

# Back to basics

Wilde Ganzen Strategic Plan 2023-2025



**WILDE**   
**GANZEN** 

Klein project Groot verschil

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## Foreword

After a long period of relative calm, economic growth and poverty reduction, there has been a turn around. The world around us has become less predictable and more unsettled, with democracies, human rights and civil society under increasing pressure. COVID-19 has profoundly changed mobility and (collaborative) work and has increased poverty. Our climate has furthermore become less stable and peace less obvious than we thought, resulting in increasing migration flows. The frayed edges of globalisation are also becoming sharper; the poverty gap within countries is growing intensely, tech companies rule, governments are failing, and economies are proving too dependent on autocracies.

As a result, there is more emphasis on self-sufficiency, self-interest and localisation. At a local level, people are capable of a lot. During COVID-19, the Ukraine war and climate change, local community organisations often prove to be more flexible, innovative and decisive than international organisations, even with fewer resources.

Within the sector of international cooperation, localisation is therefore high on the agenda, as it is changing the balance of power (shift the power). There are also serious concerns that governments

are leaving less and less space for civil society organisations to make their voices heard or to even exist at all.

**Wilde Ganzen** fights poverty by supporting the small-scale, concrete projects of local partner organisations. We are unique on two fronts: cooperation with private development initiatives (PDIs) in the Netherlands and local fundraising in the Global South. And we co-initiated the debate on the theme of shift the power in the Dutch sector of international cooperation.

The choices we are making for the coming years are based on people-centred principles, localisation and *shift the power*.

Our projects will feature more support for local partner organisations (LPOs) who implement the project, with a focus on community participation. We also encourage local fundraising, making local actors less dependent on foreign aid. In doing so, we are putting more effort into premium and match funding of locally raised funds. We will be going from one-off project support towards long-term cooperation, with our role within the relationship shifting from coach to facilitator.

We are furthermore starting participatory grantmaking, where local communities decide which initiative will be supported.

We are vigorously pursuing our policy for our focus countries. In this way, we can better facilitate networking, collaboration and peer learning among partner organisations and support opportunities to lobby governments to provide basic services, claim space for CSO work and encourage local philanthropy.

Local philanthropy is at the heart of our Giving for Change programme. Under this programme, we influence governments to foster a more enabling environment for philanthropy (for example through legislation) and to create more space for CSOs to do their work. We additionally encourage donor organisations to enter into more equal partnerships, work less top-down and give ownership of local organisations a central role in their policies.

The Change the Game Academy (CtGA) programme offers a unique tool to make real work of local fundraising through training and coaching. Together with member organisations, we form an alliance through shared control and responsibility. We will further optimise the balance between online and

offline training. Furthermore, we are creating significantly more impact by offering CtGA to fellow donor organisations so that they can equip their own partners with skills in fundraising on the ground. In doing so, local organisations become less dependent on foreign aid, grow in autonomy and, with their own local constituency, increase their social legitimacy with citizens and government.

**Wilde Ganzen** is a civil society organisation with a membership of around 40,000 donors and over 700 PDIs. We continue to engage our members as global citizens in our work. In addition, with a view to world citizenship, we see great added value in cooperating with PDIs, which in turn involve their members in their work.

The choices we make are translated into our theory of change, which indicates how and by what means we want to realise changes aimed at the intended impact.

**Kees de Jong**  
Director





## The world around us

Globally, the division between states and between citizens is hardening. Democracies are under pressure. More and more governments - authoritarian as well as democratic - are restricting human rights and imposing regulatory pressure and legislation on civil society organisations. Trust in governments is declining because they are failing: in basic services, security, civil protection, revenue and market regulation, in fighting corruption, crime and tax evasion and in social media regulation. At the same time, new human rights movements can be seen to emerge, often with young participants. There is also an increasing number of companies that see opportunities to be socially responsible and pursue and respect human rights.

A period of a growing global economy and declining poverty seems to have come to a temporary halt; COVID-19, the energy crisis, the climate crisis and insecurity all play a major role in this. In all these aspects, people in poverty are being disproportionately affected. Within almost all countries, the inequality of opportunity and income between rich and poor is becoming more extreme. It is one of the side effects of the neoliberal globalisation wave, which, after initial positive reception, is gradually being viewed with more scepticism. Global interconnectedness of trade is under pressure as a result of tensions between superpowers that want to be more self-sufficient in essential goods and services. Countries as well as citizens are retreating 'into their own backyards'; there is a growing focus on, 'homegrown', local initiatives and the human dimension.

