AFRICAN ADVOCATES:

Partnerships for Building Civil Society

A review of World Resources Institute support to East and Southern African civil society organizations 1995-2005

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Africa Biodiversity Collaborative Group

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I.   TABLE OF CONTENTS

Boxes

II.   ACRONYMS

ABCG	African Biodiversity Collaborative Group
ACODE	Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment
ACTS	African Center for Technology Studies
CIEL	Center for International Environmental Law
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CTV	Centro Terra Viva
ELAW	Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide (ELAW)
ELI	Environmental Law Institute
ILEG	Institute for Law and Environmental Governance
(I)NGO	(International) Non-Governmental Organization
LEAT	Lawyers' Environmental Action Team
RECONCILE	Resource Conflict Institute
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
USAID	US Agency for International Development
WCD	World Commission on Dams
WRI	World Resources Institute
ZELA	Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association

III. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Natural resources are at the heart of national and local wealth and wellbeing in East and Southern Africa. They are also increasingly under threat, due in part to increased demand tied to global markets in land, minerals, and wildlife. Local civil society organizations (CSOs)[1] are important change agents in natural resource governance in the region. Many play key roles in advocating for government and business accountability and securing community land and resource rights. CSOs also face many external threats and internal challenges, including because they often contest established power relationships around natural resource use and governance. Challenges have been exacerbated in recent years as governments across the region have introduced greater restrictions on CSO operations and access to funding. Local CSOs' relationships with international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) can be an important source of long-term support and capacity development in confronting these challenges, but such relationships can also, if not effectively designed, exacerbate local CSOs' organizational challenges.

Case Study Objectives and Scope

With these issues in mind, this case study reviews the World Resources Institute's (WRI)[2] partnerships with a number of East and Southern African CSOs between roughly 1995 and 2005. **The objective is to identify lessons to inform the ongoing exploration of best practice in investments and partnerships between local CSOs, INGOs and international donors, through a retrospective review and analysis.** The study explores this track record of investing in the development of local CSOs through a sample of the roughly 15 CSOs WRI directly supported: Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE) – Uganda, Centro Terra Viva (CTV) – Mozambique, and Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association (ZELA) – Zimbabwe. The scope of the review includes WRI's approach to strengthening CSO capacity; funding arrangements between USAID, WRI and CSOs; outcomes and impacts; and ongoing challenges to CSO growth and sustainability. It concludes with a set of lessons to consider in INGO and donor investments and partnerships with CSOs that are designed to build lasting local capacity.

WRI CSO Support Initiatives

From roughly 1995 to 2005, WRI carried out a number of research initiatives to influence ongoing natural resource reform and decentralization in East and Southern Africa, advocating for more environmentally sound and socially just policy and practice. In initially seeking local partners for this work, WRI found very few African CSOs with a policy analysis and action-research orientation. To address this intuitional gap and advance regional environmental governance work, WRI undertook a range of civil society capacity strengthening initiatives to support the development of new or early-phase organizations. Funded primarily by cooperative agreements with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), WRI supported a number of promising young and emerging African leaders who established a handful of independent natural resource governance research and advocacy organizations. The building blocks of this support included:

- Seed funding in the form of flexible grants
- Mentoring on organizational development and policy research skills
- 'On the job' learning, including through collaborative research on a range of pressing land and environmental governance issues
- Support for network building and peer-exchange

Investing in new organizations is a risky endeavor. WRI's willingness to take this risk on was facilitated in part by confidence in the young and promising leaders it partnered with, and by respectful, reciprocal relationships between the partners.

Outcomes and Impacts

These CSO capacity strengthening initiatives appear to have had important and sustained impacts for regional civil society and, in turn, environmental and land governance. They enabled the establishment of a group of leading African environmental CSOs that have sustained and, to varying extents, grown in the last 10 to 20 years. They have diverse visions and strategies, adapted to their context. Broadly, these strategies include the research and evidence-based advocacy used in collaborative work with WRI, as well as litigation and other internally developed tactics that depart from WRI's approach. Moreover, these CSOs have significantly influenced environmental governance in their countries and the region - from facilitating and informing constitutional and legislative changes, to calling governments and international bodes to account, to empowering rural community partners to claim rights and meet responsibilities related to natural resources.

Lessons

Drawing on this experience, lessons to consider for INGO and donor investments in partnering with and supporting the growth of CSOs in East and Southern Africa include the following:

Cross-cutting

- Be willing to take risks – including chance of setbacks or failures.
- Tailor support to the partnership and context, while maintaining a clear overall vision and a scope that allows meaningful engagement. Focus on the quality rather than quantity of partnerships. Working closely and over time with a few partners may be more impactful than providing shorter term or less in-depth support to a large number of organizations or individuals.

Relationships

- Partner where there is a convergence of missions, commitment, and values, and where you can meaningfully contribute.
- Build respectful and reciprocal relationships – engage partners as equals and ensure that support is invited / wanted by local partners.
- Partner for collaboration on shared outcomes. Avoid contracting local CSOs as service providers for external agendas.
- Be open to new leaders, organizations, and ideas and seek innovative ways of connecting with partners.
- Support change agents, including individuals and organizations willing to take risks.

Support Models

- Understand and respond to the context, including changing dynamics in political environments and funding sources.
- Support 'learning by doing', including through meaningful and sustained collaboration and mentoring. Recognize that mistakes are part of learning.
- Support network building and peer exchange.
- Include appropriate and meaningful monitoring mechanisms, including for learning. Be honest and responsive, changing course when needed.
- Support (or help partners find support for) developing and advancing local leadership, vision, and strategies, as well as for change management.

Funding Arrangements

- Provide appropriate and sufficient funding - flexible, long-term, and inclusive of overhead – with accountability.
- Provide seed funding for promising organizations and initiatives. Everything starts small. If you see something worth growing, take the risk and invest there.
- Facilitate access to other funding sources.
- Invest in leaders, ideas, and organizations – not just in projects.
- Be open and honest – acknowledge that funding is often difficult to secure and that mutual accountability is essential.

2. BACKGROUND

This case study reviews the World Resources Institute's (<u>WRI</u>) partnerships with a number of new, independent civil society organizations (CSOs) in East and Southern Africa between roughly 1995 and 2005. The objective is to identify lessons to inform the ongoing exploration of best practice in investments and partnerships between local CSOs, International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and international donors.[3]

2.1   Local CSOs, INGOs and Donors – Critical and challenging relationships for natural resource governance

Natural resources are at the heart of national and local wealth and well-being in East and Southern Africa. Natural resource governance is central to political and power relations in the region as a result. The natural resource sector is thus critical in terms of social relations and economic development, and an important entry point for governance reform more broadly. The majority of people's livelihoods depend directly on local food and natural resources, including through small-scale agriculture, pastoralism, fishing, hunting, and the collection and/or sale of timber and non-timber forest products. Access, use, and control over these resources are thus central to rural people's security and enjoyment of rights. At the national level, wildlife and nature-based tourism are central to many economies.[4] Natural resources are also under threat and at the center of political and power battles, as minerals, wildlife, timber, and land itself are increasingly subject to demand within global markets. Land and natural resources governance is thus inextricably related to the political landscape across the region.[5]

Local CSOs in East and Southern Africa are important change agents in natural resource governance. While still limited in number and reach, many CSOs are now helping to catalyze environmental policy and institutional reforms, including strengthening citizens' capacity to hold government and businesses accountable and to claim rights and benefits.

At the same time, CSOs face substantial obstacles in sustaining and growing their impacts on natural resource governance, not least because of the wealth and power associated with the systems they seek to change. Indeed, **African CSOs working in this space are often directly challenging powerful actors in the government and private sector in seeking more sustainable and socially just natural resource governance**.[6] More generally, CSOs in many parts of Africa are challenged by a political environment in which power remains highly centralized, and civil society agency is commensurately restricted.[7] This trend has been exacerbated in recent years, as governments have introduced new restrictions on CSO operations, access to funding, and use of information.[8] CSOs also face internal organizational capacity challenges, as highlighted by Maliasili Initiatives and Well Grounded (2015), "particularly around … leadership, human resources, funding, vision and strategy, values and organizational culture".[9]

Local CSOs' relationships with external actors can either mitigate or exacerbate these challenges. Institutional relationships with international non-governmental organizations (INGOS) and donors are often particularly influential.[10]

"INGOs are often involved in providing the first seed support to help establish or capitalize local CSOs…they play a key role in providing technical expertise, access to networks and resources and are often direct funders. These partnerships can be critical to supporting, sustaining, and growing successful local organizations, or they can lead to relationships of dependence, distort the accountability and ownership of CSOs away from local constituents, lead to top-down pressures on CSOs' strategic choices and investments, and ultimately undermine the development of capable and sustainable African organizations."[11]

2.2 An Opportunity for Learning – WRI partnerships for strengthened civil society

Given the role of CSOs, the challenges they face, and the impacts of their relationships with external actors, **it is important to better understand and improve supportive investments and partnerships between local CSOs, INGOs, and funders in the African conservation and environmental field**.[12] WRI's approach to strengthening local civil society through supportive and collaborative partnerships developed primarily between 20 and 10 years ago provides an important retrospective opportunity for such learning about the relationship between international support and local civil society development.

