



Conservation through
Poverty Alleviation International

Strategic Plan: Innovation for Resilience

2024-2030



CPALI.ORG

Conservation through Poverty Alleviation International (CPALI)

Strategic Plan: 2024-2030

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Forward

As Conservation through Poverty Alleviation International (CPALI) embarks on its next chapter, the road ahead looks at once challenging and full of promise. In two decades, this remarkable organization has evolved from humble beginnings – an evolutionary biologist and an entomologist exploring whether wild silk could be a key to unlocking restoration of critically biodiverse landscapes while sustaining growing local communities – to a vibrant nature-based social enterprise that works with 400 farmers and a proud circle of artisans in Madagascar to build a better future.

Delivering our mission to enhance local livelihoods, advance landscape restoration, and elevate Malagasy arts and culture with global audiences grows ever more challenging. Madagascar has one of the highest poverty rates in the world. It has struggled with political instability and infrastructure limitations that deny many of its citizens quality healthcare, education, and economic opportunity. Environmental degradation and biodiversity loss are acute. And as an island nation, its communities face extreme and immediate consequences of a changing climate.

Farmers in the northeastern rainforest region of Madagascar where CPALI's efforts focus have weathered further difficulties since 2020. Along with the economic consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, food prices skyrocketed when grain deliveries from Ukraine collapsed in 2022 following the Russian invasion, putting stronger pressure than ever on dwindling forests to address local food insecurity. Yet through all this, our initiative has persisted.

CPALI's end goal is delivering a locally led initiative that pays for itself through enterprise and innovation. This is still far out of reach. In the years between now and 2030, our work will center on integrated strategies that continue to build resilience for communities and nature while providing opportunities for women to earn a fair wage. Agroforestry for Resilience, Nature-positive Textiles, and Nature-based Innovations will be essential pillars of our approach. I'm grateful for the support of our remarkable circle of donors and friends, and feel privileged to lead the CPALI team to implement this new strategy and beyond.



Rachel Kramer
Executive Director

Who We Are



Conservation through Poverty Alleviation International (CPALI)

CPALI is a United States-based 501(c)3 non-profit organization that connects people and nature in a mutually beneficial way. Our goal is to advance local nature-based innovations that strengthen the resilience of communities and ecosystems bordering Madagascar's largest remaining rainforest. Our work centers on three goals: enhancing livelihoods, advancing landscape restoration, and elevating Malagasy arts and culture with global audiences. CPALI is proud to have been awarded a four-star rating on Charity Navigator and Gold Transparency ranking on GuideStar as a testament to the integrity, social and environmental value of our programs.



Tanana Madagascar, Our Nature-based Enterprise

To help accomplish CPALI's goals for people and nature, we have launched a social and environmental enterprise under the brand Tanana Madagascar. This enterprise links artisans and farmers in Madagascar to export markets, creating opportunities for sustainably-sourced products that support both conservation and poverty alleviation. Tanana Madagascar furthers fair wage employment for women who craft unique products from endemic raw materials that are only found in Madagascar, including wild silk from seven different species of endemic moth. Earning income from the silk encourages local farmers to restore wild silk host plants and leverage sustainable harvesting techniques. 100% of the profits from our handmade goods are returned to participating farmers and artisans. Tanana Madagascar is verified by the Fair Trade Federation and Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network.



SEPALIM, Our Local Sister Organization in Madagascar

Sehatry ny Mpamokatra Landy Ifotony (Organization of Wild Silk Producers) Madagascar (SEPALIM) is the local non-governmental organization in northeastern Madagascar that is supported by CPALI to lead collaboratively designed conservation and livelihood activities. SEPALIM works hand-in-hand with farmers to identify, develop, and implement new means of income generation. Its mission is to protect areas of high conservation value by linking the economic livelihoods of economically-disadvantaged rural communities to nature restoration. SEPALIM also leads a wild silk and raffia textile workshop and leads engagement with local artisans.

Our Mission

Our mission is to strengthen the capacity of local organizations to develop and implement innovative nature-based solutions that advance conservation and poverty alleviation in Madagascar. To do this, we create market opportunities for sustainably produced local materials and deliver technical, financial, and scientific support.