Geo-political unrest, climate change and economic inequality are creating large refugee flows and migratory movements. Rich countries are becoming increasingly rigid in barring migrants and refugees, while they themselves face severe labour market shortages. Much of their population wants to lock their gates for fear of foreigners and of them attacking their 'own' values, norms and beliefs, fuelled by populist politicians. At the same time, there is a civic movement that welcomes and cares about asylum seekers and migrant workers.

The world population is still increasing, especially in Africa. Most Africans are under the age of 25, and

only a few have a job, income or security prospects. This leads to great migratory pressure on beckoning Europe, with aging populations, labour shortages, wealth, and relative peace. Besides the growing world population, the lifestyles of the richest are also putting a strain on the earth's providing capacity when it comes to food, water and energy supplies. The result is a disruptive climate crisis that hurts the poorest the most while they contribute to the problem the least. The global climate movement is growing rapidly in number and influence.

The rise of smartphones has fast-tracked the digital revolution with far-reaching consequences. In a very short time, billions of people have gained instant access to information, events and networks. However, there are still plenty of opportunities to connect the poorest people to digital media. COVID-19 has furthermore accelerated a hybrid society wherein distance and time are relative, with both physical and digital encounters, where working from home has become normal, and where learning can be done both online and in person. Having, manipulating and depriving digital access have become essential factors for development, economy and security. In a world of social media and instant access to information – without prior verification checks – with frames, fake news and conspiracy theories, views have become more extreme and harsher. This provides opportunities for critical truth-telling and nuanced information.



# Transitions and trends in development aid cooperation

## Development aid

The concept of development aid emerged just after World War II when the world was divided into three: first, second and third worlds; in other words, the rich West, the communist Eastern Bloc and the poor developing countries in the global South. Large-scale projects were rolled out in developing countries based on the successful Marshall Plan - with disappointing results, partly due to dysfunctional governments, a lack of rule of law, failing control systems and inefficient aid structures.

In subsequent years, numerous trends passed, focusing on technology, projects, target groups, themes, communities, functional groups and programmes. All with varying degrees of success as the underlying system was hardly addressed: funding mechanisms are almost always organised top-down, and the people who are supposed to benefit only come into the picture at the end. Even community development (with bottom-up participation based on the idea that 'the people themselves know best what they want and need') often stranded on account of donors' need to scale up, using standardised and imposed more-of-the-same interventions.

### **Key lesson: if you want to realise change, bottom-up or top-down, you have to deal with very diverse realities on the ground**

From the late 1980s, market forces took effect. The relational and human dimensions of development aid cooperation got side-tracked. Projects as well as programmes were and still are completed as products with predefined end results among end users, based on the idea of 'he who pays the piper calls the tune'. Excessive accountability

and disproportionate control and regulatory pressure are accepted and contagiously passed on to recipients within the aid chain.

## Recent debate

During COVID-19, many governments and aid systems did not respond adequately. While international development agencies had withdrawn from many countries, local community organisations entered the picture in greater numbers. When top-down international aid failed or was slow to arrive and governments failed, these organisations took the lead in the relief effort in a bottom-up and decisive manner. In the response to the pandemic and climate crisis, local agility, responsiveness, innovativeness and resilience have become keywords. Interestingly, a consequence was (and is) the blurring of the traditional distinction between relief and development aid.

This in turn accelerated the growth of movements (shift the power, localisation agenda) that desire fundamental changes in the unbalanced relationship between the Global North and the Global South within the aid sector. Identified issues that need to be addressed to increase impact are:

- Localisation is needed. Aid strategies are more effective and efficient when they are shaped bottom-up with an initial input of knowledge, innovation, decisiveness and quality from local actors - especially community organisations. Global challenges around migration or climate require local solutions.

