2015 ANNUAL REPORT
Dear Friends and Colleagues,

2015 was a dramatic year on many fronts for conservation and natural resource issues in Africa, and the world at large. At the global level, the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris climate conference both provided an elevated focus – and potential future resourcing opportunities – around the importance of forests, ecosystem health, and land rights in addressing the planet’s foremost environmental and social challenges.

Within the African region the challenges facing human development and ecological sustainability continued to escalate. Growing human populations and new planned infrastructure developments are placing increasing pressure on land, water, and natural resources. Exploitation of forests and wildlife also increased, with poaching of elephants and rhinos in many parts of Africa reaching a crisis point. Tanzania, for example, has lost nearly 60% of its elephants in the past five years.

In the political landscape, social struggles over rights and freedoms continue. This is impacting civil society organizations across Africa, where there has been an increasingly well-documented suite of new restrictions on the ability of local organizations’ freedoms of speech and access to resources.

Yet despite such growing pressures, innovative and committed local organizations continued to provide the critical leadership in devising and scaling up durable solutions. Their work provides strong examples of the kinds of transformations needed for African societies and communities to address today’s challenges. And it is this critical and transformative role that provides the basis for Maliasili Initiatives’ core mission – to support high-potential African organizations to improve their performance, strengthen their organizations, and scale up their results.

For example, Namibia provides an inspirational case for the potential of community-driven conservation. Nearly twenty percent of the country is covered by locally managed conservancies, where wildlife numbers have widely recovered over the past two decades, generating increased benefits for rural communities. A key organization behind these changes, and one that has helped make Namibia a regional model for conservation, is Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC). Last year Maliasili began partnering with IRDNC, facilitating a long-term strategic planning process and helping them overhaul their communications platforms in order to better showcase their many achievements (see page 13).
Kenya is also home to a growing community conservation movement with the potential for large-scale, transformative impact on ecosystems and people. Currently, around seven million acres are established as local conservancies and there are hopes to double that figure in coming years. The country passed a new Wildlife Act in 2014 that formally recognizes these local conservancies for the first time, and the country’s 2010 constitutional reforms provide for community land rights and decentralized natural resource governance. Research published in 2015 demonstrates significantly lower elephant poaching levels on community and private conservancies than on unprotected lands in northern Kenya.

In this context, the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA) has recently emerged as an umbrella body for roughly 140 local conservancies and a dozen regional conservancy associations representing areas such as the Maasai Mara and Amboseli ecosystems. Malaisili Initiatives began a new partnership with KWCA in 2015, helping them develop a more focused and strategic set of operational priorities to guide their work and to start developing more effective communications as a central hub for the national conservancies movement. If we can help KWCA grow into a stronger and more sustainable organization that represents the interests of its members, we have the opportunity to support transformative changes across Kenyan rangelands and ecosystems.

Across all our work, we look for talented, visionary local organizations like these and we commit to helping them address their long-term organizational development challenges and to strengthen and enhance their impacts. In 2015, we received a growing number of requests for organizational support from talented organizations across eastern and southern Africa. Our challenge is now to equip ourselves with adequate human and financial resources so that we can respond to this increase in demand in 2016 so that we can assist more organizations to achieve greater impact.

We also invested heavily during 2015 in developing our own internal capacity, for example through codifying our methods in key areas of work such as strategic planning and communications. We increased our involvement in key networks and forums, both to help our partners in Africa build their own links with relevant global networks and to strengthen our own suite of collaborations. We published a number of reports and articles to stimulate thinking and dialogue around some of the systemic challenges that leading African organizations face in their efforts to build and grow sustainable organizations.

Ultimately all of our work is based on a vision of a transformed African natural resource and conservation field that is led by strong local organizations who are designing and able to scale lasting solutions for human well-being and natural systems. To achieve this vision we need to strengthen those local organizations, build stronger local to global networks and collaborations, and improve the financial models for resourcing effective local organizations. As we move into 2016, we will increasingly focus on developing ways to better link local organizations and global actors and resources, so that we can bring this vision closer to reality. As always, we thank our many colleagues, partners, and supporters for working with us in pursuit of this shared vision of the future.

