries. We want to build on the powerful stories of the women that contributed, you can read about grassroots ecofeminist voices in our report ["The Seeds We Plant Grow Roots"](#). We are inspired by our partners to change mindsets and behaviours of those actors that shape tomorrow's world. Based on the assumption that the struggle for a healthy, just and sustainable world is not a single-issue struggle, we see that feminist action is needed in three key areas: sustainable development, climate solutions and toxic free environment.

A number of new exciting programmes started or continued in 2021 including 'Women's Power' Georgia with a budget of some € 1million working with grassroots groups from youth, feminist, elderly and disability organisations, as well as with media and influencers through the Media4Equality award. Also, the cooperation on gender equality in forest and climate governance, with the Green Livelihoods Alliance lead by Milieudedefensie (Netherlands) and financed by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is a great opportunity to bring local feminist and environmental organisations together for strategic advocacy actions. We are very encouraged by our strategic cooperation with the Global Forest Coalition and their network of biodiversity and indigenous peoples organisations. Through our Eco Feminist Movement building fund, supported by the NPL, we are able to strengthen partner organisations across Africa, Central Asia, the Western Balkan and Caucasus region, and are impressed by their leadership and initiatives.

Our Gender Just Climate Solutions programme, coordinated with our WECF colleagues in Germany, provides funding and mentoring to fantastic local organisations in 15 countries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean. Their results are examples for governments, and we encourage them to integrate their good practices into national climate programmes, through our advocacy with our partners from the Women and Gender Constituency at the United Nations Climate Change Framework Convention.

Last but not least, our strategic partnership with UN Environment and the Basel Rotterdam and Stockholm Convention is essential for demonstrating the needs for gender-transformative policies to end plastic pollution and health damage from toxic chemicals, with partners in Kenya and Tunisia we are developing documentary films and case studies to build the capacity of policy makers and to coordinate campaigns with feminist colleagues from the Women's Major Group at the United Nations.

I am therefore very proud and pleased to share with you the WECF International Activity Report for 2021, presenting our collective achievements from last year. We hope this year's report will inspire you to join forces with us in changing the future.

Sascha Gabizon,  
Executive Director WECF International



# WECF INTERNATIONAL

## OUR STORY

WECF is a non-profit organization dedicated to a gender-just and healthy planet for all. We are a network of over 250 eco feminist organisations who are active in 72 countries around the world. We work with our partners and advocacy allies on jointly funded projects and advocate for female leadership and gender equality in the field of sustainability. We believe a healthy, just and sustainable world requires feminist solutions in 3 critical areas: sustainable development, climate solutions and toxic free environment.

WECF International was conceived as Women in Europe for a Common Future during the Earth Summit in Rio De Janeiro in 1992 by women from the European region coming together and recognising the role women played in sustainable development, as defined in the United Nations report, Our Common Future. WECF was officially registered as a foundation in 1994 in the Netherlands and changed its name to Women Engage for a Common Future in 2016 to recognise its growing global role.

Our philosophy: ensure that the voices of women, ecofeminists and marginalized groups are heard at the policy table combined with local action in which they realize their priorities. This dual action-advocacy approach proved to be very successful and has become one of the strongest distinguishing aspects of our network.

## OUR MISSION

Our mission is to be a catalyst for change to bring the priorities and leadership of women and feminists in all their diversities, into policies and actions that will shape a just and sustainable world; our “Common Future”, through providing capacity building, tools and funding to ecofeminist partner organisations.

## OUR VISION

We envision a world in which gender equality has been achieved and all people live in dignity while collectively sharing the responsibility for a healthy, just, and sustainable environment.

Everyone is different and as such have different needs and access to opportunities. Tackling the structural barriers to equal opportunities and wellbeing constructed by society is essential to achieve the world we want. The priorities of women in particular, are too often neglected, or considered less important, in politics, economics, and society. We promote women’s leadership and mobilise people to take action to achieve our shared vision of a just and healthy planet for all. We are inspired and led by our partners and our network to change the mindsets and behaviours of those actors that shape tomorrow’s world and support and empower our network to become actors themselves.

## OUR GOAL

Our goal is to bring together a plurality of feminist theories, analysis, approaches, and traditions by translating inclusive ecofeminist thinking/strategies into concrete demands and actions at national and international levels. Based on the assumption that the struggle for a sustainable, just, and healthy world is not a single-issue struggle, we believe that gender responsive policies and feminist action is needed in three key thematic areas: sustainable development, climate solutions and toxic free environment.

That is why we work on transformative gender-equality and ecofeminist approach linking human rights, climate justice, sustainable energy, safe water & sanitation, zero-toxics and zero-waste.

## Ecofeminism

At WECF, we base all of our work on ecofeminist principles. For us ecofeminism means, using an intersectional feminist approach when fighting structural barriers that prevent us from enjoying a healthy environment. Ecofeminism shows the lived experiences of marginalised groups under climate change; how they bear an unfair burden of this change as well as being powerful in their agency to overcome it. Ecofeminism

emphasizes that the existing heteropatriarchal capitalist system is not compatible with women's rights and a sustainable planet.

For us, ecofeminism means using an intersectional feminist approach when fighting structural barriers that prevents us from enjoying a healthy environment. Meaning, we take a holistic approach, recognising that we all come with a different baggage of discrimination (or lack thereof) depending on our gender, age, ethnicity, sexual identity, education, religion, ability or social class. These barriers, among others, include extractivism, militarism, gender-based violence, the excesses of capitalism and shrinking space for civil society to influence.



## #HerstoryOfChange

**Karen Dubois protects biodiversity while working on sexual and reproductive health and rights for indigenous women in Guatemala**

[HerstoryofChange - Karen's Story - WECF](#)

Karen Dubois works with FUNDAECO, an organisation that focuses on the protection of biodiversity and the sustainable development of local communities in Guatemala and Central America. Her goal is to make sure that indigenous women in Guatemala enjoy equal sexual and reproductive health and rights; and that they are empowered to protect biodiversity and the climate.

Karen has helped to set up 38 health clinics in the forests from Guatemala. These clinics provide health services for 5000 indigenous women and men. Women also find a space there to learn about family planning and women's rights. They exchange knowledge on agroforestry and climate resilient food production. Women gain a strong role in biodiversity conservation. Karen and FUNDAECO also created a scholarship program for adolescent girls, which gives them the opportunity to learn about women's rights and become community leaders. Sexual health care services, women's rights and education are crucial to empower women. In this way they can act in the conservation of the climate and forests, feeling that their Mayan culture is respected.

In 2019, Karen Dubois was one of the winners of the Gender Just Climate Solution Awards.

We believe that gender responsive policies and feminist action is needed in three key thematic areas: sustainable development, climate solutions and toxic free environment. That is why we work on transformative gender-equality and ecofeminist approach linking human rights, climate justice, sustainable energy, safe water & sanitation, zero-toxics and zero-waste.



## HOW WE WORK

*We have three types of intervention strategies in these three areas*

### Changing the agenda through policy advocacy

We advocate to policymakers, from the local to the global level, to include gender equality and women's perspectives in policies and implementation plans. We do this by supporting our partners' participation in decision making processes, by leading regional and international gender equality movements, and by monitoring policies.

### Changing the power balance through capacity strengthening

WECF responds to network members' requests for joint implementation projects that either aim at reducing inequalities and unsustainable practices, and/or that aim at showing good practices of women's leadership and environmental sustainability. We train, provide expertise, and offer grants to women and gender equality organisations. Thus, we support them in their work for climate justice, an environmentally sustainable future and gender justice.

### Changing the mindsets – Raising awareness & Growing the network

We campaign to increase awareness on the importance of gender-just climate and environmental solutions. We raise awareness in public spaces on the underlying structural barriers, power imbalances, discrimination and violence that women, in all their diversity, face by sharing information, stories and experiences amongst our network partners on our list-serves, social media and via our newsletters. Awareness is an important first step towards increasing public pressure on corporations and politicians. We coordinate joint campaigns for awareness raising in multiple languages around key policy and awareness raising events. We provide communication training tools and sessions on effective campaigning, outreach and social media.



# GLOBAL ADVOCACY

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## Our partners mobilising the world

Together with our network partners **we advocate for women's and feminist rights** by facilitating the participation of partners in advocacy processes with capacity strengthening, financial support, and accreditation to international policy meetings. We coordinate joint shadow reports and independent monitoring of policies and programs with our partners in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America. We advocate within global feminist movements such as the Women and Gender Constituency on climate, and the Women's Major Group on environment and sustainable development.

As a network organisation, we believe in building on existing organisations and networks, to increase impact and to avoid duplication. Our network partners operate on the principles of solidarity, intersectionality, and gender equality. Together we work towards innovative and sustainable solutions. Together, we represent extensive expertise in various sectors, from technological to social. Our network provides a platform for knowledge sharing of our best practices and lessons learned. We use our experiences to formulate policy recommendations and advocacy actions. Our ethos is: from the local to the global and back, resulting in a global policy that is responsive and supportive of the local and vice-versa. With our network partners we work together to eliminate structural barriers to gender equality, human rights and sustainable development, through our strategies of joint advocacy, joint projects and joint outreach.

## Our global role

We are strongest when we act as a movement. We raise our voices together with women's rights and gender equality groups worldwide, demanding real solutions based on the needs of the people. Our networks are our force. This is why we have opened up civil society spaces in policy processes, and we will continue to occupy and effectively use these 'seats' at the negotiation tables to advance our ecofeminist demands.

### Women's Major Group –Feminist leadership in global Sustainable Development

We have since the beginning helped to facilitate the space for feminist organisations in the UN sustainable development process, called the 'Women's Major Group' on sustainable development. The Women's Major Group is a self-organised network with between 500 and 1000 organisations from over 100 countries, which continuously provides input into the global policy processes on Sustainable Development. We gave substantial input into the monthly negotiations of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which were agreed in 2015. We support grassroots women leaders to participate in the policy process and speak in the United Nations halls. We help develop policy interventions and to organise meetings with government delegations. Through our Women2030 program, we supported local women organizations in 50 countries to engage in the national implementation of the global commitments for Sustainable Development including the global goal on Gender Equality. Furthermore, we support the bi-annual elections of the facilitators of the Women's Major Group.

### Women and Gender Constituency – Global Feminist Climate Action

Public participation of women and feminist organisations from civil society is ensured through the 'Women and Gender Constituency' at the UN. We are an active core member of the Women and Gender Constituency. We contribute to the climate negotiations and we ensure that the participation of grassroots women organisations from our networks in the policy meetings. Climate change is already badly affecting women and men living in vulnerable regions. We bring our grassroots partners to meet with policy makers to advocate for a rights-based transition, where women and indigenous peoples are included in the decision-making. Through our **Gender Just Climate Solutions** Program we identify, promote and mentor best practice project that are adapting to climate change, and reducing climate emissions. We do this in cooperation with the Women & Gender Constituency and the United Nations network on climate technology transfer and other partners. We work with climate finance experts and governments to ensure women's priorities are equally reflected in national and local climate strategies. We share policy recommendations and best practices through the Women and Gender Constituency network.

## Civil Society Advisory Group on Generation Equality (Beijing+25)

In 1995 we facilitated the participation of a delegation of women to attend the civil society forum of the fourth World Women's Conference in Beijing, one of the largest meetings to promote women's rights ever held. The outcome, the Beijing Platform for Action, remains one of the strongest commitments to women's human rights within the scope of a sustainable and peaceful world. The last couple of years we have been appalled by the roll-back of women's rights in many countries in the world, and attacks against women's human rights and environmental defenders. To reverse and accelerate the Beijing progress for women's rights and gender equality, the 5-year 'Generation Equality' campaign was launched in 2020.

### Generation Equality Forums

Through a process of self-organisation and independent selection, the Civil Society Advisory Group to the Generation was created in which WECF is one of the 21 advisors to UN Women and UN Member States. We continue to be **involved with grassroots feminist movements in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Western Balkans in collaboration with UN Women**. The process started in 2020 and in the coming years we will support to facilitate and strengthen the participation of in particular young feminists in the Generation Equality process. The Generation Equality Forums were civil society-centred, global multi-stakeholder gatherings for gender equality, convened by UN Women and co-hosted by the governments of Mexico and France in 2021.