- Decolonisation of the aid sector is needed: dismantling entrenched notions of superiority of the Global North with accompanying racism, language, power structures, practices and unconscious biases. So that people and their organisations have a leading and decisive role in shaping their own change, narrative and future.
- International development organisations need to change their role and ways of working. It is necessary that they do not or no longer implement programmes and projects themselves through local field offices but entrust them to locally rooted community organisations. Too much money lingers en route to its final destination. And more space is needed in funding frameworks for long-term change, where partner organisations have and take the opportunity to grow in autonomy, resilience and local anchoring.
- **Foreign donor dependency**  
Many civil society organisations in the Global South are struggling to raise sufficient funding for their work. With declining donor funding, they are increasingly forced to go from project to project and tender to tender with only temporary funding, while also having to deal with ever-changing themes and ever more complex donor formats. This is all taking place while they are barely given room to develop into sustainable organisations. In addition, many donors give larger contributions, leaving out small community organisations.
- **Lack of legitimacy**  
In many countries, governments label civil society organisations as 'foreign agents' if they operate with the help of foreign aid. This puts pressure on their legitimacy and authenticity. To some extent, the development aid sector itself is to blame for this. Some organisations have become donor darlings: intermediaries in the aid chain. Many international donors have mostly failed to facilitate their 'darlings' in their evolution into autonomous and mostly civilian organisations, rooted in society with their own local supporters.

## Civil society

A strong local civil society is essential as a watchdog, as an advocate, as builders of society, and as a lubricant between government, citizens and business. In many low and middle-income countries, CSOs face three major challenges:

- **Shrinking civic space**  
Civil society organisations are given less and less space by governments to make their voices heard and do their work. This is true not only in countries with autocratic regimes that violate human rights, but also in democratic countries. Highly restrictive legislation is being introduced for fear of terrorism, corruption, money laundering and invasion of privacy. This jeopardises the right to create and establish organisations. Even in countries like the Netherlands, hefty restrictions have been imposed, making it increasingly difficult for foundations to raise funds and comply with all laws and regulations. New foundations can hardly even open a bank account these days.

Despite everything, civil society is still alive and kicking. Recent challenges like COVID-19, climate change and the war in Ukraine show that it is precisely local and bottom-up responses by small-scale organisations and movements that fit the bill: they are agile, innovative, resistant and decisive. And they therefore deserve a central and dominant place in the redesign of the aid system, which can thereby grow in efficiency and effectiveness.

# Who we are

## Our vision

A world in which people who are living in poverty are capable of improving their situation and their future themselves.

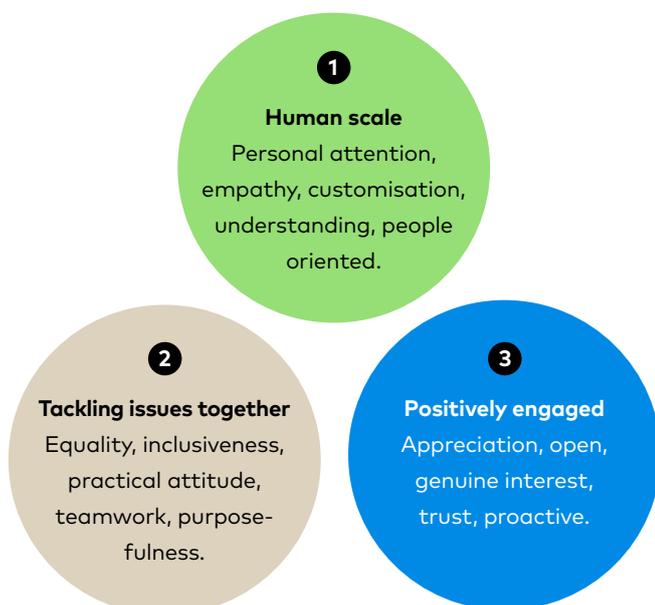
## Our mission

**Wilde Ganzen** fights poverty all over the world. By means of financial contribution, knowledge and expertise, we stimulate projects and social organisations that are a result of a joint initiative of enthusiastic Dutch people and people living in poverty.

The projects and companies are small-scale and produce visible results. We also strengthen the power of people living under poor conditions to mobilise funds and resources in their own countries. This will lead to a direct and structural improvement of their situation and a promising future.

## Our core values

Our core values and drivers are:



## Our ambition

**Wilde Ganzen** wants to be the leading supporter of active initiators in the Netherlands and their local partner organisations. In addition, our programmes set the tone for local fundraising and lobbying in at least fifteen low and middle-income countries.

## Our story

Poverty, exclusion and injustice are the greatest enemies of progress and happiness. It paralyses initiative, undermines relationships, ignores talent and takes away pride. This puts millions of people at a debilitating disadvantage. Fortunately, there are civil society organisations that are taking action together with go-getters in their neighbourhoods and villages. By way of a tangible project, they work with the community to make crucial improvements that trigger positive developments. This equal cooperation motivates, connects, inspires confidence and instils people with pride and responsibility. Fighting poverty, exclusion and injustice together moves people to come up with solutions themselves.



