

WE Africa

2022 ANNUAL REPORT



WE lead cohort 2022



OUR Purpose

is to put women at the heart of transforming Africa's environmental movement.

OUR Vision

is that WE Africa sparks a movement of women leaders in Africa and beyond, who are role modelling a more effective and impactful way to do conservation. By delivering transformational and deeply African leadership experiences, amplified by a strong pay it forward approach and supported by a connected community, WE Africa is making tangible contributions to the sustainability and wellbeing of leaders and ecosystems. WE Africa is a beacon of hope for the future, locally and globally.



OUR Journey

WE Africa was born out of our joint frustration that we were doing too little to address the dual crises of biodiversity loss and climate change. We recognized that we were facing not only an environmental crisis but a leadership crisis. Few women were at decision making tables in the environmental space in Africa and we urgently needed diverse teams making decisions – diverse in all aspects of identity including gender- as this leads to more innovation and more impact. Too many environmentalists said they felt alone, overwhelmed, and frustrated. In 2017, we began sharing perspectives and stories with other African women environmental leaders about the need to urgently scale our impact. We needed to address this profound imbalance in African conservation leadership while at the same time creating a community of practice that reduced competition and valued connection and collaboration.

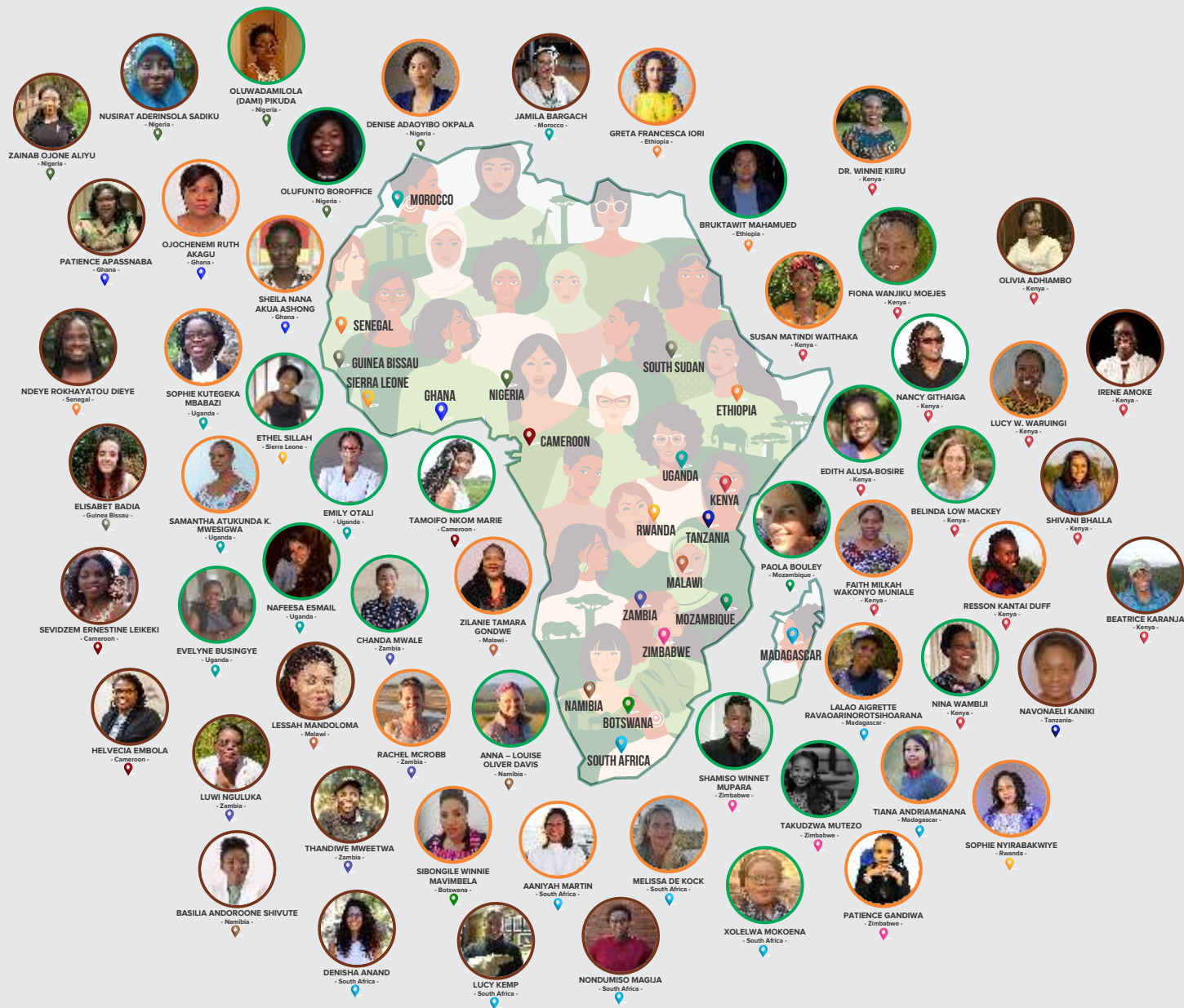
Through a series of conversations and the creation of a Leadership Council of eight African women conservation leaders, the WE lead experience was created and refined and WE Africa was born. WE lead (