**"With every harmful chemical that comes onto the market, whether already existing or newly produced, we endanger our environment and health anew every day"**

[Johanna Hausmann, WECF Chemicals Policy Officer](#)

We also became **Generation Equality commitment maker**, with many other feminist organizations, civil society actors, governments and private sector companies. Through gender and climate programmes, we made [several commitments](#) for the Action Coalitions on Feminist Action for Climate Justice, Feminist Movements & Leadership and Technology & Innovation.

### SAICM Beyond 2020

The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), adopted in 2006, is a policy framework to promote chemical safety worldwide. The objective was to achieve "the sound management of chemicals throughout their life cycle so that by the year 2020, chemicals are produced and used in ways that minimize significant adverse impacts on the environment and human health." Even the scope of SAICM is nearly unlimited -it includes both toxic chemicals and hazardous industrial activities that are unaddressed by global treaties - SAICM, by design, imposes no binding obligations

on countries. As the mandate of SAICM ended in 2020 and the goal of a sustainable chemicals management has not been achieved, the parties agreed on developing a follow up process – SAICM Beyond 2020 – which was supposed to be adopted in 2020 at the International Conference on Composite Materials (ICCM). Since in-person meetings have been suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a new framework so far has not yet been adopted. To this end, negotiations have been underway for some time between governments, industry and non-governmental organizations, which are equally involved in the process.

As NGO stakeholders, WECF has been accompanying the SAICM process from the very beginning. We have been helping to develop its legal framework and took responsibility on implementation through projects under the Quick-Start Programme realized with our partner-organisations. In 2012, we helped secure the inclusion of endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) as one of five priority issue areas. Through the SAICM process and our close collaboration with the International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN), and other NGO partners we raised awareness on the issue on chemicals, especially with the focus on Gender and chemicals, in close linkage with the UN chemicals conventions and the Sustainable Development Goals. In the so-called intersessional process – which lasts much longer than expected due to the pandemic, we are engaged to keep the chemical issues on the agenda and help to create a new and strong and gender-just SAICM Beyond 2020.



Despite the corona pandemic we have remained resilient by adopting digitalized solutions and continued to advocate for climate justice & gender equality in thematic areas of:

- Feminist action for sustainable development
- Feminist action for climate and energy solutions
- Feminist action for a toxic-free society



## FEMINIST ACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

We work towards the full realisation of human rights, justice and the right to a healthy environment for all, regardless of gender identity, age, race, sexual identity, education, religion, ability or social class.

### WHAT WE DO!

**Standing up for gender equality, women's rights and international solidarity**

#### Gender equality

Gender equality and sustainable development for all is unlikely to be realised in our generation. Many policies and plans are made without taking gender equality into account and that leads to unforeseen negative impacts. We make gender gaps in society visible. We provide trainings and training tools to ensure gender-dimensions of

sustainable development are considered. We have specific expertise and tools such as gender assessments and gender budgeting. We work with civil society, science, government and EU and United Nations partners to create institutional frameworks for gender equality, such as gender action plans. We influence policy processes from local to global, linked to the Beijing Platform for Action, CSW, CEDAW and Agenda 2030. And, as advocacy is now more and more taking place online – a development we continue to see with the COVID-19 pandemic slowing down – we build capacity on how to ensure we create online spaces that are inclusive and not exclusive.

## Women's rights

Even though almost all UN member states have ratified the global Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), discrimination against women, girls and gender non-conforming people is persistent. There have been great advances in anchoring women's equal rights in laws across the world. But underlying barriers continue to exist, everywhere, and advances are increasingly under pressure from shrinking civil society spaces. According to the latest data from CIVICUS, 89% of the world population lives "in countries with significant restrictions on civic rights". To tackle the challenges facing humanity, we need full participation and equal decision-making rights for all, regardless of gender. We document why women's rights are a prerequisite for sustainable development. We support partners working to end discrimination and gender-based violence. We cooperate with women's rights and human rights organisations to advocate for rights-based policies and practices.

**"Climate justice means recognising the overlapping forms of discrimination and barriers all genders are facing. Climate policies will never be people-centred if they lack an intersectional dimension".**

*Miriam Müller*, member of WECF's Board of Trustees, Strategic policy and research advisor for the Centre For Feminist Foreign Policy in Germany

## International solidarity

In many cases, women's human rights and environmental defenders are standing up to defend their homes, lands and forests from exploitation by commercial corporations or repression from governments. Most of the times indigenous peoples are at the forefront of this conflict as they protect 80% of the world's biodiversity on their territories. At the same time, extractive industries are vying for these lands to mine fossil fuels, uranium and forests. We promote feminist solidarity. Feminism is not only about more women in power, but about standing up for our sisters who have least access to decision-making, and in changing the underlying root causes of exploitation. We work in partnership with other women and feminist organisations at national and global level. We co-facilitate the spaces for women and feminist in the United Nations policy processes through actively shaping the Women's Major Group. Together with almost one thousand partners from these global alliances, we present our policy priorities.

## ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2021

### Women2030

The pandemic meant that the programme was not finalized in 2020 as planned but in 2021, though majority of its objectives in the three program areas were met and even surpassed: 123 subgrants have been delivered (objective: 100), reaching more than 40,600 beneficiaries (objective: 10,000) 1,367 women and feminists have taken part in regional and global policy processes, (objective: 300), 18 countries have adopted a gender responsive national plan (objective: 8-20), and more than 120 million people have been reached via social and mainstream media (objective: 50 million).

This programme was implemented to realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in a gender-equitable and climate-just way in 4 regions of the world: **Eastern Europe, Caucasus & Central Asia, Africa, Asia & Latin America**. Implementation of the programme in the fifth year was affected by COVID-19, which exacerbated existing inequalities, with reports of increased gender-based violence shrinking civic space, and digital divide. Despite these challenges, online mobilisation, movement building and engagement in policy processes have remained strong, showing the power of feminist solidarity to push for change.

As **a strategic partner of the European Commission, with the Women2030** project, **WECF** engaged in the **Policy Forum on Development (PFD)**. The PFD organised a series of virtual thematic webinars where CSOs have space for engagement. WECF participated in sessions about ‘an economy that works for the people’ and on The Green Deal. We also launched a report ‘[Why the European Green Deal needs ecofeminism](#)’ with the European Environmental Bureau (see Publications).

One major policy outcome of 2021 has been the adoption of the National Action Plan on Gender and Climate Change by the Nigerian Federal government, as a result of policy consultation meetings organised by WEP with government representatives and NGOs. WEP used the global Gender Action Plan of the UNFCCC. This is an unprecedented achievement showcasing the crucial role of multi-lateral policy mechanisms to hold governments accountable and push for policy change.

### Commission on the Status of Women – CSW65

In March, we participated in the Commission on the Status of Women as members of the official delegation of the German government alongside other civil society representatives. We also co-hosted two events: ‘[Why we need a feminist vision for Agenda 2030, feminist voices at the policy table sharing lessons](#)’, a culmination of the efforts of the Women2030 partners in promoting gender equality within the sustainable development goals, and ‘*Global Feminist Movement–Building for Generation Equality*’, a discussion leading up to the Generation Equality Forum in Mexico and Paris. We were also

**part of a civil society briefing for the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW65),** meeting with the Dutch delegation. WECF provided **input** focused on **strengthening participation of women in decision-making regarding climate and sustainability issues.**

## Gender Equality Forum

In 2021, the Forum launched a 5-year action journey to achieve irreversible progress towards gender equality, founded on a series of concrete, ambitious and transformative actions, including \$40 Billion in financial commitments. The Western Balkan Consultation took place in June 2021 as well. We helped to organise a self-selection committee from the Western Balkan countries, who then selected attendees to ensure a diversity of representation by area of work, sub-region, age, area etc. This meeting focused on methods of working between women's civil society organisations in the Western Balkans and UN Women. The meeting was attended by regional director Alia El-Yassir, and the dialogue was focused on funding and strategic partnerships, with UN Women listening to WCSOs key asks for the region.

In September 2021, UN Women presented results from a survey titled '*Unleashing Digital Transformation for Women and Girls in the Western Balkans*' on the gender digital divide, and used these results to foster discussion among women's CSOs along interventions, capacity building, stakeholders, and how these can be utilised to address the gender digital divide. In November 2021 we assisted with the facilitation of a self-selecting committee, with a particular focus on civil society and youth representatives to ensure that their voices were heard at the meeting with the UN Women Executive Director. The first part of the meeting was a presentation and discussion around UN Women's Regional Strategic Note for 2022-2025, and feedback from attendees which UN Women could then incorporate into the regional strategic note. Following a short break, we were joined by the new executive director of UN Women Simi Sami Bahous who was listening to the variety of voices from the region in her first 100 days as executive director.

## Generation Equality Commitment Maker

Joining hands with many other feminist organizations, civil society actors, governments and private sector companies, WECF International has made commitments to deliver concrete results on gender equality to support the Sustainable Development Agenda. These commitments are part of the Generation Equality Action Coalitions, which focus on delivering progress on six critical areas that underpin equality: Gender-Based Violence; economic justice and rights; bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR); feminist action for climate justice; technology and innovation for Gender Equality and feminist movements and leadership.

## UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

The Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (RFSD) took place virtually and we had the opportunity to mobilize the civil society in this space within the Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism (RCEM). In advance of the official meeting, we hosted two strategy meetings on March 8 and 9, preceded by an orientation session to introduce new people to the civil society network. We discussed our common recommendations on different aspects of the SDG agenda: people, planet, prosperity, and perspectives. On March 10, we organized our own virtual RFSD side-event 'Feminists want system change'. In collaboration with UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, we hosted a creative mobilization space with inspiring (young) feminist speakers.

## International Women's Day

To commemorate the International Women's Day (8 March), WECF with European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) staged an online exhibition entitled '*Artivism for Gender Equality*'. The exhibition consisted of 25 posters that celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the most visionary agenda for women's rights and empowerment across the world. It also highlighted the struggles for gender equality and women's rights in Europe, the United States of America, Canada, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Earlier on the 8th of March, the United Nations Environment Programme hosted a panel debate to celebrate International Women's Day. Sascha Gabizon, Executive Director of WECF, participated in the event as a discussant.

## EU Gender Action Plan

WECF undertook **advocacy on the EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III**, about improving accessible financing that goes directly to local feminist and gender equality organizations; improving the direct access to EU Delegations and CSO consultations; integrating Green Deal objectives and targets into the GAP to ensure that future climate action also becomes gender responsive. Late 2020 the EU adopted its new Gender Action Plan (GAP III), 2021-2025. In 2021, WECF continued to advocate for ambitious implementation of the Action Plan in collaboration with partners at EU level (Concord) and in the Netherlands (WO=MEN).

## WECF International advocacy in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands WECF works multiple networks and organizations to advance our goals. For example with Building Change, a national coalition of development NGOs advocating for ambitious SDG implementation and policy coherence for sustainable development and raising the awareness of the international dimensions of Dutch policies (agriculture, climate, financial policies), and the effects that they have on gender equality globally. In 2021, we launched a policy brief [Intrinsically linked](#): Gender Equality, Climate & Biodiversity.



# FEMINIST ACTIONS FOR CLIMATE & ENERGY SOLUTIONS

We mobilise for a gender-just implementation of the Paris Agreement. We want a sustainable future in which polluters and governments are held accountable and where human rights, health and the environment have priority over trade agreements and other economic interests.

## WHAT WE DO!

**standing up for climate justice, clean energy solutions and inclusive forest governance.**

### Climate justice

Climate change is badly affecting people living in vulnerable regions. Those who are least responsible for the climate crises, are already paying with their lives and livelihoods for the climate change impact. We bring our grassroots partners to the tables to meet with policy makers to advocate for a rights-based transition, where women

and indigenous peoples are included in the decision-making. Through our 'gender-just climate solutions' program we identify, promote and mentor best practice projects that are adapting to climate change, and reducing climate emissions. We do this in cooperation with the Women & Gender Constituency and the United Nations network on climate technology transfer and other partners. We work with climate finance experts and governments to ensure women's priorities are equally reflected in global, national and local climate strategies.