## Our choices

**Wilde Ganzen** is a Dutch organisation that believes in the power of small-scale: innovative decisiveness. It is deeply embedded in our DNA to tackle poverty, injustice and exclusion on a human scale with small-scale, tangible projects targeting basic needs. We cannot change the whole world, but we can change the world of a lot of people. We do this with local partner organisations in low and middle-income countries, where poverty, exclusion and injustice are of a different order than in the Netherlands.

In this, **Wilde Ganzen** is **unique in two areas:**

### 1 We work with Private Development Initiatives (PDIs).

These are initiatives by Dutch citizens who work with local partner organisations that, mostly without any self-interest, make a concrete difference to people's lives in the Global South. Not through big institutions, but through personal contact. In addition, PDIs involve their Dutch supporters in their work, thus contributing to promoting support for international cooperation and global citizenship.

### 2 We specialise in local fundraising in the Global South.

We believe it is important for people to develop on their own. Local fundraising can be seen as the ultimate manifestation of 'using your own strength'.

**Wilde Ganzen** is an initiator of **Change the Game Academy (CtGA)**, an innovative programme in 15 countries that offers training and coaching

to civil society organisations (more than 2,100) in local fundraising. In addition, **Wilde Ganzen** is part of the **Giving for Change Alliance**, focused on advancing local philanthropy. These programmes help organisations become more independent from foreign aid through local fundraising and lobby for rights, space, local philanthropy and more equal relationships with donors.

**Wilde Ganzen** wants to have an optimal impact on poverty reduction. To this end, we collaborate in networks for sustainable change from the bottom up, such as the *Shift the Power movement*, of which we are a co-initiator in the Netherlands. We increase the resilience, autonomy and self-reliance of people living in poverty as well as their own organisations, because we believe in the power of bottom-up change. We encourage local communities to take control, because they know best how to make sustainable and inclusive development happen.

**The movement we are making in the coming years is a concrete elaboration of two central themes: Localisation and Shift the Power.**

Major global problems, such as climate change, require local solutions. Local initiatives are demonstrably decisive, innovative and agile. By local, **Wilde Ganzen** means on the level of neighbourhoods, villages, communities and their (grassroots) organisations.

Traditionally, we work on change from the bottom up, on a human scale and with small projects.

We will continue to do so. Our focus on basic services also remains, partly with an eye on failing governments that do not sufficiently safeguard basic rights such as education and healthcare. Together with PDIs, we will vigorously pursue the movement already under way:

- **Project > Local partner organisation (LPO)**  
Beyond any project, we are increasingly looking at the organisation implementing the project. In doing so, we work together on sustainability, participation, resilience and autonomy – the latter specifically through local fundraising.
- **Short term > Long term**  
Starting with one-off projects, we are working towards multi-year collaboration with PDIs and LPOs. This provides more certainty and creates space to work on long-term impact.
- **Co-financier and advisor > Coach and facilitator**  
Our role evolves towards coaching and facilitating when it comes to learning experiences. In our funding role, we will incorporate less control and more trust where possible.

As a donor organisation, we will continue our unique partnership with PDIs. We are also deploying two new co-funding lines for LPO projects:

- **Match funding**  
Locally raised contributions in small projects by LPOs are doubled within this programme. In focus countries, we organise this incentive for local fundraising, together with national partner organisations (NPOs) and PDIs. Our ambition is to grow this funding mechanism significantly.
- **Participatory financing**  
In this approach (*participatory grantmaking*), local communities themselves decide on distribution and allocation of **Wilde Ganzen** contributions for local micro-projects. We thereby shift decisive authority from us as a donor organisation to grassroots organisations. This is a substantial change in approach. If pilots conducted in 2023 are successful, we wish to grow this further.

Due to very diverse challenges, needs and matching solutions at the local level, we work bottom up and, as a donor organisation, prescribe as few thematic choices as possible. Given global developments, we expect an increase in initiatives involving **climate** and **young people**. We will intensify our policy regarding these themes. In addition, we will explore options to facilitate **unregistered groups and movements**, knowing that restrictive legislation places major restrictions on registration and on opening bank accounts.

