

## **CPALI STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2018**

Conservation through Poverty Alleviation International (CPALI) has undertaken the challenge of helping the rural poor in underdeveloped countries grow more prosperous through enterprise that enhances, rather than degrades, fragile ecosystems. CPALI is evolving and testing a model for a new approach in northeastern Madagascar. This strategic plan sets out our method, our progress, our obstacles, and our hopes and plans for the future.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Our mission is to help impoverished communities farm and transform endemic resources to create sustainable enterprises that benefit farm families and protect endangered ecosystems.

### **VISION STATEMENT**

We will build and test the effectiveness of an innovative, environment-conserving enterprise.

### **AREAS OF ENDEAVOR**

CPALI's focus efforts can be divided into four areas:

- piloting a silk gardening and textile production enterprise in northeastern Madagascar
- international marketing of the wild-silk products from Madagascar
- building recognition that endemic resource farming can be a successful international conservation strategy
- building CPALI as an institution in order to fulfill its vision

This plan will address our progress to date in each of these spheres, the challenges we face in each area, and our plans for the future.

#### ***I. Growing the Madagascar Project***

Centered in Maroantsetra, Madagascar, CPALI's initial project introduces communities displaced from the Makira Protected Area and Masoala National Park to new activities that result in an innovative textile sold on international markets.

##### **A. Progress Made**

- 1. The Resources and the Product.** The CPALI method begins with identifying native species living at the border of protected areas that can be developed for commercial products. In Madagascar, CPALI identified the native silk moth *Antherina suraka* as the producer of high-value cocoons. Larvae feed on the native second growth rainforest tree, *Polyscias bakeriana*. At our initial test site, we established best practices for cultivating the trees and cocoons. We developed a non-spun textile (US and Madagascar patent pending) using the cocoons that can be produced in isolated areas where cash is rare, malnutrition is common and plant and animal species need protection.
- 2. Human organizations and incentive structure.** In Maroantsetra, we have helped establish an independent, local, all-Malagasy NGO, "[Sehatry ny Mpamokatra Landy Ifotony](#), Madagascar" (Association of Wild Silk Producers), or [SEPALIM](#), which manages training, raw materials growth and distribution, and textile production and purchases cocoons and develops additional income opportunities. From an initial base of 12 farmers in 2009, farmer networks have expanded to include roughly 300 farmers in 11 communities, who have planted 30,000 native trees. Complementing the networks are women's artisan groups who sew cocoons to make the textile. SEPALIM now supports the immediate production process, including banking activities and communally organized purchase of subsidized educational materials for families and identification of new endemic resources to be farmed.

## B. Challenges and Plans

- 1. Continuing to Expand Production** To support international commercialization of the textile, a minimum level of production needs to be established and maintained. Our goal is to expand textile production from 60 m<sup>2</sup>/y to 1500 - m<sup>2</sup>/y. Even though some farmers can more than double their annual income by selling the cocoons, this new economic venture is an added income activity and does not replace their need to improve the amount and nutritional value of agricultural products for subsistence.

### Responses:

- a. Diversifying Cultivation**
  - To increase the value of the silk program to farmers, we are adding another silk moth. *Ceranchia apollina* pupae and cocoons can be collected in the northeastern region of Makira. We plan to integrate local rearing of this species into our existing program (this will have to be a new program in a new area), but sustainably collected cocoons have meanwhile increased the profitability of the workshop program for women.
  - On existing farms, farmers can interplant caterpillar host trees, part of the habitat restoration strategy, to build boundary forests around Makira and

Masoala protected areas The host trees are coppiced each year to allow new growth for the larvae. Edible mushrooms colonize cut branches left on site. Hence, CPALI is exploring the potential of mushroom production to yield additional commercial returns to farmers as well as improve the number of nutritious foods easily available to farmer families.