## Clean energy solutions

The energy sector has a low female participation, and research has shown that this is holding us back in our struggle against climate change. Households not connected to natural gas spend a large part of their income on firewood used for heating, cooking, and washing. Also, in Europe, living in energy poverty particularly affects single-women households. That is why we focus on creating gender-just sustainable energy services for low-income non-connected areas, at a low cost. We advocate for governmental subsidies to support the shift to clean and sustainable energy solutions. We see the EU Green Deal as an opportunity. We analyse and pilot locally constructed technical solutions such as decentralized solar, biogas and energy efficiency. We identify and promote best practices for women's leadership in sustainable energy.

## Inclusive forest governance

Deforestation is the world's second largest source of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Halting climate change is impossible without protecting the remaining forests. Women, in all their diversities, are disproportionately affected by deforestation. They face multiple forms of discrimination based on gender but also on class, age and ethnicity amongst others. Often land ownership, tenure and resource rights are allocated to men. Valuable traditional knowledge that women hold about forest management and food production is often ignored. We strengthen participation of indigenous and rural women in forest conservation and governance and promote women's rights and gender responsiveness in forest-related policies from local to global. We strengthen community organisations, women's groups and their initiatives and their autonomy so they can represent themselves and gain access to land and tenure rights. We gather evidence to show the link between gender (in)equality, drivers of deforestation and forest conservation.

# ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2021

## COP 26 in Glasgow

Together with our feminist partners from the Women and Gender Constituency we participated in the COP26, which took place in Glasgow Scotland from 31st of October till 12th of November. As a member of the Women & Gender Constituency we advocated for our [Key Demands](#) and we brought the concept of climate justice to the Climate Change Conference.

Climate Justice refers to the idea that all of our struggles lead back to the same unjust system – from climate, to covid, to racism, to gender inequality. Therefore, to solve these problems, we have to solve them all together through system change. Throughout these two weeks, we organised and participated in several highly successful events, which were also livestreamed for those who could not join the conference in person due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One of them was the Awards Ceremony for the Gender Just Climate Solutions Awards, with Dutch Director General for International Cooperation (DGIS) Kitty van der Heijden and other high level speakers. Moreover, on 6 November we joined the Global March in Glasgow and we organised personal meetings for our partners with delegations and delegates in advance and during the COP itself.

**The progress made on prioritizing human rights and environmental safeguards was shameful, and leaves significant questions around the power of corporate influence and human rights violations. Regarding discussions surrounding Article 6 and carbon markets, Gina Cortés Valderrama (WECF) expressed deep concerns, saying, “I fear for the exacerbated risks that this COP is placing on environmental and human-rights defenders. We needed the COP26 to advance real climate solutions that bring immediate GHG reductions and not ‘false’ solutions that lead to land-grabbing from women farmers, Afro descendants, and Indigenous Peoples. Instead, the COP outcome will still have billions of public tax payers money going to the fossil fuel industry, tree-plantation monocultures, nuclear and geoengineering, instead of to a just transition.”**

Unfortunately, the COP26 was one of the least inclusive due to the discriminatory visa processes, high accommodation costs in Glasgow, and vaccine apartheid. On top of this, those who managed to afford and overcome this, experienced on-site restrictions as access to the negotiations rooms was limited to 36 out of the 11,700 registered civil society observers during the first days of the COP. The rest of the participants were invited to follow the negotiations on a virtual platform that failed to transmit the entirety of the talks. Furthermore, the creation of a Loss and Damage fund to compensate communities who have already lost their homes and livelihoods from floods, droughts, heatwaves and rising sea levels did not get the green light from several countries. As a result, the Women and Gender Constituency launched the *#MissingVoicesCOP26* campaign.

On the other hand, the fact that the term ‘fossil fuels’ (excluding oil and gas) and the need to phase-down (instead of phase-out) coal power and inefficient fossil fuel subsidies were included in the final decision text of the COP represented a step forward in naming one of the major drivers of this climate crisis although the text falls short of providing clear objectives for transformative policymaking. Lastly, one of the most important achievements for

civil society representatives during this conference was the securing of three seats on the Advisory Board of the Climate Technology Center and Network (CTCN) for the observer constituencies YOUNGO, Indigenous Peoples Organisations and Women and Gender. Thanks to the collective advocacy work led by WECF and leaders of youth and indigenous people's organizations over the last years, we now have a seat at the table of a UNFCCC body responsible for climate technology transfer and development.

### Strong step forward

One of the most important achievements for civil society representatives during the COP26 in Glasgow was the securing of three seats on the Advisory Board of the Climate Technology Center and Network (CTCN) for the observer constituencies YOUNGO, Indigenous Peoples Organisations and Women and Gender. Thanks to the collective advocacy work led by WECF and leaders of youth and indigenous people's organizations over the last years, we now have a seat at the table of a UNFCCC body responsible for climate technology transfer and development.

This is a strong step forward towards integrating and understanding the priorities, needs, but above all, solutions that youth, indigenous communities and women in all their diversity can provide to address climate change. It is a step forward in guaranteeing the meaningful participation and contribution of communities at the frontline in decision-making spaces.

**"We feel inspired by Liliane from Colombia who said that "Change begins when we begin to love ourselves, to be strong, to be independent." Indeed, we want to become stronger, we want to make our voices heard even better, we want to become more visible and we want to inspire others to include our ecofeminist demands and visions in their policies and practices. Internationally, but also in the Netherlands"** Kirsten Meijer, Director WECF in the Netherlands from 2018-2022

### Regional Consultation Meeting for Major Groups and Stakeholders in the UN European Region

On 14 December 2021, WECF International, EEB (European Environmental Bureau), supported by the UN Environment Programme organised a Regional Consultation Meeting for Major Groups and Stakeholders in the UN European Region (including Central-Asia). A great number of active participants covering the whole region joined the consultations and put forward concrete recommendations. A result of these Consultations is the Joint Regional Statement towards UN Environment Assembly 5.2 held in February. The statement included a series of core messages and recommendations from representatives of the different areas.

## Decentralised energy projects worldwide

Decentralisation is one of the most important building blocks for us to make the energy transition socially just and sustainable. We are currently working on a number of projects that promote decentralised energy produced by citizens. To bring about change worldwide, we provide our expertise at national, EU and international levels: through workshops, consultations, publications, the installation of sustainable energy technologies, the implementation of decentralised business models and direct dialogue with decision-makers, we make our contributions to a gender-equitable and clean energy policy - worldwide.

## Energy Transition in Morocco

From March 29 to April 2, 2021, WECF together with its Moroccan and French partners organised a training in the manufacture of solar cookers for twenty young technicians and engineers from the Souss Massa region of Morocco. The training consisted of preparation, cutting, and assembling of the cookers but also understanding the issues related to solar energy and its use for cooking and processing food products. So far, we have trained 40 young woman technicians in Morocco - 20 in Tetouan (north), 20 in Agadir (south) - who will form 2 solar energy cooperatives, with the aim of producing locally different types of solar equipment for the transformation of agricultural products, and for daily use by local rural households.

## Green energy in the hands of women in Ethiopia

Despite economic growth, improved access to education and health services as well as an increased electrification rate, more than 22 million people still live below the poverty line in Ethiopia, with an even higher number of people without access to affordable sustainable energy and affordable clean water. Working with coffee cooperative alliance OCFCU has given us the opportunity to promote sustainable and decentralised



energy technologies with a focus on gender equality, not only by getting more women involved in management and technologies but also by showing the importance of planning projects in a gender-sensitive way.



# FEMINIST ACTION FOR A TOXIC FREE ENVIRONMENT

We promote toxic-free and non-chemical alternatives based on the principles formulated at the Earth Summit in Rio 1992: the polluter pays, reversal of the burden of proof, the precautionary principle and principle 10 to ensure public participation, transparency and access to justice.

## WHAT WE DO

**stop toxic chemicals and waste, standing up for menstrual health and safe and clean water**

### Stop toxic chemicals and waste

Plastics, pesticides and thousands of chemicals used in toys, food packaging, clothing and other day-to-day products are a danger for our health and that of the planet. Many chemicals found in plastics and pesticides disrupt our hormone systems and can cause irreversible damage such as cancer and infertility. Waste dumping of industrial chemicals, pesticides, plastics and electronics are polluting food, air, the environment and drinking water. Women and men who live near waste dump are often from low-income groups. We provide information and training how to identify and avoid harmful chemicals. We work in coalitions with other civil society organizations, such as the Plastic

Health Coalition, and with UN Environment. We identify the different gender-roles and health impacts on women. We advocate for legislation that obliges polluters to replace plastics, pesticides and other harmful chemicals with safe alternatives.

## Menstrual health & Toxic Free Periods

All around the world girls, women and gender non-conforming people suffer from the stigma of menstruation through discrimination and the inability to afford sanitary products. The taboo on menstruation not only affects people's opportunities to participate in society, but also has a huge impact on our health and our environment. An average menstrual pad for instance can contain up to 90 percent plastic. This plastic ends up in our bodies and in the waste dump, or in the sea, rivers, beaches as waste, polluting our beaches and oceans. We stand up for the right to menstrual health, to toxic free periods and campaign for breaking the taboo on menstruation and reproductive health. Together with partners we advocate for laws that prevent single use plastic and promote affordable and sustainable alternative sanitary products. We support our partners with building menstrual health management proof toilets in schools and we cooperate to ban taxes on sanitary products.

*"The triple environmental crises of climate breakdown, rapid biodiversity and ecosystems loss, and pollution and waste from unsustainable consumption and production patterns, impacting even the remotest corners of the planet, continue to threaten peace, health and wellbeing of current and future generations". [From the UNEA 5.2 must drive impact #ForNature now Joint Regional Statement](#)*

## Safe water & sanitation

Having water inside your school, or in your home, is not a reality for millions of people. Often, existing water sources are not well protected. The water itself can be polluted with bacteria, nitrates and pesticide residues. It is not only having access to water, but to safe water, that is a human right. Knowing how to protect your drinking water source is the first step. Our training program on Water and Sanitation Safety Planning is a step-by-step assessment in which national institutions, water providers, schoolteachers and pupils participate. We pilot ecological wastewater treatment solutions and build school toilets in areas where there is no sewage system. We share our experience with decision makers in policy processes such as the Protocol on Water and Health and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

## ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2021

Work by WECF and network partners towards a toxic free future suffered because of covid impacts. In general, it was felt that there is a lack of global data on the impacts of toxic chemicals on women and their families which requires more testing, for example,

hair sampling to check mercury levels. Despite the challenges we stayed engaged through the following international processes and projects:

### **Consultations for UNEA 5**

This project was from May – December 2021 and focused on “Enhancing the engagement of Major Groups and Stakeholders (MGS) in the global environmental agenda. It was aimed at women in the EECCA (Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia ) & Global south. Part of the deliverables of this project was organizing an international MGS consultation ahead of United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA 5) in Kenya, February 2022.

Along with the climate crisis and biodiversity loss, the United Nations calls pollution, including exposure to toxic chemicals, the third major environmental crisis of our time. The widespread use of toxic chemicals is a major cause of millions and millions of illnesses and deaths. Nonetheless, chemical pollution, receives far less attention in the public arena than climate catastrophe or the destruction of biodiversity. In October 2021 the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) has finally recognised for the first time that having a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is a human right.

### **The Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (BRS)**

The global conventions that address harmful chemicals, mercury and waste are managed by the United Nations. We work with the secretariat of the Basel Rotterdam and Stockholm convention, to document gender dimensions of chemicals and waste. Together with our partners from the countries we carry out scoping studies and visit hotspots of chemical pollution and waste. We document the gender dimensions in case studies and on film, and we propose gender measures for national governments to integrated in their institutions.

In 2021 we conducted extensive research on chemical pollution in different countries, including Bolivia, Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria and Indonesia, resulting in new country studies, which were presented at the High-Level Political Forum during an online side-event. The research raised awareness of the far-reaching effects of toxic chemicals and highlighted the impact of harmful chemicals on different groups. As women tend to be impacted differently from these chemicals and waste, solutions need to have a gender-perspective and need to be based inclusive.