In focus countries, we will further integrate our interventions (projects and programmes). In particular, we are committed to better facilitating exchange, learning and collaboration between LPOs. In doing so, we encourage inclusion of disadvantaged groups and communities that struggle to connect geographically, socially, culturally or digitally. To strengthen capacity, we are expanding our networks and focusing mainly on participatory skills and our niche: raising funds and mobilising support locally. In addition to our work on the local level, we will focus more on regional and national levels with lobbying for a more enabling environment for CSOs and philanthropy.

The **digital revolution** presents many new opportunities. COVID-19 demonstrated the convenience and benefit of online contact with LPOs, PDIs and NPOs. We will further optimise the hybrid balance between offline and online at conferences, peer learning and within Change the Game Academy.

Distances between global and local can be bridged online. We aim at direct access for our partner organisations to a more collaborative online project management system. This will accelerate downward accountability and bottom-up reporting, bringing equal partnership a major step closer.

The **Change the Game Academy** network will be transformed into an Alliance with joint ownership and member governance. Based on principles of distributed leadership - using a flight of geese as a role model - **Wilde Ganzen** will share decision-making authority and power with member organisations. Fundraising will also become much more of a joint responsibility.

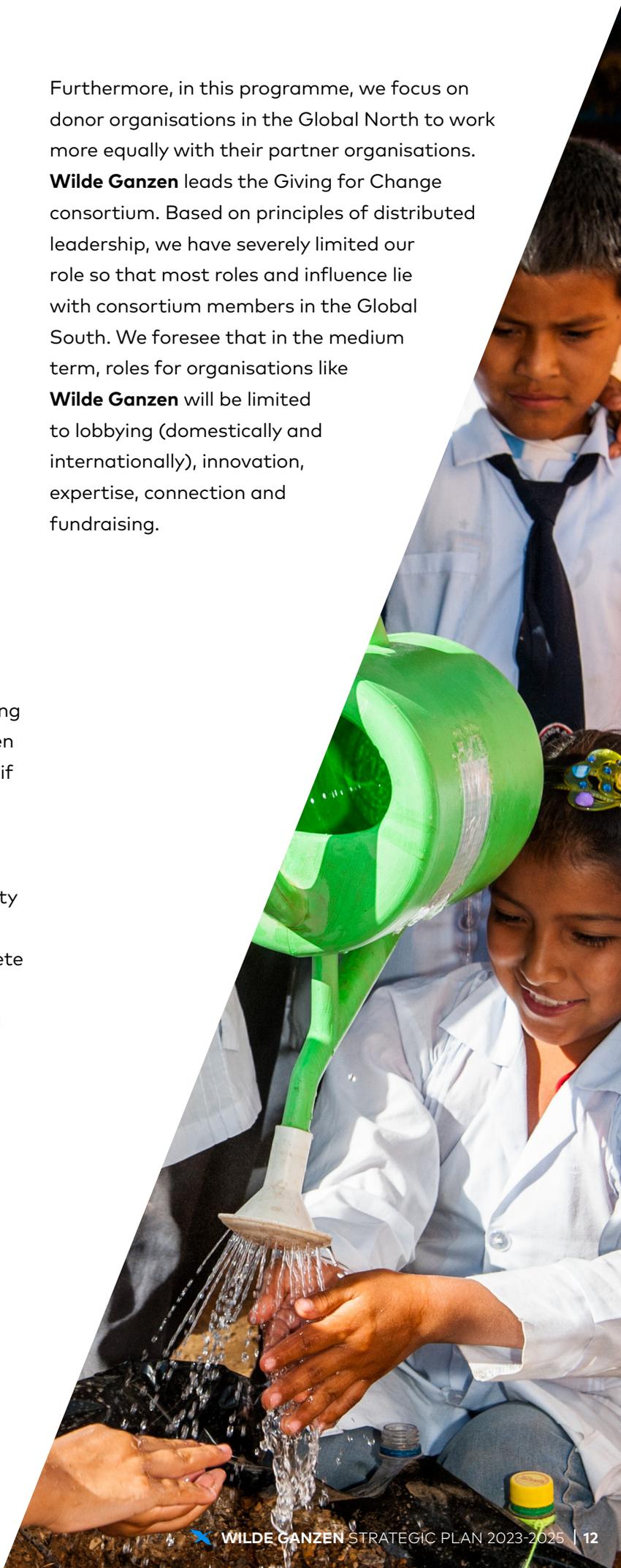
CtGA is an attractive and unique programme for local fundraising, which impact as well as financial sustainability will significantly increase. We do this partly by making CtGA available to (international) NGOs in the Global North. This allows them to strengthen their own partner organisations with regard to autonomy and reduced dependence on foreign funding.