Sincerely,

Fred Nelson
Executive Director
OUR IMPACT
AT A GLANCE
Increasing funds and financial sustainability

**OUR SUPPORT**

$2,866,000

FUNDS LEVERAGED / RAISED FOR PARTNERS

**IMPACT ON PARTNERS**

More Core Funding, Financial Security, And Flexibility

Additional Staff Members

Expanded Operations

“Maliasili provided valuable support while we were developing our proposal to UN Women. They helped us think through what would be most strategic to us as an organization as well as how we can most effectively communicate our impact, achievements and goals.”

- Ruth Kihiu, Programme Manager, Pastoral Women’s Council

UJAMAA COMMUNITY RESOURCE TEAM’S FINANCIAL GROWTH: 2011-2015

1.5 x their investment in staff salaries

2 x the number of members in their senior management

1.5 x their annual expenditure
Improving Strategy

Our Support

4

Organizational Strategies

Impact on Partners

The strategic planning process has helped PWC develop a clear roadmap for where we are going as an organization. Having been through the process with Maliasili, I have started to realize the importance of narrowing our focus – aiming for quality over quantity and capitalizing on what it is that we do best.”

- Maanda Ngoitiko, Executive Director, Pastoral Women’s Council

“Already we can see how the strategic planning process has impacted upon our work and the level of motivation and purpose in our team.”

-Karine Nuulimba, Program Director, IRDNC

Clearer focus and priorities

Smarter use of resources
The support with redoing our website and developing an organizational profile for improved communication, has been invaluable - we would really not have been able to achieve this without the help of Maliasili.”

- Comment from Partner evaluation survey


- **Increased total revenue by 50.55%**
- **Doubled the average individual donation**
- **Increased their number of repeat donors every year**

*Maliasili supported Lion Guardians with the development of their communications strategy in 2014. In 2015, we played an advisory role, supporting and coaching their Communications Manager to implement their strategy.*
Imagine the change that would be possible if these types of organizations were even stronger – if they were able to grow and expand their efforts to work across larger landscapes and with more communities, to expand their impact.
ACHIEVING IMPACT

Our partner organizations are generating results on the ground, with increasing impact and scale. They are delivering leading edge solutions to natural resource management, land rights, and conservation challenges in African communities and societies.
**MPINGO CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE**

In 2015, Mpingo Conservation & Development Initiative increased the area of community managed forests in southern Tanzania by 81,732 hectares; they added 2 more communities to their Forest Stewardship Council group certificate, increasing hectares under this scheme by 26,578 hectares, and they helped communities earn more than $107,500 from sustainably harvested timber sales.

**UJAMAA COMMUNITY RESOURCE TEAM**

Ujamaa Community Resource Team assisted pastoralist communities in northern Tanzania to secure legal rights to own, manage, and benefit from 29,258 hectares of communal grasslands, helping them to protect critical grazing land for livestock and wildlife. They also helped 228 women gain access and ownership to land, improving food security for them and their families.

**INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND NATURE CONSERVATION**

In 2014, Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC) in Namibia supported 46 communal conservancies with 93,846 residents across 4,330,900 hectares. These conservancies generated revenue of USD $1,453,271 in the Kunene Region and $2,370,615 in the Zambezi Region. Over 300 people received employment from conservancy enterprises.

**BIOCARBON PARTNERS**

BioCarbon Partners in Zambia, working with local tourism companies, enabled the Lower Zambezi National Park to become the world’s first “carbon neutral national park” by offsetting emissions through their flagship Rufunsa Conservancy avoided deforestation (REDD+) project.

**CARBON TANZANIA**

Carbon Tanzania expanded their Yaeda Valley REDD project by 11,140 hectares of Acacia woodland, bringing the total project area to 31,751 hectares. From the sale of verified emission reductions (carbon offsets), Carbon Tanzania paid two Hadzabe hunter-gatherer communities $30,500 based on results showing improved land management and governance.

**LION GUARDIANS**

After four consecutive years of growth in the Amboseli-Tsavo ecosystem, Lion Guardians recorded a stable lion population in the area in 2015. Over the past several years Lion Guardians has observed a tripling of the lion population in this area.
Mwambao

After operating a network for several years using existing informal resource-based groups, in 2016 the Mwambao network grew from 8 to 10 members. It has also formalized in each of the villages to constitute a group of all the conservation-related individuals and organizations working there. All network member groups are in the process of formal registration, and Mwambao has formalized the engagement and capacity building process for these members.

Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA)

The Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA) grew from 80 to 106 members in 2015. KWCA has played a key role in the development of Kenya’s new wildlife legislation, and currently represents conservancy interests on a government committee that is developing the regulations under Kenya’s 2014 Wildlife Act. In this role, KWCA is working to represent conservancy interests by ensuring that all regulations appropriately cater to conservancy interests, in particular those regarding conservancies, access and benefit sharing, compensation, community participation and bio-prospecting.

Pastoral Women’s Council

The Pastoral Women’s Council helped 391 women in ten villages advocate for their own land rights. Two-hundred and eighty four women applied for and received plots from their Village Councils, and in Engaresero village, 107 women were officially handed over title deeds to their land, allowing them rights to own, manage and benefit from their lands.

“Maliasili has built up a portfolio of some of Africa’s leading conservation and land rights organizations as its partners...and developed a specialization in building methods and tools for such groups to refine their strategies, upgrade their communications, and grow their resource base.”

- Acacia Conservation Fund, Annual Grants Letter 2015
Overcoming ‘Market Failure’ in African Conservation

During the past five years we’ve observed a recurrent pattern: local African organizations with outstanding track records of innovation and performance are chronically under-resourced. We see this across nearly all of our partners, who are achieving great results through innovative methods, but frequently struggle to secure sufficient core funding, which would enable them to invest in their staff and basic infrastructure, leave alone the growth and expansions that could maximize their impacts.
The funding that is available for local African organizations is often short-term and restricted to activities or project frameworks that provide limited scope for either organizational investment or adaptive management. Large development agencies tie funding to reporting and compliance requirements that further stretch the capacity of local organizations, even while denying them the funding for the core organizational investments that might enable them to meet such externally imposed requirements.

The challenges these organizations face in accessing adequate and appropriate funding represent a basic ‘market failure’. There is growing global demand – a marketplace – for solutions to pressing environmental and social issues in Africa. For instance, recent developments, such as global commitments to reverse deforestation linked to climate change, or the surge in resources devoted to combatting elephant and rhino poaching, reinforce this. Yet at the same time, the local African organizations that often possess the knowledge, skills and experience to address these problems, are not necessarily the focus of such investment.

There are several basic explanations for this situation. First, many of the best African organizations delivering results on the ground are not commensurately communicating their work and achievements externally, either nationally or internationally. Language, organizational culture, a focus on field operations and implementation, technical skills and infrastructure all play a part in limiting many effective African organizations’ communications. The result is that the organizations doing the best work on the ground are often largely unknown outside a small and somewhat technically focused network of collaborators. Consequently, as we have worked with our partners to help them improve their resourcing, networks, and base of support, communications has frequently been a priority area. For example, Lion Guardians decided to make a major organizational investment in communications in 2013 as an outcome of a strategic planning process that Maliasili facilitated. Partly as a result of this, they have been able to grow their revenue by 55% over the past two years.

A second root challenge lies on the ‘upstream’ side of the funders who invest in African conservation outcomes. Because of the aforementioned weaknesses in local organizations’ communications capacity, and limitations on funders’ own capacity to identify promising organizations in remote parts of Africa, or to carry out due diligence on those organizations, funders in African conservation often direct resources to organizations that are more visible but less impactful. In addition, many funders’ investments models- such as those focused on making small, short-term donations to discrete field projects- are not geared towards promoting scalable and transformative solutions led by pioneering local organizations. The African conservation field urgently needs more long-term, informed, and strategic funding.

For Maliasili Initiatives, it became apparent in 2015 that in order for us to succeed in our mission long-term, we need to focus greater energy towards addressing these market failures. We need to work with our partners, other collaborators, leading conservation and land rights networks, and progressive funders, to better attract and direct capital investment to the most effective local organizations. This is a key part of changing our field – by ensuring that more resources flow to the most effective local organizations, and in turn, ensuring that our partners and other local organizations are able to obtain the resources they require to operate, respond to their constituents, and grow. We need to not only strengthen the capacity of African organizations, but also improve the capacity of upstream funders to make the appropriate investments in those local organizations.