With the end of the Cold War, the mid-1990s were a period of rapid and substantial law and policy reform throughout East and Southern Africa, including with respect to natural resources. **WRI carried out research initiatives to influence ongoing natural resource governance decentralization and democratization,** including to enable civil society to hold governments accountable. WRI initially sought 'like-minded' CSOs in East and Southern Africa to partner with on this research and policy advocacy work. They found, however, that there were very few CSOs in the region working on land or environment policy and advocacy, including in relationship to rural people's livelihoods and rights.

"This investment in ACODE was also about creating the foundations of organizations that could be partners, and could also in a few years partner with other organizations too." – Godber Tumushabe (formerly ACODE)

To help address this institutional gap, WRI embarked on a range of programmatic initiatives to strengthen civil society in conjunction with their ongoing research agenda. (See Box 1.) Funded primarily by cooperative agreements with the United States Agency for International Development ([USAID](#)), WRI provided seed funding, mentoring, and on-the-job learning to promising African leaders who established independent organizations or programs focused on natural resource governance research and advocacy. These partners then developed collaborative research and built regional networks for peer-learning.

…There seemed to be … latent interest in creating these types of institutions, but the support and help and encouragement… hadn't been there." – Peter Veit (WRI)

Newly established CSOs included Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment ([ACODE](#)) and [Greenwatch](#) in Uganda, Centro Terra Viva ([CTV](#)) in Mozambique, the Institute for Law and Environmental Governance ([ILEG](#)) in Kenya, the Lawyers Environmental Action Team ([LEAT](#)) in Tanzania, and the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association ([ZELA](#)). WRI also supported some existing organizations in building research and advocacy work, such as the African Center for Technology Studies ([ACTS](#)) in Kenya.[13]

Investing in new organizations is a risky endeavor. WRI's willingness to take this risk on was facilitated in part by confidence in the young and promising leaders it partnered with, and by respectful, reciprocal relationships between the partners.

These CSO capacity strengthening initiatives appear to have had important and sustained impacts for regional civil society and, in turn, environmental and land governance. They enabled the establishment of a group of leading CSOs that have sustained and, to varying extents, grown in the last 10 to 20 years. Moreover, these CSOs have significantly influenced environmental governance in their countries and the region - from facilitating and informing constitutional and legislative changes, to calling governments and international bodes to account, to empowering rural community partners to claim rights and meet responsibilities related to natural resources. They have also contributed to international discourse on natural resource governance, including through joint research.

Box 1 | Environmental Accountability in Africa (EAA) Initiative – An example

The Environmental Accountability in Africa (EAA) initiative (1999 – 2003) was one among several WRI projects in the longer case study period that supported capacity strengthening for African CSOs. It sought to "foster development of the essential legal and institutional infrastructure for effective, replicable and sustainable environmental governance" with the objectives to:

- "Influence the character of ongoing …donor-driven African government decentralization efforts …
- Promote national-level …reforms [for]… environmentally sound decentralizations and… enable public interest groups to hold governments and private actors accountable…
- Develop regional networks of independent policy research and advocacy groups that are effective in promoting and utilizing the above reforms in the interests of improved environmental management."

Specific EAA efforts included, among others, identifying and promoting enabling policies and laws, including through research conducted jointly with independent policy-focused institutions, and strengthening a "select group of independent policy research and environmental advocacy groups and their networks", including those referenced in this case study. NGO strengthening work included "organizational development, capacity building in advocacy approaches and skills, and technical competence in specific environmental matters", as well as facilitation of CSO networks and collaboration.[14]

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3. CASE STUDY SCOPE AND METHOD

The case study reviews[15] a sub-set of WRI – CSO partnerships between roughly 1995 and 2005 **to identify lessons for best practice in investments and partnerships between local CSOs, INGOs, and international donors**. The scope of analysis includes:

- WRI's approach to strengthening CSO capacity
- Funding arrangements between USAID, WRI and CSOs
- Outcomes and impacts
- Ongoing challenges to CSO growth and sustainability

It concludes with summarized lessons to consider in INGO and donor investments and partnerships with CSOs.

The study is informed primarily by semi-structured interviews with current and former representatives of WRI, USAID and three focal CSOs: ACODE – Uganda, CTV – Mozambique, and ZELA – Zimbabwe. It also draws on documents by and about the focal CSOs, including joint research with WRI, as well as literature on CSO funding and support strategies, relevant websites, and, where available, reports pertaining to specific partnership agreements.[16] Interviewees were in leading roles in these partnerships during the case study period. They were identified based on prior knowledge of the researchers and via 'snowball' method, i.e., additional interviewees identified by initial interviewees. The focal CSOs are in many ways 'success stories', but are also generally representative of the larger group of CSOs whose establishment was supported by WRI in the case study period. Focal organizations and programs are further described in Box 2.

Box 2 | Focal Organizations and Programs

International NGOs and Funders

WRI: WRI is a global research organization focusing on the intersections of environment, economic opportunity and human well-being.[17] Its Institutions and Governance Program (IGP) (now Governance Center of Excellence[18]) addressed "the social and political dimensions of environmental challenges, and explore[d] the equity implications of alternative environmental management regimes", aiming to inform policy with research and analysis.[19] This study pertains to CSO capacity strengthening initiatives under the IGP during the case study period.

USAID: USAID is a US government agency with the mission of "…partner[ing] to end extreme poverty and promote resilient, democratic societies while advancing [US and global] security and prosperity".[20] This study pertains to USAID cooperative agreements with WRI during the case study period.

East and Southern African CSOs

Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE) – Est. 1999, Uganda: ACODE is a non-governmental public policy research and advocacy think tank based in Uganda and working throughout East and Southern Africa. ACODE's mission is to "make public policies work for the people" through research, policy outreach and advocacy, and capacity building, including "empower[ing] communities to demand [] justice, and promot[ing] public participation and citizens' demand for accountability in decision-making processes that affect their livelihoods and the environment".[21] While their scope of work extends to other sectors,[22] environmental governance remains a focus, with programs focusing on environmental democracy, peace and democracy, and innovation and biotechnology policy.[23]

Centro Terra Viva (CTV) – Est. 2002, Mozambique: CTV is a leading environmental research and advocacy NGO on land governance in Mozambique. It brings together diverse professionals in the environmental field, including from law, conservation, education, and rural economics and sociology.[24] CTV's vision is "a national natural resource management policy and practice that is environmentally sound, scientifically-based, economically viable and institutionally responsible. CTV's mission is to contribute to improved national policies and legislation and to increase the capacity of civil society to participate in environmental management through informed and relevant contributions".[25]

Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association (ZELA) – Est. 2000, Zimbabwe: ZELA is a public interest environmental law group promoting justice, sustainable and equitable use, and democracy and good governance in the natural resources and environment sector. They focus on legal and policy research, advocacy, impact litigation, conflict resolution and civic education. ZELA works with a range of stakeholders, including rural communities, other CSOs, government agencies and businesses. Their current program focuses on governance of mining and other extractive industries, the use of natural resource revenues for social services delivery, climate change and energy, responsible investments for businesses, and sustainable land and natural resources management.[26]

4. STRENGTHENING CSO CAPACITY THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

4.1   WRI Strategy

Broadly, **WRI's strategy for strengthening CSO capacity involved identifying promising and motivated leaders with a shared or complimentary vision and providing them with tailored support including seed funding, mentoring, and on-the-job learning for organizational development and policy research**. There was no set blueprint. Rather, specific activities were developed with partners, based on their needs and interests. However, the overall initiative was focused in terms of the scope of the work and the number of partners. WRI dealt principally with policy research, outreach communications, and advocacy, and worked with a limited number of motivated individuals and organizations, rather than casting a wide net. It was in part this focus that enabled effective tailoring. [27]

The overall CSO support initiatives and much of the one on one mentioning were led by Owen Lynch[28] and Peter Veit. Other WRI administrative staff, researchers and partners also worked with the CSO partners at various points. For example, many of the individual researchers from these and other local CSOs worked with Jesse Ribot on research on decentralization of natural resources governance. (See Box 5).

WRI sought out high-potential local leaders to partner with in building new organizations, as well as promising existing organizations. **Many of these leaders were highly talented and motivated young lawyers and analysts who shared a commitment to public interest environmental law and policy.** Connections were made in various ways, including through universities and law schools Dr. Lynch lectured at a number of East and Southern African law schools and met directly with faculty and students to share information, gauge interest, and build relationships.

