



ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTHENING

REALIZING POTENTIAL, INCREASING IMPACT

Maliasili Initiatives' approach to organizational strengthening

ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTHENING FOR INCREASED IMPACT

Since 2011, we've
been strengthening
our partners...

7 - Number of strategic and
business plans we've helped
our partners develop

\$1,476,845 - Funds
we've raised and leveraged
for our partners' work since
2011

\$456,979 - Funds we've
granted as bridge funding to
our partners in direct core
support

15 - Number of
communications products
we've helped develop to
showcase our partners'
impacts

7 - New senior staff we've
helped recruit, raise funds for
and coach

10 - Number of
funding relationships or
programmatic collaborations
we have helped facilitate for
our partners

...Helping them create significant impact

4,431 km² - Total area of land **Lion Guardians'** operations
cover, which has doubled in size since 2010

\$123,322 - Total revenue **Mpingo Conservation &
Development Initiatives'** partner communities have earned in
timber sales between 2009-2014; 2014 sales increased roughly 65%
from the previous year, generating more than \$78,384

42 - Number of Women's Rights and Leadership Forums that the
Pastoral Women's Council has helped establish across Ngorongoro
District, northern Tanzania. These forums raise awareness about
women's rights, helping women defend their own rights, and giving
them a voice in public

208,182 hectares - Total hectares of communal grazing
land in Simanjiro District, northern Tanzania, that the **Ujamaa
Community Resource Team** has helped secure since 2012

18,012 tCO₂e - Tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions **Carbon
Tanzania's** Yaeda Valley REDD Project mitigates each year; this
same project has earned the partnering indigenous hunter-gatherer
community, the Hadzabe, more than \$50,000 so far

1 - New Wildlife Law in Kenya, which incorporates civil society
inputs to address poaching and to strengthen community-level
incentives for conservation and wildlife management. The **East
African Wildlife Society** was one of the organizations advocating for
this new and improved law

13 - Number of participatory films **Mwambao Coastal Community
Network** has helped partner communities produce since 2010,
covering issues ranging from dynamite fishing to coastal resource
conflict

INTRODUCTION

- Local leaders, civil society organizations, and social entrepreneurs have the potential to bring about transformational changes that benefit local people and ecosystems in Africa. Yet creating, building, growing and sustaining the organizations to realize such impacts is a widespread challenge. Maliasili Initiatives works to address this gap in the African natural resources field.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTHENING

Our partners are existing or promising leaders in their field; our role is to help make them stronger. We thus use the term ‘organizational strengthening’ because we feel it is the most literal description of what we do – strengthen and improve the organizational performance, impact and leadership of the groups that we work with.

“Maliasili has been key in trying to transform PWC as an organization, not just as a project.”

- Jill Nicholson, Pastoral Women’s Council

- We support local organizations with high potential for scaling their reach and impact, and together we identify, address and solve their organizational challenges so they can realize their full potential. Maliasili Initiatives understands the suite of technical, operational and organizational development issues that African organizations face in working to develop effective sustainable natural resource management systems on the ground and in the policy realm. From early start-ups with great vision and emerging track records to long-established organizations playing important roles and seeking renewal, we help organizations at different stages of development achieve greater results by addressing these issues.

- This document describes Maliasili Initiatives’ framework for organizational strengthening, including how we select, work with, support and strengthen our partners to help them reach their full potential.

OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES THAT GUIDE OUR APPROACH

“Most organizations that come to assist us with building our capacity, while well meaning, often don’t know UCRT very well or the context in which we operate. Maliasili Initiatives is one of our partners that knows us well and has been a committed partner to UCRT. They understand exactly what we want to achieve in our work, our strengths and weaknesses and the challenges facing us in the environment we work in.”

- Edward Loure, Ujamaa
Community Resource Team

- **Customization:** We strive to meet our partners where they are at a given time and respond to their own needs and circumstances.
- **Prioritization:** Organizational change and growth cannot happen overnight; it must be done in a phased, prioritized, and measured manner.
- **Long-term Investment:** Meaningful impact on an organization’s development and performance requires multi-year timeframes to develop an understanding of the organization, its culture and history, and to strengthen all areas that need attention.
- **Trust:** Building relationships based on trust is critical for effectively facilitating organizational change and development.
- **Integrating Technical and Operational Support:** We integrate knowledge and expertise on African natural resource issues with organizational development approaches to help our partners strengthen both their impacts and their organizations.

COLLABORATION, PARTICIPATION, COMMITMENT, ADAPTIVENESS, & LEARNING

– these are Maliasili Initiatives’ values, which guide our thinking, actions and decisions. They shape the way we approach our work, the partnerships we make and the projects we engage with.

