



# Annual Report 2020



**Making Earth Cooler**  
Transforming Landscapes for Climate, People and Nature

# Foreword from the CEO

“ We imagine a world where communities and nations sustainably manage their forests and natural resources for the benefit of our climate, our environment, and humanity. ”

The WeForest Vision

Marie-Noëlle Keijzer, CEO  
© Mint Radio



Dear Friends of WeForest,

2020 was a year unlike any other. COVID's impact in the rural locations of our projects was thankfully limited. The most challenging situation of all arose in Ethiopia, as a war erupted in Tigray combined with recurring locust plagues. At the time of writing, we have branched out from our usual activities and launched an urgent fundraising campaign to provide essential seeds and secure the next harvest for the 23 000 smallholder farmers living there.

In the midst of all this we have, incredibly, achieved a significant milestone. After meeting our original goal to restore 25 000 hectares two years early, in 2020 we were well on track to reach more than 100 million trees – equivalent to around 85 000 ha – by the end of 2024.

The new programmes we launched in 2020 protect forests at risk in Zambia and restore those already degraded in Senegal. This could become the largest carbon-certified mangrove project in the world, restoring over 7 000 ha in the first phase, with ambitious livelihoods for the communities in the estuaries of the Sine-Saloum and Casamance rivers.

Will this be enough? The world now recognizes the need for **an additional trillion trees by 2050**, representing a 25% growth compared to today's forest cover and current atmospheric carbon pool to limit global warming. With growing corporate commitments towards carbon neutrality and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration starting in 2021, we are already seeing an acceleration of new initiatives. WeForest is contributing in two ways: by doubling the surfaces restored every other year, and by joining networks such as **1t.org** to share knowledge and disseminate best practices so that others can replicate with high quality standards. If we want long term impact, this is so much more complex than just planting trees.

Marie-Noëlle Keijzer  
CEO and co-founder, WeForest

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Organisations and individuals that embrace action on climate and nature want a real and measurable impact.

The vibrant forestry projects WeForest develops for hundreds of organisations around the world turn corporate commitment into an efficient and inspiring contribution for people and the planet.

## Our achievements in 2020

### Forests

Close to **16 000 hectares** (ha) of forests were added in 2020, which includes a new **8 500 ha** conservation project in Chintumukulu, Zambia. This brings our total number under restoration or being protected to **39 535 ha** since we started in 2009.

### People

In 2020, **25 000** families enjoyed additional income across all projects: **more than a fifth** of these are headed by women.

### Income

We raised **€6.7 million**, which is **50%** more than in 2019, and more than double our income in 2018.

### Trees

Since 2009, with 39 535 ha under restoration, we estimate the number of trees to be **47.8 million**.



### Programmes

We started **5** new projects, one in Zambia, two in Brazil and two in Senegal. This brings our total number of active projects to **14**, spread across **8** countries.

# Active Projects

## Ethiopia

### Desa'a, 2017-2030

In the highlands of Tigray, WeForest started an ambitious project five years ago to restore and protect dry afro-montane and bring water back to this region, which is directly threatened by desertification coming from the north and east, and lift rural communities out of extreme poverty.

- **Main field partner:** the Tigray Bureau of Agriculture and Rural Development
- **Results to date:** 6 000 ha of the 38 000 ha target is under restoration
- **83 native tree species**, including the endangered Nubian Dragon Tree



## Malawi

### Mount Mulanje, 2019-

How do we know when a tree is endangered? Mount Mulanje, the only place the Mulanje cedar (*Widdringtonia whytei*) grows naturally, was once a rich forest. Now only two mature specimens are known to be standing.

It's not just trees that are endangered. The Mulanje pygmy chameleon (*Rhampholeon platyceps*), endemic to this region, is also on the IUCN's Red List. It's not known how many individuals are left, but their population is in continuous decline as their only habitat is cleared.

By raising Mulanje cedar and other native seedlings and planting them on the mountainside and as hedges on farmsteads, we aim to restore the Mount Mulanje Forest Reserve and its biodiversity. Eight community nurseries create local employment, and beekeeping is an alternative source of income for these very poor communities, which helps reduce pressure on the forest.

