

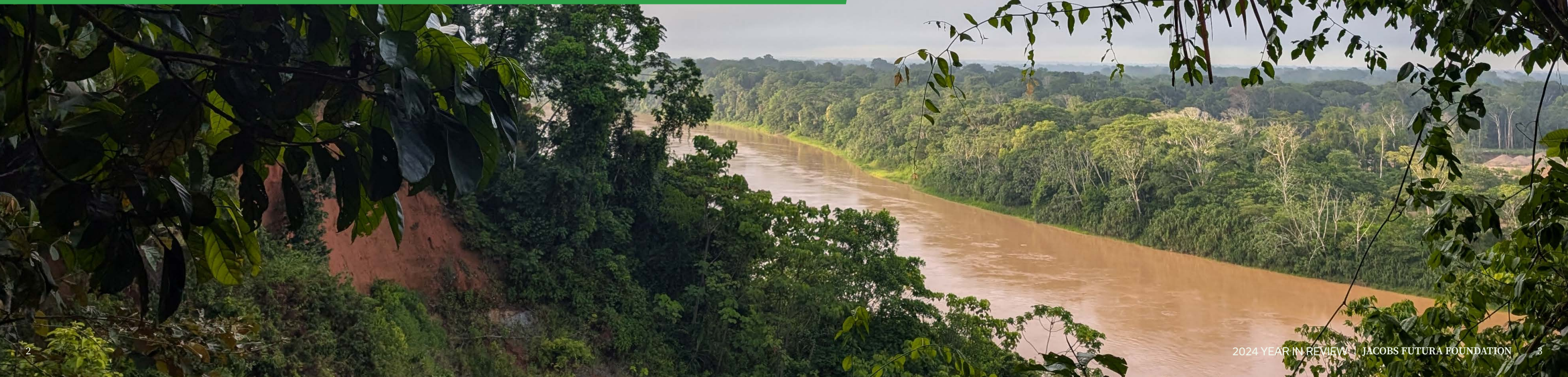


jff jacobs futura
foundation

**2024 Year
in Review**

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Section One:

Establishing the Jacobs Futura Foundation

2024 marked the first full year of the Jacobs Futura Foundation. It has been an exciting year, full of energy and momentum as we have started to define who we are as a foundation and what difference we want to make in the world.

We have established the core elements of the organisation including developing policies, systems, and processes, launching our brand and website, hiring team members, and importantly – with the engagement of our Board – determining the values that define us as a Foundation.



Our values are:

- **Ambition:** we are positive, with a bias to action and identifying solutions that deliver lasting impact
- **Humility:** we are keen to learn from others, we are pragmatic and open
- **Commitment:** we are intentional in how we target our efforts, we are patient, and we have a determination to follow-through
- **Collaboration:** we can only make a difference working with others, we will bring value to our partnerships



Two focus areas for the Foundation's work:

1

To protect the world's **tropical rainforests** for the benefit of the climate, nature and the communities that depend on them.



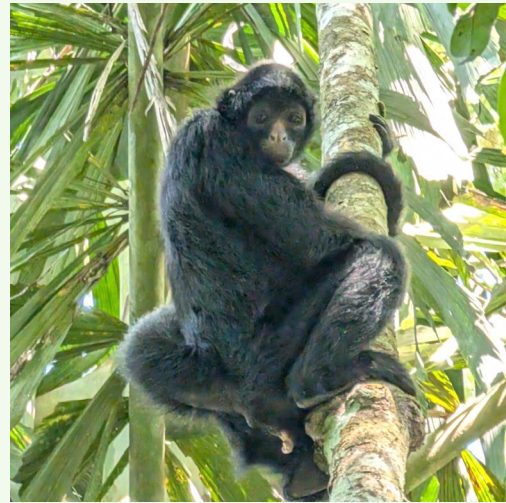
2

To support **athletes** to thrive in the transition to life beyond their sporting careers.



To ensure we are additive to existing efforts, we have been building relationships with other funders, experts, and partner organisations. In September we held an **event** to mark our establishment. We thanked those who had helped us in our setting up and introduced more about us and our focus areas, bringing together people from the worlds of sport, the environment, and other sectors.





We are here to make a difference in our two areas of focus. We are pleased therefore that even in our first year we have been able to support a range partners across both themes.

2024 in Numbers

13

Grants approved



90+

Athletes starting to receive support



351,000

Hectares of rainforest that our grants will aim to designate as 'protected'



7,600,000

Hectares of rainforest that our grants will help strengthen the protection of



5

New team members



1,696

New LinkedIn followers



£4.3m

Value of grants approved



Section Two: Athletes

Why does it matter?