A priority for Maliasili Initiatives in 2016 is to design a clearer set of solutions to this problem and build the collaborations required for implementation. We hope to engage with many of you during the course of the year in progressively developing solutions to this systemic challenge.
A CLOSER LOOK
From the field to the office – facilitating change

Renewing organizational strategy in Namibia:
INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND NATURE CONSERVATION

Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC) is an iconic organization in the African – and indeed global – conservation and natural resource management fields. IRDNC has pioneered Namibia’s approaches to community-based natural resource management, which have evolved into one of the world’s most powerful models for conservation and nature-based rural development. This work began in the 1980s with initial community projects to improve protection of rhinos and elephants in Namibia’s northwest, and went mainstream with policy and legal reforms in the 1990s that enable rural communities to form ‘conservancies’ where they are granted broad rights over wildlife management and utilization. Since then, these community-run conservancies have proliferated to more than 80 in number, covering around 16 million hectares and generating over USD $6 million annually for rural communities. Local protection, joint venture investments with tourism and hunting operators, and strong collaboration with the government have helped conservancies protect elephants, rhinos, lions, mountain zebras, and other species that are declining in most other parts of Africa.
Despite helping to lead Namibia’s remarkable conservation achievements, in 2014 IRDNC began discussion with Maliasili Initiatives around a range of organizational challenges. Long-term funding from USAID and other donors that had supported their work with the conservancies for many years was phasing out, with Namibia reclassified as a middle-income country and less eligible for aid. Finding new funding sources and diversifying their revenue was a priority, as was developing the communications tools and capacity that would enable IRDNC to better articulate and broadcast its remarkable achievements. At the same time, and despite many superficial indicators of continued growth and positive impact on the ground, IRDNC was also concerned about new operational threats including resurgent poaching of elephants and rhinos in southern Africa, or enduring weaknesses related to conservancies’ internal governance, as well as new opportunities such as the growth of transboundary conservation initiatives.

This discussion eventually led to Maliasili Initiatives facilitating a strategic planning process for IRDNC that would chart out the organization’s shared vision of its goals and priorities for the years ahead. A strategic planning workshop was held over a week during March 2015, and plans subsequently revised through additional meetings and internal reviews. The resulting plan charts a renewed ten-year vision and focus for IRDNC to further strengthen and bolster community-based natural resource management in Namibia and in transboundary areas such as the Kavango-Zambezi (KAZA) Transfrontier Conservation Area, which surrounds Namibia’s northeastern Zambezi Region and includes portions of Angola, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Zambia.

In parallel, Maliasili also provided immediate support in helping IRDNC overhaul its outdated communications platform, including developing a new web site and organizational profile.

“This website is a trove of useful and relevant facts at a glance, and explanations of the key thinking shaping IRDNC’s approach to CBNRM [community-based natural resource management].”

- Rosie Cooney is chair of the IUCN’s Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP)/Species Survival Commission (SSC) Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Group
Strengthening Collaborations

THE NORTHERN TANZANIA RANGELANDS INITIATIVE

In September 2015, the Northern Tanzania Rangelands Initiative (NTRI), a consortium of organizations working across the landscape, was awarded a five-year, $12.5 million grant by the U.S. government through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The collaboration brings together a diverse group of organizations with a variety of skills and experiences. Partners include large international groups such as The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Pathfinder International, and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), as well as a number of leading local conservation and land rights organizations, including our partners Ujamaa Community Resource Team (UCRT) and Carbon Tanzania. The USAID grant will provide substantial funding over the next five years to these organizations, including to help UCRT expand the coverage of more secure communal land rights to grazing lands in pastoralist communities across the Maasai Steppe, and for Carbon Tanzania to develop a new forest conservation initiative in the Makame Wildlife Management Area, a nearly million-acre expanse of community-managed wilderness.
For Maliasili Initiatives, this grant represents an important milestone. We played a central role in convening the various partner organizations in the early formation of NTRI, starting about five years ago; to craft the basic strategy for the collaboration, and later to develop the successful proposal to USAID.

NTRI in many respects represents what we consider to be a model for the wider African conservation field in a number of key respects:

- The initiative seeks to build on synergies between community land rights, enterprise development, and conservation outcomes, to achieve both human development and wildlife conservation.
- The initiative represents a level of deep institutional collaboration between diverse development and conservation organizations, and local and international groups, which is exceedingly rare in our field. The collaboration is based on long-term shared interests and vision, not merely short-term project-level joint actions.
- The initiative is fundamentally ambitious, targeting key landscapes covering roughly eight million acres across the central Rift Valley of northern Tanzania, and working to create a framework for jointly pursuing and monitoring shared results and outcomes that will result in the permanent protection of communal rangelands and ecosystem services for people, livestock and wildlife.