- **Goals:** restoration of the afro-montane forest on the mountainside with Mulanje cedar and the surrounding miombo woodlands. Support community forest management of the miombo forest
- **Field partners:** Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust (MMCT); The Forest Department



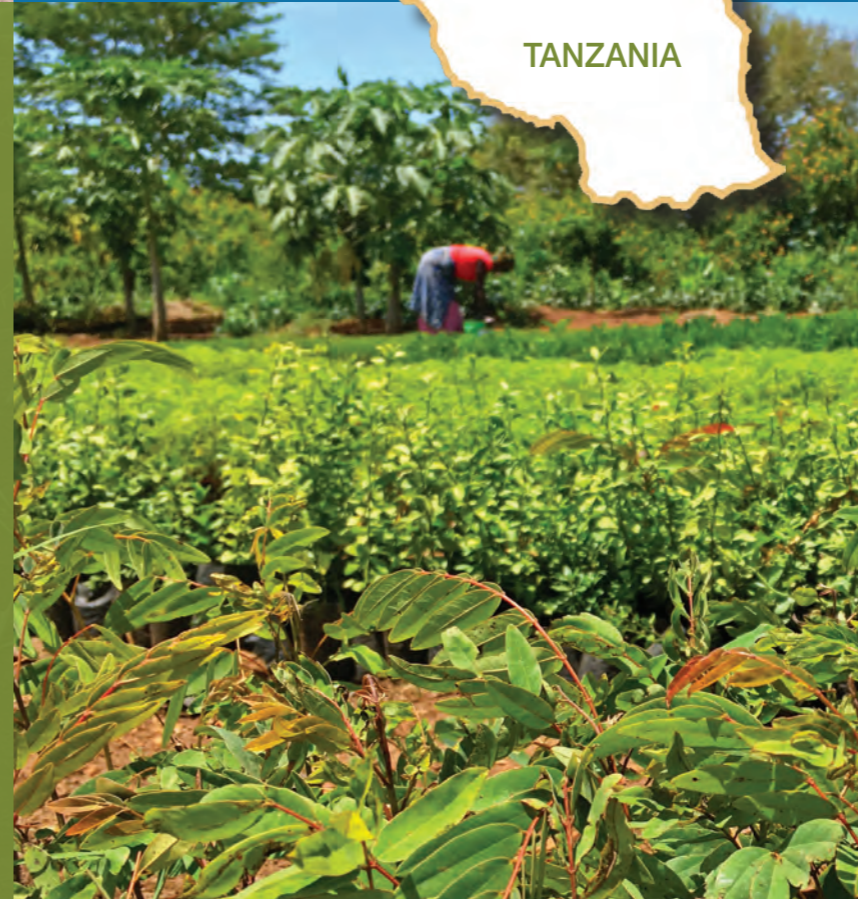
## Tanzania



### Mara, 2011-

In Mara, instead of restoring forests, we grow seedlings in nurseries and distribute them to the people that need them most. By establishing agroforestry systems on their property, farmers and institutions such as schools and churches are able to grow their own fodder, fuelwood, fruit and timber, and so no longer need to depend on the forests. In addition, the woody perennials planted improve soil fertility and water recharge.

- **Field partner:** Global Resource Alliance
- Over **1.5 million** seedlings of over 60 species distributed to date to more than **4 000 farmers** and **500 institutions**
- **800 community members** trained in agroforestry and silviculture



### Amhara, 2016-2021 (phase 1)

Trees are grown on community land, gullies, river banks and farmland in Machakel, where as little as 6% of forest remains. We promote alternative sources of income such as fruit trees and beekeeping among the local communities, who are at the heart of the restoration.

We exceeded our restoration target in 2020 by almost 30%. As of 2021, the project is set to enter phase 2 and expand to ten times its current size in the neighbouring district!

- **Partner:** The Hunger Project
- **Over 1 000 ha** under restoration
- One third is agroforestry, with **3 300 farmers** engaged