The demands of being an elite athlete are all-consuming, often at the expense of other life priorities like education and gaining professional experience. When an athlete's competitive career ends – usually abruptly and out of their control – they face a range of challenges for which they are mostly unprepared. Almost 60% of UK athletes leave their sport involuntarily, due to injury, deselection, or financial stress, and around half of athletes in the UK do not feel in control of their lives up to two years after finishing their careers. Many athletes navigate significant challenges during their transition including financial instability, mental health issues and a changing identity. Yet high performance athletes have valuable skills and experience that can be of use to them beyond their sport.

With the right support, athletes can navigate to the next stage smoothly and effectively, benefiting them and society as a whole.

The UK is built on a long heritage of sporting excellence – Team GB has a strong history of success in the Olympic and Paralympic medal tables. Focusing on transition here in the UK was key to the Foundation's understanding of the landscape. The opportunity to learn best practices from organisations working in this space and highlight the gaps or fragmented support to our athletes. We will convene the willing and give a voice to those unheard when expressing the uphill transition struggles that so many athletes face.



MINTRIDGE
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Understanding the Issue

We wanted to better understand the issue and to share what we had learned. In 2024 we developed a report: **Forged in Competition, Tested in Transition: empowering elite athletes through and beyond sport** focusing on the current state of athlete transition in the UK. The report provides an overview of who these athletes are, the difficulties they face, and what support exists, alongside a review of the evidence and personal stories from athletes themselves. It was clear that support is available – from public bodies and civil society – however, the overall amount is insufficient, and the ecosystem of support is fragmented and complex to navigate. The report emphasised the need for significantly enhanced, tailored support to ensure athletes can thrive after their sporting careers end. We look forward to continuing to contribute to this discussion and to engaging widely with experts, athletes, and practitioners towards our shared goal that all athletes have the support they need to reach their full potential after – not just during – their sporting careers.

Raising Awareness

In October 2024 we held an **event** to launch the report and more importantly to raise the profile of the issue and share ideas and best practices about addressing it. Athletes, sports administrators, and industry experts came together to discuss the challenges facing athletes as they transition to life after elite competitive sport. A highlight was the athlete panel, which brought together former elite athletes to share their firsthand experiences with career transition. Their candid reflections reinforced the report's findings and highlighted the diverse challenges athletes face across different sports. Their stories underscored the positive impact that timely and targeted support can have on an athlete's transition journey, whilst also pointing out areas where support can



be improved.

We are particularly grateful to Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson for facilitating this session - her Duty of Care in Sport review was the genesis of many of the discussions and initiatives we now have today. We were struck by the eagerness of many in the sporting community to come together to discuss the issues currently facing athletes at this stage in their career. Our hope is that by working together we can create a more effective, coordinated, and coherent support ecosystem that delivers impactful assistance to athletes at crucial transition points.



Supporting athletes - Paris 2024

From our initial assessment of the sector we knew that while there was support for athletes, it was insufficient and fragmented. 2024 was an Olympic and Paralympic year and we took this opportunity to seek out and fund a range of organisations that were planning on supporting athletes leaving their sport around this time.

We have **partnered with six organisations:** Switch the Play Foundation, Dame Kelly Holmes Trust, the Mintridge Foundation, Human First Athlete Transition, The True Athlete Project, and Reboot. They each offer distinctive and complementary support to athletes, from career planning to mentoring to addressing issues of identity and mental health. However, they all have a shared purpose to help athletes navigate change as they prepare for a future beyond sport, helping them find the right support for their needs. Recognising the fragmented landscape, they have also joined together as a collective to create an Athlete Support Network, a group dedicated to the support of elite athletes on their transition out of competitive sports, with a stronger coordinated effort.



Looking to 2025

In 2025 we will reflect on our experiences and learnings so far to develop a longer-term plan to advance our work in athlete transition. We will continue to convene and empower the Athlete Support Network and continue to raise awareness about the challenges athletes face post-career. We will also deepen our grant-making, exploring particular aspects of athlete transition for example women in sport or new ('development') Olympic and Paralympic sports. We are energised by the many organisations and individuals we meet who share our passion to address this issue. Most of all, we are excited to help unlock the potential of these incredible humans - outside their sporting careers – for the wider public good.



Section Three: Rainforests

Why does it matter?

Rainforests support about 1.1 billion people globally by providing food, livelihoods, and environmental services such as water supply; they are also home to over 50 million Indigenous Peoples, representing over 1,000 different communities. As the planet's most biodiverse ecosystems, tropical rainforests hold over half of all terrestrial plant and animal species within just 7% of the planet's land surface - so rich that a single hectare of rainforest can contain up to 300 tree species. Perhaps most critically for our changing climate, they are the world's most effective terrestrial carbon sinks. Deforestation is responsible for as much as 15% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Tropical rainforest protection matters to JFF as we recognise the critical role that philanthropic funding can provide in catalysing, derisking and scaling up existing efforts at local, regional and global levels.



