

2015

ANNUAL REPORT



1.

MESSAGE FROM OUR
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2.

ABOUT WELL GROUNDED

3.

2015 AT A GLANCE

4.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

5.

2016, A PREVIEW

6.

ACCOUNTS

7.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

"Thanks to the work with Well Grounded our organisation now benefits from the collective participation of community members in protecting the forest" CAMGEW





MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

People in the Congo Basin have been organising themselves in 2015 to achieve great things: promoting rights and protecting forests. From community level in Cameroon, where communities are making a living from forest products, to international level in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where organisations and communities have been mobilising to protect the Virunga National Park, the organisations we've worked with have been making a real difference.

Our part in that has involved, as ever, supporting organisations as they think through and improve how they organise themselves. It's been a real inspiration, seeing what a group of determined people can get done! We've also been collaborating with others to ask bigger questions about how civil society could have even more effect. With Maliasili Initiatives, an organisation that works in East and Southern Africa, we published a report on the challenges facing African civil society organisations and throughout this year we've been using it to get conversations going about what support African organisations want and need in order to have an even greater impact – and about when support can become more of a hindrance than a help.

All in all, it's been an inspiring and challenging year and the growing Well Grounded team is looking forward to working with even more fantastic African organisations in 2016!

CATH LONG

Well Grounded executive director

2

ABOUT WELL GROUNDED

In the countries in which **WELL GROUNDED** works, natural resources are key to the lives and livelihoods of the poorest and most marginalised people.



Many African organisations are doing a great work improving natural resource management and asserting community rights, but face **serious challenges** that limit their efforts to grow and sustain their impact.

WELL GROUNDED PROVIDES SUPPORT TO THESE ORGANISATIONS SO THAT THEY CAN OVERCOME THESE CHALLENGES, BEING MORE EFFECTIVE AND IMPROVING THE WORK THEY DO ON NATURAL RESOURCE GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNITY RIGHTS.



Our team in 2015



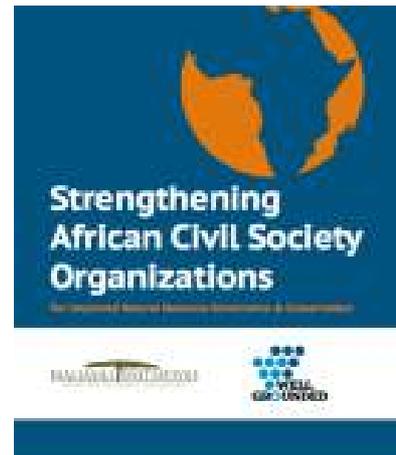
Know more about the challenges the African organisations face and about how to address these issues



3

2015 AT A GLANCE

We co-authored with Maliasili Initiatives a **report** that explores the major organisational challenges and issues facing African Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working in the natural resource and conservation fields, as well as current practices and trends in funding and external capacity support.



Welcome to the Well Grounded blog!



We launched our **institutional blog**, intended to be a space for reflection about the challenges facing African CSOs today. We did it with the hope that many different people and organisations get involved in the conversation, challenge ideas, provoke discussion and debate and share solutions.



We continued our work **supporting African Civil Society Organisations in the Congo Basin**, obtaining together great achievements on their structure, strategy, planning and advocacy capacity.

Why we do refer to African civil society organisation as **CLIENTS?**

- ✓ Because it is to them that we are primarily accountable, regardless of how our work with them is financed.
- ✓ Because we want to be clear that our relationship with organisations is professional and based on mutual respect.

"We had the opportunity to reflect on what we want, where we want to go, the means to get there and the change or impact we want to make in society"
SAILD

Our **CLIENTS** in **2015**

CAMEROON

Service d'appui aux initiatives
Locales de Développement

Cameroon Gender and
Environment Watch

Field Legality Advisory Group

Nature Cameroon

Réseau des Organisations
Locales du Dja

Centre for Assistance to Justice
and Animation for
Development

**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
OF CONGO**

Mbou Mon Tour

Groupe de Travail Climat REDD

Dynamique des groupes des
Peuples Autochtones

Réseau pour la Conservation et
la Réhabilitation des
Ecosystèmes Forestiers

REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Plateforme pour la Gestion
Durable des Forests

4

THE YEAR IN REVIEW



"Management is doing things right, **LEADERSHIP** is doing the right things"

Peter Drucker

During 2015 we continued with our **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**, launched in 2014.

SUPPORT
THAT
MATTERS



We worked with African civil society organisations in Cameroon, DRC and the Republic of Congo, trying to address the challenges faced and giving people the opportunities to develop their skills.