Our Vision

CPALI's vision is a world in which people and nature thrive on community lands that are critical for biodiversity conservation by connecting fair and sustainably sourced native resources to local and global markets.

How We Work

Madagascar is among the 10 poorest countries in the world. The majority of its population relies on subsistence farming for their livelihoods. As communities grow, cultivating food and cash crops in nutrient-limited soils accelerates conversion of forests and other natural systems for agriculture.

More than 1% of the world's biodiversity is represented within the dwindling forests of an isolated region of northeastern Madagascar where CPALI's efforts focus. To balance the needs of people and nature in this remarkable place, locally driven economic incentives are essential. These include providing

sustainable financial returns to farmers who restore native species in their multi-use agroforestry systems for livelihood and biodiversity co-benefits. These benefits include generating sufficient supplemental income to send children, particularly girls, to school, while creating canopies for lemurs and other species to move through the landscape.

Founded 20 years ago by American and Malagasy scientists, CPALI has identified seven species of wild silk moth in the northeastern rainforests whose cocoons can be harvested for a new form of nature-positive textile. Their method allows wild moths to fly free and continue their lifecycle. With this discovery, local farmers and artisans have begun engaging in a new kind of conservation initiative: wild silk production.

To advance this initiative and instill local ownership, CPALI supported the creation of a local organization, SEPALI, that works directly with farmers in northeastern Madagascar to plant native trees and understory species in degraded areas. In addition to host plants for wild silkworms, other native flora are beginning to be explored for natural dyes and fibers to offer wider community and biodiversity benefits. From 2010 to 2014, SEPALIM worked with 360 farmers to plant 45,000 native trees in rainforest-bordering agroforestry systems. In that period, reforestation efforts focused on a single native tree species, locally named *Talandoha* (*Polyscias bakeriana*). This tree is a host plant for the endemic Saturniidae silk moth, (*Antherina suraka*). By collecting and selling silk from wild suraka moths, farmers have earned important supplemental income. After two years, farmers who planted 200 native *Talandoha* trees for rearing silkworms have increased their average income by 30%. When other family members have participated in cocoon washing and processing, income gains have increased 40% to 60%.

To date, wild silk production is not cost-competitive with high-value introduced cash crops, such as vanilla and cloves. However, wild silk offers farmers the benefit of being immune to price swings reflecting global supply and demand dynamics, like those experienced in the vanilla market (local market price for vanilla changed from \$500/kg in 2018 to less than \$100/kg in 2020). Wild silk harvests also provide a reliable source of income outside of the cash crop and rice harvesting seasons. These values have provided sufficient incentive for participating farmers to validate CPALI's vision.

After integrating this single native host tree into local agroforestry systems, enough supply of wild silk cocoons has become available to support the growth of a new local art form by area artisans. The stunning, nonspun, wild silk textiles that they produce are beginning to be valued far beyond the island of Madagascar and are now marketed under the brand Tanana Madagascar. Income from these textile

sales, combined with donor and grant resources, enable CPALI to further iterate and scale this remarkably unique initiative.

Our Integrated Initiatives

CPALI's work through 2030 will fit under 3 integrated initiatives. We will enhance the biodiversity value of local agroforestry systems, producing nature-positive textiles, and supporting nature-based innovations to deliver locally driven transformative change.

Agroforestry for Resilience

“As we face today’s ecological crisis, we need more regenerative models that restore nature by strengthening community participation.” - Rachel Kramer, CPALI Executive Director

One hectare of forest lost in Madagascar has a greater impact on global biodiversity than a hectare of forest lost almost anywhere else on earth. Restoring degraded landscapes with native species can help to prevent biodiversity loss, support local communities, and strengthen climate resilience. After testing the CPALI concept and successfully integrating one native host tree in local agroforestry systems to deliver income benefits, we are ready to iterate and scale. In late 2024, CPALI will support SEPALIM Madagascar to work with local farmers in four rainforest-bordering communities to mainstream additional species of wild silk moths into the production system and plant a wider range of native host plants in agroforestry systems.