As the work funded by USAID gets underway in 2016, it will be important to capture the lessons from this exceptional collaboration and explore how and if NTRI can provide a model for other large-scale landscape efforts in Africa.

**UCRT’s Expenditure and Investment in Staff Salaries**

2010 – 2015

The Northern Tanzania Rangelands Initiative provides a framework for local organizations such as the Ujamaa Community Resource Team to build collaborations and leverage financial and human resources to support their work. It will provide multi-year funding for UCRT, being the latest major step in Maliasili Initiatives’ work during the past five years to assist UCRT in strengthening its resource base so it can invest in its staff and scale up its critical work to assist pastoralist communities secure rights over grazing land and develop plans for sustainable management.
Changing Business Models

MPINGO CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

When community forest patrol members from Ngea, a small village in southeastern Tanzania, confiscated a large stack of illegally cut wood last September, they turned to the Mpingo Conservation & Development Initiative (MCDI) for help. MCDI has worked with Ngea for many years, first helping the community set aside and manage a village forest reserve, then helping it gain certification under MCDI’s Forest Stewardship Council Group Certificate, allowing the community to sell sustainably harvested timber at a premium price.
MCDI has been exploring new ways for communities to earn more revenue from their timber, and selling sawn logs is one quick way to add value to the product. MCDI offered Ngea a loan to process the confiscated logs into sawn timber, and the community was able to sell the planks at a higher value (40% more) at a local auction. Ngea paid back MCDI’s loan and then used the money from timber to construct a teacher’s house in an effort to improve educational services in their village.

This business-minded approach reflects the evolution of MCDI’s strategy and business model. During the past ten years, MCDI has established itself as the leading organization in Tanzania working to enable local communities to develop market opportunities from sustainable forest management. Today, MCDI-partner communities are benefiting from managing – and conserving – their forest resource, and MCDI has helped them earn more than USD $315,000 from forest products. At the same time, MCDI, which has primarily relied on grants-based funding, is searching for ways to develop more sustainable models to support and expand community-based forest management and value chains, particularly as demand from communities for MCDI’s services grows.

Over the past several years Maliasili has worked with MCDI to develop a new business model and strategy, with revenue generated from a range of clients and customers rather than solely being reliant on grants. In 2015, MCDI went from generating just 2% of its core costs through service provision linked to these social enterprises, to 32%. Revenue was generated through community contributions, fees from timber buyers and from paid consultancy work.

We have also worked to support MCDI to expand its networks, create new partnerships, and to strengthen its communications capacity in order to effectively market its value, achievements and role. Most recently we helped MCDI secure new additional core funding, which will support the organization as it transitions to become a more financially sustainable institution.
Growing Octopus and Organizations

MWAMBAO COASTAL COMMUNITY NETWORK

After a three-month closure of a fishing ground on Kisiwa Panza island in Pemba, Tanzania, local community members were able to catch larger and more octopus than before. The Mwambao Coastal Community Network (‘MWAMBAO’) facilitated this pilot initiative, helping the local community improve their fishing practices by demonstrating the value of allowing octopus to grow and reproduce in selected areas without fishing pressures. Nearby communities have asked MWAMBAO to help them expand this project, which they plan to do in 2016.

This work is a part of MWAMBAO’s effort to empower local communities to strengthen their rights and ability to sustainably manage and better benefit from their fisheries and other marine resources in coastal Tanzania. MWAMBAO’s approach is distinguished through its network model, which seeks to engage communities along the coast and support them to address local priorities, build local capacity, integrate science with traditional knowledge and practices, and facilitate the exchange of ideas and experiences between communities.

While MWAMBAO is helping to build more sustainable and viable local fisheries in Tanzania, we are helping the organization become more sustainable and impactful itself. In 2015, Maliasili helped MWAMBAO connect with new networks and partners that will help it expand its work and better engage with new initiatives in the regional marine conservation sector. We also helped the organization secure critical core funding to support its growth for the next two years.

"Maliasili has nurtured us as an organization, and taken time to help us plan and think. This year, through Maliasili’s networks and reputation, we’ve been able to link with key contacts that will really strengthen us as an organization, helping us to be more recognized, and helping to cement our relationships and partnerships."

- Lorna Slade, Executive Director of Mwambao Coastal Community Network

Community members rush to the waters of the Ngazi fishing area, which they had closed off to fishing for three months to let octopus recover.