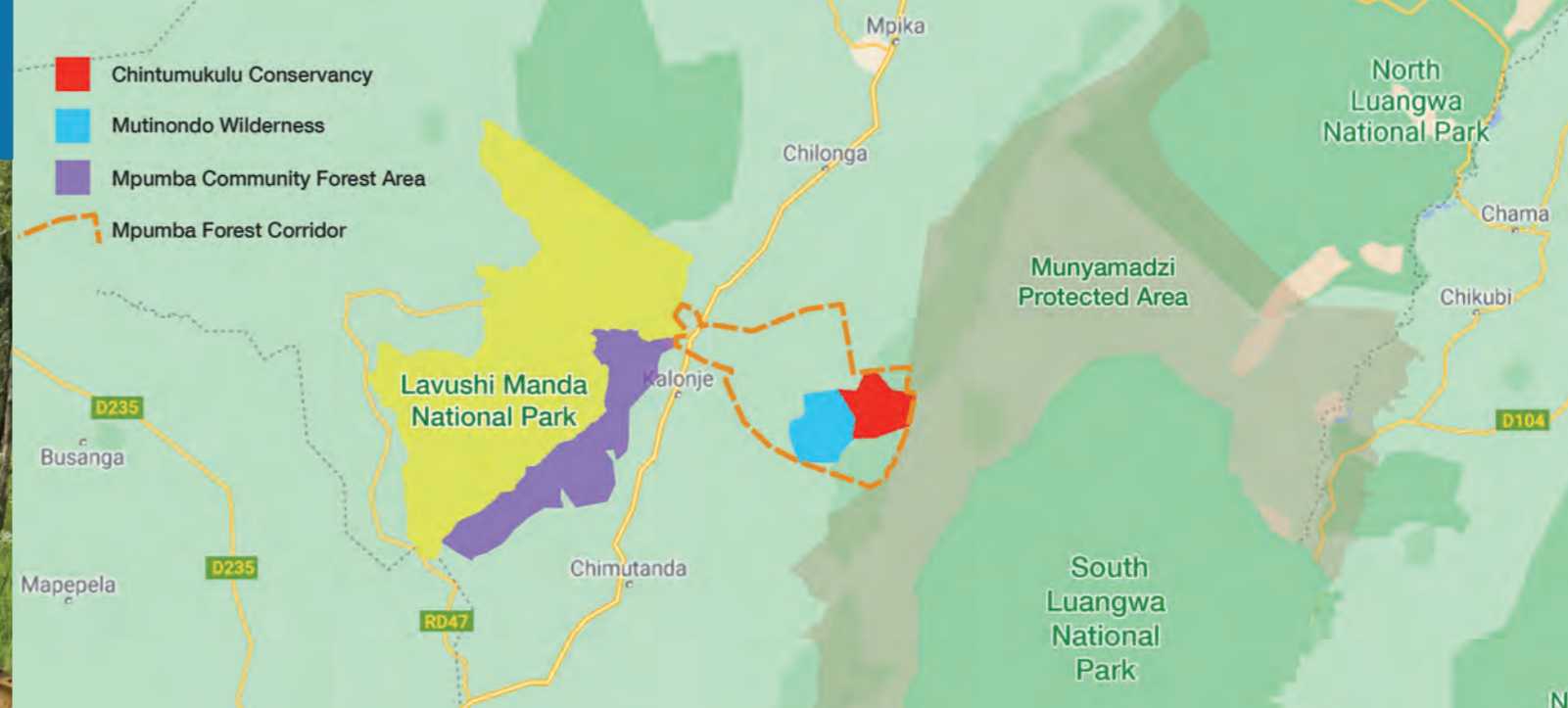


### Katanino, 2019-2029

The miombo woodland of the Katanino Forest Reserve has been heavily deforested. As well as reforesting the area, WeForest is laying the groundwork so that local communities, supported by public institutions, can take over management of the reserve. More than 900 families in the buffer zone around the Reserve are expected to participate over the next 10 years, setting aside half a hectare each as restoration plots and taking up income-generating activities – mainly beekeeping – that reduce pressure on the forest.

Great news: the number of active charcoal kilns in the forest has been drastically reduced since the start of the project, thanks to regular patrols by the new Community Forest Guards.

- **Field partners:** The Katanino Forest Trust; Zambian Forestry Department; Miombo AS
- **Goal:** protect and restore 6 345 933 trees (80% in the Reserve and 20% in the 5km buffer zone)
- **Long-term beekeeping goal:** 6 000 beehives installed



### Chintumukulu Conservancy, Zambia, 2020-2030

Lions, leopards, elephants, hippopotamus and buffalo roam the National Parks surrounding the Chintumukulu Conservancy, an 8 474 ha area of pristine miombo forest which has been set aside by the Mpumba Chieftdom for protection. This conservation project ensures there is no further deforestation and illegal poaching inside the area, and provides jobs for the surrounding communities.