one year leadership experience), together with WE talk (authentic, powerful storytelling) and WE move (our path to scale our movement) are the foundations of WE Africa. In February 2020 WE Africa was formally inaugurated by The Honorable Margaret Kenyatta, First Lady of Kenya, at the 2020 Pathways Conference in Kenya. WE Africa's founding cohort launched the first 12-month experience in January 2021 graduating in December 2021 with special guests Dr. Musimbi Kanyoro and the honorable, Mary Robinson.

In 2022, we welcomed our second cohort to the WE lead experience, recreated our website to represent our vision and our stories and launched the WE move alumnae package that focuses on keeping the fellows connected to each other. WE move is our path to scale, supporting and connecting our fellows to a wider community. Applications for WE Africa 2023 opened in June with the third cohort joining WE Africa in December 2022.

As a community of 60 African women environmental leaders from 21 African countries we are well on our way to achieving our vision.





2021
2022
2023

WHO We Are

WE Africa has a non-hierarchical structure, there is no CEO nor any directors. We are governed by our [Accountability Council](#) made up of 6 African leaders from both the environmental and leadership spaces that oversees financial accountability, donor strategy, and governance to achieve our vision and our [Leadership Council](#) of eight African women environmental ambassadors that keep us grounded in our purpose to transform the African environmental movement.

Our [WE Africa integration team](#) meets every month to ensure that all the different parts of WE Africa from WE lead, WE talk and WE move and our WE Africa community are aligned with our common purpose, values and culture, and are moving forward as one entity that is adaptive and responsive to the needs of our fellows to co-create an environmental movement. All on the WE Africa Integration team have defined deliverables and timelines and are paid for their time.



WHO Our Fellows Are?

Our fellows are women leaders from across Africa who have a minimum of 8 years of experience in the environmental space in the government, NGO or private sector in a senior leadership role with a strong desire for

mentorship and paying it forward. Some are based in a city while others are based in remote areas leading field projects. All are already leaders with extensive experience and some influence. [Meet our fellows here.](#)

The WE Africa Approach

Our journey is defined by our values of co creation, disruption, inclusiveness, equity, and joy. WE Africa values the idea of a round room - a safe space where we all co-create this program together with the fellows at the centre using dialogue as the vehicle for transformational change.

Five pillars form the foundation of WE Africa:

1. PERSONAL LEADERSHIP GROWTH

WE fellows will be able to clearly identify their leadership style, values, purpose and goals and lead with greater self-awareness, courage and influence.

2. WELLBEING AND WELLNESS

WE fellows will feel healthier and more energized through a focus on holistic wellbeing and stress management tools, no matter where they work or what challenges they face. This will improve their resilience so they can keep going and pay it forward to others to create whole and healthy teams.