“The thing that we like about this partnership is the freedom to be allowed to give our views...When we discuss [with Maliasili] about what we need to focus on, we have the freedom to talk about our needs, and Maliasili responds by saying they will help us to fill in those needs.”

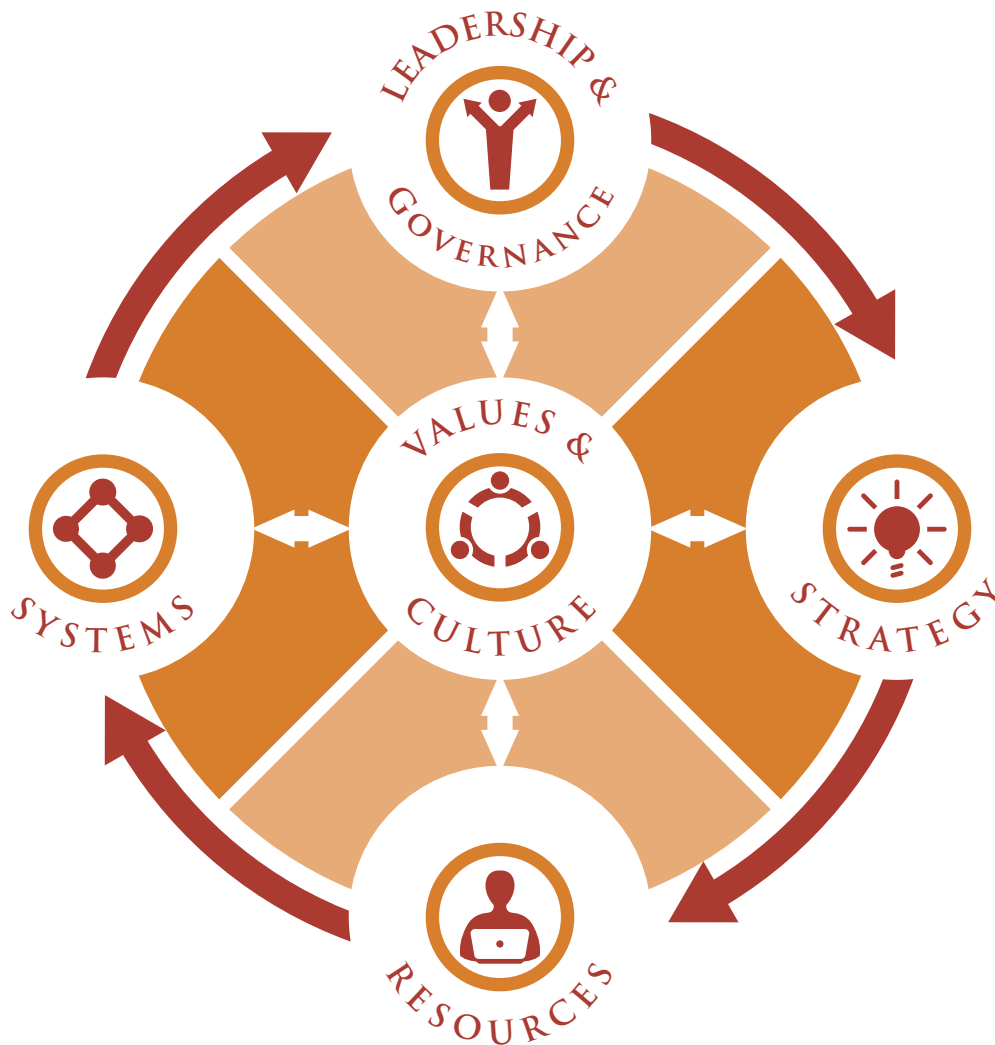
- Michael Gachanja, East African Wild Life Society

“Some partners and donors say, ‘We want you to do this’. But maybe that is not our need...maybe these are not our priorities. With Maliasili it is not like that.”

- Jaspas Makala, Mpingo Conservation & Development Initiative

OUR FRAMEWORK: FIVE ORGANIZATIONAL DOMAINS

We believe there are five basic domains that comprise the essential building blocks of impactful, effective, and successful organizations.



- The **values and culture** that define the belief systems, patterns of behavior, and intrinsic motivations of any organization.
- The **leadership and governance** of an organization, including an organization's accountability to its constituency and its basic organizational design and structure.
- The **strategy** of an organization that articulates the essential elements of what it wants to achieve and how it will do so.
- The human, financial, infrastructure and technical **resources** an organization needs in order to execute its strategy.
- The administrative, management, communications and planning **systems** that enable an organization to carry out its work and deploy its resources.