### **Advocacy on a toxic-free environment in the Netherlands and European Union**

‘Why the European Green Deal needs Ecofeminism’ which was launched by WECF and the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), also included an extensive chapter on Chemicals. Specifically the chapters on “Fighting menstrual precarity, toxic products, risks and waste” and “Gender and chemicals: eliminating hazardous chemicals from our

environments". Going deeper into the fact that women's health is differently impacted by chemicals. And social factors and gender roles resulting in different health impacts. Due to social norms, beauty standards, gendered occupations and biological factors, women are disproportionately affected by chemicals such as those found in cosmetics or cleaning products.

Despite the evidence on the differences regarding vulnerability to hazardous chemicals, EU policies aimed to protect people from the risks posed by hazardous chemicals remain gender blind. Based on these findings, we proposed a list of measures (while not exhaustive) that can contribute to achieving an inclusive, gender-just, impactful and more effective transition to a carbon neutral and sustainable future.

### **Online course: What has gender got to do with Chemicals?**

This course, as part of IPEN's Women and Chemicals training series, has been developed by WECF's Johanna Hausmann, senior policy advisor on harmful chemicals and waste and an environmental activist. It offers an overview of the areas where women are typically more exposed to chemicals than men and includes ways to protect oneself. We also issued a statement together with our partners from IPEN to support stronger limit values for POPs in waste.

### **NanoRigo**

Currently many products on the market incorporate nano materials for which a proper risk assessment cannot be made. Contrary to the REACH principle 'no data no market' the presence of nano materials in its content is generally not reported either. Given this situation, it is the demand of many stakeholders - industrial companies as well as consumers and their organisations - to be informed about the possible dangers of nano materials used in their products to be able to perform an independent risk assessment and if deemed necessary to develop a risk management strategy. This is very important considering the European GREEN DEAL for a non-toxic circular economy, and the use of the precautionary principle, as advocated by European and National governmental institutions in case of knowledge gaps and/or uncertainties. The EU-project NANORIGO aims to develop and implement a transparent, transdisciplinary and science-based Risk Governance Framework (RGF) for nanotechnology. Our specific role as WECF International is to be a critical partner in the consortium, bringing in a gender perspective and putting the precautionary principle first to protect the health of women and workers at the workplace and as consumers.

## **Trainings on Water and Sanitation**

WECF supported the organisation of several trainings on water and sanitation and menstrual health management organised by the Serbian NGO Environmental Ambassadors for Sustainable Development (EASD). Especially the latter is a taboo subject in the Balkan region, resulting in a lack of MHM education.

## Serbia

The first training was for 19 students from different classes at a Secondary School in Aleksandrovac, Serbia. The training gave the possibility to four teachers – who had been already trained on the topic by WECF and EASD – to expand their professional skills and knowledge related



to water and sanitation and share it with their students. The other training focused on the possibilities of risk reduction in the water and sanitation sector in Serbian rural communities and schools. The two-days Training of Trainers was conducted by our WASH expert Bistra Mihaylova and by Aleksandra Mladenović from EASD. All activities are part of the project '*Water and Sanitation Safety Planning (WSSP) in Romania, Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia*', funded by the Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU).

## Albania

In September, our Albanian project partners – Milieukontakt Albania and Woman in Development – organised Trainings of Trainers at schools in different regions, one near the capital Tirana and one in a rural region near Shkodra. The purpose of the training was to increase the knowledge of participants on WSSP, its role and how to carry out the activities in several schools in rural and semi-urban communities. In addition to the theory, a practical segment showed how to measure the nitrate concentration of different water sources and how the spread of germs can be illustrated under UV light. But the main aim of these trainings is the contribution to long-term improvement of the drinking water and sanitation situation in the Balkan region.

## North-Macedonia

In cooperation with Journalists for Human Rights (JHR) we organised the Round Table '*Water as a public good*'. The objective of the Round Table was to raise awareness of the interconnections between relevant North Macedonian institutions and local officials dealing with drinking water management and sanitation facilities/services, and to develop a strategic partnership of actors to address the environmental, water and sanitation challenges in the country and the Balkan region, especially since the Covid 19 crisis brought to light how important it is to maintain good sanitation and hygiene standards to prevent the spread of diseases and improve the living condition of an entire community.

**When we talk about bottom-up solutions, we mean solutions driven by local communities and the needs of the people. We give support and offer expertise and training, while our local partners map and implement programmes.**

- **Green Livelihoods Alliance**
- **Gender Just Climate Solutions Awards**
- **ClimAct – Spark a Change**
- **EU NEAR – Women Empowerment in Georgia**



## **GREEN LIVELIHOODS ALLIANCE – FORESTS FOR A JUST FUTURE**

'Forests for a Just Future' is a 5-year programme of the Green Livelihoods Alliance (GLA) that contributes to the sustainable governance and protection of tropical forests and the people who directly depend on those forests. Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) whose lives and livelihoods are directly affected by deforestation often lack the power to end it because of structural inequalities and systemic power imbalances. This also affects their claim to their right to sustainably govern and manage their territories, tropical forests and natural resources.

Combating deforestation and related human rights violations require the ability to stand up against vested interests. However, IPLC leaders, environmental human right defenders

and CSOs are confronted with medium to severe obstruction of civic space in the countries where GLA will operate. Despite facing many dangers, local communities often still resist deforestation, land degradation and extractive projects in the ways possible to them.

## WHAT WE DO

Urgent and ambitious climate action and forest protection and preservation is critical for sustaining all life on earth. Deforestation is not only causing climate change, but climate change is also contributing to further deforestation and forest degradation, setting in motion a vicious cycle with devastating effects. Deforestation is mainly driven by large-scale agriculture, especially for palm oil, soy and cattle ranching, by pressure due to increased areas for subsistence farming, by forest fires, by extractive industries such as fossil fuel extraction, mining, logging, and by infrastructure development.

With partner organisations in Africa, South East Asia and South America, the GLA works to govern tropical forests in a sustainable and inclusive way. It also works with CSOs, IPLCs and social movements to increase the participation of IPLCs, women and youth in policy and decision-making regarding land rights and forest governance. Besides, it aims to strengthen lobby and advocacy to hold governments and agro-commodity, extractives, energy and infrastructure industries accountable for deforestation and human rights violations. The meaningful participation of women in all their diversity and other marginalised groups is essential for achieving these objectives. Within the programme, we work to ensure that the GLA pursues gender transformative change and commits to integrating an intersectional approach in all its interventions.

## ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2021

### GLA Gender Assessment

On 29 March 2021, over 120 participants from across the Green Livelihoods Alliance (GLA) network came together, virtually, to reflect on the findings of the Gender Assessment Report, which was undertaken during the programme's first phase (GLA-1), and shared the experiences and best practices for the upcoming years.

### Op-Ed Dutch Newspaper

In April 2021, WECF joined other organisations and experts in [an opinion piece in De Volkskrant](#), one of the largest Dutch newspapers, which highlighted the contribution of Dutch banks and pension funds to worldwide deforestation. Big Brazilian meat processing companies such as JBS and Marfrig, which are involved in harmful practices due to the growing demand of agricultural lands, receive loans from Dutch banks whereas the pension funds ABP, PFZW and BpfBOUW invest millions in them. For instance, the pension fund ABP - which is one of the biggest pension funds for the government and teachers - is among the ten major investors in JBS.

Following this publication, the Dutch health care workers' pension fund, PFZW, stated that it would disinvest from any fossil fuel company that doesn't have a "convincing and verifiable" strategy to reach the goals laid out in the Paris Climate Change agreement by 2024. The fund said it would work with other large investors and engage in discussions with companies in which it invests. Moreover, it will stop extraction in the Arctic and investments in new production.

In October 2021, ABP issued a statement where it pledged to stop investing in stocks of fossil-fuel companies and to divest 15 billion euros of investments in fossil fuel producers by the first quarter of 2023 in an effort to minimize global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The fund will reinvest the sold assets in renewable energy strategies, boosting its current €4 billion allocation. Although ABP claims it wants to focus its investments in companies that it defines as 'frontrunners' in sustainability, the criteria the fund uses to define companies as frontrunners, laggards or improvers – companies that have bad scores but have the potential to do better – have not been made public yet.

## European Development Days

WECF and Articulación Feminista Marcosur arranged **a lab debate session at the virtual European Development Days** called '**Rural and Community-led initiatives by and for Indigenous women**' as part of the Green Livelihoods Alliance Program.

As most big events in 2021, the European Development Days (EDDs), a yearly gathering in Brussels also took place online. During the EDDs which took place the 15th and 16th of June, we hosted two online sessions. The first one was a Lab debate called '*Rural and Community-led initiatives by and for Indigenous women*', organised by the Policy Forum on Development (PFD), in partnership with us and Articulación Feminista Marcosur (AFM). The panel, consisting of our partners Ernestine Leikeki from Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch (CAMGEW) and Dorothee Lisenga from Coalition des Femmes Leaders pour l'Environnement et le Développement Durable (CFLEDD), shared, along with Lilian Celiberti from AFM, their experiences in working with IPLCs and their solutions in tackling the climate crisis and the fight for biodiversity conservation.

The following day, during a session entitled '*The diverse, local, indigenous: Pathways for food security and conservation*', panelists Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, Sherine Omondi, Jocelyn Brown Hall and Nachilala Nkombo discussed the difficulties they face in improving food security for indigenous populations and the importance of including more local indigenous knowledge into farming systems to protect the biodiversity. Both sessions showed the importance of focusing on community and rights-based approaches, while at the same time understanding that women are critical in protecting the forest as they are actors of change, as well as engineers of the land.

## Afrikadag Online

In September 2021, together with our partner Action for Rural Women’s Empowerment (ARUWE), we joined the Afrikadag Online – an event organised by Foundation Max van der Stoel (FMS). WECF’s Sanne Van de Voort spoke to ARUWE’s Executive Director Agnes Mirembe about her work and the importance of gender-just climate solutions – both at the local level in Uganda and at the global level during climate negotiations. We also provided input to the study ‘Climate justice: African perspectives & EU policies’, which was presented by FMS together with The Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS) the following day and included a case study on a sustainable energy project in Uganda by ARUWE and by our partner CAMGEW in Cameroon.

## Countries

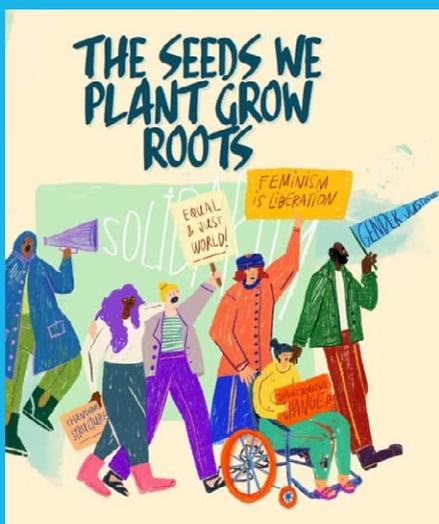
Bolivia, Cameroon, Colombia, DR Congo, Ghana, Indonesia, Liberia, Malaysia, Philippines, Uganda, Vietnam and regional work with partners in Nigeria.

## Partners

Gaia Amazonas (Colombia), Global Forest Coalition (NL), IUCN (NL), Milieudefensie (Friends of the Earth; Netherlands), Non-Timber Forest Products – Exchange Programme (NTFP-EP; pan-Asia), Sustainable Development Institute (Liberia), Tropenbos International (NL)

## Donors

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.



## THE SEEDS WE PLANT GROW ROOTS

The seeds we plant grow roots – A booklet of impact stories from the Women 2030 Program. This booklet presents a collection of creative pieces which emerged as the final outcomes of a participatory storytelling exercise to evaluate the Women2030 program. Through this process, we ensured the partners could shape

the narrative, while building their capacities to tell their stories. By listening and sharing many stories we also discerned patterns and invited the participants to make sense of their experiences.