3. RELATIONSHIPS OF COLLABORATION AND PEACEBUILDING

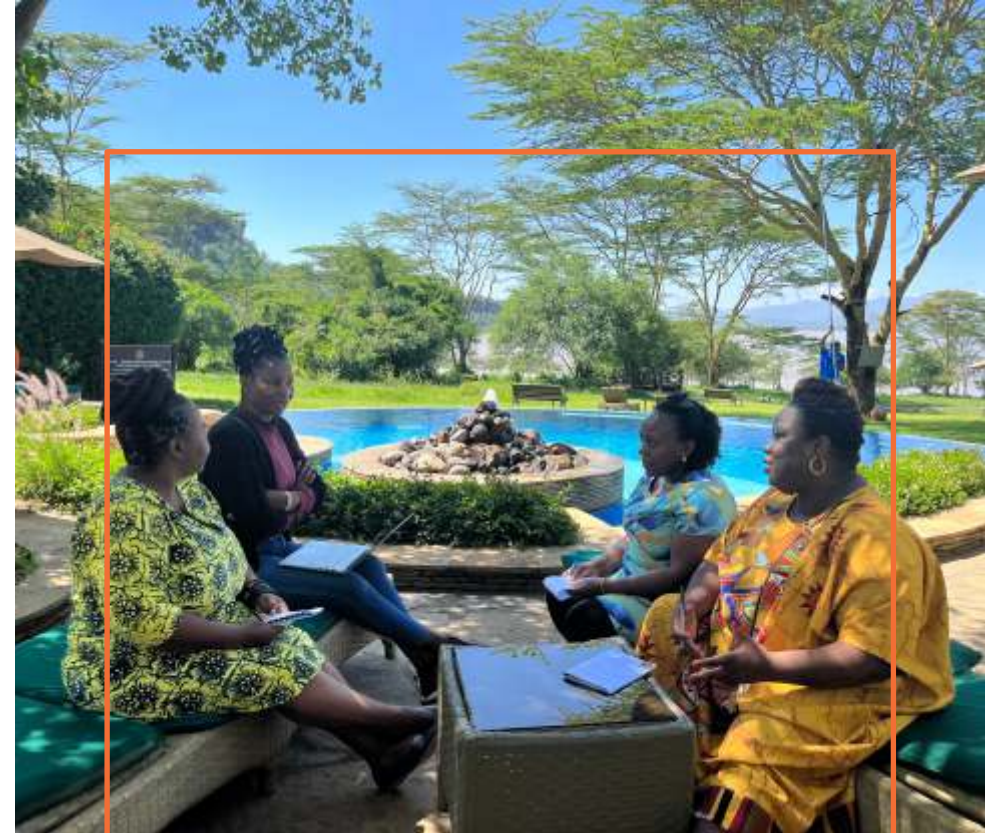
WE fellows will be able to build and maintain more productive relationships and help create a culture of collaboration and inclusion, rather than competition.

4. VISIBILITY FOR IMPACT

WE fellows will be able to use their authentic visibility to build influence and collective impact within their communities, teams, organisations and countries.

5. RADICAL IMAGINATION

WE fellows will have a growth mindset ensuring the work done will not be business as usual but will weave imagination and a spirit of abundance into everything that they do across all the pillars. They will be inspired and equipped to “pay this forward” by helping other women in their network on their own leadership journeys. This approach will grow the WE Africa community into a movement across Africa and beyond that has the collective power and imagination to transform the environmental space.





WE lead is our pan African one year leadership program for high level women environmental leaders with influence, a desire for change and a paying it forward mindset who wish to be part of this movement to put women at the heart of transforming the African environmental movement.

The one year transformational WE lead experience is largely online and is comprised of a range of leadership building opportunities for the 20 top level women leaders from Africa each year delivered by a diverse and committed delivery team (almost all from Africa) across all 5 of the foundational pillars. These include tailored trainings, facilitated dialogues, one-on-one coaching and mentoring, community building, peer support, focused retreats, and increased visibility. Each fellow commits to attending two hours of online learning a week, 15 -20 executive coaching sessions and two four-day in person retreats (March, September). To ensure equity and inclusive, all the WE Africa fellows are sponsored to the value of \$11,500 per woman per year. Our fellows are asked to provide a \$500 registration fee to secure their commitment to attend 80% of all the sessions and to pay for their own travel costs to the two retreats. For those who are unable to pay this portion, limited scholarships are available on request to assist.