#### **b. Expanding Textile Production**

- Women's groups need a clean facility with available electricity to produce and store significant lengths of textile. Architects for Humanity, Boston has designed a building, SEPALIM has purchased land, and CPALI has raised money to construct a center. We expect it to be built by January 2016.

#### **c. Diversifying Benefits**

- Pupae of the silk moths that are not needed for seed are an edible, high-value protein that could enrich local diets. Some individuals already eat the pupae and CPALI is working to spread the use of excess pupae as a food both for improved nutrition as well as for sale by farmers as an additional income stream.

**2. Growing the Madagascar NGO.** Founded with CPALI's support, SEPALIM has accomplished prodigies of development in the Maroantsetra area. Part of the CPALI method is to build enterprises that are profit-making for farmers and that can support further nonprofit program expansion independent of foreign donors. This policy has particular application in Madagascar, where, as the Maroantsetra project proves out, CPALI's efforts should turn to helping others in other countries apply the lessons learned, while SEPALIM's efforts would be directed to spreading the method of wild silk cultivation and reforestation elsewhere within Madagascar. SEPALIM has developed a plan to become financially independent from CPALI in two years. Nurturing SEPALIM's maturation entails current CPALI efforts, including

- Funding the design and building of a center that SEPALIM can use to generate income by hosting inter-organization collaborations and trainings, as well as use it as a site for expanded textile production and product finishing
- Ensuring that SEPALIM staff acquires international training and exposure

**3. Improving Results Monitoring.** The best practices for proving the benefits of the CPALI method include improving our quantification of results. Our current monitoring quantifies trees planted, textile woven, payment made to farmers and textile producers, and increase in total family income. In the next period, we will explore monitoring whether local insect farming is transforming the diets of villagers and directing them away from harvesting bushmeat

## **II. International Marketing**

### **A. Progress Made**

**1. Product Development.** Both using its own expertise and working with designers, CPALI has developed a range of products that use the wild silk textile, including jewelry, hats, lamps, decorative furnishings, and clothing. To date, CPALI textiles have garnered environmental design awards for at least two fashion designers. CPALI has sold all of the silk it produces at a high enough return to support the farmers that produced it. As sales increase, product returns should support SEPALIM. Patent applications are pending for the non-spun textile, covering the textile and manufacturing process, in both the United States and Madagascar.

**2. Distribution Channels.** CPALI's products are distributed through dConstruct-, Habu Textile, Source4Style, and CPALI's "Wildsilkmartets" website and have been juried and appear on the Material ConneXion libraries. CPALI participated in the DWELL trade show and is a member of the Fairtrade Foundation and the Sustainable Furnishings Council.

## **B. Challenges and Plans**

**1. Expanding Market Presence for Existing Products.** Further growth of the Madagascar enterprise depends upon developing a steady commercial demand for premium niche products using the non-spun textile. While progress to date provides a good foundation for achieving that goal, the next stage of development requires CPALI to establish a qualitatively different presence in the international marketplace.

### **Responses:**

- a. Promotion.** Through 2015 CPALI will devote its primary investment to promoting its products to potential customers, including through trade shows. Our goal is achieving a foreseeably stable demand of 1500 m<sup>2</sup>/y of textile by the end of that period.
- b. Product Lines.** CPALI will continue to seek new applications for the non-spun textile, particularly focusing on architecture and home design applications.
- c. Legal Placement.** Seeking to secure the commercial placement of its product, CPALI will continue to seek intellectual property protection, continuing to pursue patent applications and exploring trademark protection for identifying the product.

**2. Contingency Planning.** CPALI's contingency and expansion response will be to spin the silks it produces and weave them into silk textiles.

### **Response:**

If the goals for marketing of the non-spun textile are not achieved in that time frame, we will explore the feasibility, both in situ in Madagascar and in the international marketplace, of shifting to spun products and yarn. These products do not currently appear optimal, not only because of the increased difficulties of production in Madagascar but also because the Madagascar product may be less distinguishable from other products, although they may tap existing markets. In light of that consideration, CPALI has already had an invitation from an Italian designer to process the silk and perhaps be involved in teaching our farmers how to spin and weave.