Photo Credit: Mwambao
Over the past several years Maliasili Initiatives has tested out, refined, reviewed, and tested again, our emerging methodologies for organizational strengthening. We have been learning what works well and what does not based on our work with our partners and customizing our methods to their needs and contexts.

After several years of iterative development, we have codified some of our methodologies in a published form. In 2015, we completed two of these publications— one on strategic planning and the other on communications – two areas where we have worked extensively with our partners and which are foundational for effective organizations.
Facilitating strategic planning or review processes is one of the main services we provide in our wider efforts to strengthen the organizations we work with. The reason for this is that strategy lies at the heart of everything that an organization does. As such, working with our partners on strategic planning processes, or reviewing an existing strategic plan, tends to be a logical starting point for our organizational strengthening work. Often the need to answer fundamental strategic questions about mission, focus, and growth, is the catalyst for organizations reaching out to us for support.

From fundraising to advocacy, communications has the potential to enhance the growth and performance of an organization. Yet communications is a chronically underinvested area within many organizations, especially with small to medium sized organizations working in rural areas. Therefore, it’s not surprising that many of the organizations we work with identify communications as one of their weakest areas and one where they see Maliasili Initiatives’ support as having the potential to lead to significant change for them as an organization.
“In a nutshell, there has been major impact of the Business Plan we have developed together; during the course of strategy and business plan development it became clear that revenue sharing with communities alone would not be sufficient to cover MCDI’s operating costs. The business plan has helped us to define how MCDI will generate income from three sets of clients. MCDI is already generating internal revenues from all the three streams.”

- Makala Jasper, CEO, Mpingo Conservation and Development Initiative
Done right, small organizations can hit above their weight and use communications as a foundation for growth, sustainability, and scaling.”

-Salisha Chandra (Lion Guardians) and Jessie Davie (Maliasili Initiatives), ‘Small but not silent’ Stanford Social Innovation Review online
Despite the centrality of African civil society organizations in social change and impact on the ground, they face daunting challenges in their ability to grow, scale up, and achieve their goals. In 2015, Maliasili Initiatives and Well Grounded, with support from the Rights and Resources Initiative, published the report, *Strengthening African Civil Society Organizations for Improved Natural Resource Governance & Conservation*. The report reviews the external factors as well as internal organizational capacity constraints that go largely overlooked in the African natural resources governance field, but that have a profound influence on the performance and impact of African CSOs.

These include:

- Organizational development constraints, such as funding, human resources, leadership and strategy
- Short-term, generic, one-size-fits-all capacity building support models
- Funding challenges and constraints by donors (particularly core support) and unsustainable funding models
- Complex and uneven partnerships with international NGOs
- Gaps in knowledge, documentation and learning around organizational and capacity development

Our report set out to highlight and spark dialogue around these issues, which we facilitated at a number of major international conferences on land rights and conservation.
Convening Space for Peer Learning: Insights from African organizations

In 2015, Maliasili Initiatives and Well Grounded convened two peer learning events so that we could hear from our partners working across Sub-Saharan Africa about their thoughts on issues, challenges and opportunities related to organizational strengthening.

While the contexts and issues where these organizations work – in Cameroon, Tanzania, Kenya, Namibia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Central African Republic – vary significantly, they did identify common ground around organizational matters. They developed shared insights for what they believe make strong, successful, and resilient organizations, and they asked for more opportunities to learn from each other.

WHAT MAKES STRONG ORGANIZATIONS?

1. Vision, values and identity are at the core
2. Resilience and adaptability
3. Develop and nurture partnerships, but be cautious of them too
4. Learn to say ‘no’
5. Being grounded and accountable to your constituents
6. ‘A crisis is a terrible thing to waste’ (crisis generates opportunities for change)

HOW CAN CSOS BE SUSTAINABLE, INNOVATIVE, ADAPTIVE AND ACCOUNTABLE?