In WE lead we use facilitated dialogues both as a vehicle for co-creating and social change and also as an important skill that should be learned to create more inclusive,

collaborative leadership and teams. At the end of the WE Africa program there were five fellow-led dialogues hosted by at least two fellows for each session to practice their skills and to dig deeply into topics of their own choice. These fellow-led dialogues included topics like fundraising as an African woman, the power of visibility, paying it forward and building the WE movement. Two of the fellows decided to host a dialogue on becoming intentional changemakers and drew on the analogy of leadership as a journey--when you travel you need to be intentional about what you pack and what you leave behind. There was a rich discussion that followed and again self-awareness emerged as a key lesson:

“I packed everything I could but I left myself behind”

WEA 2022 Fellow.

One fellow reflected on the fact that she started her leadership journey without a bag and has had to learn on the go. Other fellows shared the more practical aspects that they had learnt from this pillar or goal that includes being a calmer and more patient leader.

The challenges of fundraising are raised often. The fellow-led dialogue on fundraising opened with discussion on what associations fellows have with fundraising and the following words were voiced: restrictive, white, western-led, and inaccessible. There were at least two examples shared where acts of racism were linked to fundraising opportunities. For example, one fellow was

told that she needs a white male on her board to access funding. Other intersectional challenges raised in this area by fellows were being a woman, African and black.

“My leadership role starts with me, I always thought it starts with my team. My well-being is the most important thing for my leadership. I have been trying. My mental well-being is in such a great place. I can say NO and I didn't know that until WE.”

WE Africa 2022 fellow

“Stopped thinking of myself as a leader in a traditional sense. I have redefined what being a leader means; that is a person that helps to tie things together, creates a space to bring ideas together and creates the bigger picture. This type of leader steers the direction we are going and creates the space for the team to thrive.”

WE Africa 2022 Fellow

“Yes, my confidence and comfort with dealing with conflict management has changed drastically. Dealing with conflict was not my strongest point, because I always walked away from it. This has been my biggest eye-opener after participating in the WE program. I am more willing to listen to even the wrong people; I become more open minded to different views.”

WE Africa fellow 2022



Retreats

WE Africa's in-person and pop-up online retreats are an opportunity for the WE sisters to step away from the reality of their day to day lives and to find themselves again, reflect, engage and connect deeply with each other. We are exceptionally grateful to our safari lodge partners who help us host retreats in beautiful areas in Africa, providing spaces where we can reconnect to nature and remind ourselves why this all matters and why we do the work we do.

In 2022, the fellows had the opportunity to take part in two retreats. One in March at Meno-A - Kwena in Botswana (cosponsored by Natural Selection) and the second later in Kenya, at Lake Elmenteita (cosponsored by Serena Hotels). These are moments of reflection and learning but most of all of connection that will last long after WE lead has been completed, binding us together in our common purpose.





WE talk creates a safe, carefully curated space for women to tell their own stories of what it is like to lead, find purpose, live in alignment with your values, fail and succeed, seek joy, and honor yourself from the wider WE Africa ecosystem followed by Q&A by the WE fellows. The unscripted, authentic conversations with women from across Africa broaden our community and are open to all the WE fellows and delivery team binding us together.

[WE talk speakers.](#)



TRACKING Transformation

Understanding & Adapting are critical for WE Africa, this is our form of M&E. This not only adapts the program as it takes place to ensure WE lead meets the needs of each diverse cohort and cocreates an experience with them, but also tracks individual changes over the year long program through hour long entrance and transition interviews coded for key objectives linked to our vision and tracks changes in the alumnae.

Aaniyah Martin, a 2021 fellow, took the lead in July 2022 to coordinate the Understanding and Adapting (U&A) component for WE Africa. Aaniyah has worked to bring together many sources of data with the help of the WE Africa delivery team and coaches. This approach of working alongside the delivery team, coaches and fellows is key to U&A as we all co-create and adapt WE Africa in real time and over the short and medium term. As additional cohorts come on board, additional U&A will track long

term changes of the fellows. A transformational leadership experience may only show significant impact over time as our fellows move into new positions more aligned with their values and voice.

A major focus of 2022 based on feedback provided in 2021 was to create a framework for paying it forward that was not as explicit for 2021 fellows. The WE Africa cohort of 2022 were intra-viewed for the transition conversations in November 2022 before graduation. The term intra-view as opposed to interview encompasses a generative exchange rather than extraction of information through an open-ended conversation (Petersen 2014).