In 2015, **32 people** have improved their leadership skills and are now able to identify the difference it has made to their organisations.





Photo: François Nègre



GHISLAIN AIMEE
FOMOU NYAMSI
Forest Programme
Manager.
SAILD

“The programme gave me an opportunity to step back and reflect on who I am and know what I want to achieve, personally and professionally.
I developed deeper interest in doing what I currently do.
The Leadership Programme helped me to develop my objective and be better focused”



Supporting **NETWORKS**

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together"

African proverb

The national **PLATFORM FOR THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF FORESTS (PGDF)** was created in 2008 and is comprised of nearly sixty organisations in the Republic of Congo. Member organisations work on a variety of issues that range from natural resource management and environmental protection to the promotion of human and indigenous people's rights. The platform's main purpose is to coordinate civil society engagement in political processes to ensure good forest governance and respect of forest communities' rights.

We have been working closely with the platform since 2012 on their organisation development priorities. Our work in 2015 has

focused on the platform's strategy, structure and ways of functioning. As a result of our support, there is a stronger link between the departments and the national level and members are actively contributing to the work of the platform.

By maintaining its focus on its core objective, keeping realistic in its ambitions and its demands on its members and continuing to be accountable to those members, the platform will continue to have a significant impact.

ACTIONS
WITH
IMPACT



In the Democratic Republic of Congo, our client **RESEAU CREF** and its partners have been able to call a halt to oil exploration in Virunga National Park



Photo: LuAnne Cadd

Members of the PGDF have actively shaped the strategy of the platform, including the renewed focus on engaging in the implementation of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA). **OVER 50%** are able to explain what the VPA is and what its implications are for the communities they work with.

The members in the departments have also started to strengthen their approach to working with forest communities by putting in place mechanisms for **GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY**.

The PGDF have had a considerable impact on the revision of the **NATIONAL FOREST CODE**. During a national multi-stakeholder workshop, 70% of their contributions were validated.



It is all about
STRATEGY

"A goal without a plan is
just a wish"

*Antoine de
Saint-Exupéry*

Most African Civil Society Organisations have a clear idea about what they want to do and why, but many haven't necessarily articulated how they want to do it.

During 2015 we have worked with organisations in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon and the Republic of Congo, to help them **DEVELOP A STRATEGY TO GUIDE THEIR WORK.**

We helped them to clarify their vision, mission and values, to develop their strategy and to create links with others organisations, supporting them to be an even more strategic player at the national and regional level.

IMPACT



THE NEED TO BE FOCUSED

NATURE CAMEROON is a civil society organisation created to combat the rapid destruction of the rich biodiversity in Cameroon mainly at the grassroots level.

Our support has led the organisation to be more focused. They can now spend more time with communities, carrying out participatory resource mapping and workshops on illegal logging.



A CLOSER LOOK **SAILD**

SAILD (Service d'Appui aux Initiatives Locales de Developement) is an organisation working in the natural resource sector in Cameroon. They participated in the leadership programme in 2014 and received one to one organisational support during 2015.



Despite its work, SAILD was not being perceived as a key actor within the sector in Cameroon. The support from WG enabled them to have a clear definition of the organisation's purpose and a better organisation of their work.

Today, as a result of its engagement and valuable contribution to the networks of civil society organisation in the natural resource sector in Cameroon, SAILD is more accepted by stakeholders and its work recognized and valued.

"We are a better organisation today. We are seeing an improvement in the way we work. Our credibility has been boosted. Today, no serious work can be done by CSOs in the natural resource sector without soliciting the views of SAILD"

SAILD



" **COMMUNITY** is much more than belonging to something; it's about doing something together that makes belonging matter"

Brian Solis

During 2015, we put some emphasis on the relationship between CSOs and communities, supporting CSOs to look critically at themselves and how they include and account to the communities they work with.

We supported our clients in our countries of intervention to build

and strengthen spaces for community participation, and to incorporate the views of its members when planning their goals and activities.

Community ownership and participation is essential to have a real **IMPACT** and to ensure sustainability.



2015 enabled **CAMEROON GENDER AND ENVIRONMENT WATCH (CAMGEW)** to identify ways of engaging better with community members: They strengthened their **community radio programme** and initiated activities that gave them a space to get community views and challenges.

2015 was also a year of change for **NATURE CAMEROON**. They focused on interventions that benefit the Banyang-Mbo constituency and initiated other participatory activities that have generated great engagement.

Community members are now much more involved in the protection of **Banyang Mbo Wildlife Sanctuary** that provides habitat to a large population of chimpanzees in this region and the last remaining sizeable population of forest elephants.



