A non-profit organisation that supports the development of Civil Society Organisations in Africa to reach their full potential and achieve real, positive change for environmental and social justice.
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"2016 has been an intense year for Well Grounded: we've seen quite a bit of change in the team and we're working with plenty of new organisations who are all doing exciting work and have interesting issues that they want to get to grips with. In an increasingly uncertain world, with climate change becoming more and more apparent and international politics delivering real shocks, we've been enthused and inspired by the people we work with, who don't let the most trying of circumstances stop them from building positive change. In the Republic of Congo, for example, they've managed to get important rights for forest people enshrined in the texts of new policy and legislation.

In particular, over the past year, we've been working with far more organisations outside the capital cities, so our team has spent a fair bit of time in planes, buses and canoes in order to reach people who are working with forest communities on a day to day basis. It's been really rewarding: quite apart from getting to spend time in remarkable forests and being welcomed by fantastic people, the insights and challenges that organisations close to the grassroots bring up give us a fresh perspective.

We've come across great organisations that range from loose and informal structures to those guided by traditional norms and others that have a more bureaucratic form. For all of them, with inspired leadership (not just from the heads of organisations but from any level), and with a passion for the work they're doing, they can find creative and positive ways to move from strength to strength. Our team's job is to open up the discussion and provide a space for organisations to take a look at themselves and if we get that right, our clients find their own solutions to whatever challenge they're facing.

On a personal note, it's been a year of change for me and I am stepping down as Exec Director – although I am staying on as a board member. My time with a wonderful team of people at Well Grounded has been incredibly rich. And that team will take us on from strength to strength – the experience, the willingness to learn, the shared laughter and the passion for the issues that everyone on the team has give me huge hope and enthusiasm for Well Grounded's future and that of the great organisations that we have worked with in the Congo Basin over the past six years."

Cath Long
Executive Director
OUR TEAM IN 2016

Jimm ‘Chick’ Van Reijswoud
Emily Wilson
Mireille Kayijamahe
Doudou Kalala

Emma Almeras
Cath Long
Prudence Mosses
Joseph Kuwong
Fabrice Hansé
In 2016, we articulated our organisational strategy around three core pillars, which taken together reflect all of our work.

**Organisation Development (OD) Delivery:**

The foundation of all of our work is facilitating OD processes for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and CSO networks on a one-to-one basis.

Our OD services are tailored to each one's particular needs.

We work directly with clients face-to-face and also offer advice and support at a distance.

We facilitate links and exchanges with other organisations in the region or internationally to enable peer-to-peer learning and mentoring.

**Individual Learning:**

In order to reinforce the work we do with organisations and teams, we also offer specific support to individuals that work within CSOs. This includes:

a. Leadership Development
b. Diversity & Inclusion
c. Conflict Transformation, Negotiation & Trust-building

**Enabling environment:**

This is work that we initiate to try and influence the broader context in which African CSOs work, often in collaboration with other key actors.

Key areas of focus include:

a. Creating space to promote collective action
b. Promoting new forms of collaboration between CSOs and International NGOs
c. Improving funding models for African CSOs to increase their autonomy
d. Reacting to changes that influence space for CSOs to operate
In 2016, the majority of our work was one-to-one Organisation Development processes with clients in Cameroon, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo and Democratic Republic of Congo.

We worked with 24 clients in 2016.

In relation to Individual Learning, we organised a leadership workshop in Brazzaville, which was the last one as part of our pilot Leadership Development Programme. In Cameroon, we piloted an approach called co-development, where people support each other in developing their leadership skills. Based on all our learning and feedback so far, we’ve designed a new Leadership Development Programme to be launched in 2017.

In 2016, Well Grounded took a close look at some key issues that all CSOs have to deal with: gender & diversity and conflict. We commissioned research on how these issues play out in the Congo Basin and we are now planning with our clients how best to support them in dealing with them.

As part of our Enabling Environment work, we worked with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) on a meeting that brought African CSOs together to share experiences, draw out learning and identify common objectives and activities.