These data were supplemented by regular feedback from coaches, attendance at the September retreat by Aaniyah and a mid-year pulse interview that revealed the following key highlights:



1. Increased confidence in leadership skills:

95% of the 2022 Fellows agreed that their leadership style has changed since participating in the WE Africa program.

“I stopped thinking of myself as a leader in the traditional sense. WEA has helped me redefine what being a leader means – a person that helps to tie things together, provides the space to bring ideas together and creates the bigger picture.”

WE Africa 2022 Fellow

2. Increased self-awareness:

90% of fellows reported having a better sense of self-awareness at the end of WE Africa than at the beginning.

“Through WEA I have become even more aware of who is around me and what they are experiencing. I am also more aware of what makes me move and what triggers me in the teams I lead. I am more aware than ever about what I don't want to put off and what I can speak up about. I am more comfortable about my place and my identity as a white African woman who has a right to lead.”

WE Africa 2022 fellow

3. Confidence to deal with difficult situations:

By the end of WE,

84% of the fellows shared that they were more comfortable dealing with conflict than when WE began where 42% of WE fellows reported being comfortable with conflict resolution.

“Today I had a very fulfilling session with my coach and miraculously we had planned to discuss conflict management so Duwa's talk was extremely timely. I have been smiling since this morning and actually changed a way I would have normally handled a problem. It was refreshing to step away from my default”

WE Africa 2022 fellow

5. Visibility as a women leader in conservation:

21% of fellows felt that they identified with this greatly,

53% moderately and the remaining

26% somewhat.

“Thanks to all of you sisters , we have learnt a lot from the rich discussions. And together we shall surely bite the visibility slice one day at a time”

WE Africa fellow 2022

4. Women are a bigger part of their community:

100% of the fellows agreed that women have become a bigger part of their community since participating in WE.

“Not sure what my sisters think...but the patriarchy is alive and well BUT there are so many amazing women here speaking, being seen and raising their voices. I have had a couple of unpleasant experiences (standing in a group of people and men hand out their business cards but not to me) etc. So many thoughts about this space in which I generally feel not a great deal of comfort! I am working to support and connect with the women who are here and like me, trying to navigate this congress!”

WE Africa 2022 Fellow

6. Paying it forward:

100% of the fellows have a desire to mentor other women and pay it forward, however only 43% had in fact done so this year.

“Amazing!!!! I loooove so much that you made and created a space for her to speak! We need to give each other – and create more – opportunities to share and speak and inspire!”

Lastly, when asked which area of WE had resulted in the most significant change for them:

37% of fellows agreed that wellbeing was the most common area of most significant change,

26% Personal leadership,

11% Strategic visibility, relationships/collaborations/peacebuilding and paying it forward/mentoring.

When asked to identify which elements of the WE Africa program helped fellows achieve their most significant change

61% agreed that the creation of a safe space for fellows to share stories and be vulnerable was a key factor enabling their change.

44% Coaching,

39% Well-being sessions.

“The fact that I find myself in spaces where I might be the only young female of African descent is not a weakness; it is a strength. WE Africa has reinforced that belief for me. It has helped me find my space, own it and become a more authentic leader”.

Takudzwa Mutezo, WE Africa 2022 Fellow

“Before WE Africa, I felt frustrated and burnt out from conservation work. I was doing a lot but couldn’t see the impact. I have learned that the key is to pause and evaluate where I am and where I want to go”.

Bruktawit Abdu Mahamued, WE Africa 2022 Fellow

“I have learned that there is no shame in speaking about my achievements, my struggles and my ambitions. And I will continue to speak up and pursue my dreams of a better world with more opportunities for youth and women leadership in Africa.”

Marie Tamoifo Nkom, WE Africa 2022 Fellow

“This journey has dismantled the notion that women don’t support each other and are in constant competition. I have developed a sisterhood that has helped me forgive myself for my past mistakes and encouraged me to continue being the best leader I can be.”

Oufunto Boroffice, WE Africa 2022 Fellow

A Celebration

The 2022 cohort graduation marked the year's pinnacle. The fellows' statements to how they intend to pay it forward formed the heart of their commitments. Two prominent African women leaders, Dr. Musimbi Kanyoro and Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, gladly shared their life stories with the attendees as a way to inspire.