The project is part of something much bigger: it will form the first stepping stone in establishing the Mpumba Forest Corridor. In collaboration with several other partners, this 40km-wide wildlife corridor between South Luangwa National Park (East) and Lavushi Manda National Park (West) will cover 68 000 ha, allowing a gene flow of important animals.

- **Field partner:** Mpumba Natural Resources Conservation Society
- *Pterocarpus tinctorius* (Padouk d'Afrique) are **no longer present**, and *Pterocarpus angolensis* (Mukwa) is **at risk**

### Copperbelt: Forests on Farms, 2015-2025

Previously known as Luanshya, this project – in which farmers set aside part of their lands to regenerate the miombo woodland – began its expansion into two new districts of the Copperbelt province, and will see another five million trees regrowing in the next five years.

Despite 2020's challenges, our partnership with the Luanshya Forest Commodities Association grew stronger: they are taking over the management of the livelihoods programme, with WeForest continuing to monitor progress.

- **Partner:** Luanshya Forest Commodities Association
- **3 190 ha** under restoration – **3.8m** trees
- **685 farmers** engaged





### Agroforestry in Apuí, Amazonas, 2020-2027

Coffee is helping to reforest the Amazon! In Apuí, one of Amazonas State's most deforested municipalities, hundreds of local farmers will turn degraded pastures into organic coffee agroforestry systems to avoid further deforestation. Native trees will also be grown to provide shade for the coffee, so the project will not only increase coffee production and regenerate soil fertility, it will also reforest the land.

The project also provides another income opportunity for the community: as the native tree species are hard to find here, local networks have been set up to regularly harvest seeds from "mother trees" to be planted where needed.

- **Field partners:** Idesam
- **Goals:** 175 ha of coffee agroforestry and native tree species over 5 years; 3-year pilot with potential for scaling up
- **Beneficiaries:** 35 landowners (2021-22 planting season)



### Tietê Forests, Mata Atlântica, 2020-2029

The Tietê river is a crucial water source for the state of São Paulo, yet it is suffering the consequences of the loss of much of Brazil's Mata Atlântica. The river and its tributaries are under severe threat from soil siltation and runoff from herbicides and pesticides. Our project is the ideal testing ground for restoration approaches that aim to reduce the use of herbicides – which are usually relied on in Brazil to control invasive grasses – or even eliminate them entirely.

Our active planting of native vegetation will also establish a wildlife corridor for more than 100 mammal species, 400 bird species and 40 amphibians.

- **Field partners:** AES Brasil; CEIBA Consultoria Ambiental
- **Goal:** Restore restore 200 ha per year. Scale up from four to around 15 municipalities over time
- **Threatened species we are planting:** *Psidium myrtilodes* (endangered), *Zeyheria tuberculosa*, *Cedrela fissilis*, *Cedrela odorata* (all vulnerable)



### Wildlife Corridors, Mata Atlântica, 2014-2025

Two decades ago, Brazil's Atlantic forest was four times the size of Germany. Today, only 7% remains. It is still one of the world's top hotspots for biodiversity, and our project wants to keep it that way. By growing trees between the remaining fragments of forest, the project is creating a corridor for wildlife. The endangered black lion tamarin, jaguars, pumas, red macaws and tapirs can now feed, migrate and diversify their gene pool.

Climate change is very visible in this region. In December and January, temperatures now regularly reach 42°C, forcing us to change our planting seasons for a higher survival rate of trees. Instead of one season (October to March), we now plant twice: March to June when it's cooler, and then again from September to November.

- **Field partners:** IPÊ and 9 local community nurseries, 4 of them run by women
- Growing **80 native tree species**



### Casamance Mangroves, 2020-2022 (phase 1)

Mangroves are one of the most incredible and complex ecosystems. They act as a huge carbon sink, a fish nursery and as protection from salt water intrusion.

The spectacular estuary of the Casamance river in the south of Senegal used to be known for its high biodiversity of flora and fauna and for being the greenest region of the country. Unfortunately the region was seriously affected by droughts from 1968 to 1994, which killed the mangroves in the higher parts of the mudflats. Others were cut for construction wood, firewood and charcoal used for fish smoking and cooking.

We chose a double certification (VCS for carbon and CCB for Climate, Community & Biodiversity) to simultaneously address climate change, community livelihoods and biodiversity conservation.