1. Become donor-independent
2. Think creatively about financial sustainability
3. Change perceptions of donors and partners
4. Build trusting relationships through dialogue
5. Showcase the benefits of social enterprise in the natural resource sector
6. Develop a network to focus on organizational strengthening of African CSOs
7. Talk about partnerships and rethink those relationships

“If an organization isn’t clear about its direction and its vision, it will collapse”
- African organization representative

“The biggest challenge perhaps is changing the perceptions or outlook of traditional donors or organizations to realize that the grassroots organizations are the ones that aren’t going anywhere and so they need to build the capacity of these local organizations that are doing this work”
- African CSO representative

“There is a dialogue to be had with donors to understand what they want, what they need in order to invest in an organization like ours. What do they need to trust grantees more?”
- African CSO representative

READ MORE ABOUT CSO RECOMMENDATIONS AND INSIGHTS:

- Strengthening Organizations - What African CSOs Want and Need →
- Six Insights from African CSOs →
It is clear that innovative and committed African conservation organizations are developing effective approaches that can lead to elephant recoveries...If 2016 is to be the year the elephant poaching crisis turns around, increasing awareness of these progressive models and stepped-up support for the innovative African organizations that are developing them will be key to achieving impact at a wider scale.”

- Fred Nelson, National Geographic, A Voice for Elephants & Rhinos Blog
In 2015, Maliasili Initiatives’ expenditure totaled $622,202, an increase of 42% over our 2014 budget. Over the past five years, since our founding in 2011, our budget has more than tripled. In 2016 our expenditure budget is expected to be around $740,000, representing continued strong growth and enabling us to work with an expanding suite of partners and collaborations as described in this report.

There are several key factors that have enabled this financial growth. First and foremost, we are privileged to have a vital seed and core funding partner in the Acacia Conservation Fund, without whom Maliasili Initiatives would not have been established five years ago. We are extremely grateful as an organization for this support and this strong partnership.

We have also been fortunate to have a number of other long-standing partners and providers of general operating support, including an important anonymous funder, the Linden Trust for Conservation, and, a new funder in late 2015 that will support a significant segment of our Tanzanian portfolio, the Flora Family Foundation.

Key strategic partnerships with other international organizations have also been important to our budget growth in recent years. This includes a grant from the Rights and Resources Initiative that supported much of our research and publications on strengthening African civil society organizations in 2015, and collaborations with The Nature Conservancy in Tanzania (see p. 16) and Kenya that link our work with shared partner organizations such as UCRT and KWCA with USAID conservation project funding.

With improved fundraising efforts and new strategic partnerships, we believe we have numerous opportunities to increase our resourcing and our impacts in the year ahead.

Thank you to all of our supporters.
## 2015 Expenditure by Category

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### Expenditure 2013-2015

- **2013:** 419,474
- **2014:** 438,559
- **2015:** 622,202

The pie chart illustrates the distribution of expenditure for the years 2013, 2014, and 2015.
The results we have outlined in this annual report and that Maliasili Initiatives has achieved since our founding have in large part been due to the highly exceptional core funding we have received from the Acacia Conservation Fund – a funder that, like us, is passionate about results and impact and willing to provide the core funding to enable its grantees to invest in their work and their growth. We have also diversified our funding, particularly in 2015, with new two-year core funding from the Flora Family Foundation, new sources of USAID funding in East Africa (accessed through several deepening collaborations with The Nature Conservancy), and an increasing level of co-funding of our support services from our African partner organizations themselves.

We now believe that Maliasili Initiatives is well positioned to considerably grow our portfolio and our impacts, with a growing suite of new potential pipeline partners, many of whom now make up an interconnected ‘ecosystem’ of organizations within a particular field or country. We have opportunities to considerably grow our portfolio and our impacts in countries such as Kenya, Tanzania and Namibia, building from our existing portfolio and a suite of critical opportunities. To do this though, we need to attract new core funding and investment.

So as a part of this annual report, as Maliasili Initiatives reaches a half-decade in age, we are issuing an open call for new investors. We are seeking philanthropic investors that want to support the leading cadre of African conservation and natural resource organizations to grow their impacts, scale up their work, and strengthen their organizations. We are seeking investors who want to engage with us in thinking through how to best achieve impacts, how to select and support the best African organizations, and how to achieve social and environmental change. Above all we seek investors that share our vision for an African conservation field led by talented, committed, and enabled local organizations tied to their communities and their societies, and our belief that we can help those organizations advance towards that future.

We encourage any interested investors to contact us directly to explore how we can work together to achieve greater impacts.

Fred Nelson, Executive Director
fnelson@maliasili.org
“If we believe in the work that CSOs [civil society organizations] are doing - and we should - then we must help usher in a new era of capacity building investment, for institutions, and the individuals who comprise them.”

- Darren Walker, President, Ford Foundation