We had a mission and an interest. But the question of how we were going to achieve that was wide open and would depend on who was there and what they wanted."
- Peter Veit (WRI)

"We've had funding partners who … gave us enough flexibility to adjust, to adapt – and these are the kind of donors that we want…" – CTV

We helped set up new groups. But they were very independent and had their own ideas about how to link the law to justice.
– Owen Lynch (formerly WRI)

"Capacity building is something that has to be done on the job" – Jon Anderson (formerly USAID)

In the late 1990s, Godber Tumushabe, ACODE's founder and first Executive Director, saw a gap in the organizational landscape the region, as the Cold War ended and governance reforms in decentralization and democratization took place in Uganda and throughout the region, including in the natural resources sector. There was a need for non-governmental organizations that combined policy research and advocacy. He had discussed these issues with Peter Veit and Owen Lynch when he was still in law school in the mid-1990s, including during a workshop on public interest law and litigation organized by WRI and the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL). After graduating from law school and working for a few years in Kenya, he began discussions with WRI about building a regional think-tank for public interest research and advocacy in Uganda. In 2002, he returned to Uganda to found ACODE, with two years' seed funding from WRI/USAID.[29]

Before starting the organization, CTV's founding leader was studying law at a DC-based university. She worked with CIEL and WRI during that time. The idea of CTV was inspired in part through this hands-on work and the building of relationships with WRI, CIEL and CSOs in the cohort. Shortly after returning to Mozambique, she arranged a sub-grant with WRI to help start CTV.[30]

Mutuso Dhliwayo, one of ZELA's co-founders, gained interest in working on public interest environmental law and advocacy during law school, after hearing a lecture given by Dr. Lynch.[31] In 2000, following graduation and a few years working for an environmental non-profit, Mr. Dhliwayo, together with colleagues from law school including Shamiso Mtisi, Tumai Murombo, George Gapu, Rejoice Muwadzuri, Makanatsa Makonese, Gabriel Shumba, Actor Katurura , Marylin Takawira and Josiah Chinherende formed ZELA with seed funding from WRI, CIEL and Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide (ELAW) fellowships. WRI, CIEL, and ELAW also helped the founding leaders to secure additional funding, including a Ford Foundation grant, enabling them to start implementing programs in 2003.[32]

4.2   Building Blocks of Supportive Partnerships

Support to individual CSOs involved building reciprocal partnerships and opportunities for learning-by-doing. Rather than 'capacity building' per se, these were collaborative research initiatives that included dedicated resources for building the requisite experience, skills, and institutional infrastructure, tailored to each partner's interests and needs. This was a **learning-based approach for both for WRI and the participating local CSOs, enabled by WRI and USAID being willing to take the risk of investing in new organizations and ideas**. The discrete types of support varied, but generally included a mixture of:

"This wasn't theoretical …capacity building. … It was learning by doing. …Part of this is you accept mistakes. …It's part of the learning." – Jon Anderson (formerly USAID)

▪ Seed funding in the form of flexible grants
▪ Mentoring and opportunities for on-the-job learning
▪ Collaboration on land and environmental policy research with a focus on issues concerning rural people's livelihoods and human rights
▪ Support for network-building and peer-learning

4.3   Seed Funding as Flexible Grants

WRI provided multi-year funding to CSO partners, primarily in the form of flexible sub-grants. These **often funded joint research and advocacy work, but also provided substantial coverage for overhead, particularly in their early years**. Funding covered salaries for new lawyers and policy analysts, as well as the basic infrastructure of the organizations – laptops, printers, internet access, and the other 'nuts and bolts'.[33]

"It's… rare… for a local NGO, a new NGO, to get that kind funding… [I]t wasn't money that said "you do this for us". It was money for institution building…and that was very significant." – Godber Tumushabe (formerly ACODE)

As sub-grantees, CSOs had substantial discretion in funding use, working in coordination with WRI. Being able to secure these funds through WRI, rather than having to directly administer USAID funding, was noted as having simplified the process of starting a new organization. WRI did ask for regular financial reports and encouraged regular audits – including as required for donor reporting – but worked with partners to ensure they had the capacity and systems in place to provide these.[34]

"The first seed funding - the first computer, the first piece of paper - was from WRI … I had to learn by doing. And CTV is what it is today because of the support that I had in those years. …." – CTV

4.4   Mentoring and On-the-Job Learning

WRI offered mentioning and on-the-job learning opportunities for both policy research and organizational management and development. Many CSO leaders and staff were offered fellowships of several weeks or months at WRI's offices in Washington, DC.

"WRI really took a mentoring approach. It wasn't directive, it wasn't top down… it was very collaborative, with joint design of the programs." – Jon Anderson (formerly USAID)

As a leading environmental policy research organization, WRI was well placed to support partners who had a shared technical interest and mission in natural resource governance research. Partners worked with WRI staff to better understand how WRI works in Africa and elsewhere. Some spent time learning about WRI's research methods and about the role of evidence-based advocacy. Close working relationships also facilitated research on issues of mutual interest, including rural land rights in the region.

Many CSO partners also wanted support in organizational development, which had not typically been part of WRI's work. To support this, WRI typically contracted experts and/or arranged for staff in Washington D.C. to provide hands-on training on their financial and human resources management systems. **Organizational development support was, in this sense, offered on a short-term or as-needed basis**.

One-on-one guidance was also offered on specific matters of concern to partners. For example, budgeting for overhead was often a challenge, especially for new organizations, because rates varied widely as organizations were getting established. WRI worked with partners on an individual basis to effectively budget for and manage overhead costs. Partners also discussed different funding options; WRI encouraged cooperative agreements or grant-based funding (rather than contract or project-based) given their greater flexibility.

"It's very expensive to build these skills and capacity [to access and manage donor funds]… Now [the CSOs] are our competitors for funding … and this is a measure of success." – Peter Veit (WRI)

Partners also discussed plans for longer-term organizational sustainability. For example, while stability in leadership was not an immediate concern, staff turnover and leadership changes were likely to be longer-term challenges. WRI suggested building internships and partnerships with universities into the CSOs' programs to keep building new leadership.

For pre-existing organizations, and where requested by new ones (see Box 4), organizational development support was sometimes given via contracted specialists who could address specific issues.[35]

Box 4 | Targeted Organizational Development Support – An example

WRI contracted an organizational development specialist to work with ACODE's founding leaders, including on developing a strategy and organizational growth benchmarks. This targeted support was important to ACODE's initial development. It supported leaders in defining and advancing their own vision and agenda.

"…They were really robust documents. They really help explain why we were able to grow at the pace we did. Faster than other NGOs… "
- Godber Tumushabe (formerly ACODE)

4.5 Collaboration on Policy Research

As both part of mentioning and moving beyond it, WRI and partners undertook collaborative research. These were reciprocal relationships. Collaboration helped build shared understanding and trust between partners, and CSO leaders and staff were making critical contributions to joint research.

This focus on collaboration on projects of shared interest was important for a number of reasons. It was highlighted as a comparative strength of WRI's approach, as opposed to more general 'capacity building' approaches that often lack the depth and responsiveness of these collaborative endeavors. This approach also reflects professional development best practice. For example, the Center for Creative Leadership's "70-20-10 rule" is a "guideline for developing managers says that you need to have three types of experience, using a 70-20-10 ratio: challenging assignments (70%), developmental relationships (20%) and coursework and training (10%".[36]

"…We needed the funding, but what is more important is that we needed the learning." – Mutuso Dhliwayo (ZELA)

"A lot of our attention and support …wasn't defined as "capacity building" per se, but rather saying 'let's do this research together and build the capacity needed to make sure this work can get done'. And each group was different." – Peter Veit (WRI)

"…We did joint research projects, we published joint reports together… [T]his was really training in research and in advocacy, and we continue to believe that our advocacy interventions should be supported by very solid research. …This … was the most important support in terms of …our institutional growing capacity". – CTV

Box 5 | Collaborative Research on Environmental Governance - Examples

There are many examples[37] of WRI work that involved the collaboration of researchers and lawyers in this cohort of CSOs, including the following:

- The **Legislative Representation and the Environment Project** was coordinated by WRI and undertaken with research partners across Africa. Project partners conducted country-level research and organized three Africa-wide workshops as well as local and national forums between 2002 and 2006. Workshops "helped identify and clarify important issues related to legislative environmental representation in Africa".[38] Key outputs included a 2008 report co-authored by Peter Veit and 10 African researchers, including from ACODE, CTV and ZELA[39], as well as a number of the related national level studies.[40]
- WRI's **Accountability, Decentralization, and the Environment research initiative**, led by Jesse Ribot, involved many African researchers, some of whom were from this cohort of CSOs. Among these was Alda Salomao, CTV's founding leader. Key outputs of this initiative include Dr. Ribot's 2004 research monograph "Waiting for Democracy: The Politics of Choice in Natural Resource Decentralizations."[41]
- The WRI '**Environmental Governance in Africa Working Paper Series'**,[42] undertaken as a component of the EAA and edited by Jesse Ribot and Peter Veit, included papers written and informed by researchers in the group of CSOs partnering with WRI. For example, Ms. Salomao (CTV) wrote a 2004 paper on legal frameworks for participatory natural resources management in Mozambique.[43]
- Researchers from WRI, LEAT, and South Asia collaborated on a 2001 **independent assessment of the World Commission on Dams** (WCD)[44]

4.6 Peer-Learning and Network Building

WRI, together with other partners including ELAW, supported CSO network building, including through South-South exchanges. CSOs in the cohort came together once or twice a year to share experiences and to discuss and collaborate on common issues. CSOs have expressed interest in continuing these exchange opportunities, including expanding them to civil society organizations outside of the network. However, sustained funding for this has not been available.[45]

Some CSO staff participated and presented their research in international fora, such as International Association for the Study of the Commons ([IASC](#)) meetings. Many of the advocates in this cohort are members of ELAW, as is Peter Veit. ELAW brings all its members together once a year. It also offers fellowships to come to the US. Several of these CSOs, including Greenwatch, ILEG, LEAT, and ZELA, are also Members of the Access Initiative (TAI) network, for which WRI serves as global secretariat. TAI is a global civil society network "dedicated to ensuring that citizens have the right and ability to influence decisions about the natural resources that sustain their communities".[46]