96% of global deforestation is happening in the tropics. The most pressing need and where the funding gap is more prominent is in certain regions like the Congo Basin, Amazon Basin and Southeast Asia, where capacity and resources are limited, socio-political and economic conditions are complex, and enabling conditions are insufficient. JFF is responding to this by establishing a Rainforest Programme that can support key tropical forest regions in strengthening local capacity to value and protect standing forests. Through our deep learning and paced approach, rooted partnerships and adaptive targeted interventions our Rainforest Portfolio is initially focusing on projects in West Africa, the Congo Basin and the Amazon Basin.

The Congo Basin

The Congo Basin is the second largest tropical rainforest in the world, but deforestation rates are high, and attention and funding is less than in other tropical rainforest areas.

Recognising the complexity of the region and the early stages of our understanding, we have partnered with Synchronicity Earth's Congo Basin Pooled Fund. This partnership enables us to provide resources to local organisations, to contribute to existing efforts, and to learn from others with more experience.

Community or Indigenous People-led forest management in the Congo Basin appears to be an effective buffer against deforestation as well as promoting biodiversity, climate resilience, sustainable livelihoods, and poverty alleviation. To understand this better, we have partnered with the World Resource Institute (WRI) to assess community-led forest management in the Congo Basin. The work will review successful forest management approaches and funding models, and the potential for community-led initiatives to reduce deforestation while supporting local livelihoods. It is intended to inform funders, civil society organisations and policymakers by drawing on existing experience and providing insights into a new wave of community-led forest management just getting underway across the Congo Basin.

These partnerships are not only about funding; they are about learning and collaborating with others, enhancing our understanding, and amplifying the work of local leaders dedicated to preserving the Congo Basin for future generations.



The Guinean Forests of West Africa

The Guinean forests of West Africa are one of Earth's critical biodiversity hotspots and feed West Africa's major river systems, yet they face mounting pressures from over-logging, agricultural expansion, and resource extraction.

Through our partnership with Rainforest Trust UK (RTUK), we are supporting two local organisations in West Africa. In [Ghana](#)'s Togo-Volta highlands, Herp Ghana is working with communities to protect an area rich with endemic species and to ensure that communities can benefit from this protection via new income streams such as alternative agriculture and ecotourism.



In southeastern **Guinea**, the World Chimpanzee Foundation (WCF) is supporting the creation of the Pinselli-Soyah-Sabouyah National Park to safeguard essential forest corridors and create connectivity with existing protected areas in neighbouring Sierra Leone. Extensive community consultation has shaped the park's design and management, while traditional knowledge has informed conservation strategies. WCF is also developing alternative livelihood programmes and creating employment opportunities through ranger positions.



WCF and Herp Ghana bring decades of experience and deep community relationships to their work. These organisations demonstrate how local expertise, when properly supported, can deliver lasting conservation impact while improving community wellbeing.

The Andes Amazon

Conscious of the huge breadth of organisations working in the Amazon, JFF launched a request for proposals in the summer of 2024 to identify potential opportunities. We wanted to contribute to existing efforts where we could also learn. We also used the exercise to build our network and develop a pipeline of future opportunities. We were overwhelmed by the response, and we can see immense potential to make a difference in the region.



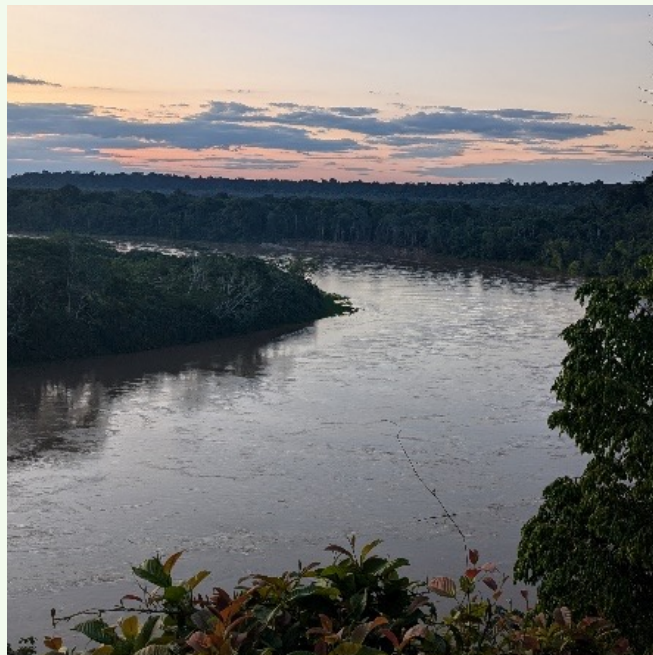
For the initial round of grants in 2024 we identified a funding need in the Andes Amazon region. With its vast range of elevations and climates it is one of the most biodiverse regions on Earth. It stores five billion tonnes of carbon, and serves as South America’s largest water source, feeding major basin systems like the Amazon and Orinoco. Currently, the rise in illegal mining, cattle ranching, land grabbing, agricultural expansion, and infrastructure development is threatening this ecosystem and risking the livelihoods of local communities that inhabit the region.