With Maliasili Initiatives, we started work on a research project on alternative funding models that African CSOs will be able to use to develop more reliable and more autonomous ways of financing their work.
Cameroon is rich in forests and natural resources, and about 70% of the population depend on agriculture and natural resources to survive. The forest area is divided up into zones, and forest communities only have a very limited access to land and forest resources they used to own. In addition, corruption and mismanagement are endemic, and there is increased pressure on forest lands from interests in industrial-scale agriculture and mining.
The Service d’Appui aux Initiatives Locales de Développement (SAILD) has been working for over 25 years to build capacities of Cameroon’s farmers and small rural entrepreneurs. In 2016, Well Grounded supported the team to reevaluate the context of its work and update its mission. We also supported them to develop a project that tackles illegal logging in community forests, which is currently funded by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). It is the first time a project is focusing on monitoring the timber extraction from community forests, which was a crucial element in the decision by the FAO to support it.

“I SEE AN EVOLUTION IN OUR STRUCTURE, AND IN THE SETUP OF AN EFFICIENT AND CREDIBLE ORGANISATION.”

SAILD

In 2016, CSOs and communities advocated in favour of the renewal of the FLEGT-VPA agreement between the European Union (EU) and the government.

CSOs have also made contributions to the development of the Mining Code to ensure that the interests of forest communities are being taken into account, and that it is not in contradiction with the Forest Code.
The Central African Republic has considerable mineral and natural resources. These are also something of a curse, since for over forty years the country has been immersed in coups d'états and abuses. In this context, sustainable development policies have not been a government priority, and unregulated exploitation has been threatening the large forested areas in the South-West and East of the country.

Civil society’s history is relatively recent and only really began with the arrival of national action plans, which created a space in which CSOs could finally have an impact. In 2008, the country adopted its forestry code to provide guidelines on the management of its forest resources.

**OUR CLIENTS**

**CIEEDD**
Centre pour l’Information Environnementale et le Développement Durable

**GDRNE**
Plateforme pour la Gestion Durable des Ressources Naturelles et l'Environnement
In November 2011, the government signed a convention for transparent forest management - a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) - with the European Union. The process was stalled in 2013 due to political crisis but in April 2016, a new government and Ministry of Water, Forests, Hunting and Fisheries was appointed and activities concerning the VPA were re-initiated. CIEDD, one of our clients, has played a lead role around civil society’s independent monitoring of forest activities.

In 2016, Well Grounded has been supporting CSOs that are working on community forestry in the country as part of a larger Consortium of international and national civil society groups.

The Centre pour l’Information Environnementale et le Développement Durable (CIEDD) is a major advocacy player for forest communities in CAR. The political crisis in 2013 affected some of the organisation’s activities. In 2016, Well Grounded supported the CIEDD team to update and adapt their strategic framework to take into account the new context.

The Plateforme pour la Gestion Durable des Ressources Naturelles (GDRNE) is a national network that brings together about 30 of the major environmental organisations and organisations that advocate for the rights of women and indigenous people in forest management in CAR. The network’s activities were impacted by the political crisis, but the members supported each other so as not to let down the communities they were working with. Well Grounded has been working with GDRNE since its creation and in late 2016 the foundation for developing a new 2017-2019 strategy was laid.
Our Work in...
Democratic Republic of Congo

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is home to more than half of the Congo Basin forest and has the greatest extent of tropical rainforests in Africa. The country also has the greatest mammal and bird diversity in Africa, and close to 60% of its population relies on the forest for food, shelter and medicine.

After twenty years of war and unrest, the DRC is still marred by corruption and mismanagement. A significant amount of its forest has been allocated speculatively for industrial exploitation, without consultation of local populations.

Since 2002, the DRC has embarked on a series of reforms, including the consolidation of the Forest Code. In 2014 a law on community forestry was adopted, thus providing new opportunities for community management of forest resources.
The Centre d’Accompagnement de la Population pour le Développement Multisectoriel (CADEM) is based in Nioki, in the Bandundu province of DRC. Its goal is to promote grassroots sustainable initiatives to enable the Mai-Ndombe population to improve their living conditions and to defend their common interests.