The program connected more than 189 women’s rights and feminist partner organizations in 62 countries, building their capacities through training and sub-granting, and engaging them in Agenda2030 and climate-related policy processes. Overall, it reached over 40,000 people from all over the world who benefited from capacity building initiatives, and 120 million through the media. The stories shed light on the incredible stories of women and men of Women2030 program and how they are challenging injustices and gender inequality.

– women farmers from Togo – reflect on their participation in a training organised by Women Environmental Programme (WEP) and how this experience enhanced their life. They received a training on the production of sustainable mushrooms, which helps them build a stable source of income for themselves and their families. This opportunity was essential to highlight the important role played by women at the forefront of climate resilience.

Mamata Tmang is the chairperson of the Kusum Community Forest Group located on the northeast side of the Kathmandu valley in Nepal, a social worker and activist working to protect her community’s rights in the forest. She participated in training on community forest conservation and policy awareness organized by the Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN) as part of Women2030. Thanks to this experience, she learned about the national and international policies on community rights in the forest, about biodiversity, about the relationship between SDGs and women, and about organizing advocacy strategies for community campaigns. Once she became aware of her rights, she decided to mobilise the entire community to protect the forest.

Together with the support of local government and different civil society organizations they were able to stop the forest encroachment from hotel companies and to influence the creation of new laws to ensure that 50% of the forest’s community income is allocated to women empowerment and that forest groups apply the 50-50 rule in their executive committees.



## GENDER JUST CLIMATE SOLUTION AWARDS

The solutions to a sustainable climate resilience and inclusive world already exist on the ground. This is why we started to organise a high-level award celebration during the annual global climate negotiations, the COPs, the **Gender Just Climate Solutions Awards**.

The first Award Ceremony took place during the Climate Summit in Paris, in 2015. Launched by the Women and Gender Constituency, the Award honours the fundamental contribution of gender equality and women's organisations in the fight against climate chaos and demonstrates the necessity to integrate gender equality in all climate policies.

### Showcasing outstanding projects

The past 7 years, through this annual award, we have identified many outstanding grass roots climate actions that have women leadership and promote gender equality. Jointly with civil society and UN climate technology networks, we provide these actions and projects with mentoring and support to bring their good practices to scale.

We think this is important, as most of the climate funding is going into reducing emissions in large scale energy, industrial and transportation projects, while much less support is available to those who are already paying a high price from climate change and who need funds to rebuild, replant, and survive. For example, rural communities worldwide barely access climate funds, due to high minimal thresholds. But they also have to pay for the transition to low-carbon services and for the capital costs of infrastructure and grids. Indigenous and traditional technologies that already contribute to climate resilience are often excluded from the application criteria of bigger funds.

Moreover, even though gender criteria are becoming more formally applied, truly transformative climate action implemented in a gender-responsive manner is rare. Therefore, it is clear to us that the transition of low-carbon economies has to be more inclusive.

## Women hold the key to change

During the sixth ceremony of the [Gender Just Climate Solutions Awards](#), organized on November 8th, we were very proud to announce [the new award winners and launch the publication](#). The awards ceremony featured the participation of high-level guests such as Åsa Regnér, UN Women Deputy Executive Director, Abdou Karim Sall, Minister of the Environment & Sustainable Development, Senegal, Kitty van der Heijden, Director General for International Cooperation of the Netherlands, among others.

The Gender Just Climate Solutions Awards show that relevant gender-just climate solutions are already happening around the world. They aim for transformative, inclusive development models and help to rethink growth. With real commitments from governments, e.g., in terms of finance and technology, we can upscale these inclusive solutions to have a significant impact, not only locally but also on the global level.

As Fatou Ndoye, Award winner from 2016 stated during the ceremony: “Women are at the heart of the energy system: to fetch wood, water, transform... This requires enormous physical efforts while at the same time educating and taking care of their children. With all these burdens, they are de facto distant from decision-making”. Women hold the key to change in the fight against climate change and environmental pollution. While women in their own environments come up with brilliant, sustainable & affordable solutions against climate change, climate finance often goes to large infrastructure projects. Much less support is available for those who are paying a heavy price for the climate crisis and who would need the resources to adapt and survive the most.

## THE 2021 WINNERS

The 2021 awards winners are:

### Technical solutions

#### **IMECE - Solar Age: empowering refugee women through solar engineering (Turkey)**



IMECE is a non-profit organisation that supports, educate and empower the displaced people in the forgotten settlements of Turkey. Their Solar Age Program aims to two tackle two of the world's greatest problems: the global environmental crisis and the empowerment and the financial independence of vulnerable women. In fact, there is a high percentage of female refugees

in Turkey, who often rely on irregular and insufficient sources of income. Therefore, providing them with practical and employable skills is an important step to reinforce their independence.

The Solar Engineering Course, a 10-day theoretical and practical training in solar energy, benefitted 200 women refugees so far. Among them, 20 have also been trained to build EFE (Energy For Everyone) solar batteries, which are sold on the local market to generate revenues. The EFE batteries are specifically designed to provide for the needs of refugees. They integrate a flashlight for SOS signals and serve as an autonomous source of energy for mobile phones to facilitate life-saving communication.

### Non-technical solutions

#### **Todos Juntos - Mealflour: empowering indigenous women in Guatemala for climate resilient food sovereignty (Guatemala)**



MealFlour is a project created in 2016 to promote better nutrition through the sustainable farming of protein-rich mealworms. The project aims to empower communities to prevent the serious health

problems related to protein deficiency while addressing the interconnected issues of low income and environmental impact. Rural women are empowered as "ambassadors" of mealworm farming through a Train-of-Trainers program. Besides, they initiated a catalogue of local food sources to preserve indigenous knowledge and improve food sovereignty, incl. dietary recommendations. The catalogue 'Bienes Forestales' is disseminated in local Mayan language and will be used to transfer ancestral knowledge to children and set up gardens of local plants.



### **Mention of Honour → All India Women's Conference Calcutta – Women-led mangrove reforestation in Sunderbans (India)**

AIWC is an organisation that focuses on the empowerment and betterment of women and children. Their project, initiated by indigenous women, aims to train beneficiaries in the preparation of seedlings and the planting of mangroves, which are damaged by frequent cyclones in the Indian state of West Bengal. These cyclones have an enormous impact on the agricultural land and affect soil fertility. The mangrove afforestation, planted by AIWC, contributes to the protection of the area from soil erosion and reduces the intensity of climate disasters while increasing community resilience. At the same time, women become agents of change and benefit economically through organic farming and a vermicomposting programme, which provides a sustainable source of income and ensures food security for local communities.

## **Transformational solutions**

### **fundación Plurales – Strengthening women environmental defenders through a digital and advocacy network (Argentina)**



Fundación Plurales has been promoting sustainable development by strengthening the networks of peasant and indigenous women in the American Chaco and carrying out projects to ensure access to water and sanitation, and using updated technologies and knowledge to further social inclusion.

'Defensoras Ambientales' supports women environmental rights defenders from indigenous peoples and local groups in Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay, with a gender justice perspective. A network of over 1,200 women has been built, and an innovative mobile phone application (PLAC) was launched to inform, connect, protect and communicate efficiently. This also supports the protection of territories deteriorated by extractivism, agrochemical contamination and the restriction of local actors' civic space. A feminist school was established in 2021 to strengthen local knowledge, technical and advocacy skills for climate adaptation and mitigation, with the aim to improve the groups' resilience and amplify their demands.



## #HerstoryOfChange

**Dorothee Marie Lisenga, advocate for women's land rights in DRC**

[HerstoryOfChange - Dorothee Marie Lisenga, advocate for women's land rights in DRC - WECF](#)

Dorothee Marie Lisenga started her project Coalition des Femmes Leaders pour l'Environnement et le Développement Durable (CFLEDD) in 2016. Her unwavering work and negotiation with governments and traditional tribal leaders has enabled women to become landowners through the adoption of ground-breaking new land and forest legislation in 8 provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo, which contributed to the removal of the existing barriers for women to participate in climate action. This is an incredible milestone considering that 70% of women in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) did not have access to land and forest rights until recently.

The project trained 480 women from different ethnic groups to change land and forest laws and secure women's land rights, through policy dialogues at the provincial level and participatory mapping in forest communities. At the same time, it supports peasant women who are now working towards climate justice solutions. Their work also supports women farmers in developing agroforestry activities (planting fruit trees, acacias, small livestock) and in detecting illegal industrial activities. By promoting ancestral knowledge, they empower indigenous women and improve food security.

Dorothee Marie Lisenga won a Gender Just Climate Award in the Transformational Solutions category in 2018.



## CLIMACT INSPIRING YOUTH TO SPARK A CHANGE

‘Climate Action by EU Citizens Delivers for Development’ with the brand name SPARK is delivered by a diverse consortium consisting out of 20 organizations in 13 European countries, working together to spark climate justice. We do this by raising awareness, building capacity and facilitating EU citizens, particularly youth, to build and mobilize public support for ambitious gender just climate change and development policies in line with Agenda 2030. Climate change has no borders and affects us all. It especially hurts those in poorer countries, because unequal global systems mean life is already hard. Extreme weather, drought and rising seas are now forcing people out of their livelihoods and their homes.

With fewer resources to rely on, surviving and recovering from these disasters is more difficult. Women and girls are hit hardest because social, political and cultural systems silence their voices, and limit their access to the resources and opportunities needed to withstand and adapt to climate change. Climate change is all around us but its impact is unequal. And those most affected by it, have done the least to cause it. SPARK is

created and maintained with the financial support of the European Union, through the EC-DEAR (Development Education and Awareness Raising).

## WHAT WE DO

Partners bring together experience of climate change campaigning and communication in Europe, gender equality, European youth mobilisation, and climate change development programmes in the Global South. In fact, the SPARK consortium has developed a gender and climate justice narrative in order to contribute to strengthen the existing feminist climate activism and inspiring the youth climate movement with innovative feminist approaches from different regions under a global scope and intersectional lenses. The goal is to work towards solutions that fight gender inequalities at the same time as finding climate solutions, from an ecofeminist lens in its content and its approach. On top of that, we want to provide, through ClimAct, spaces for the stories of inspiring champions in the field of gender equality and the fight against climate change and environmental pollution.

### How?

Young people inspired by hope, tools and knowledge take action against the unequal systems driving climate change and injustice, in their own communities and together with other changemakers across Europe. Even small actions count up to something big in the fight against the unequal systems driving climate change and injustice.

It just takes a spark – post an idea, share a conversation, kick-start a debate, find a community, plant garden, make a sustainable choice, sign a petition, cast a vote, join a march. Demand real system change now for a fair and sustainable future for all people and our planet. Every one of us can play a part in fighting climate change and injustice.

## ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2021

In March, a **Gender & Climate Change** training partners was conducted with about 30 partners participating. It focused on a Gender Justice Strategy document in preparation for COP26. Furthermore, we developed a **Young Feminist toolkit** on Climate and Gender Justice Advocacy in the run up to the COP27. The toolkit is an introduction to advocacy, from local to national to global level. We launched this with a hybrid event in Utrecht, for both an international and national audience.

### Ecofeminist Scorecard

The Dutch national elections provided an opportunity to stand up for the protection of equality, climate and our health. WECF developed an Ecofeminist Scorecard card which ranked party commitments to a gender-just and sustainable future. The scorecard was launched with a special campaign page on our website with explanations, links

and background information on topics specifically aimed at young ecofeminists. The ecofeminist scorecard was picked up by other feminist platforms aimed at the Dutch elections. We also hosted Instagram live-sessions with two Candidate-MPs.

Throughout the year, we contributed to several initiatives to influence the government on gender equality, forests and biofuels, and we were pleased to see a substantial improvement on gender aspects. In July, our director participated in the consultation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Feminist Foreign Policy where she highlighted that the root causes of inequality and unequal power relations need to be addressed through long-term political commitment to an intersectional and gender transformative approach.

## Gelijk=Anders Campaign in the Netherlands

WECF organised a photo action in The Hague and made a compilation video afterwards for the Gelijk=Anders campaign, on the intersection of gender equality and climate change. The campaign was run in collaboration with WO=MEN and other women's rights CSOs. Together with WO=MEN, BothENDS, and ActionAid we have also worked on a policy paper providing Dutch policymakers with recommendations on gender, climate and biodiversity.