- **Field partner:** Oceanium
- **Results:** 602 ha in 2020 out of a 3-year plan of 2 245 ha
- **Species planted:** *Rhizophora mangle*, *R. racemosa*, *Avicennia germinans*, *Conocarpus erectus* and *Laguncularia racemosa*
- **Certification:** VCS and CCB standards for 30 years



### Sine-Saloum Mangroves, 2020-2022

(phase 1)

The Sine-Saloum delta in Senegal is formed by the confluence of two rivers. It is the most visited region in the country and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

WeForest launched this ambitious project in 2020 with an experienced local partner with a long track record of success in Senegal. Oceanium manages the restoration and community engagement, while WeForest helps define the livelihoods strategy, secures long-term funding, drives scientific research on carbon, soil and water aspects and ensures a double certification.

Mangroves provide habitats for fish and shellfish that are important protein sources. With the communities here, we will define sustainable livelihoods activities during the next 2 years, which will protect the mangroves and ensure a steady source of income for these villages.

- **Field partner:** Oceanium
- **Results:** 1 334 ha in 2020 out of a 3-year plan of 4 775 hectares
- **Species planted:** *Rhizophora mangle*, *R. racemosa* and *R. harisonnii* at a density of 5 000 trees per ha
- **Certification:** VCS and CCB standards for 30 years



### Khasi Hills, 2014-2024

Thousands of saplings have been raised and are growing in the hills of Meghalaya state, and hundreds in the project's new extension area to the north. The local Khasi communities manage the tree nurseries, carry out thinning and weeding, establish natural firebreaks and protect the forest.

Our next steps are to complete this project and hand it over to the local community by 2024.

- **Partner:** KSKHAWUM Welfare Society
- **59 Khasi villages** are involved in the project

# Our contribution...



## ...to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals

### SDGs 1 and 2

With our projects, rural communities take care of their natural resources. In return they have bigger and more diversified **incomes**, learn new **skills** and enjoy better **health**.

### SDG 5

At least one-fifth of the families that we support are led by **women**. It is also well known that women make up the majority of the world's poor and are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

### SDG 6

Trees contribute to healthy soil filtration, which helps **water quality**. They promote cloud formation and precipitation, slowing surface 'run-off', stabilising water course flow and helping recharge groundwater reserves.



### SDG 8

Nearly a billion people directly rely on forests for their living! We **decouple income from deforestation**, making communities more resilient, both financially and in the face of climate change.

### SDG 13



Measuring the changing forest is key. The **NewFor project** in Brazil uses LiDAR data to compile a **high-resolution carbon map** of new forests in São Paulo State, including WeForest restoration sites. The project, a partnership between WeForest, the University of São Paulo and IPÊ, provides information on the forests' structure, carbon stocks, taxonomic and functional diversity and soil attributes, and help gain a better understanding of how new forests behave.



### SDG 15



Some of our projects focus on bringing animals back. How do we know they actually do? We've partnered with **Rainforest Connection** to **monitor species diversity, distribution and activity patterns** by recording 'Soundscapes' in our wildlife corridors in Brazil (hear an example [here](#)). The data gathered will also contribute to Rainforest Connection's 'Audio Ark' – a digital library of shareable, searchable forest sounds and eco-data for use by scientists and land managers to help protect and conserve the world's forests.



### SDG 17

We are advancing the Forest Landscape Restoration agenda by **developing collaborations** with the scientific community, think-tanks, intergovernmental institutions and not-for-profit organisations in ways that create shared value:





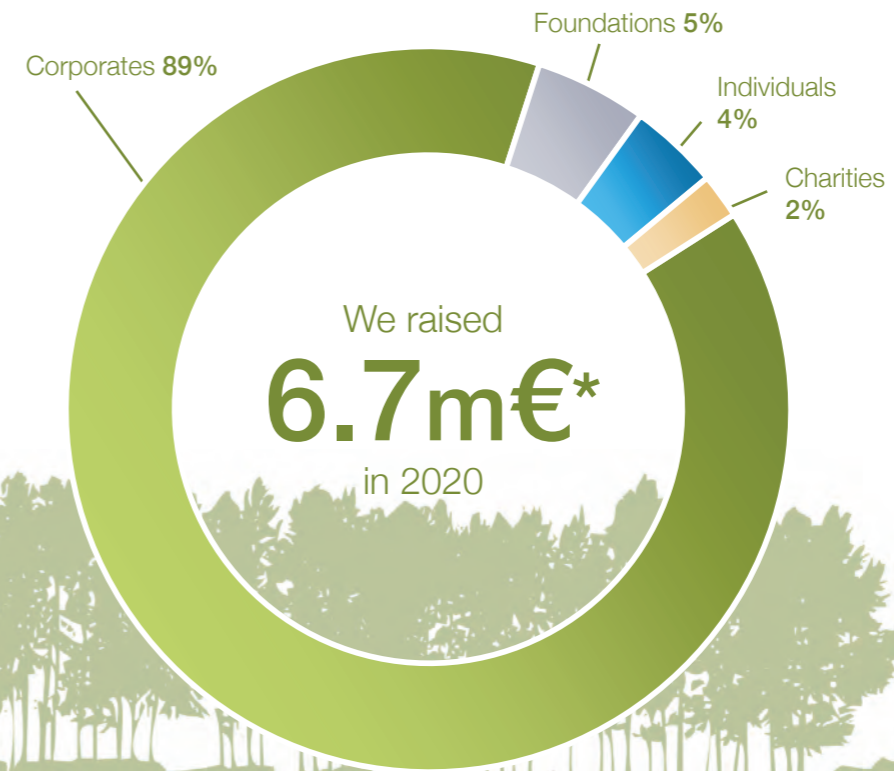
# Partnerships

30 funders together contributed over 90% of our income in 2020, including:



We'd also like to say a special thank you to some of our other long-term partners:

# Funding



Most of our partners are corporates.

63 were new in 2020, bringing our all-time number of funders to over 490.

\* before external financial audit and possible deferred income

“ We are proud to have established this key strategic partnership with WeForest which contributes concretely to our sustainability approach and our objective to continue to be a successful business actor with a positive impact on society. ”

Veronique Touilly, Global Head of Sustainability, UCB

## Our growth, 2014-2020

We're almost doubling our income every other year: a very steep growth curve!

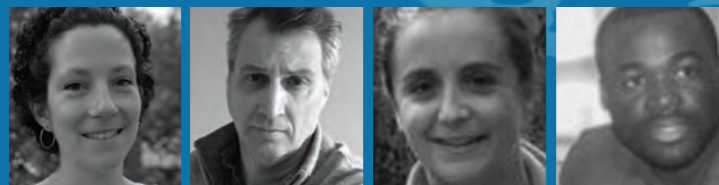


# Who We Are

## Board of Directors

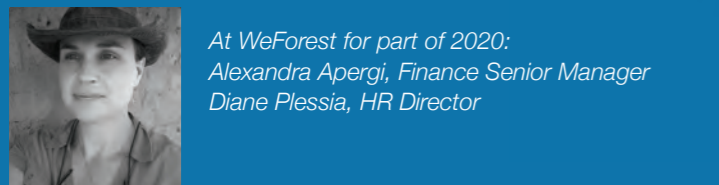
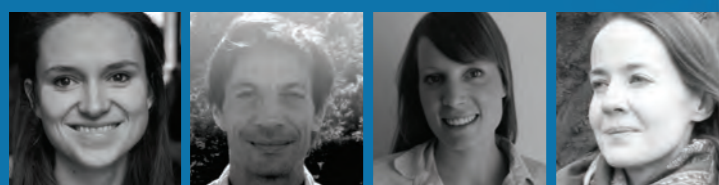


**Bill Liao**, Co-founder  
**Marie-Noëlle Keijzer**, Co-founder & CEO  
**Tom de Fauw**  
**Astrid Leysens**  
**Jan Vets**  
**Laurent Durieux**



## HQ (Brussels)

**Alice Pirson**, Executive Assistant/HR Officer  
**Michaël Tytgat**, Finance & Admin Director  
**Alicia Brigger**, Finance Senior Manager  
**Gauthier Luzolo**, Accountant  
**Anne-Laure Cordier**, HR Director  
**Jessica Chalmers**, Partnerships & Communications Director  
**Vienna Leigh**, Communications Manager  
**Pascaline Haedrich**, Digital Content Manager  
**Louise Tideman**, Sponsorships Manager  
**Xavier Hatchondo**, Science & Policy Director  
**Anna Roesinger**, Carbon Technology Manager  
**Rachel Cohen**, Research Officer  
**Olivier Standaert**, Programmes Director  
**Claire Parfondry**, Livelihoods Manager  
**Marc Parren**, New Projects Developer & Forestry Advisor  
**Adia Bey**, Monitoring & Evaluation Manager  
**Corrie Mauldin**, Agroforestry Advisor