More and more governments are failing to meet their obligations in basic areas such as health, education and security. CtGA is therefore developing a social accountability training course to strengthen CSO's capacity to draw governments' attention – if required – to their duty of service.

**Giving for Change** is funded by the Dutch government through the Strengthening Civil Society funding framework. The programme encourages local philanthropy in the global South. It is a concrete strategy for community-led development by increasing local ownership. It also encourages local organisations to create space with governments aimed at the survival of CSOs and opportunities for local fundraising.

Furthermore, in this programme, we focus on donor organisations in the Global North to work more equally with their partner organisations.

**Wilde Ganzen** leads the Giving for Change consortium. Based on principles of distributed leadership, we have severely limited our role so that most roles and influence lie with consortium members in the Global South. We foresee that in the medium term, roles for organisations like **Wilde Ganzen** will be limited to lobbying (domestically and internationally), innovation, expertise, connection and fundraising.



# Our approach

**Changes and movements are reflected in our choices. How and by what means we intend to achieve this - our approach - is shown in the theory of change below.**

## **Impact**

Our intended impact: a world where people living in poverty can improve their situation and their future on their own.

## **Strategies**

Our theory of change has three strategies, the first of which is dominant:

### **1 We support sustainable projects supported by local communities**

It is important for people to organise and work together in an equitable way to fight poverty, exclusion and injustice. Change is more sustainable if communities are closely involved in the establishment and continuation of relevant basic services such as education and health care. And developments are more enduring when they are driven by powerful, independent organisations that can handle setbacks and are (partly) independent of foreign aid.

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**This is why we fund civil society organisations' projects for sustainable access to relevant basic services. These are tangible projects on a human scale and with sustainable results.**

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**We also strengthen civil society organisations in participatory work with stakeholders and communities. As part of this approach, communities identify problems, needs and rights themselves and translate this into solutions for which they themselves take (partial) responsibility. We encourage this through training, coaching and education.**

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**We support civil society organisations to operate autonomously and resiliently. With training, coaching and match funding, we strengthen their capacity to raise funds in their own context, to think critically about rights, and to hold authorities accountable in fulfilling their obligations.**

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Ultimately, supporting these CSOs leads to well-organised and resilient communities that have control and access to relevant, qualitative basic services.



## 2 We create an environment that welcomes input from local civil society organisations

We encourage governments and donor organisations (including private development initiatives) to create more room for participation, input and ownership by local organisations. In view of the #shiftthepower debate, (more) equality and balance of power is required between donor organisations and partners. After all, many problems require local solutions where input from local partners is a must.

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**It is important for donor organisations to support their partners' autonomy and resilience. We therefore call on them to reflect on their practices and facilitate training, coaching and mutual learning between CSOs and their donors. In doing so, we aim to raise awareness about both harmful and empowering practices and thus contribute to change.**

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**We also defend and expand space for civil society. We do this by strengthening the capacity of civil society organisations to make their voices heard towards the government and stand up for their rights. This allows them to claim the space they need to continue doing their jobs. We also support initiatives to advocate for less restrictive legislation for civil society.**

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**Finally, we support initiatives to lobby for a more enabling environment for local philanthropy, e.g., encouraging legislation for 'giving' or supporting emerging philanthropic foundations. Local philanthropy strengthens the autonomy and resilience of civil society organisations. A local constituency also strengthens them in standing up for the rights of the people they represent.**

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The ultimate result is that this makes governments involve civil society organisations and fulfil their obligations.



### 3 We promote global citizenship

As global citizens, people are members of a larger entity that extends beyond the boundaries of their own local or national community. We believe it is important for people to grow in world citizenship and thus: learn about local, global and intercultural issues; understand the perspectives and world views of others; engage openly with people from different cultures; act towards collective well-being and sustainable development.

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**We therefore encourage donors to grow as global citizens. We do this through positive stories of people and their organisations tackling poverty. And with concrete action perspectives for sustainable development.**

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**We also encourage private development initiatives (PDIs) to engage their constituencies as global citizens. We do this in the Netherlands and, if possible, elsewhere in Europe through funding, training, knowledge exchange, campaigns and events.**

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This strategy transforms the challenges of globalisation into concrete action perspectives in the Netherlands. This is with the understanding that citizens are working internationally for a just, inclusive and sustainable society.

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