“Too few women are working in the environmental sector. Take up space and share it with others like you. Be deliberate about being a role-model.”
Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka

STORIES Of Self



[ETHEL SILLAH](#)



[CHANDA MWALE](#)



[BELINDA LOW MACKEY](#)



[FIONA MOEJES](#)



[DAMI PIKUDA](#)



[NAFEESA ESMAIL](#)



[ANNA-LOUISE DAVIS](#)



[BRUKTAWIT
ABDU MAHAMUED](#)



[OLUFUNTO BOROFFICE](#)



[NANCY GITHAIGA](#)



[DR. NINA WAMBIJI](#)



[MARIE TAMOIFO NKOM](#)



[SHAMISO MUPARA](#)



[EVELYNE BUSINGYE](#)



[EMILY OTALI](#)



[PAOLA BOULEY](#)



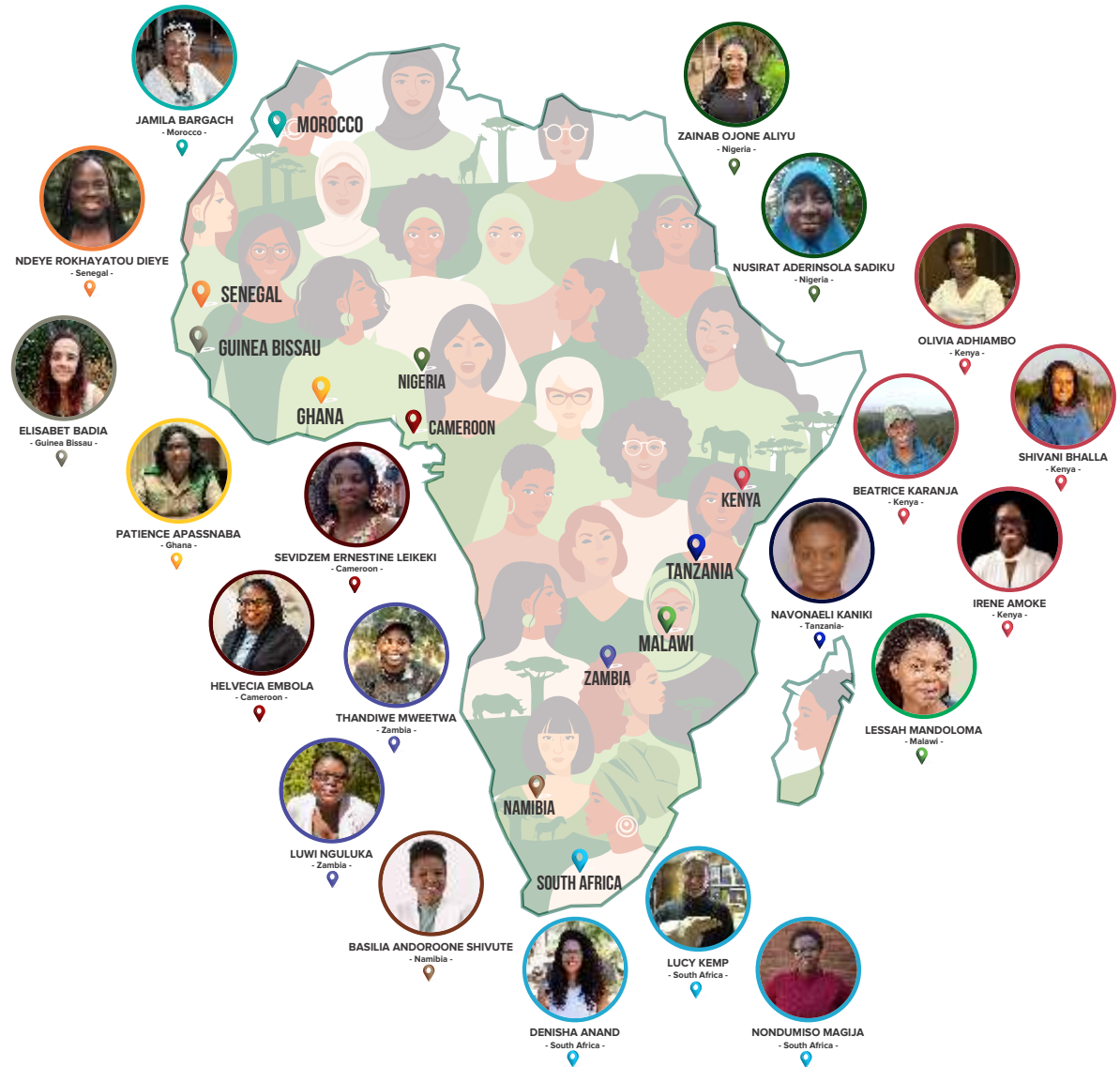
[XOLELWA HLALU](#)