In this next phase of activity, we will work with local farmers to cultivate 15 species of native tree and understory plant that are host for seven species of endemic wild silk moth. We will also support restoration of a range of other native plants used for natural dyes and fibers, and that deliver wider value for communities. While providing important economic benefits, many local farmers report that the selected target species in our next phase of restoration also play important roles in the local ecosystem. These range from fruit production for local birds to canopy connectivity that helps lemurs and other wildlife move through the cultivated landscape.

The SEPALI Madagascar team will continue to work in forest-bordering communities on the edges of Makira Natural Park and Masoala National Park that have been engaged in silk rearing programs since 2010. This next agroforestry initiative will establish tree nurseries and enroll up to 400 farmers by the

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end of 2025. Native species planted under the program will range from endangered slow-growing hardwood trees to rapidly growing silk moth host plants.

Nature-positive Textiles

"Things that had no use to us before now have meaning. SEPALIM has blossomed in this community." - Trozona, Village Elder

What does it look like to celebrate nature, culture, and sustainability in a single textile? The Tanana Madagascar brand brings people, nature, and design together to do just this. Constantly developing new designs that leverage traditional techniques and local inspiration, SEPALI Madagascar works with area artisans to transform native renewable resources into stunning products that we market to global audiences. With an online retail marketplace and wholesale catalog, Tanana Madagascar's nature-positive textiles are beginning to be showcased at major trade shows, from Shoppe Object New York 2024 to the Museum Store Association in Baltimore. With a US-based General Manager and fulfillment support now in place, orders for Tanana Madagascar wild silk have been commissioned by prestigious institutions' gift shops, including the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art.

Tanana Madagascar has earned a double-verification with the Fair Trade Federation and Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network, which reflects our commitment both to paying women and other artisans fair wages and to offering products that have the power to reverse wildlife declines. From 2024 to 2030, we will continue to grow our supply chain while striving to achieve a net profit, a goal challenged by the fact that shipping from Madagascar represents 25% of the sale price of each item. Through 2030, we will continue to work with our local sister organization to encourage entrepreneurial activities that can develop direct sales connections both in-country and in export markets and work toward local independence.



Nature-based Innovations

"We believe in a social capital approach that invests in existing social networks to implement change." - Catherine Craig, PhD, CPALI Founder

In 2024, CPALI began investing pilot funding in locally initiated nature-based innovations that have the potential to transform our supply chain and offer wider social and environmental benefits. Our initial 2024 investment is in a local effort to reduce the prevalence of an invasive plant-introduced Asian water hyacinth—which clogs local waterways, while reducing the amount of costly and environmentally damaging firewood needed for raw silk processing in our artisans workshop, as well as for cocoon cleaning by women in rainforest-bordering farming villages. By supporting local collectors to remove invasive water hyacinth from rivers and wetlands, dry, and transport it for biochar production, and designing custom stoves to burn that biochar, fuelwood demand may be significantly reduced.

With new donor resources, CPALI will explore ways to further seed and scale this and other efforts that empower local entrepreneurs and help reduce the human footprint.

2030 Targets

By 2030, CPALI aims to deliver the following results with our local sister organization, SEPALIM:

- **Reforestation** - Over 85,000 native trees and understory species planted in local farmers' agroforestry systems, helping to restore critical spaces for biodiversity along the borders of Madagascar's largest remaining rainforest.
- **Livelihoods** - 400 farmers inter-crop native trees and understory species within multi-use food and cash cropping systems to deliver sustainable supplemental income for families. A thriving workshop supports local artisans to grow their skill level and sell products to local and international markets.
- **Education** - Farmers and artisans earn enough to send their children to school.
- **Fair Labor** - Regular employment is provided at a fair wage to local artisans (predominantly women) who have limited access to paying jobs.

- **Enterprise** - Supply chain and marketing optimization yields net profits to establish Tanana Madagascar as a sustainable nature-based social enterprise.

Operations

From 2024 to 2030, CPALI will actively seek support to accelerate our programs and scale our impact for communities and nature. We will also work to further optimize our operations in the following ways:

Certifications

We will strive to sustain the highest rankings with globally recognized certifications and verifications:

- **GuideStar** - CPALI will annually update our organization's filings to maintain GuideStar Gold Transparency ranking, or higher.
- **Charity Navigator** - CPALI will annually update our organization's records to maintain our high rating as a reflection of our integrity and strong performance.
- **Fair Trade Federation**- Tanana Madagascar will submit documentation to sustain our brand's Fair Trade Federation verification and seal.
- **Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network** - Tanana Madagascar will submit documentation to sustain our brand's Certified Wildlife Friendly status and seal.