## Cop in My City – empowering young people to change the world

In September 2021, the event 'Cop in my City' took place. This is a simulation created by the French youth NGO *CliMates* where participants play the role of different actors to reach an ambitious agreement that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Each participant represents a different actor – from a fossil fuel lobbyist to a feminist advocate. At the end of the negotiations, the states have to sign a final agreement. After a brief introduction on the history of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and an inspiring opening speech from the UN Secretary-General António Guterres – as read by our very own Rose – the participants were



ready to start the negotiations. Played hundreds of times across the globe, COP in my City has empowered young people to create communities in all the continents to make things change in their regional context. With greatly enthusiastic participants logging in from all over Europe, the event was a huge success!

## Climate Justice needs Young Feminists Event

On 12 October, we organised a hybrid event – *Climate Justice needs Young Feminists* – presented by feminist podcast hosts Damn Honey and filled with workshops, poetry

and activating speeches. The panellists presented the most efficient tools to design a strategy and engage with policymakers and politicians. And as we believe in empowering youth to become true ecofeminists, we launched our *'Climate Justice Toolkit for Youth'*. The toolkit provides accessible explanations of climate processes but also theory on the link between feminism and climate action.

**“As you know, not everybody is hit as hard by this climate crisis. Women are specifically disproportionately impacted by climate change and are also not heard enough during climate change negotiations – as are youth.”**

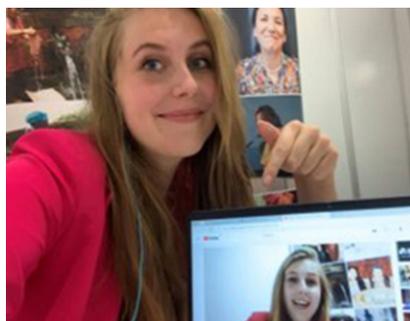
## Gender block at the Climate March, November 6

On 6 November, a coalition of Action Aid, Plan International, WO=MEN, Fossil Free Feminists and several others gathered in Amsterdam at the Global Climate March where over 40,000 called for action on climate change. It became clear, from this march through the streets of Amsterdam that it is youth who are leading this movement. We brought our message on the need for intersectional feminist climate justice to the climate march in the Netherlands, walking as part of the gender block.

## SPARK at COP26 – EU side event on youth engagement

During the COP26 in Glasgow, WECF's Rebecca Heuvelmans took part in the European Union Side Event panel discussion at COP26 titled *'9 Years Left to 2030: Bringing in Young European and Global Voices'*. Kicking off the panel was Rebecca Heuvelmans with a reflection on her experience at the climate march in the Netherlands.

**“Besides talking about youth engagement, as an ‘engaged youth myself’ I feel obliged to stress the real worries that myself and others face who are not able to be here present at COP.” – Rebecca stated – Many ‘false solutions’, are out there that distract from the need to acutely stop with fossil fuels, but on a positive note real, local and gender-just solutions already exist. One of our previous winners from the Gender Just Climate Solutions Award; Trupti Jain, is a powerful example of the sort of initiative that should receive funding instead of ‘unjust carbon offset projects’.**



To achieve climate justice, it is essential that the voices from everybody, including indigenous people, people from the LGBTQ+ community, BIPOC people, youth and women are not forgotten but actively included. Mollai Hughes and Terna Hoi in their powerful plea on education also touched on this need for “inclusive participation of children and youth in climate policy.” Their voices are amongst those that need to be heard.

As a final call to action Rebecca shared: **“I feel like youth are ready to stand up for intersectional, feminist climate justice, so I would implore you all to be ready too!”**

## Countries

Belgium, Slovenia, United Kingdom, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain

## Partners

SPARK consortium members: Oxfam Novib, Oxfam GB, Oxfam Intermon, Oxfam France, Oxfam Belgium, Oxfam Germany, CAN Europe, Climate Outreach, WECF, CDE, 11.11.11, CliMates, ICN, Za zemiata, NSC, ZERO, Green Liberty, ART, Ecolise.



Trupti Jain

## #HerstoryOfChange

**Trupti Jain from India is the co-founder of Naireeta Services.**

[HerstoryOfChange - Trupti's Story - WECF](#)

She invented an innovation called Bhungroo, that has been developed with the help of women farmers, where traditional knowledge and wisdom support the innovation of this technology at the ground level.

Trupti Jain works in Gujarat state, India, which is prone to short periods of heavy rains and flooding, followed by long droughts. Many farmlands have become waste lands. In Gujarat state the agricultural sector is flooded with problems: the agricultural land is affected by droughts; women farmers don't have land rights and local farmers are not aware of a lot of technological innovations happening all over the globe. She combined women's leadership with low cost and sustainable technology to tackle the severe impacts of excessive rain water from storms. This technology protects groundwater via a filtration system and increases soil fertility by reducing salinity. The units conserve 1 to 4 million litres of runoff water and can irrigate 22 acres during the dry season. While women still do not own the land, by owning the technology they help their community double their harvest which in turn has a tremendous impact on their role in the community as decision-makers. Since 2011, more than 3500 units have been installed in India and also increasingly abroad; in Ghana, Vietnam and Bangladesh. Each installed Bhungroo - a simple pipe that allows storing excess water in underground aquifers, and then using it for irrigation during droughts - provides food security for 30 to 100 people, generating an additional income of about USD 5700 per year.

In 2018, Trupti was one of the winners of the Gender Just Climate Solution Award.



## WOMEN POWER GEORGIA

'Women's Power – Economic and Political Participation for Inclusive Societies in Georgia', or in short 'Women's Power for Inclusion', is a programme run by WECF International's Georgian office, in cooperation with Women's Fund in Georgia, Woman and Reality, Young Pedagogic Union, Pankisi Women's Council, and Racha Community Organization. The overall objective of this 3 year programme is to empower women, youth and minority groups in the 4 target regions in Georgia (Guria, Imereti, Kakheti, Racha) by having them participate actively in community and economic life and ensure that their rights are protected.

### WHAT WE DO

WECF Georgia, together with local partners, is building this project with the goal to empower women, youth and minority groups in the Georgian target regions, especially through the use of social media and digital tools. One of the goals is to support women and girls in four regions of Georgia (Kakheti, Guria, Racha, and Imereti) to participate equally in economy and politics and change patriarchal mindsets and stereotypes. Furthermore, feminist activists, including young people, will be trained and funded to implement local actions that contribute to increased women's political and economic participation. The action will result in tangible changes improving the lives of local women and men, girls and boys, including ethnic minorities and women with disabilities.

The outcome of this programme demonstrates effectively how the Sustainable Development Goals can be implemented in an integrated manner, in particular SDG5 on the Empowerment of Women and Girls, and SDG1 on poverty eradication, SDG8 on employment and SDG16 on good governance.

Ethnic and religious minorities make up 13.2% of Georgia's population. Although, the government has anchored the rights of women, youth, and minority groups in its constitution and legislation, these groups still experience severe marginalization and discrimination, leading to unemployment, poverty and poor access to education, health care and social benefits. Women and young people are disproportionately affected by this. Added to that, women and girls are bearing a double burden, as they also experience gender discrimination. The COVID-19 crisis has worsened the situation, but there are also new opportunities arising.

## ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2021

The year 2021 was dedicated to capacity and network building of local activists, including ethnic minorities and Women With Disabilities (WWDs) in 7 municipalities. On national level WECF co-initiated the national task force on Women's Economic Empowerment, that will work towards a national inclusive strategy on the topic with CSOs, government structures and UN organizations.

In its first year, the project trained CSO (17) and youth (15) trainers who in their turn were able to train 280 local activists and 349 youth. Many of the trained activists and youth got involved in the project as subgrantees and youth grantees, working on empowering women and girls, including ethnic minorities and WWDs, working on debunking stereotypes, and improving economic conditions for women.

### Media4Equality Award Ceremony

On 10 December 2021, WECF Georgia, with the support of the European Union in Georgia, organised the Media4Equality Award Ceremony in Tbilisi where traditional media representatives, bloggers and social media content creators were invited. Out of 68 applications, the qualified jury of seven experts in media, journalism and gender chose four nominees for every category. Each winner received a prize of 1500 Euros and the #equalitychampion title. The media award #Media4Equality sparked a high level of national interest in traditional and social media. It promotes the use of ethical media standards, and is the first competition that includes influencers and social media. Four Equality Champions were awarded in 4 categories, out of 63 entries.

The winners of the 2021 ceremony were: **Lasha Tsertsvadze**, with a project about women to whom no monuments are dedicated; Tamta Kakhaberidze, for an article about

a woman who herself was a victim of domestic violence but ended up in prison; **Mariam Takidze**, for her reportage about a young entrepreneur in the region of Georgia who decided to digitalize education during the pandemic; and **Dina Oganova**, with her photo project #metoo that portrays the places where women have been physically and sexually abused.

### Indoor air pollution related health challenges for Georgia

In 2021, a new study was published conducted by WECF Georgia and the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health of Georgia (NCDC) concerning the indoor air pollution in Georgian kindergartens. During the winter and spring seasons in 2019/2020, indoor air quality information was collected from 59 public kindergartens across nine municipalities and three regions of Georgia and the research found out that children and their caregivers are exposed to elevated levels of particulate matter (PM), with Georgia having one of the highest mortality rates from indoor air pollution (3.8%) in the PAN European region.

### Why Gender in Georgian Climate Policies?

The WECF Georgia team Anna Samwel and Ani Muradashvili wrote an article that was published in 'Caucasus Digest' explaining why and how Gender should be integrated Georgia's Climate policy. The article addresses the lack of gender responsiveness and highlights the necessity for the involvement of women in climate policies and actions in Georgia. Based on analyses of existing documents and policies related to climate change, the paper suggests that the Georgian government should develop gender-responsive climate policies through an intersectional approach, building capacity on gender mainstreaming in the relevant sectors, upscaling existing best practices by civil society, grassroots organisations and national experts, and conducting deep gender analysis as stipulated by the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). WECF Georgia's Anna Samwel also visited JAMnews Georgian's podcast "What on Earth Georgia" to talk about the connections between gender equality and climate change.



## Training Sessions and workshops

Within the framework of our 'Women's Power' project a series of trainings were organised aimed at regional media, CSOs, public sector and companies. A training session was held for regional media representatives on ethical and inclusive reporting standards, conducted by mass communications expert Natia Kuprashvili on items such as violence against women, sexual, religious and ethnic minority issues. As part of the 16-day worldwide campaign against violence against women, WECF Georgia and the Union of Professional Unions hosted a workshop 'Gender equality at the workplace', where representatives of civil organizations working on women's rights, the public sector and the business sphere had the opportunity to discuss the mechanisms for protecting women's labour rights. The meeting was devoted to the ratification process of ILO Conventions 183 and 190. The mechanisms that were voluntarily implemented by business organizations in terms of women's labour rights were discussed. Participants shared their experience in this direction and discussed ways to improve practice.

## Tbilisi Pride

On 5 July 2021, right-wing groups gathered in an effort to prevent the Tbilisi Pride march from taking place and targeted civic activists, community members, and journalists who were peacefully exercising the rights guaranteed to them by Georgia's Constitution. The mobs went largely unchecked by authorities as they attacked citizens and also broke into and vandalized the offices of the Shame Movement, the Human Rights Center, and Tbilisi Pride, and attacked a long-term opposition tent protest outside of Parliament. Following the incident, WECF Georgia issued a statement recalling the national obligations concerning the respect of human rights and reaffirming the support to the Tbilisi Pride and LGBT+ people across the country.

**"Human influence on climate change is unequivocal. Immediate, rapid, deep and large-scale GHG reductions involving societal, and systems transition are required. Climate change depends on the decisions we make now."**

[Gina Cortés Valderrama,](#)  
[Project Manager Climate](#)

## Countries

Georgia

## Partners

Women's Fund in Georgia, Woman and Reality, Young Pedagogic Union, Pankisi Women's Council, Racha Community Organization.