Promoting
DISCUSSION,
increasing CSOs
capacities to
INFLUENCE



Current support models, both technical and financial, are not necessarily contributing to the building of effective CSOs.

In 2014, we carried out a research in partnership with Maliasili Initiatives that showed that, even if most significant barriers to CSOs to scale up their work are internal, some current international development funding and “capacity building” practices are having also a considerable negative impact.

In 2015 we **PUBLISHED THE REPORT** with the result of this research, and a video showing the main findings and recommendations.

We also supported organisations to attend the **GLOBAL LAND FORUM** and the **CAPACITY BUILDING FOR CONSERVATION CONFERENCE**.

Together with Maliasili Initiatives we facilitated **PEER LEARNING EVENTS** between African civil society organisations to talk about Organisation Development Issues: A report report highlighting the key points and themes that emerged was published.





A CLOSER LOOK **CAMGEW**

CAMEROON GENDER AND ENVIRONMENTAL WATCH (CAMGEW) is a civil society organisation created to look for a solution to environmental and women's problems in Cameroon.

The work with CAMGEW has allowed its team to be more united and to work with efficiency with a clearer strategy and approach.

The 2015 sessions enabled CAMGEW to develop a more representative mission statement that reflects what they seek to do. With this, they put in place radio programmes on why they do what they do. They also use other platforms to communicate and allow participation like trainings. As a result, there is an increased understanding on the work and relevance on CAMGEW. This has led to more youth and women being involved in eco-business activities. There is also an increased interest by the community to protect the forest.

They also gained a better global understanding of their programmes and a better appreciation of the challenges in their community.



**"I be na member
for CAMGEW"**

This is a way of expressing the attachment of the community members to CAMGEW's work, and that they belong to the change process CAMGEW is influencing.

5

2016, A PREVIEW

Discover our main activities planned for 2016

ONE TO ONE ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT: One to one tailored organisation development support to individual CSOs and national networks in Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME: After a highly successful implementation of the the leadership development programme, a new phase will be started in Cameroon.

CROSS-CUTTING THEMES: 2016 will also mark the development of new services and skills in cross-cutting areas, including gender, conflict management and anti-discrimination.

CO-DEVELOPMENT: Establish co-development groups in Western Democratic Republic of Congo to promote peer learning through knowledge and experience sharing amongst leaders of civil society organisations.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME: In order to create a regional resource base of organisation development practitioners to support CSOs in the Congo Basin region, an internship programme will be put in place.

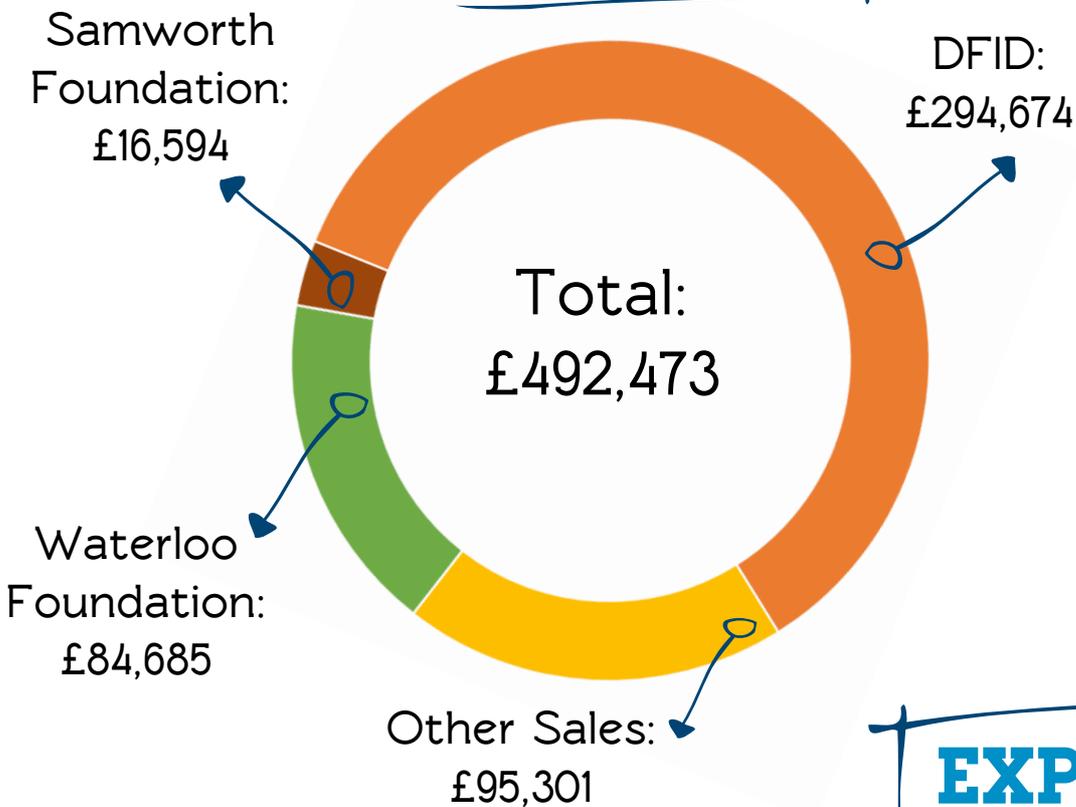
KNOWLEDGE SHARING: Develop open access materials to increase the body of knowledge on organisation development, to share experiences and stimulate discussion.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUES: Convene dialogue with progressive donors and partners of African CSOs to explore ways in which to improve the funding and support environment for CSOs in the Congo Basin.