VALUES & CULTURE



These are the beating heart and core foundation of effective, high-performing civil society organizations and social enterprises. These foundations include the basic motivation and identity of an organization, the way it forms and manages internal and external relationships, its ability to learn and adapt, and the way people within an organization work together and interact.

Key Elements

Benchmarks for Effective Organizational Performance

Commitment

The organization's staff and leadership possess and demonstrate long-term personal and professional commitment to the organization's mission and goals.

Identity

The organization has a strong and established sense of its values, vision, mission, and purpose, which most staff members can clearly and easily articulate.

Teamwork

The organization has a strong and fluid internal teamwork dynamic, with all staff and board working effectively together as a cohesive unit.

Learning

The organization is adaptive in its programming and execution, taking time to reflect on its practice and impacts and to adjust its work accordingly.

Relationships

The organization is adept at building and maintaining strong, long-term relationships with a wide range of constituents, partners and collaborators, based on trust, mutual respect, and shared interests.



LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

Leadership gives an organization direction and agency, channeling its values and beliefs into action. An organization's governance is a key part of leadership and direction, including the board and other aspects of constituent accountability, as well as an organization's basic structural design and composition.

Key Elements

Executive
Leadership

Board
Governance

Constituent
Accountability

Structure

Benchmarks for Effective Organizational Performance

The organization's executive leadership possesses a combination of visionary leadership and organizational management skills and experience. The organization is not overly dependent on any single individual.

The board plays a key role in accountability, providing overall organizational leadership and supporting the resourcing of the organization.

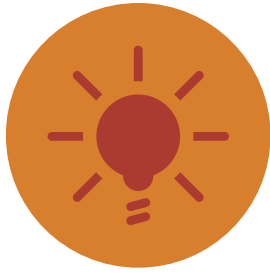
The organization is clearly accountable to its core constituency, with regularly exercised mechanisms for feedback and accountability.

The organization's structure is effectively adapted to its functions, mission, and activities, allowing the organization to operate smoothly and effectively.

STRENGTHENING THE FOUNDATION

"2013 saw a needed turning point for UCRT in two respects. Firstly, the Board became more actively involved in oversight and in holding the organization and its staff accountable, and secondly, activities and programs became 'results' oriented. Maliasili was instrumental in facilitating both of these changes."

- Daudi Peterson, UCRT Board Member



STRATEGY

Provides the compass heading to guide an organization's actions and to marshal its energies and ambitions in a focused and targeted manner that will produce results and overcome obstacles. Strategy encapsulates an organization's mission and vision and guides its actions to enable it to achieve its goals.

Key Elements

Strategic & Business Planning

Alignment & Implementation

Theory of Change

Benchmarks for Effective Organizational Performance

Strategy is clear about what the organization wants to achieve and how it is going to achieve it (i.e. clarity around mission and clarity around actions required to achieve those goals), and serves as the foundation for planning and execution as well as for developing the organizational components required to achieve the mission.

The organization's work plans, programs and projects are fully aligned with its strategy and focus on achieving the set goals and outcomes.

The organization has a clear theory of change that underlies its strategy and provides the basic logic for its work.

CASE STUDY: PROTECTING MORE LIONS - STRATEGICALLY

"Maliasili Initiatives is supporting us to directly address our major challenges...this type of support has given our donors and supporters more confidence in Lion Guardians as we now have a five-year strategic plan and detailed work plans...we can stay on track and also do more."

- Dr. Leela Haazah, Executive Director of Lion Guardians

Lion Guardians' innovative conservation model and remarkable success in reducing conflicts between people and lions at their founding project site in southern Kenya was creating new opportunities but also posing some tough questions for the organization – how can it build an organization that can cover numerous sites in multiple countries and eventually protect many more lions across the species' range? How could it expand its model to new sites and settings without compromising its existing programs or standards and without becoming overstretched or draining its resources?

These questions lay at the heart of the strategic planning process that Maliasili Initiatives guided Lion Guardians through during 2012-2013, as the basis for a new five-year strategic plan. Their new strategy attempts to maximize the reach of Lion Guardians' exceptional technical knowledge and skillset through developing partnerships, focusing on target expansion areas, training other lion conservation groups to deploy their model, and building the organization's human and financial resource base.



RESOURCES

Resources provide the critical inputs that enable an organization to execute its plan. These include human resources and financial resources, and also include access to important information and networks that will strengthen an organization's ability to perform.

Key Elements

Human Resources

Financial Resources (Funding)

Infrastructure

Networks

Benchmarks for Effective Organizational Performance

The organization has a highly skilled, motivated and experienced staff that is adequately resourced and compensated, with established processes to develop and grow its staff's technical skills.