In northeastern **Ecuador** we are contributing to Jocotoco’s Amazon-Andes Programme to enhance connectivity and resilience across ecosystems beyond their reserves. A core component of the project is the use of advanced technology, including remote sensing and AI-driven acoustic monitoring to enable real-time monitoring of ecosystem health, supporting rapid responses to threats like deforestation and generating essential conservation data.

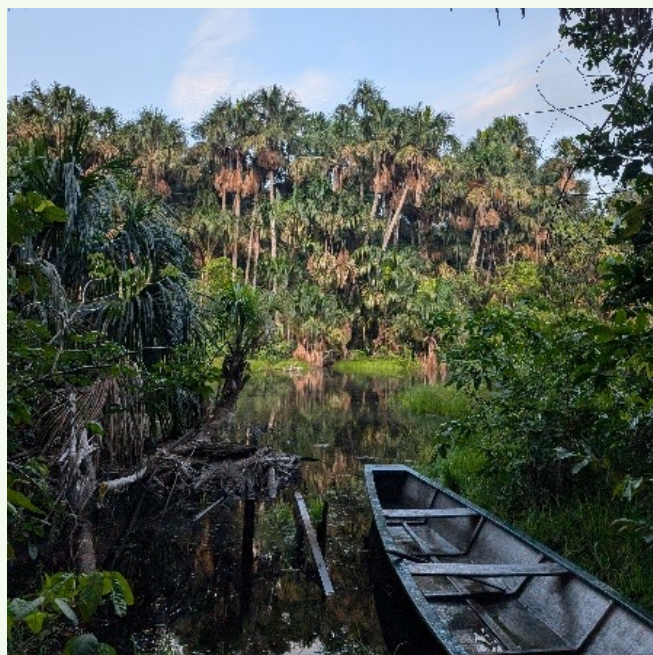


Our partnership with the Andes Amazon Fund and the Peruvian NGO Amazon Conservación Amazónica-ACCA will support the creation of new Regional Conservation Areas (RCAs) in **Peru** and enhance the effectiveness of existing ones. RCAs are managed at the regional level, allowing more locally tailored management strategies that reflect their specific ecological and social needs. This project ensures that staff will be equipped with courses on GPS, drones, camera traps, and acoustic monitors. They will also be trained to prevent and control forest fires, and able to access equipment to strengthen their management capacities in their RCAs.





In 2022 **Bolivia** had the third highest rate of primary forest loss after Brazil and the Democratic Republic of Congo. JFF's partnership with WWF Bolivia will enhance municipal governments and local communities' ability to halt deforestation, improve livelihoods and strengthen the management of Protected Areas and Indigenous Territories. The project will utilise the innovative Forest Foresight (FF) tool which uses AI to predict illegal deforestation hotspots before they occur, enabling efficient prevention and enforcement efforts.



Our grants in the Andes Amazon region focus on countries where deforestation rates have dramatically increased and where we can add value by playing a role as an engaged funder. These projects emphasise the strengthening of the management of existing protected areas and building the capacity of local partners. Not only this, JFF focused on the utilisation of technologies in different and innovative ways giving us an opportunity to learn and share these lessons across our portfolio and beyond.



Looking to 2025

In early 2025 we plan to fund a cluster of projects in Brazil, building on the network of organisations and projects and which we have already engaged. We will continue to identify opportunities in Africa as we grow our understanding and networks. We will also start to address some of the cross-cutting drivers of deforestation at a more global, systemic level. As with our work on athletes, we will reflect on our experiences and learnings so far, and listen to what other have to say, in order to develop a longer-term plan for our work on tropical rainforests.

Section Four:

The Jacobs Futura Foundation in 2025



In 2025 we will continue to strengthen the foundations of the organisation. We plan to increase the scale of our grant-making while retaining our evidence-based, thoughtful, learning-by-doing philosophy. We also aim to develop longer-term strategies for both our focus areas, and with that a view, of where the foundation will develop into the future.

Finally, recognising that we can only achieve our goals by working with others, we will foster our partnerships and networks – to learn, enhance and actively contribute where we have something to offer.

We hope you will join us:

<https://jacobsfutura.org/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/jacobs-futura-foundation>





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Registered Charity Number: 1208303

January 2025