In 2016, Well Grounded worked closely with the CADEM team to help them clarify their focus: vision, mission and objectives, and to identify key activities. Following this work, they were able to win a UNICEF grant that will enable them to promote hygiene and improved health to forest communities they work with in the Mai-Ndombe area.

In 2016, Well Grounded supported the CAGDFT team to undertake a critical analysis of the organisation. This enabled them to identify their strengths, weaknesses and the existing opportunities they can leverage.

With WG’s support, they undertook a strategy development process that culminated with the organisation’s first ever strategy document, and a workplan for 2017.

A multi stakeholder platform bringing together CSOs, government, private sector and community representatives has been established to develop a National Strategy to facilitate the implementation of the community forestry law. The Strategy will be used as a guiding document for the implementation of community forestry on the ground.

This ‘roundtable’ is an unprecedented collaboration around policy making on forest governance in the DRC.

Over the past year, Well Grounded has been supporting four CSOs that are piloting the implementation of a community forestry programme.
The Republic of Congo has a wealth of natural resources, including oil, forests and minerals. The challenges to the sustainable management of resources include a lack of resources to monitor implementation of laws, a poor system of tax recovery from private companies, a lack of transparency in the management of revenues, a weak industrial sector to transform raw products and a large informal sector. However, the government is engaged in certain initiatives that aim to address some of these challenges.
Endangered Species International Congo (ESI-CONGO) is a Congolese association founded in 2009, based in Pointe Noire. Their objective is to fight biodiversity loss through actions with local communities. They are particularly focused on protecting gorillas, which live in the Southern forests of Congo.

In 2016, Well Grounded facilitated an internal process that supported the ESI-Congo team to improve several aspects of their organisation, such as their strategic focus, their participatory approach, and their internal structure.

“This workshop helped shake ESI’s foundations, challenge ourselves and refocus our social objective.”

ESI - CONGO

Plateforme pour La Gestion Durable des Forêts (PGDF), the national civil society forest platform, was successful in influencing the forest code revision process in 2014: the majority of their recommendations, including the integration of community forestry and benefit-sharing for forest communities were integrated into the draft law.

In 2016, PGDF continued its lobbying efforts to ensure that the issues they proposed are not removed from the final text and that there is greater transparency in the process.

PGDF is increasingly recognised as a credible actor in the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) process, which is part of the government’s commitment to improving forest governance.

Through participation in VPA bodies, they have been putting the issue of forest conversion on the table and members are starting to be called on as resource people by government and other key stakeholders.

Well Grounded has been collaborating with Client Earth over the past year to support PGDF to prepare for these meetings. In 2016 Well Grounded also worked with members of the platform to support them in developing departmental action plans that are aligned with the PGDF’s national strategy and action plan.
Our Accounts

Expenditure

TOTAL: £630,732

- £120,398 Operational costs (e.g., running costs, support staff, communications, legal advice, etc.)
- £7,865 Equipment
- £502,469 Programme costs (e.g., workshops, trainings, programme staff, travel, etc.)

Income

TOTAL: £685,900

- £472,157 Department For International Development Grant
- £62,916 Direct client support contracts
- £43,406 Samworth Foundation Grant
- £11,896 Waterloo Foundation Grant
- £52,855 Rainforest Foundation UK-led Consortium
- £42,670 International Institute for Environment and Development-led Consortium
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Beyond this, we also receive support from the Waterloo Foundation for our work in Cameroon and Republic of Congo with civil society platforms working on forest governance and community rights issues; and from the Samworth Foundation specifically for our work with CSOs in Cameroon.

Our clients also contribute to the costs of our services in various ways, as a means of investing in their own organisation development process. Some of our clients' international partners also provide funds to support this work.
Thank you to all of our clients and collaborators in 2016!

In particular, we would like to thank:

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