"Linking people together was also important… Keeping partners in touch and doing things together.
--CTV

4.7 USAID Funding - Multiple-year cooperative agreements

WRI's capacity strengthening initiatives were funded primarily with multiple year USAID cooperative agreements. The use of cooperative agreements was significant in several respects. While still rigorous, and subject to more substantial USAID involvement than "normal" grants, such agreements allow more flexibility than contracts in project design, implementation, and reporting.[47] WRI staff worked closely with USAID counterparts, but also had substantial discretion over how the funds were allocated. They were in turn able to give discretion to CSO partners.[48]

"You cannot underestimate the importance of having multiple-year flexible funding…" – *Peter Veit (WRI)*

"There aren't any recipes. There's no one-size-fits-all way of doing things. It depends a lot on trust and flexibility and social capital … The basis of a cooperative agreement is trust and that colors the performance right from the start."
– Jon Anderson (formerly USAID)

Cooperative agreements vary in their administration, and thus may sometimes be more restrictive than those governing USAID – WRI arrangements in this case.[49] **The effective and flexible implementation of these cooperative agreements was facilitated by a strong sense of shared mission, good working relationships, and a collaborative approach between organizational counterparts.** WRI and CSO partners worked with USAID points of contact, brainstorming on the issues and programming. This appears to have contributed to mutual understanding and trust.[50]

Discretion and flexibility in use of funds did not mean lack of rigor or reporting. CSOs underwent regular auditing and had monitoring plans. Problems were proactively addressed – e.g., revising finance management systems and replacing personnel in some cases when accountability issues arose. Part of the 'monitoring' also involved ongoing discussion and reflection between the partners. WRI and USAID

counterparts, for example, would periodically reflect on the effectiveness and impact of the initiatives, changing course when necessary.[51]

WRI/USAID funding was intended to help launch independent groups that could then raise other dedicated funds. In some cases, WRI helped its partners connect directly to other funders. They also collaborated on communications, sharing information about their work and impacts and helping to ensure wider recognition. More generally, WRI supported partners in building a foundation and the necessary skills to access and manage funding directly from USAID and other bilateral donors and foundations. After two years of WRI seed funding, ACODE was able to secure a program grant for approximately eight years from another international organization. In negotiating this funding, ACODE required that a portion be allocated for further organizational capacity building.[52]

Box 6 | USAID-WRI Cooperative Agreements - An example

One cooperative agreement, the "Environmental Governance Initiative"[53], was signed by USAID (Washington D.C.) and WRI in 1995 with the objectives of:

- Enabling a governance system for improved wildlife management
- Promoting new policies, legislation, and procedures for improved wildlife governance
- Establishing independent advocacy capacity
- Establishing independent capacity to monitor performance and help implement new wildlife governance policies and practices

Within Tanzania, WRI was responsible for "building NGOs' technical capacity in policy research / outreach and in institutional assessment and monitoring", working with LEAT, as well as two pre-existing organizations – the Journalists Environmental Association of Tanzania and the Freidkin Conservation Fund.

An independent audit report indicates that LEAT's budget (for 1.5 years of the longer agreement) allocated more than 50% for core costs.[54]

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5. Outcomes and Impacts

Identifying the distinct results of WRI's CSO technical and organizational strengthening initiatives is challenging. There are many interrelated factors, including the leadership, commitment and talent of the CSOs founders, and there was little long-term monitoring. Nonetheless, some important general outcomes and impacts can be pointed to.

5.1   Outcomes of WRI / USAID Support to New CSOs

5.1.1 Sustained and Evolving Organizations

WRI's support appears to have substantively contributed to the establishment and sustainability of a group of CSOs that, with diverse visions and strategies, are national and regional leaders in research, law, and advocacy for environmental justice. While many have had ups and downs, all of the CSOs that WRI supported in their formative years are still operational. Some of the organizations in this cohort, including LEAT in Tanzania, have now existed for over 20 years. This durability is in itself an important accomplishment.

"In the long term, [CSO leaders] are now leaders in their national contexts providing expertise that in the past had been overlooked."
– Owen Lynch (formerly WRI)

WRI's partnerships with pre-existing organizations have had more mixed results with respect to sustained work on land and environmental governance. In some cases, greater capacity for environmental policy work was generated with relatively little support. This was the case for WRI's work with the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS), Kenya, which had already been doing some policy research. In other cases, particularly where policy research was a new institutional component, work on land and environmental governance/policy has generally not been sustained within the organization, though impacts can be seen elsewhere as the policy-trained staff have moved onto other organizations.[55]

Growth, in terms of budgets, programs, and staff size, has varied by organization and each has had different opportunities and challenges – expanding, contracting, and even re-building at points. This resilience – being able to rebuild and continue growing after setbacks – is also a good measure of their success. CTV expanded from one to three offices within Mozambique.[56] ZELA started as an organization of five people and has grown to 20 people, with a budget 20 times the size it was when founded. This growth is welcome, and has also been a significant challenge to manage. ZELA is in the process of developing a growth management strategy.[57] ACODE grew quickly during its first roughly 15 years. It is currently going through a transition following the move of its founding executive director from management to the board.[58]

"In terms of impacts… we're still around now and I think can claim that we're one of the best known NGOs in Mozambique. That wouldn't have happened without WRI. And we're continuing to evolve and adjust."
– CTV

"… ACODE's growth was phenomenal ….due not just to my leadership alone, but also to the fact that WRI gave us …the building blocks for that growth. WRI helped build the foundation that enabled us to grow at the pace and the way that we did. …."
– Godber Tumushabe (formerly ACODE)

5.1.2 Diverse Approaches to Environmental Policy Research and Advocacy

ACODE, CTV, ZELA, and others in cohort have varied visions and use diverse strategies to pursue sustainable and socially just natural resources governance. Many apply the research and evidence-based advocacy approaches utilized in their collaborative work with WRI, including working with and generating research directed to government actors at all levels. At the same time, many also have built capacity and employ strategies and tools that WRI does not, such as litigation and grassroots advocacy campaigns.

ZELA's focus on natural resource governance was informed in part by their partnership with WRI, including The Access Initiative (TAI). Likewise, 'evidence-based advocacy' remains among ZELA's core strategies. They use the information they generate through rigorous research to inform their policy advocacy and engagement with governments, and to support rural communities in claiming rights and demanding accountability.[59] For example, ZELA regularly generates reports for Parliamentary Committees to use in the formation and revision of specific environmental laws and policies, including in the mining sector. ZELA also works with a network of CSOs and communities to generate and publish information on mining practices to promote greater transparency and accountability in the sector.[60]

"This partnership broadened our perspectives …Environmental issues can't be looked at in isolation and it helped us open up our work to looking at environment in its broader context and to see it in terms of governance issues" – Mutuso Dhliwayo, ZELA

"Some of the methods we use are the same as WRI – research and evidence-based advocacy. That approach is something we wanted to learn from. That research-based lobbying approach and the experience that WRI had in working on these issues." – Tumai Murombo, Formerly ZELA

"… [Parliamentarians] have been able to use …the information we give them to better perform their legislative, representative, and oversight duties duties, and it's helping them to become more representative of their communities in terms of environmental justice… We call [this way of working] 'cautious engagement' because our work is really to influence the law and policy and those government agencies are really in charge of making and implementing the law. … [I]f you don't engage parliament you're not going to change the laws." - Mutuso Dhliwayo, ZELA

5.1.3 Sustained Partnerships and Supportive Connections

As new organizations were formed and became operational, WRI increasingly shifted focus to collaboration, working as equal partners to conduct joint research and pursue new ideas together. In this way, WRI has maintained close working relationships with several local CSOs. For example, CTV has undertaken joint projects and programs with WRI since it was established, when and as funding has allowed. In other cases, formal collaboration has diminished over time. For ACODE, joint projects with WRI became less feasible in part because they had a full program and the additional projects did not meet their budget needs. Apart from joint projects, several CSO leaders have maintained personal and professional supportive connections with one another and with Peter Veit and Owen Lynch. They remain actively engaged colleagues whether or not there is funded work. At the same time, as noted above, maintaining a formalized network and financial support for periodic meetings between the CSOs has proven difficult, despite there being interest among the partners. Some of this convening role has been taken up by ELAW in more recent years.[61]

"Our partnerships are strong, we stay in touch even if there is no project work going on between us… because we have vested interests in each other… – Peter Veit (WRI)

"This wasn't just a funding relationship. It was more than that. It was an institution to institution support relationship". – CTV

Box 8 | Contributing Factors to Growth and Sustainability

The partnership with WRI was one among many interrelated contributing factors to CSO sustainability and growth. Interviews indicate that other key contributing factors included the following:

Strong Founding Leaders: ACODE, CTV, ZELA, and others among the most successful organizations partnering with WRI were founded by passionate, committed, and effective leaders.

Mission and Vision: These founding leaders were mission driven, growing organizations with a strong commitment and in pursuit of a vision.