The organization has the long-term programmatic funding and core funding required to execute its work and plans, including a significant proportion of funding from sustainable and renewable sources.

The organization has a well-developed infrastructure to support its work, such as a comfortable office work space, vehicles, communications infrastructure, and field equipment.

The organization has the networks, relationships, and collaborations required to do its work, execute its strategy, and secure human, financial, and technical resources.

GAINING EXPOSURE, INCREASING OPPORTUNITY

"Maliasili has helped us gain recognition from other major organizations. Maliasili helped us secure a high-level consultancy that allowed us to showcase our area of expertise. In addition, it was good for building our capacity and understanding of what's going on in Kenya and how to translate that to a Tanzanian context."

- Lorna Slade, Executive Director of Mwambao Coastal Community Network.

SECURING RESOURCES TO GROW

Since 2011, Maliasili has helped UCRT raise or leverage \$970,000, and has helped the organization hire and fill key positions to support its growth and development.

"Organizational growth comes with a lot of challenges – financial and programmatic reporting and meeting donor deadlines. We became overstretched...Maliasili helped us secure funding from a new donor, which has allowed us to hire a Financial Manager and cover other core costs. This has been critical as poor reporting can be incredibly damaging to an organization's reputation."

- Edward Loure, Executive Director of Ujamaa Community Resource Team



SYSTEMS

Organizational systems provide the means of organizing the management and deployment of an organization's resources. They include basic administrative and management functions such as financial management, planning, communications and performance monitoring.

Key Elements

Planning

Benchmarks for Effective Organizational Performance

There are established planning systems that integrate individual work plans, project and programmatic plans, and annual work plans; these are connected to project and annual organizational budgets and to the organization's strategic planning framework and provide the basis for performance monitoring and reporting.

Performance Monitoring

The organization has well developed reporting and monitoring systems for tracking and evaluating the performance of individuals, projects and programs, and the organization as a whole in relation to clear benchmarks or metrics established at project/program and organizational level.

Financial Management

The organization has established, transparent, and well functioning systems for managing financial resources that provide clear and current information on costs, expenditures, income, cash flow, and provides the basis for financial reporting.

Communications

The organization has a communications strategy with multiple well-developed communications tools and platforms for reaching a range of key target audiences. The organization has a strong sense of its brand, core messages, and has metrics for tracking the impact of its communications.

COMMUNICATING IMPACTS

"Maliasili has provided support with our annual reporting, which has helped us to really draw out our impact... This is something which is now being instilled in staff – they have gone from submitting generic reports to thinking more about what has come about as a result of a piece of work....And, with Maliasili's support, we are also getting better at being able to communicate it."

- Jill Nicholson, Program Manager of Pastoral Women's Council

OUR ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTHENING PROCESS

We select organizations with high potential for scaling their reach and impact, where our support can really make a difference in terms of enabling our partners to grow and accelerate their impacts. Our support is adaptive, working with our partners to jointly identify and understand what their needs are. Together we design an integrated and phased program of organizational development and technical support. Ultimately, we aim to help our partners achieve sustainable internal growth that will lead to enhanced and scaled up impacts.

We have five basic phases to our process of organizational strengthening:



SELECTING OUR PARTNERS

We use three criteria to screen prospective partners:

1. The organization's performance and potential for impact in the African natural resource management arena. This is based on their track record, their level of innovation, an initial scan of their organizational culture and values, and their strategic focus on promoting sustainable natural resource management through local rights and incentives.
2. The organization's needs and challenges with regards to its capacity and development.
3. An evaluation of our own ability to help the organization address those needs and improve their performance.

AN EVOLVING FRAMEWORK

Maliasili Initiatives is itself an early-stage organization working to develop and adapt the most impactful approaches to organizational development within the African natural resource field. This Organizational Strengthening document is our first attempt to articulate our approach in order to explain how we work and how we achieve impacts. It has been developed based on our work with our partners over the past three years, the experiences of our team in working with African natural resource civil society organizations and social enterprises over a longer period of time, and informed by numerous other sources of ideas about organizational development in our field and more broadly.

Maliasili Initiatives encourages and facilitates partner organizations to reflect on their experiences and to practice adaptive management in their strategies and operations. In turn, we strive to approach our own work in the same way. Therefore, this framework remains a living document that is flexible, evaluated and revised from time to time in order to ensure we provide the best service to our partners.

LEARN MORE

- *Maliasili Initiatives' Organizational Overview*
- *The Maliasili 2013 Annual Report*