## Donors

European Union



## OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATION

Communication and outreach are one of the three programme areas around which we organise our work. We build the capacity of our staff and member organisations on how to use media, we engage in joint campaigns with advocacy networks to push for policy change, and we showcase and amplify the work and voices of our partners. We have a dedicated communication staff in each of our offices, as well as regular communication-related staff trainings. We provide media trainings to our members on how to build accessible social media campaigns and effectively advocate for gender equality and women's priorities and positions. We share all of our resources and campaigns on our website.

### Partners

For a network like WECF outreach and communications are of great importance. WECF International communicates in various ways with multiple stakeholders and target groups. Our main stakeholders are our partners. Their vision and needs are leading for our organisation. They have a voice in our governance through our International Advisory Board. Communication with partners was also organised through monthly calls and regular Covid 19 health checks during the pandemic. In 2021 we, helped by a consultant, organised several online strategy meetings with partners, old and new, to do a mapping of all our network partners/members, working in our three focus areas.

## Donors

Our other main stakeholders are our donors, in particular the European Commission as well as Oxfam Novib, the lead applicant of our European Commission funded programme ClimAct, and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the donor of the Green Livelihoods Alliance programme, for which we work as technical partner. Communication with most of our donors was mainly restricted to Teams and Zoom session for most part of 2021.

## Civil Society in Europe and the Netherlands

WECF is a member of Climate Action Network Europe, the European Environmental Bureau, and CONCORD at the European level. These partnerships are effective in bringing women's rights organisations into a wider movement, but also to offer a gender perspective on environmental policies, at the national, regional and global levels, and to contribute meaningfully to shared advocacy efforts.

In the Netherlands, WECF is an active member of WO=MEN, the Dutch Gender Platform, mainly consisting of the larger Dutch developmental and social NGOs. WECF is also part of the Building Change Coalition, which collaborates to advocate for policy coherence for development. The SDGs are crucial in achieving this, so they envision a fair and ambitious implementation of the SDGs, led by a positive, engaging government. Building Change collaborates with a large coalition of NGOs working in the sustainability and development sectors. WECF has also signed the 'SDG Charter', which built a bottom-up movement of business, civil society and local governments to enhance collaboration for SDG Action.

## Public support

In 2021 we invested in updating our relations in The Netherland by further intensifying our online cooperation with civil society organizations, Members of Parliament and Ministries (Health, Infrastructure and Water, Agriculture, Foreign Affairs), by organizing online meetings and providing information by mail and co-organising advocacy meetings.

## Citizens

Finally, WECF's main target group is citizens in the countries where we run the programmes. In 2021 we invested in our external communication by focusing more and more on social media and especially Instagram reels, attracting a young audience, and by joining or initiating several pan European and/or international campaigns. We reached out through our social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn) and digital newsletter.

WECF developed three social media campaigns on climate impact on women and women's solutions to climate change, sharing videos, blogs and stories via social media, new campaign pages on WECF's platforms and the Women Gender Constituency

and Women2030 websites. Also, in the run up to the Dutch elections, an eco-feminist scorecard was produced, ranking political commitments to a gender just and sustainable future. A social media campaign was held to increase awareness of the Ecofeminist scorecard and two InstaLive sessions with Dutch MPs were held.

The dynamic nature of the pandemic restrictions made it hard for us, like many other organisations, to predict if or when offline storytelling activities could proceed, which in turn interrupted preparations, and meant that most activities had to move to online, at a time when the digital space became increasingly crowded. Thinking of creative ways to connect a large audience of young people to the issues of Gender Equality and Climate Change at a time of digital fatigue was also a challenge. Some productions were limited to using existing available good footage and functional internet access, due to covid restrictions on travel.

## Social Media and Campaigns

WECF organised a number of campaigns together with the WMG under the hashtag #FeministsWantSystemChange to cover the Beijing+25 process. We also contributed to the campaign on #FeministResponse #Covid19 with a Twitter storm for the launch of the Feminist Response to COVID-19 toolkit. The Women's Global Strike campaign of 2021 also created opportunities for advocacy in many regions of the world. The campaign was covered in 56 media outlets across the globe including international outlets like Al Jazeera.

In 2021 three Gender & Climate Campaigns were generated to highlight stories of partners from Global South and raise awareness in connection with climate change and gender equality: Gender Just Climate Solutions applications, HerstoryOfChange & HerstoryGrows.

The first one on Gender Just Climate Solutions, identifying the most outstanding grassroots climate actions that have women leadership and promote gender-equality. The second campaign 'Her Story of Change', provided space for the stories of inspiring champions in the field of gender equality and the fight against climate change, and the third one on 'Her Story Grows', showcasing stories from feminist partners all over the world. Content created for these campaigns included 5 videos and narrative website pages of female climate changemakers from the global south.

The third campaign by the [Women2030 programme](#) 'HerStoryGrows - The seeds we plant grow roots - a booklet of impact stories, featuring 745 people in more than 40 countries was supported with 5 videos and Adobe Spark narrative website pages of female climate changemakers from the global south. This storytelling journey put human faces behind the numbers, and helped people to connect to each other. One project in Morocco featured in The Independent newspaper and in Le Monde, as part of an international project for young journalists.

## OTHER COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

Throughout the year, we have produced a number of news articles, press releases and publications. Here is an overview of our most prominent publications in 2021:



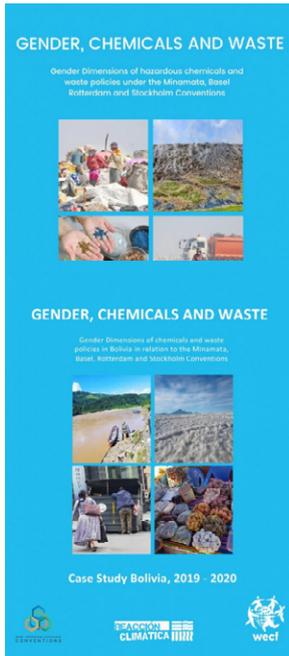
**Gender just climate solutions (GJCS)** – Relevant gender just climate solutions are already happening around the world. They aim for transformative, inclusive development models and help to rethink growth. With real commitments from governments, in terms of finance and technology, we can upscale these inclusive solutions to have a significant impact, not only locally but also on the global level. In 2021, we launched the 6th edition of the GJCS, which includes an overview of several projects that are aimed at making gender equality and women’s rights central to just climate action.



**Climate justice toolkit for youth** – In the last few years youth from all backgrounds are mobilising to change the world for the better, and are finding new ways to negotiate their identities in these times of uncertainty and change. Climate justice frames climate change as an ethical, political and social issue, not merely an environmental problem that requires technical solutions: it permeates every layer of society and is reflected in the inequalities present in our world today. We have decided to create this Toolkit to share our knowledge on the use of advocacy tools to change and improve our societies because everyone can become an activist.

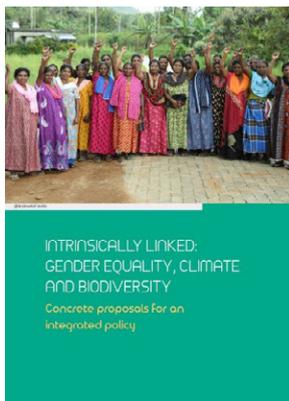


**Why the European Green Deal needs ecofeminism** – In July, we launched together with the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) our new report ‘*Why the European Green Deal needs ecofeminism*’. The report argues that despite the European Union’s declared commitment to gender equality, women are invisible in the EU’s flagship European Green Deal, which risks turning the gender gap into a chasm and delaying the transition to sustainability. The publication investigates various aspects of the nexus between gender equality and environmental action in Europe and propose a list of measures that may contribute to achieving an inclusive, gender-just, impactful and more effective transition to a carbon neutral and sustainable future.



**Case Study: Gender, chemicals and waste in [Kyrgyzstan](#)**

**and [Bolivia](#)** – Between 2019 and 2021, WECF and its partners in Kyrgyzstan – BIOM, EKOIS – and Bolivia – Reaccion Climatica – researched the gender impacts of hazardous chemicals, on request of the UN Environment secretariat of the chemicals’ conventions. The project partners visited numerous hotspots of chemical pollution such as various hazardous waste sites. As part of the scoping study, leading scientists were visited and interviewed, as well as scientific institutions and national authorities responsible for chemicals and waste, and UN representatives working in the country. The publications were presented at the United Nations in Geneva, during the Conference of Parties of the BRS Conventions, as well as at the United Nations in New York, during the High-Level Political Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals.



**[Intrinsically linked: gender equality, climate and biodiversity](#)**

The paper *‘Intrinsically linked: gender equality, climate and biodiversity’* describes the intrinsic link between climate, biodiversity, and gender equality and offers concrete proposals to the Dutch government to ensure that the national approach aligns with the international objectives and to implement key recommendations for an integrated policy. Although the climate and biodiversity crises are inevitably interconnected, they are still discussed in different UN bodies and intergovernmental bodies with the risk of combatting neither crisis successfully. Despite the Netherlands being an international champion for women’s rights, many Dutch policies do not yet address climate change, the biodiversity crisis and gender equality in tandem.



## OUR PEOPLE

As an ecofeminist organisation working on gender equality, we believe in the power of women in all their diversities as agents of change. We continue to lead by example by striving for inclusive staffing, Board of Trustees and Board of Directors. We are proud of our international team and strengthen cooperation between staff in our different offices. We believe in an equitable, healthy and stimulating work environment, which is reflected in the human resource policy of the organization. Our human resource policy is guided by four main goals: empowerment, equality, integrity and diversity.

WECF has a dedicated and professional staff. We find it important everybody is able to bring out the best in themselves. We attach great importance to empowerment and personal development. In 2021 personal development reviews with almost all staff members were held to identify personal needs and possible improvements to the organisation.

In 2021, two new staff joined the organisation. In our Utrecht office 9 employees were deployed for core tasks, including: management of the network, implementation of programmes, advocacy, communication, administration, and controlling. WECF International supports the representative office WECF Georgia with 5 employees: implementation of programmes, communication and administration. All staff members have a responsibility for fundraising. Also, in 2021 we had interns and volunteers who supported our work with great enthusiasm, in total 8.

Since we are a network organisation our programmes are implemented in close cooperation with staff of our sister offices in Germany, in France and its representative

office in Switzerland. And with our strategic partners (e.g. APWLD, WEP, GFC). Through WECF specific capacities of these organisations are or will be funded and this brings expertise from these organisations to the core work of WECF. This way of working enables WECF International to keep a lean management and organisation and to strengthen the autonomy and capacity of the organisations in our network.

## WECF STAFF 2021

Our country offices provide expert and funding support for our network activities.

### WECF International (based in the Netherlands)

**Kirsten Meijer**, Director WECF in the Netherlands

**Sascha Gabizon**, Executive Director WECF International

**Chantal Van den Bossche**, Communications Specialist

**Sanne Van de Voort**, Advocacy Officer

**Rebecca Heuvelmans**, Communications Officer

**Audrey Ledanois**, Project Manager

**Annabel Kennedy**, Project Manager

**Wim van Schie**, Financial Controller

**Margreet Munneke**, Book keeper

### WECF France

**Natalia Dejean** - WECF France Director

**Malika Berkaine** - Administration and Communication Officer

**Maëva Bréau** - Gender & Advocacy Project Manager

**Céline Burdin** - Territorial Development Project Officer

**Emilie Delbays** - Health & Environment Education Manager

**Lucie Dominé** - Nesting and FEDIAAC Project Officer (50/50)

**Anne Gomet** - Health & Environment Training Manager

**Anja Härtwig** - Communication Officer

### WECF Germany

**Julika Zimmermann**, Communications

**Gina Cortés Valderrama**, Project Manager Climate

**Anne Barre**, Policy Coordinator Climate

**Verena Demmelbauer**, Project Manager Water & Sanitation

**Hanna Gunnarsson**, Policy & Communications Officer Gender Equality

**Johanna Hausmann**, Programmes Coordinator Chemicals & Health

**Katharina Habersbrunner**, Programme Coordinator Sustainable Energy & Climate Solutions

**Annemarie Mohr**, Director WECF Germany

**Bistra Mihaylova**, Programmes Coordinator Water & Sanitation

**Anja Ruelemann**, Programme Coordinator Make Europe Sustainable for All

**Anke Stock**, Programmes Coordinator Gender Equality  
**Johannes Baumann**, Expert Sustainable Energy & Climate Solutions  
**Maryliss Louvet**, Project Coordinator Energy & Climate  
**Mariana Hernandez Voth**, office manager  
**Sabine Hanisch**, book keeper

## WECF Georgia

**Anna Samwel**, Country Director  
**Ida Bakhturidze**, Programme Coordinator & Women's Rights Expert  
**Ana Muradashvili**, project officer  
**Ani Gurulishvili**, communications officer

## WECF Governance

### The Board of Trustees (BOT)

Members of the Board of Trustees are appointed on the basis of their experience and expertise and execute their function on a voluntary basis. They are appointed for a period of four years and can be re-elected once. In 2021 the BOT met 4 times, and there was an additional meeting with mandated board members to finalize the updated integrity policies. Next to their controlling tasks they advise the Board of Directors, perform representative functions for WECF and, as far as time allows, keep in touch with the work and members of WECF through participation in projects. No members of the Board of Trustees received any remuneration during 2021. The members do receive

reimbursements for actual incurred travel expenses, accommodation costs and cost for food and drinks.