[TAKUDZWA MUTEZO](#)

A Growing Sisterhood

The WE Community is growing bigger. We welcomed our third cohort of 20 African women leaders from 12 countries in Africa in January. These women join a group of 40 women African leaders connected by a common bond, shared interests, experiences and goals making a difference in the environmental space in Africa.





Power of the Collective: WE move

WE move shifts from the individual to the collective. Through WE move, we will generate the collective impact needed to effect transformation and pay it forward to a broader community. We are sparking a movement through the fellows, and subsequently through their influence, their connections and their communities, to create the change we want to see in the environmental space across Africa.

In 2022, an alumni package was developed to support the fellows individually and collectively in this

journey.

Our alumnae package is designed to keep the fellows connected through quarterly dialogues, monthly WE talk, and WE learn masterclasses and quarterly coaching sessions as well as an active real time WhatsApp chat forum and online platform app. This is also a space for alumni to collaborate in implementing collective actions to achieve impact aligned with our purpose particularly collective discussions at international environmental and conservation meetings.



MOVING Forward

Based on ongoing feedback and conversations detailed recommendations were provided in the U&A report and where possible will be implemented for 2023. These included developing a more user friendly WE Africa platform that provides opportunities for interaction, potential topics for more in-depth learning and WE talks, more attention paid to the visibility pillar to include more African contexts and challenges, and breaking down barriers to fundraising.

ALUMNI package



**QUARTERLY
DIALOGUES**



**BI-ANNUAL COLLECTIVE
WELLBEING SESSIONS**



**MONTHLY
WE TALKS**



**INTERACTIVE
WEBSITE**



**MONTHLY
MASTERCLASSES**



**WE
FESTIVAL**



**QUARTERLY COACHING -
NEXT 2 YEARS**



**SCHOLARSHIP
FUND**

“Part of my plea, as a person who has come from philanthropy for many years is to trust the women of Africa, invest big in them, and think big of them as they think big and they want to do good work. The deeper your investment in people the more you will see impact”.
Dr. Musimbi Kanyoro

OUR Finances

WE Africa is financially governed by our fiscal sponsors TRT Conservation Foundation (NPC:2017/024322/08) in South Africa & Wildlife Guardians (501 c3) in the USA. A joint financial statement is provided for all WE Africa accounts. The annual cost of the WE lead program is currently \$11,500 per woman per year.

Total expenses in 2022, were \$366,566, with \$206 440 for WE lead and \$160 126 for WE Move, 2021 retreat expenses (delayed by Covid 19) and development, admin and integration.

Our net assets on the 31st of December 2022 were \$385 162. Our financial statement can be downloaded [here](#).

We are now moving into extensive fundraising to support the WE move projects, governance and development which will create the movement and pay it forward seeded by the WE lead program. We have a fund-raising goal of \$5 million USD over the next 4 years.



WE lead sponsored costs of \$10 500.00 per fellow which will be increased to \$11 500 per fellow in 2023.
Total WE lead expenditure in 2022 was \$206 440.00

OUR Partners

WE Africa is inspired and supported by a large community. Your support is essential to our success and we are grateful for your commitment to our mission. Together, we have accomplished so much in the past year and we could not have done any of this without your support. Thank you to all of our funders, friends, and supporters for fostering leadership cultures that go above and above for the environment and for empowering women. With particular thanks to the Blue Foundation, Dry Creek Foundation, Liz Clayborne and Art Ortenburg Fund (LCAOF) and Acacia Fund for their substantial support of WE lead. Support for the ongoing management and development of WE Africa has been provided by the Dry Creek Foundation, LCAOF and Scott Weiss Foundation, this has allowed us to grow. The two In person retreat would not have been possible without the generous in kind support from Meno-A-Kwena lodge in Botswana and Natural Selection and Lake Elmenteita Serena Camp in Kenya and Serena Hotels.