*At WeForest for part of 2020:*  
**Alexandra Apergi**, Finance Senior Manager  
**Diane Plessia**, HR Director

## Brazil



**Cristina Yuri**, Brazil Project Manager

*For part of 2020:* **Ricardo Gomes Cesar**

## Senegal



**Germaine Ebong**, Senegal Project Manager

*In 2020, 43% of WeForest's employees were women.*

# Who We Are

*In-country project staff made up 64% of the WeForest team.*

## Ethiopia



**Aklilu Negussie Mekuria**, Country Director  
**Anteneh Metiku**, Finance & Admin Manager  
**Yemane Gebru**, Socio-economic Expert  
**Birhane Etay**, Forestry Expert  
**Tadele Gebryohannes**, Desa'a Project Manager  
**Elsa Ayele**, Finance Officer  
**Negusse Gebreyohannes**, Monitoring & Evaluation Expert  
**Kiflom Haftu**, Driver  
**Meles Weldeabrha**, Desa'a Project Assistant  
**Bahre Embaye**, Desa'a Livelihoods Expert

## Southern Africa



**Matthias De Beenhouwer**, Zambia & Malawi Country Director  
**Ruben Foquet**, Projects Support Officer  
**Sefia Jetha**, Project Manager, Luanshya  
**Fainess Lumbwe**, Project Manager, Katanino  
**Christopher Ng'ambi**, Finance & Admin Manager  
**Lawrence Chilambe**, Finance & Admin Officer, Katanino  
**Mulako Muimui**, Lead Extensionist, Luanshya  
**Dean Mpande**, Agricultural Extensionist, Katanino  
**Alex Mwape**, Driver, Katanino  
**John Mwandwe**, Driver, Luanshya  
**Sara Banda**, Forest Extensionist, Katanino  
**Haggai Mutale**, M&E Officer, Katanino  
**Dries Van de Loock**, Project Manager, Chintumukulu  
**Leonard Gondwe**, Field Manager, Mulanje  
**Clemmie Borgstein**, Project Support Officer, Mulanje  
**Mike Cheeka**, Assistant Extensionist, Katanino

*For part of 2020:*  
**Sybryn Maes**, Project Manager, Luanshya  
**Humphrey Elekani**, Governance & Sustainability Expert  
**Kennedy Sakala**, Field Extensionist, Luanshya  
**Katwenge Nanguzgambo**, M&E Officer, Katanino

# 2020 at a glance



# What's next?

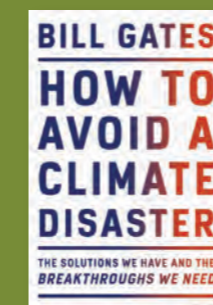


As the United Nations just launched the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration to support all life on Earth, WeForest is taking the pledge to scale its impact massively and reach over **100 million trees** – equivalent to around **85 000 hectares** – restored or conserved by the end of 2024.

This expansion will take place on all continents including in the three African countries where we are most active today: **Zambia**, with thousands of farmers engaged in agroforestry; **Ethiopia**, with ambitious livelihood programmes to lift entire communities out of extreme poverty; and **Senegal**, where large-scale mangrove restoration will help protect coastal villages from the rising sea.

Just like all of us, you're probably eager to hear what the next climate summit, **COP26**, in November will bring. We're keen to see whether it will reinforce the decisions made five years ago at COP21 in Paris and bring clarity to topics like carbon accounting. We know policy matters if we want a system to change.

And if you are keen to read more on climate, don't miss 'How To Avoid a Climate Disaster', where Bill Gates suggests that individuals have the most impact when they:



- 1) send the right signals to the market by their purchases, and
- 2) vote for the right candidates, who can change the system.

Building upon corporate and scientific partnerships, WeForest empowers communities to sustainably advance and implement innovative, high standard, scalable and lasting solutions to restore forests and landscapes.

WeForest's Mission

Find out more at  
[www.weforest.org](http://www.weforest.org)

[contact@weforest.org](mailto:contact@weforest.org)

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*WeForest.asbl/vzw is a global non-profit organisation headquartered in Belgium (BE 0826.151.968).*

*Donations are tax-deductible in USA and most of Europe.*