Adaptability: Adaptably has also been important. CTV, for example, has been able to adapt and respond to donor demands, and to expand and contract their programmatic and even geographic scope, while maintaining their own vision and agenda.[62]

Strategic Fund Raising and Partnerships: While CSO access to long-term funding has been a limiting factor in some cases, ACODE, CTV and ZELA have been largely effective in securing additional funding to develop and pursue their own agendas. Godber Tumushabe highlighted ACODE's ability to negotiate funding that meets their programming needs in both scope and form. He attributes this to, inter alia, good negotiating skills, internal safeguards and policies regarding the funding they will accept, and ACODE's strong performance and record keeping.[63] Mutuso Dhliwayo described ZELA's efforts to inform donors about the links between environment and human rights in Zimbabwe, indicating that as understanding of this relationship has grown, funding for environmental law and policy work in the country has become more accessible. ZELA also seeks to establish MOUs with partners, in addition to any plans or contracts, to help ensure a shared vision.[64]

Strategic Partnerships: CTV has become a leading CSO in Mozambique for many reasons, including the quality and impacts of its work and effectiveness in creating and sustaining national and regional partnerships. For example, CTV is a core partner of Namati's, working on protection of community lands.[65] ZELA has navigated a highly challenging political environment in part by working with a mix of strategies and across political and sectoral boundaries – 'cautiously engaging' government agencies and businesses to influence them, leading and participating in advocacy and legal actions including with civil society coalitions, and supporting and empowering rural communities though information sharing, organizing support, and other strategies.[66]

Responding to a Need: More generally, the CSOs established in this time were filling a niche that had remained largely open. They were among the first civil society organizations in East and Southern Africa focused on environmental and land governance with a policy research and advocacy orientation. There was an urgent need for the work they were doing, and they did it well.[67]

"It is all about leadership. For any organization… leadership is what determines whether the enterprise succeeds or not. The availability of funding is only a factor. It is not an explanation ..." Godber Tumushabe (formerly ACODE)

"The most successful groups were the ones that were founded by a strong leader. … They knew exactly what they wanted to do and we just helped facilitate it." – Peter Veit (WRI)

"At first it was a big struggle to explain to donors how these things are linked, but now people are all coming to this understanding - that you can't address Zimbabwe's democratization deficit without looking at natural resource governance. Natural resources management can either undermine or promote democracy and it seems to be the former in Zimbabwe" – Mutuso Dhliwayo (ZELA)

".… [W]e have … the capacity to adapt and adjust …very quickly as donors adjusted and changed their policies and priorities and their focus.. CTV was …able to go through those necessary adjustments and changes … without losing our focus. ….Having clarity on what you want to address and why is important." – CTV

5.2   Impacts of CSOs on Environmental Governance

ACODE, CTV, ZELA, and other CSOs in this group make substantial contributions to natural resource governance thinking, policy, and practice, including:

"…The intellectual sustainability - how [these CSOs] impacted the way people perceive issues in the long run… on this they've had an incredible impact." – Jon Anderson (formerly USAID)

- Contributing to national law and policy, and to government actors' capacity in natural resource governance
- Partnering with, supporting, and influencing other CSOs and networks
- Empowering and supporting rural communities
- Influencing private sector accountability through direct advocacy and strategic engagement
- Contributing to INGO work and to natural resource governance discourse internationally
- 'Ripple effects' beyond the original CSOs, including as leaders move on to new roles

5.2.1 Contributing to National Law and Policy… and Government Capacity

Impacts on national environmental law and policy range from contributing to constitutional reform[68] to helping communities hold governments accountable for environmental impacts and related rights. In several cases, this has involved both working with and challenging governments through various advocacy approaches. Ultimately, it appears that these CSOs have contributed to not only discrete law and policy changes, but also to decision-makers' understanding of natural resource governance issues.

- **Advocacy as enhancing government awareness and capacity**. CSOs in this cohort work with all branches and levels of government to raise decision-makers' awareness and capacity for environmentally sound and socially just natural resource policy. Governments in the region have shown interest in working with ACODE in part because they synthesize and communicate key policy inputs from civil society and draft specific language. ZELA has been a resource for government at the national and local level in Zimbabwe, providing research to governing bodies on environment and natural resource governance.[69]

- **Advocacy as independent research and (legal) action**: ACODE, CTV, ZELA and other CSOs and researchers in this group also engage in independent advocacy-oriented research,[70] more direct advocacy campaigns, and legal action on natural resource governance. Several CSOs have taken governments to court to demand accountability for environmental law and practice. For example, Greenwatch (Uganda) has taken its government to court to demand compliance with national laws governing environmental impact assessments.[71] WRI did not itself support litigation, though did support CSOs in undertaking research that contributed to their due diligence.

5.2.2 Collaborating With, Supporting, and Influencing other CSOs and Networks

ACODE, CTV and ZELA have been able to help form and participate in networks with complementary agendas and skills. This has been facilitated by a growth in the number and diversity of CSOs in the region over the last two decades. In 2005, for example, ACODE led a joint campaign to stop degazettement of part of the Mabira Forest Reserve (Lake Victoria area) for use by the Sugar Corporation of Uganda Limited. They built a coalition that included other local CSOs, journalists, and international donors and partners, including the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED).[72] The multi-faceted campaign included information generation, demonstrations, and a public interest lawsuit in Uganda's Constitutional Court.[73] ZELA coordinates several civil society coalitions in Zimbabwe, including the Publish What You Pay campaign for mining sector transparency and accountability. CTV created a network of CSO partners in Mozambique, which has been important to their reach and impact, and is a key partner in Namati's community land rights work.[74]

"… The WRI partnership was important, but it was also very important for us to have national partnerships, and this is what has allowed CTV to be as widely and well known as it is today. It's because we managed to interact and liaise and support small or big organizations that existed outside of Maputo." – CTV

These CSOs have also impacted their civil society landscape over time. ZELA has been criticized by other civil society actors in Zimbabwe for its approach of 'cautious engagement' – working with government and businesses as they seek to inform and influence them. Yet, over time, they are also demonstrating a model that they see others starting to take up. CTV was founded when the civil society sector in Mozambique was just beginning to emerge. Through its work with government, rural communities, businesses, and other CSOs, CTV is helping to demonstrate the role and build the legitimacy of civil society in the country.[75]

5.2.3 Supporting Change on the Ground for Rural Communities

ACODE, CTV and ZELA also work directly with rural communities, including by supporting and empowering them in accessing information and claiming rights in relation to environmental governance through. Strategies include sharing information; supporting communities in establishing their own organizations and campaigns; facilitating exchange programs between communities and at the national, regional and international level; and undertaking more direct legal action such as litigation.

"[O]ne of our biggest achievements is raising awareness about the importance of natural resource governance and environmental rights, particularly with local communities. …. …And this is how we've empowered the communities we work with, because they can use that knowledge anywhere. We bring communities together at the local level and bring them to the regional and international level. We facilitate the existence of CBOs as legal entities in the form of trusts with their own leadership and financial accountability and capacity to do human rights monitoring work… " – Mutuso Dhliwayo, ZELA

5.2.4 Influencing Private Sector Accountability

Several of the CSOs in this cohort aim to influence private sector accountability for environmental and social impacts through combinations of direct advocacy and strategic engagement. ZELA, for example, has started to include mining and other extractive industry entities in its 'cautious engagement' approach. It coordinates the Zimbabwe Alternative Mining Indaba - a space for dialogue that has evolved to include CSOs, communities, government, and most recently some private businesses. Such private sector engagement is in addition to, rather than in lieu of, continued work on more direct advocacy campaigns and actions. According to their 2014 Annual Report, ACODE "carried out research and advocacy that informed the Public Finance Management Act, which provides for overall management of public finance including oil revenues", working with 'like-minded civil society organizations' and the Ministry of Finance and Parliament. This research resulted in increased transparency and accountability provisions.[76]

5.2.5 Contributing to Environmental Governance Internationally

Joint research and policy work between WRI and CSOs in East and Southern Africa has made contributions to natural resource governance at multiple levels. CSO partners, including ACODE, CTV and ZELA made critical intellectual contributions to this work, as well as sharing understanding of their contexts, connections to local organizations and communities, and the capacity for long-term field-based research. (See Box 5). Likewise, these CSOs have worked with other international organizations and researchers, contributing to discourse, awareness, and action on environmental and land governance issues in various forums. (See Box 9).

"…[I]f you want in-depth research and analysis of an issue, you …need partners who are there and can work with you on research and data – partners who really know the issues." – CTV

"There was reciprocity in the learning and this was important." – Jon Anderson (formerly USAID)

Box 9 | CSO Contributions to International and Regional Research – Examples

- CTV was a key research partner in the International Development Law Organization and Namati report on "**Protecting Community Lands and Resources**: Evidence from Liberia, Mozambique and Uganda" (Knight et al 2012), which explores avenues for effectively supporting implementation of laws for community land titling and documentation.

- In 2002, USAID (principally Jon Anderson) and partners including WRI published a framework entitled **Nature, Wealth and Power**, which explored the links between resources, growth and governance.[77] This framework was informed by several sources, including research with and by local CSOs in Africa. Several CSO partners also contributed to further discussion on the framework, including through a 2004 High Level Policy Dialogue organized by ACODE.[78] In 2012/2013, USAID assessed and updated the framework,[79] with a target audience of rural development practitioners worldwide.[80]

5.3   Impacts beyond Organizational Boundaries

These CSOs and their leaders are having ripple effects, bringing their experience beyond their organizational boundaries. As noted, ZELA supports rural community partners in establishing their own local CSOs, including for human rights monitoring. ACODE's founding Executive Director had been exploring options for raising dedicated funds to provide seed capital to new CSOs, in the vein of WRI's support. Additionally, as leaders and other staff of these CSOs move on to new positions, they continue to act as leaders in the civil society and government sector. Tundu Lissu, formerly at lawyer with LEAT, has been a Member of Parliament in Tanzania since 2010 and continues to be active on environmental justice issues in that position. Kenneth Kakuru, founder and former Director of Greenwatch is now a Justice of the Court of Appeal of Uganda. Godber Tumushabe, who moved from Executive Director to the Board of ACODE has founded a new regional NGO (Technology Frontiers Education Center) and is Associate Director of a regional think-tank, the Great Lakes Institute for Strategic Studies.