### In 2021 the Board of Trustees consisted of the following members:

**Corinne Lepage**, President. Other relevant functions: Associate Lawyer at Huglo Lepage Avocats (paid).

**Irene Dankelman**, Vice President. Other relevant functions: Researcher & Lecturer at Radboud University Nijmegen (paid, until April 2019), Consultant Gender & Climate (paid), Board member Green Challenges and Sustainability Café Nijmegen (unpaid), Advisor of Joke Waller Hunter Initiative for Young Environmental Leadership (unpaid),

**“If we truly want to fight climate change and environmental degradation, we need to make sure that everyone’s solutions, everyone’s perspectives, everyone’s recommendations are part of the solutions. And that is something that at the moment is not the case”.**

**Sanne van de Voort**, WECF Advocacy Officer

Chairperson of the Stichting wAarde (unpaid).

**Hannah Birkenkötter**, Member. Other relevant functions: Research Assistant at Humboldt University of Berlin (paid), Board member of the United Nations Association of Germany (unpaid).

**Dominique Ounadjela**, Member. Other relevant functions: Board member Réseau Cohérence de Bretagne (unpaid), Board member Mutuelle (unpaid), Board member of a territorial Development Council in « Pays de Morlaix » (unpaid).

**Yuliya Savchenko**, Treasurer. Is currently Finance and Administration Director, Yuliya has many years of experience at financial and organisational positions in NGO's.

**Jolein Baidenmann**, Integrity Advisor. Program Manager Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate (Paid). Expert Sustainability and Gender.

**Miriam Mona Mueller**, Member. PhD-researcher taking a decolonial perspective on gender, peace and security and besides that also works for the Centre of Feminist Foreign Policy.

**Claudia Wendland**, Member. Water and sanitation specialist with experience on EU, UNECE and international policy. Claudia's background is civil and environmental engineering.

## International Advisory Board (IAB)

The International Advisory Board advises the organisation on the main directions of its work. It represents the partner organisations of WECF. The IAB meets once or twice a year, either in person or virtually. WECF's partner strategy meeting, in which the IAB participates, was postponed to January 2022. In 2021 there was no separate IAB meeting.

### The following IAB members were elected end of 2018:

**Katim Alaoui**, Africa, Morocco, individual member

**Priscilla Achakpa**, Africa, Nigeria, Women Environmental Programme

**Betty Namagala**, Africa, Uganda, Caritas Kasananensis

**Andriy Martynyuk**, Europe, Ukraine, NGO Ecoclub

**Madeleine Fodge**, Europe, Sweden, individual member

**Natasha Dokovska**, Europe, Macedonia, Journalists for Human Rights

**Yuyun Ismawati Drwiega**, Asia and Caucasus, Indonesia, FokusNexus3 Foundation

**Nana Pantsulaia**, Asia and Caucasus, Georgia, Women's Fund Georgia

**Armenuhi Sargsyan**, Asia and Caucasus, Armenia AYRUDZY NGO

**Laura Martin Murillo**, global, Spain, individual member



## OUR FINANCIAL SITUATION

WECF is a non-profit organization dedicated to a gender-just and healthy planet for all. We are a network of over 250 eco feminist organisations who are active in 72 countries around the world. We work with our partners and advocacy allies on jointly funded projects and advocate for female leadership and gender equality in the field of sustainability.

We make choices according to our beliefs and in line with the mission of our organisation. We do not accept economic reasons for compromising our children's health, our own health and the environment. We do not participate in actions that are not compatible with our principles and objectives. We do not seek funding from donors, including businesses that are not in line with WECF's objectives and principles. We aim to limit our carbon footprint by promoting a plastic-free and vegetarian office culture. We compensate for our international travel by investing 7% of the ticket price in a fund that supports climate action.

The income from WECF stems almost fully of grants of governmental or multilateral organisations, like the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands, the European Union (DEVCO/INTPA, DEAR, NEAR) and smaller grants of for instance the United Nations Environmental Programme. On top of that also income was generated by the Dutch Nationale Postcode Loterij. These grants are fully designated to accomplish the projects for which they were given. As a result of this, almost all costs are for project implementation, which include the salary costs belonging to the projects. It is the policy of WECF to keep the administrative costs and the costs for raising grants and subsidies to a minimum.

For the EuropeAid projects co-funding is required: at least 10% (DEAR, NEAR) to 20% (WOMEN2030). A major part of it is realized by the partners in these projects and another part comes through our WECF sister organisations in Munich, Germany and Annemasse France. Co-funding is therefore an important source of income for WECF, though much less than the years before, since the WOMEN2030-project ended by the start of 2021.

A specific risk in 2021 was, just like in 2020, caused by the lack of possibilities to meet and organize physical activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic for large parts of the year. It meant a serious blow to our core activities (capacity strengthening, policy advocacy and mobilization and campaigning). It also caused underspending on all our projects, causing a major drop in our turnover, while our personnel costs remained at the same level. We mitigated this risk by submitting a request for government support (NOW) which was awarded, and we also managed to get an extension for our main programme (Women2030), enabling us to finish the programme by end of March 2021 instead of 2020. In addition, we shifted to online activities, which also worked very well to some extent and led to new ideas and creative solutions.

Stable financial resources for the coming years remain assured through the 5-year programme 'Forests for a Just Future' programme of the Green Livelihoods Alliance, the ClimAct programme with Oxfam Novib, as well as the donation that WECF was awarded by the 'Nationale Postcode Loterij' in the Netherlands. Finding additional funding for example from the European Commission, as a follow-up to our strategic partnership and Women2030 programme remains crucial.

Finding additional funding for 2022 is looking good, with a number of foundations committing to contributing to the activities and additional funding proposals submitted or to be submitted to further ensure long-term stability in the coming years. For 2022 the budget is 1,61 million, of which 95% consists of secure funding. On top of that an estimated 400 to 500.000 euro will be channelled through WECF Germany. Liquidity will be sufficient throughout the whole year.

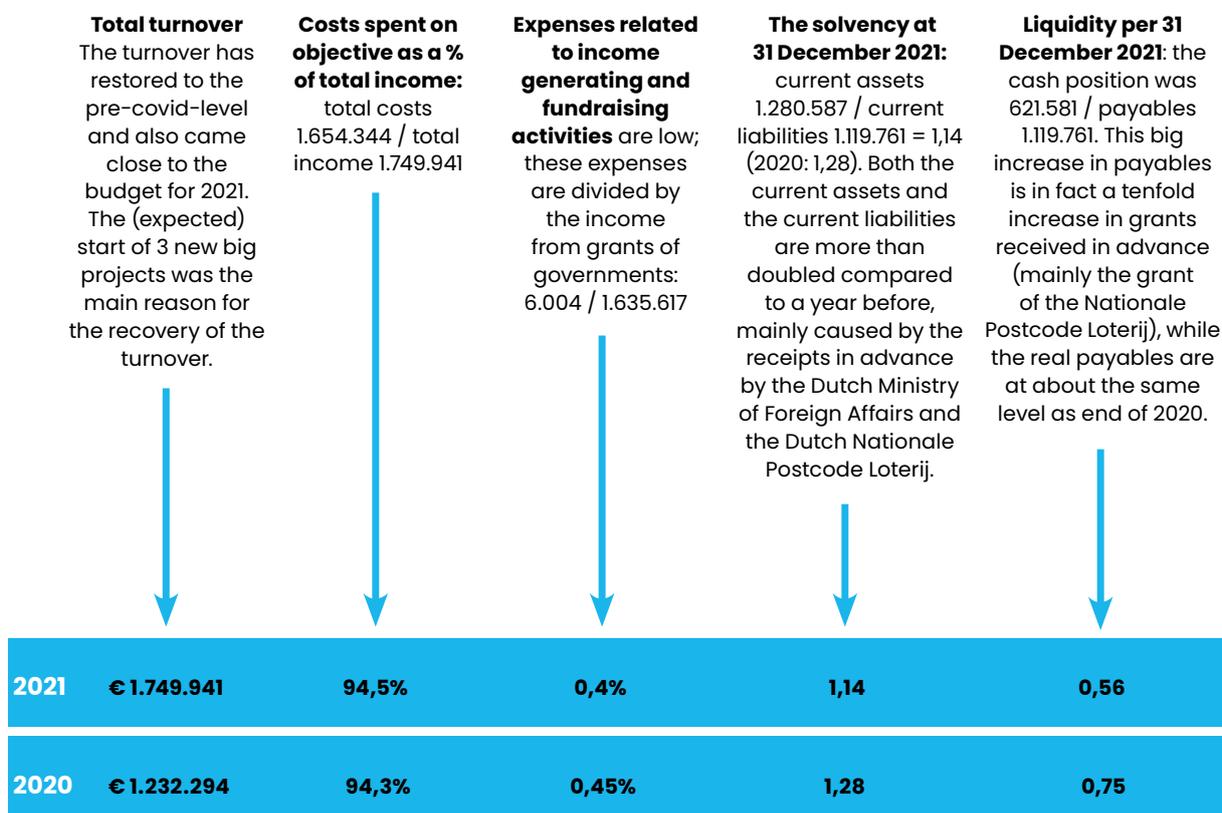
WECF is a project funded non-profit organisation that is largely depending on institutional funding. That makes it hard to build our continuity reserves. To be able to deal with financial risks we would like to strengthen the continuity reserve to be able to cover some costs in periods of lack of funding. Currently the reserves would cover the fixed costs for a period of ca. 5 months.

## Fundraising Strategy

We are further developing our fund-raising strategies to include funds allowing to build our financial reserves to be better prepared for any future periods of instability. Our fundraising strategy consists of the following elements:

- 1 Finding multi-annual funding for continuation of our work with the Women2030 alliance, especially for partners in those countries that are not eligible under the new Dutch programme, concentrated in the region where we historically have a lot of partners: Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia, Western-Balkans. Our focus is on institutional fundraising, especially from the European Commission (EuropeAid), and governments.
- 2 Finding support for mid-sized projects and assignments on demand of partners or pro-actively when the purpose of the fund fit the work of our network partners very well. Our focus is on UN agencies and private and public sector funds in the Netherlands, Germany and France.
- 3 Expanding our own scope and capacity to contribute to information gathering, knowledge sharing and awareness raising on the need for feminist action for sustainable development, future proof climate and toxic free environment in Europe by actively seeking for funds that enable this. Our focus is on European Commission (Horizon2020 and EuropeAid/DEAR), but also smaller funds of municipalities.
- 4 Strengthening our support base and looking at other income generation activities such as private donations, crowdfunding. We will plan at least one action a year targeted at our support base and broader audience, connected to urgencies we encounter and highlighting the power of ecofeminism.

## Financial key figures



## Impressum

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- WECF is an official partner of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- WECF represents ECO-Forum in the European Environment & Health Committee (EEHC)

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