### **III. CPALI Institution Building**

#### **A. Progress Made**

**1. Organizational Foundation.** Conservation through Poverty Alleviation, International, is a small nonprofit corporation with big ideas. Incorporated in Massachusetts, it has relied to date principally on individual contributions to finance its initiatives. Associated with Global Giving as its principal portal for public contributions, CPALI has recently modernized its website to give the public readier access to its progress. To set the stage for future growth, it has most recently brought in a CPA as a board member and treasurer and contracted for the continuing services of a former Peace Corp volunteer who worked with the project in Madagascar and is now working with CPALI in the US.

**2. Establishing a Presence.** A crucial aspect of the CPALI mission is to get the word out about its environmental-enterprise model of development assistance. To that end, CPALI leaders have published scholarly, trade, and popular articles about the experience in Madagascar. Its executive director is preparing to teach students at Washington State University.

#### **B. Challenges and Plans**

**1. Financial Foundation.** From CPALI's beginning, we have envisaged its experience as a possible basis for creating consulting, advisory, training, extension, research, and other services that could generate income devoted to the organization's eventual sustainability. We are now at a point where the harvesting of experience can be a more organized core activity and can begin considering media for such services.

- a. To date, CPALI has depended almost entirely on volunteer work in the United States. It is aware that to continue its mission into the future, both to support the future of the Madagascar project and to spread its lessons elsewhere, CPALI must establish a firmer economic foundation for its professional activities. To the end of establishing a professional, fulltime staff that can

direct ongoing activities into a second generation, CPALI aims to increase its endowment to at least \$500,000 by 2019.

**Responses:**

- **Institute Consultant Services for Fees or Other Tangible Benefits.** CPALI's scientists have developed substantial development expertise that, as their presence is needed less in Madagascar, could be made available to other organizations that are attempting related projects. Among the consultant projects that CPALI could offer are:
    - identification of developable and sustainable indigenous resources
    - improving strategies for directing assistance to producers
    - methods for building local cooperatives and savings
    - developing marketing approaches and services
  - **Increased Grant Funding.** Public and large nonprofits have been wary in the last several years about funding projects in Madagascar because of its volatile political situation. Now that a regularly elected government is in place, we expect it to be easier to convince donors that our in situ project deserves their assistance. Increased grant funding could be directed to the expansion of projects in Madagascar as well as in other tropical sites in need of poverty alleviation and conservation benefits.
  - **Metrics.** Creating and gathering more precise measures of our environmental and societal benefits will not only help prove the effectiveness of the CPALI method but also improve our funding requests.
  - **Growth in Product Placement.** The projected increase in the marketing of non-spun textile will also reduce payments to farmers and textile producers that must be made out of donor contributions and replace them with enterprise earnings.
  - **Exploring Partnerships.** CPALI will be open to circumstances in which alliances with larger environmental nonprofit organizations can help leverage its capacities.
2. **Increasing Awareness.** In the three-year period of this strategic plan, CPALI should bring to fruition the project of proving a sustainable enterprise in Madagascar. Once this goal is achieved, CPALI should turn not only to finding new sites where the method can be instantiated, but also to helping others learn from its experience.

**Response:**

- **Develop Lessons Learned.** CPALI should publish in the relevant academic literature, as well as make available to other NGOs, an account of its lessons learned. Its experience in Madagascar can provide a roadmap not only for supporting sustainable, environmentally enhancing enterprises but also for avoiding pitfalls in such projects. In particular, CPALI should be able to help others who may contemplate similar programs reduce the lag time from dependence to independence.
- **Train Others.** CPALI, as it grows from the impetus of its original founders, must teach other professionals the methods and goals of environmentally supportive enterprise development. Approaches may include providing publications, advice, and direct training for fee.