6. LEARNING FROM CHALLENGES

'Learning by doing' was central to these civil society support initiatives – both for the CSOs and for WRI, which was taking an innovative and largely uncharted approach. Mistakes are part of learning, and were generally accepted as such, while being proactively addressed. There are also more pervasive challenges to the CSOs' growth and sustainability outside the scope of WRI's support. These all provide insights to consider for improved CSO, INGO, and funder relationships in the African environmental, natural resource governance, and land rights arena.

6.1   Mistakes and Challenges as a Component of Learning

Like most organizations, CSOs in this cohort have had ups and downs. Key internal challenges have often involved financial and personal management. Issues were generally addressed as they arose, as a component of WRI's mentoring support. At least one of the CSOs has had to largely rebuild itself after financial accountability difficulties and the departure of founding leadership. That it was able to successfully do so is a testament to its core strength and resilience. A lesson here is the **importance of understanding mistakes as part of the learning process and being open to supporting revision and rebuilding where needed and appropriate - e.g., where the promise of an effective and accountable organization remains intact.**

6.2   Securing Sustainable and Appropriate Funding

While some of the CSOs have had substantial success, accessing appropriate and sustainable funding continues to be a challenge for many, including due to the political nature of natural resources governance, as further described below. The short-term nature of most project support was noted as a major challenge for CSO stability and sustainability, as well as rapidly changing donor agendas and interests.[81] Mentoring on financial management, assistance in connecting with other funders, and the flexibility and recipient discretion in initiatives under WRI's cooperative agreements with USAID were all highlighted as important and relatively rare. CSOs in this cohort also pursued a number of strategies to manage costs and secure long-term funding. LEAT and ACODE, for example, purchased offices to reduce the operational costs of rent. ACODE has also established internal guidelines on the nature and scope of funding agreements they will accept. At least one CSO (ACTS[82]) tried to establish an endowment for ongoing funding, though this proved complicated in practice, in part because of restrictions on using donor funding for capitalizing endowments. A key lesson here is the **need for long-term and flexible funding, as well as support in**

"If you want to secure sustainability it's not only financial sustainability but also the sustainability of your interventions – you don't want to be jumping from one issue to another all the time….Donors' responsibility towards civil society should be assumed in a way that reduces the amount of instability …" – CTV

"We also really promote long-term support….Real impacts can take 10+ years, and you need continued engagement and learning in a partnership." – ZELA

establishing sustained financing. One relatively unexplored option is helping partners to create endowments to reduce dependency on project-based funds and contracts.[83]

6.3 High Cost of Success – Threats to powerful change agents in natural resource governance

Public interest CSOs in East and Southern Africa are often at the forefront of challenging natural resources policy and practice. They call governments, businesses and donors to account on grounds of their social, environmental and human rights impacts. These change agents have faced exceptional challenges as a result. In some cases, funding has been limited or blocked altogether seemingly because of CSO agendas challenging powerful actors. Beyond funding challenges, several of CSO leaders have been targets of government scrutiny and even arrest and criminal charges in response to activism.[84]

Despite such challenges, these CSOs continue to find ways to effectively navigate their political environments.[85] A key lesson here is that **INGOs and funders need to understand the challenges that public interest CSOs are facing. Further, they should be willing to critically examine their own agendas and alliances and transparently support change agents even where this may have political costs. CSOs and their leaders are often taking enormous risk, and need partners who are willing to go the distance with them.**

6.4 Maintaining networks and managing longer-term change?

Some partners would have liked more or longer-term support in navigating organizational change. WRI's initiative was focused on helping to build new institutions, organizations, and capacities, and then to collaborate with these partners to pursue meaningful change. Organizational development support was not intended to be long-term. Yet organizations also face new management and growth challenges over time. For example, ZELA has faced challenges as it has grown in staff size, program reach, and budget. In practice, WRI has offered some change management support to partners as needs have arisen, but it is not an institutionalized arrangement. This experience emphasizes the importance of **ensuring partnerships of sufficient duration and scope, and of supporting partners' capacity to independently grow and to secure additional support overtime as needed**.

Support for longer-term maintenance of CSO networks has also been limited, including due to lack of funding. However, other organizations, including ELAW, have supported this to an extent. CSOs also have existing relationships between each other that they can build on.[86]

6.5   Strong Founding Leaders – A double-edged sword?

Strong leadership appears to have been a key ingredient in the CSOs' success. At the same time, reliance on charismatic leaders can also pose a challenge for organizations when they move on. CTV's and ZELA's founding leaders are still with the organization. ACODE is currently undergoing a transition as Godber Tumushabe, the founding Executive Director, moved from management to the Board in 2013. He and ACODE's other leaders have worked together on the transition, and WRI has continued to offer some limited technical support to its leaders. The longer term impacts of leadership changes in these CSOs thus remains to be seen, as in most cases founding leaders are still in place or have transitioned relatively recently.[87]

6.6   Partnering where there is Shared Mission and Commitment

Support to already established organizations was less impactful than that given to new organizations, in terms of generating sustained work on land and environment policy research and advocacy. Full analysis of the reasons for these differences is beyond the scope of this study. However, one factor that appears to have been significant was that, with newly established CSOs, WRI was able to work directly with motivated leaders who had specific interest in the issues and approach. This points to the **importance of working with motivated partners on the basis of shared commitment and vision**.

6.7   Recruiting Diverse Leadership

The relatively small number of women among the CSO leaders in these initiatives suggests that **more or different efforts could have been made to identify and support women leaders**, though there are women among the policy research staff of the CSOs in this cohort.[88]

7. LESSONS TO CONSIDER FOR BEST PRACTICE IN CSO, INGO AND DONOR PARTNERSHIPS

To conclude, this section draws on the experience described above to distill **lessons for INGO and donor best practice in investing in and partnering with CSOs in East and Southern Africa**. These are not meant to be exhaustive, and should be taken as preliminary, rather than definitive, given the case study scope.[89] Nonetheless, clear lessons do emerge, and there is notable overlap with recommendations from more comprehensive sources, including Maliasili Initiatives and Well Grounded (2015).

Lessons are summarized in Box 10 and explored in further detail below. While they are different types of organizations, most of the lessons here apply to both INGOs and donors, particularly where INGOs are acting as funders. They are therefore not differentiated.

While some lessons relevant for CSO best practice did emerge, the focus of this report is on INGO and donor policy and practice. Lessons for CSOs are therefore not similarly specified. However, the reflections below are ultimately about maintaining relationships of mutual respect, confidence and trust. That requires that all partners, including local CSOs, operate in good faith and are able to follow through on agreements.

Box 10 | Summarized Lessons to Consider for Best Practice

Cross-cutting
- Be willing to take risks – including of setbacks or failures.
- Tailor support to the partnership and context, while maintaining a clear overall vision and a scope that allows meaningful engagement. Focus on the quality rather than quantity of partnerships. Working closely and overtime with a few partners may be more impactful than providing shorter term or less in-depth support to a large number of organizations or individuals.

Relationships
- Partner where there is a convergence of missions, commitment, and values, and where you can meaningfully contribute.
- Build respectful and reciprocal relationships – engage partners as equals and ensure that support is invited / wanted by local partners.
- Partner for collaboration on shared outcomes. Avoid contracting local CSOs as service providers for external agendas.
- Be open to new leaders, organizations, and ideas and seek innovative ways of connecting with partners.
- Support change agents, including where there may be political costs.

Support Models

- Understand and respond to the context, including changing dynamics in political landscapes and funding sources.
- Support 'learning by doing', including through meaningful and sustained collaboration and mentoring. Recognize that mistakes are part of learning.
- Support network building and peer exchange.
- Include appropriate and meaningful monitoring mechanisms, including for learning. Be honest and responsive, changing course when needed.
- Support (or help partners find support for) developing and advancing their own leadership, vision, and strategies, as well as for change management.

Funding Arrangements
- Provide appropriate and sufficient funding - flexible, long-term, and inclusive of overhead – with accountability.
- Provide seed funding for promising organizations and initiatives. Everything starts small. If you see something worth growing, take the risk and invest there.
- Facilitate access to other funding sources.
- Invest in leaders, ideas, and organizations – not just in projects.
- Be open and honest – acknowledge that funding is often difficult to secure and that mutual accountability is essential.

7.1   Cross-cutting

Be willing to take risks – including of setbacks or failures. WRI and USAID support was grounded in a willingness to take the substantial risk of investing in a cohort of new and promising leaders. Likewise, these young leaders took great risk in entering new and sometimes dangerous territory for local civil society. Without their being table to take these leaps, enabled in part by mutual trust, impacts would likely not have been what they are.