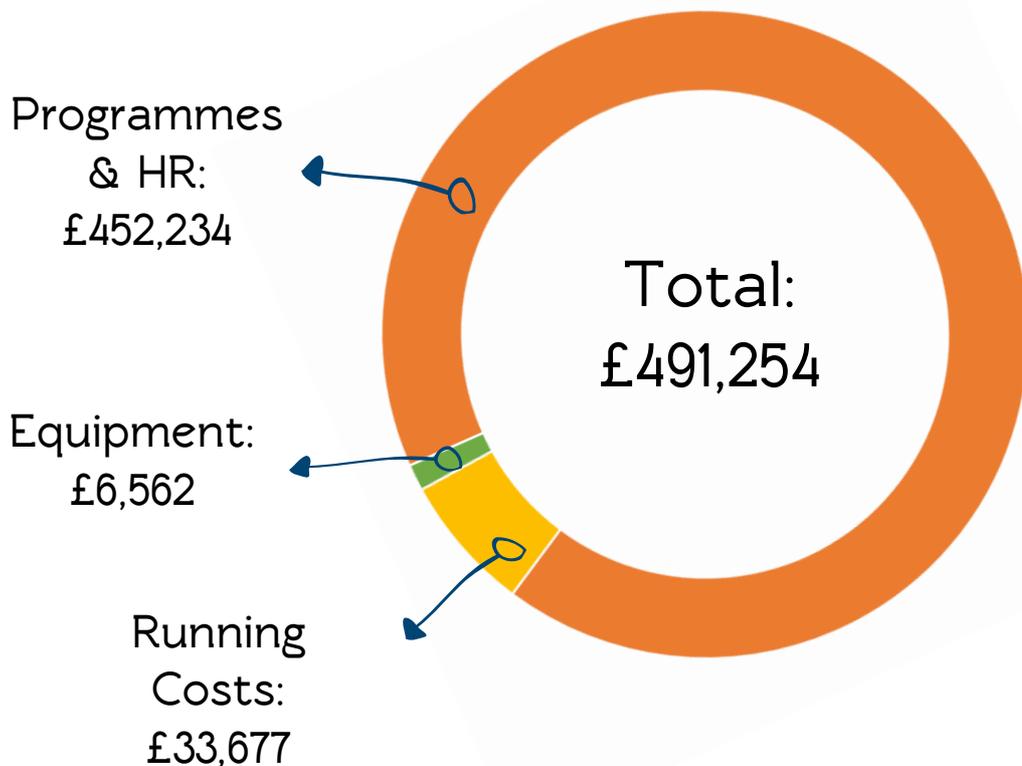
6

ACCOUNTS

INCOME



EXPENSES



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

DONORS

Department For International Development (DFID)

Waterloo Foundation

Samworth Foundation

Rainforest Foundation Norway

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

International Union For the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI)

Thanks to all **PARTNERS AND CLIENTS** we worked with in 2015

BOARD MEMBERS

Will Campell

Iola Leal

And also thanks to...

Centre pour l'Environnement et le Développement

Davine Thaw

Guillaume Soto at Shauri Conseil & Coaching

Jasmine Paradine-James

Jean Guillaume Kleis

Katie Giddings

Katy Scholfield at Synchronicity Earth

The team at Maliasili Initiatives

Vamory Traoré at Web Architecture and Technologies Ltd.

Supported by:



UKaid

from the British people

Disclaimer: The views presented in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of DFID

Sign up to our newsletter!



Follow us!