Transparency

Transparency is a core value at CPALI. Our organization will continue to post our federal income tax returns, annual reports, and our strategic plan on our website.

Policies

As a growing organization, CPALI is adopting new policies that guide our efforts:

- In 2023, CPALI adopted and published a non-discrimination policy.
- In 2024, CPALI will adopt and publish a whistleblower policy.
- CPALI expects to create an employee handbook in 2025.

Organizational Development

- **Strategies:** In 2025, CPALI will create an organizational development strategy, with immediate, short-term, and long-term goals.
- **Culture:** At CPALI, our core values are Respect, Collaboration, Innovation, and Integrity. We will endeavor to further strengthen our internal result-oriented culture with careful integration

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between the CPALI leadership and Board, Tanana Madagascar enterprise, and our SEPALI Madagascar local sister organization. Transparency will be prioritized in planning, strategy, and operations decisions on both the US (CPALI) and Madagascar (SEPALIM) sides via weekly check-in calls.

- **Systems:** In 2024, CPALI will explore ways to make our donor engagement and enterprise more efficient by researching and adopting a good-fit Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solution.
- **Presence:** To strengthen relationships and understanding across our US and Madagascar-based partners, CPALI's Executive Director will travel to the field a minimum of once per year and explore grant opportunities to bring local SEPALI Madagascar leaders to the US for trade shows and other opportunities that share Malagasy arts and culture with global audiences.

Communications

- **Websites:** CPALI will continue to support SEPALI Madagascar as a local organization with limited resources and connectivity to maintain their public website at sepalim.org, in companion with the cpali.org and tananasilk.com websites, covering all associated costs.
- **Social Media:** CPALI and Tanana Madagascar will continue to engage the wider public, donors, and buyer circles through social media channels. Avenues will be explored to limit third-party costs associated with social media and marketing, while advancing strategic interests and goals.
- **Newsletters:** Targets are set to distribute quarterly CPALI newsletters and monthly Tanana Madagascar marketing newsletters to enhance awareness and motivate purchases and giving.

Budget and Resource Mobilization

CPALI will work to establish a strong funding model, strengthen our fundraising capacity, and identify increasingly secure, diverse, and sustainable funding to achieve our 2024 to 2030 strategic goals.

We will continue to solicit income via the following channels: Global Giving fundraising campaigns; external grants; contributions from Donor Advised Funds; donated stock; checks; and purchases from the Tanana Madagascar enterprise.

In 2024, the organization will review and obtain Board approval of its calculated indirect cost rate.

Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning

A Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) culture will be built into CPALI's operations, and adaptive management will be practiced in the delivery of our initiatives and operational functions. We will consider establishing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for critical operational functions to measure our progress toward outcomes, manage risks, and support our vision.

Risk Assessment and Management

A strong risk management culture exists among CPALI's leaders and staff. Emerging risks will be considered carefully and in consultation with the CPALI Board of Directors and local partners, as appropriate.

Sustainability Analysis

At CPALI, we center our decisions on two core questions: "How can we get the most out of our conservation dollars over the long-term?"; and "How can we help set local initiatives on a path to independence?" It's unclear that any social or environmental enterprise can survive without some degree of subsidization. This is especially the case in our local partners' operating environment in remote northeastern Madagascar, where there are limited public services and challenging logistics, and with limited resources to run a complex enterprise such as Tanana Madagascar. We will strive to cultivate an enabling environment for success that includes the following:

- **Actively consulting and taking direction from our local sister organization** in all decisions relating to CPALI's three initiatives;
- **Strengthening the capacity of our local sister organization**, including two-way knowledge transfer, and participation in national and international events as possible and appropriate; and
- **Mobilizing sustainable investment from new sources** that extend beyond individuals and the conservation community, such as industry and gender-oriented and international development-oriented foundations.