Tailor support and enable flexible approaches - with a clear and shared broader vision and at a scope that allows for meaningful engagement. The support to each CSO was tailored to their interests and needs. This one-on-one approach was facilitated by a focused overall scope on policy and advocacy work, and by the relatively few number of partners. The focus was on the quality rather than quantity of partnerships. Working closely and overtime with a few partners may be more impactful than providing shorter term or less in-depth support to a large number of organizations or individuals. Maintaining a clear and shared overall vision of the partnership, and a manageable scope in line with available resources, may help enable such an approach.

7.2 Relationships

Partner where there is a convergence of mission, commitment and values and where you can meaningfully contribute. Be knowledgeable of and responsive to the context, including challenges, and engage where you can provide additional and wanted support. Be clear about your interests and vision as an investor or partner. Avoid rapid or substantial changes to your vision/demands where these will impact partner stability. WRI's initiatives responded to a gap in the institutional landscape that was particular to the time and that WRI had the core competencies to help address. Their *specific* approaches may not have worked in a different context. The landscape has also changed, and is fuller. With respect to this particular set of CSOs, needs have now shifted to navigating changing political and funding landscapes, and managing organizational growth.

Build and maintain respectful and reciprocal relationships, engaging partners as equals. Support CSO-led and jointly developed initiatives. Recognize local CSOs' competencies and interests, and support opportunities for reciprocal learning. Listen to and respect their visions and interests, as well as any safeguards or policies they may have regarding partnerships.

Partner for collaboration on shared outcomes. Avoid contracting local CSOs as service providers for external agendas. WRI partnerships are described as having been respectful, reciprocal, and collaborative. The talents of CSO leaders and staff were recognized, and there was reciprocal learning that drew on the strengths of each partner. Comparatively, frustration has been expressed with the relationship of 'service delivery' that underlies many INGO – local CSO engagements. Often, local CSOs are treated as consultants or service providers carrying out pre-determined or narrowly defined tasks on behalf of INGOs, with little flexibility and relatively low levels of funding. In fact, this funding often does not cover the true costs of the work. This 'service delivery' orientation may be rooted in many factors, including the funding restrictions and reporting requirements to which the INGO is held. However, in some cases CSOs feel that their day to day INGO counterparts do not engage with them as respected and equal colleagues, even where favorable terms of agreement are in place.[90]

Be open to new leaders, organizations, and ideas and seek innovative ways of connecting with partners – e.g., looking for emerging leaders. Supporting already established organizations is a common strategy, and may often be effective, particularly where there is a clear alignment of capacities and missions. However, INGO and international donor support can also shape and reinforce the institutional landscape – for better or for worse.[91] **Looking only at established organizations and**

"For international partners, it's important to have a shared vision… Sometimes your [funder/ partner] can fail just because your methods aren't aligned to the social and political context. You need this alignment on visions, on expectation, and on understanding of the operating environment."
– Mutuso Dhliwayo (ZELA)

"Mutual respect and recognition are crucial for partnerships under any circumstances and this is something we should all strive to secure and maintain. We all have things to learn from each other and offer each other".
- CTV

Some other partners/ funders have been "much more extractive, with limited appreciation that you need to invest in the organization… the infrastructure costs – human, physical, ICT infrastructure that you really need to do the work, and to do it well … I want partners that understand that you need certain competencies and capabilities to actually do quality work."
– Godber Tumushabe (formerly ACODE)

actors can mean missed opportunities for empowerment and change. New opportunities and impacts can come from recognizing and supporting emerging leaders, new intuitions and new ideas. Particular attention may need to be given to identifying and supporting diverse leaders, including women leaders.

Support change agents, even when this may have political cost. Natural resource governance is political. Governance focused CSOs in East and Southern Africa, and throughout the world, are acting as catalysts of positive change in difficult and often dangerous operating environments. INGOs and international donors that seek to support change in these arenas should be willing to actively support CSO partners in work that has political costs.

7.3   Support Approaches

Understand and respond to the context, including being aware of changing dynamics in political landscapes and funding sources. Awareness can help ensure support that is tailored to need.

Support 'learning by doing', including through meaningful and sustained collaboration and mentoring. Recognize that mistakes are part of learning. WRI's approaches of mentoring partners, undertaking joint research, and providing opportunities for hands-on 'learning by doing' were highlighted as comparative strengths. Many times, 'capacity building' is undertaken through more generic or short-term approaches – workshops, trainings, etc. This more collaborative and sustained approach appears to have been important for sustainable outcomes.

Support network building and peer-exchange. Opportunities for peer-learning and exchange at multiple levels and across sectors can benefit all partners in the short and longer-term.

Be honest and responsive, changing course when needed. This can be facilitated by questioning assumptions and by having **appropriate and meaningful monitoring mechanisms**, including for learning.

Support (or help partners find support for) developing and advancing their own leadership, vision and strategy and for change management.

7.4   Funding Arrangements

Provide appropriate and sufficient funding - flexible, long-term, and inclusive of overhead – with accountability. To maintain stable visions and interventions, and to have sustained impacts, local CSOs need long-term funding, with sufficient flexibility and discretion over its use. This can be facilitated in part by INGO and donors maintaining a long-term view of "success". Funding should also include sufficient coverage for overhead costs – inclusive of regular operating costs and (re)investment in capacity. WRI's partnerships were enabled (versus having been restricted or directed) by the funding support from USAID – which was both substantial in amount and flexible in use, including to sufficiently cover overhead costs.

There was a high level of recipient discretion between USAID and WRI, and likewise between WRI and the local CSOs.

Provide seed funding for promising organizations and initiatives. Often donors and INGOs are reluctant to invest in or partner with new and emerging organizations, even if better established organizations are not the best 'fit' for their missions. However, everything new starts small. If you see something worth growing, take the risk and invest there.

International organizations can **use their networks and communications infrastructure to proactively support local partners in identifying and accessing additional sources of funding**. This may be especially important for newly established organizations.

Invest in organizations – not just projects. This can include supporting organizational and technical capacity strengthening and investing in new ideas. WRI's focus on investing in partners, including securing the building blocks of new organizations, was highlighted as a comparative strength.

Be open and honest – acknowledge that funding is often difficult to secure and that mutual accountability is essential. Flexibility should not mean lack of rigor – appropriate and meaningful monitoring and reporting can be helpful for all parties, including to reveal and address weaknesses. WRI worked closely with USAID counterparts, contributing to mutual trust and understanding, and there was accountability for the use and management of funds. Mentoring included hands-on finance management training, including budgeting for overhead.

8. REFERENCES

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Name (Alphabetical order by surname)	Organization During Study Period	Organization Currently
Jon Anderson	USAID (Natural Resource Policy Advisor, Office of Sustainable Development)	Independent
Mutuso Dhliwayo	ZELA (Co-Founder)	ZELA (Director)
Owen Lynch	WRI (Senior Associate) CIEL (Senior Attorney)	Independent Fellow at Rights and Resources Institute
Tumai Murombo	ZELA (Co-Founder)	University of Witwatersrand (Associate Professor) ZELA (Chairperson of the Board)
CTV Representative	CTV	CTV
Godber Tumushabe	ACODE (Executive Director)	Founder, Technology Frontiers Education Center (Founder) Great Lakes Institute for Strategic Studies (Associate Director) ACODE (Board Member)
Peter Veit	WRI (Senior Associate)	WRI (Director, Land And Resource Rights Initiative)

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Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association (ZELA)	http://www.zela.org/

8.4   Notes

[1] For purposes of this study, 'local civil society organization' refers to local, national, and regionally focused NGOs and other civil society organizations that are registered and operating solely in countries in Africa.

[2] This work was undertaken by what was, during the case study period, called the WRI Institutions and Governance Program (IGP). It is now known as the Governance Center of Excellence. For purposes of this study, references to "WRI" refer specifically the work of the WRI IGP circa 1995 – 2005, unless otherwise specified.

[3] Ongoing initiatives and exploration of best practice in this area include the INGO Accountability Charter under development through a process facilitated by the International Civil Society Network http://www.ingoaccountabilitycharter.org/

[4] Maliasili Initiatives and Well Grounded 2015, citing Spenceley 2008 and World Trade Organization 2014

[5] Paragraph informed by Maliasili Initiatives and Well Grounded 2015. See also Anderson et al 2013 – a framework articulating relationships between nature, wealth and power.

[6] Maliasili Initaitives and Well Grounded 2015:10, citing Gouzou 2012

[7] cf. CIVICUS 2013

[8] cf. Sherwood 2015, CIVICUS 2015, and Maliasili Initiatives and Well Grounded 2015:10,11, citing CIVICUS 2014, Onyango 2015, and Cornell 2015

[9] Maliasili Initiatives and Well Grounded 2015:1 (For further detail on challenges and constraints, see pages 20 – 25 in the same source.)

[10] Maliasili Initiatives and Well Grounded 2015:35

[11] Maliasili Initiatives and Well Grounded 2015:35, citing INTRAC 2004

[12] This case study aims to provide a snap shot of lessons from a particular case. For broader research in this area, cf. Maliasili Initiatives and Well Grounded 2014 and INTRAC 2001 and 2004

[13] Collective input from interviews

[14] EAA description adapted from WRI supplemental information section in Logo 2003 (pages 34,35)

[15] This study does not constitute a comprehensive review of any project or organization.

[16] Efforts were made to obtain copies of cooperative agreements and related reports and evaluations, including extensive search of the USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) (https://dec.usaid.gov/dec/home/Default.aspx). With some exceptions, such records were not available.

[17] WRI website: www.wri.org/

[18] The Governance Center of Excellence works with diverse stakeholders with the goal of "empower[ing] people and strengthen[ing] institutions to foster environmentally sound and socially equitable decision-making", as described at http://www.wri.org/our-work/topics/governance

[19] In Salomao 2004:26 (Supplemental information section by WRI).

[20] USAID website: www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/mission-vision-values

[21] ACODE 2014:1

[22] See, for example, the Local Government Councils Score-card Initiative (LGCSCI) at: http://www.acode-u.org/LGScorecards.html and ACODE publications focusing on other issues/ sectors, including Tumushabe and Makaaru 2013 and Bogere et al 2013

[23] ACODE's website: http://www.acode-u.org/About_Us.html

[24] CTV website: http://www.ctv.org.mz/ (English page and Google Translate)

[25] CTV profile in Knight et al 2012:5

[26] ZELA's website (http://www.zela.org/) with further inputs based on interviews with Mutuso Dhliwayo and Tumai Murombo (ZELA)

[27] The cohort included about 15 organizations, though more individuals, as several organizations were formed by groups rather than single individuals. Paragraph based on interviews, including with current and former WRI representatives.

[28] Dr. Lynch was instrumental in the initiation of these partnership initiatives. He moved from WRI to start work with CIEL relatively early in the case study period (1997), though continued to work with many of the CSOs in this cohort.

[29] Based on interview with Godber Tumushabe (formerly ACODE)

[30] Based on interview with CTV

[31] In a 2009 interview with Green Grantsgrants Fund, Mutuso Dhliwayo explains that "During my third year at the University of Zimbabwe, I attended a lecture titled "A Career as a Public Interest Environmental Lawyer," given by Professor Owen Lynch, from the Center for International Environmental Law in D.C. His talk changed my perception about private practice and I opted, instead, to join Environment Africa as a legal officer upon graduation. In 2000, I founded ZELA with a group of former classmates." https://www.greengrants.org/2009/02/25/new-zimbabwean-advisor-mutuso-dhliwayo/ [Accessed 7 October, 2016]

[32] Based on interview and follow up inputs from Mutuso Dhliwayo (ZELA) and Tumai Murombo (formerly ZELA)

[33] Based on collective input from interviews and Deloitte and Touche 2002
Sub-grant amounts varied, but were typically large compared to other funds available for newly established NGOs in East and Southern Africa at the time. In other cases, initial funding was in smaller amounts, but increased over time as the organization grew.

[34] Based on collective input from interviews

[35] Section based on collective input from interviews, including Peter Veit (WRI), Owen Lynch (formerly WRI) and Godber Tumushabe (formerly ACODE)

[36] This rule "emerged from 30 years of CCL's Lessons of Experience research, which explores how executives learn, grow and change over the course of their careers" https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/the-70-20-10-rule/

[37] For further examples see, e.g., Veit et al 2007, 2001 and 1997

[38] Veit et al 2008:iv (Acknowledgements)

[39] Veit et al 2008. The report co-authors were: Peter Viet, WRI, Washington DC; Gracian Z. Banda, Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy, Malawi; Alfred Brownell, Green Advocates, Liberia; Shamiso Mtisi, ZELA, Zimbabwe; Prudence Galega, Network for Environment and Sustainable Development in Africa, Cameroon; George Mpundu Kanja, Institute of Human Rights, Intellectual Property, and Development Trust, Zambia; Rugemeleza Nshala, LEAT, Tanzania; Benson Owuor Ochieng, ILEG, Kenya; Alda Salomao, CTV, Mozambique; and Godber Tumushabe, ACODE, Uganda;

[40] Cf. Mtisi et al 2006
Project description adapted from Veit et al 2008:iv (Acknowledgements)

[41] Ribot 2004. See also Ribot 2002a,b
This research was also informed by Dr. Nyangabyaki Bazaara, who directed the Centre for Basic Research (CBR) in Uganda. CBR was among the pre-existing organizations that partnered with WRI in capacity strengthening initiatives.

[42] The series was renamed "The Representation, Equity and Environment Working Paper Series" from paper no. 23 onward, to reflect its broader (worldwide) scope. (Explained on page ii in papers no. 23 upward, e.g., http://www.wri.org/sites/default/files/wp23_achhatre.pdf)

[43] Salomoa 2004
See also, for example, Goldman 2001 citing LEAT 1998

Environmental Governance in Africa Working Paper Series description adapted from supplemental information section in Logo 2003 (pages 34-35). All papers in the series are available for download at: http://www.wri.org/publication/market-access-institutional-choice#index. This website also includes an index with abstracts for each paper.

[44] Dubash et al 2001

[45] Based on collective input from interviews

[46] Description of TAI from website: http://www.accessinitiative.org/
Paragraph based on collective inputs from interviews, including Peter Veit (WRI) and Owen Lynch (formerly WRI)

[47] USAID policy regarding cooperative agreements has been revised since the case study period, though a detailed comparison of the differences is beyond the scope of this study. Under current policies, the three core options for USAID funding are described as: "Contracts – USAID typically exercises a higher level of control over the partner in obtaining results…; Grants - USAID does not need substantial involvement with the program implementation; and Cooperative Agreements - USAID is substantially involved with the recipient in program implementation". https://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/get-grant-or-contract/grant-and-contract-process
For more detail on cooperative agreements, see USAID Operational Policy, ADS Chapter 303 Grants and Cooperative Agreements to Non-Governmental Organizations, https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303.pdf

[48] Based on collective input from interviews

[49] Based on collective input from interviews and review of USAID operational policy on cooperative agreements.

[50] Based on collective input from interviews

[51] Based on collective input from interviews

[52] Based on collective input from interviews

[53] USAID Cooperative Agreement No. PCE-5517-A-00-5021-00

[54] About 38% for staff salaries and about 18% for general administration and expenses
Box based on Deliotte and Touche 2000

[55] Based on collective inputs from interviews and CSO websites

[56] Based on interview with CTV

[57] Based on interview with Mutuso Dhliwayo (ZELA) and Tumai Murombo (formerly ZELA)

[58] Based on interview with Godber Tumushabe (formerly ACODE)

[59] Based on interview with Mutuso Dhliwayo (ZELA) and Tumai Murombo (formerly ZELA)

[60] See the ZELA coordinated "Publish What You Pay" initiative referred to below.

[61] Based on collective input from interviews

[62] Based on interview with CTV

[63] ACODE has also developed a system for analyzing their funding streams and needs, and adjusting as needed, such as shifting to direct grants (vs. sub-grants) and foundations (vs. bilateral donors) over time as these have proven to be more secure approaches.

[64] Based on interview with CSO representatives

[65] The CSO Namati is a widely recognized leader in disseminating and implementing innovative legal empowerment interventions, working in with a large network of other CSOs. For work with CTV, see for example Knight et al 2012

[66] Based on collective input from interviews

[67] Based on collective input from interviews

[68] ZELA coordinated the Zimbabwean civil society working group that helped ensure the new constitution reflects natural resource governance issues and environmental rights. This working group prepared position papers and raised the issues with communities throughout Zimbabwe, helping to generate demand for these reforms.

[69] Based on collective input from interviews

[70] Cf. Lissu 2001 and 1999

[71] See
http://www.wri.org/blog/2008/03/greenwatch-uganda-champions-information-rights
Also article: http://www.right2info.org/cases/r2i-greenwatch-u-ltd-v.-attorney-general-of-uganda-and-uganda-electricity-transmission-co.ltd

[72] Partners included the CSOs Environment Alert, National Association of Professional Environmentalists, Nature Uganda, Anti Corruption Coalition Uganda, as well as faith-based organizations, cultural organizations, donor groups, lawyers, and journalists

[73] Description adapted from ACODE and International Budget Partnership (nd)

[74] Based on interviews with CTV and Mutuso Dhliwayo (ZELA) and Tumai Murombo (formerly ZELA) and Knight et al 2012

[75] Based on interviews with CTV and Mutuso Dhliwayo (ZELA) and Tumai Murombo (formerly ZELA)

[76] ACODE 2014:7

[77] USAID et al 2002

[78] ACODE 2004

[79] Anderson et al 2013

[80] Adapted from description of Anderson et al 2013 at: https://rmportal.net/library/content/nwp-2.0

[81] Based on collective input from interviews. See also Maliasili Initiatives and Well Grounded 2015

[82] One of the pre-existing CSOs that WRI supported in building environmental policy research capacity

[83] Based on collective input from interviews

[84] cf. CAO c. 2002 and Lissu c. 2002

[85] Based on collective input from interviews

[86] Based on collective input from interviews

[87] Based on collective input from interviews and CSO websites

[88] This study did not examine reasons for the relatively low numbers of women leaders among the newly established CSOs.

[89] As noted in the section on methodology, this case study is based on a relatively small number of interviews and documents, and on a sample of the full group of CSOs.

[90] Based on collective input from interviews. See also Maliasili Initiatives and Well Grounded 2015:44

[91] Maliasili Initiatives and Well Grounded 2015