

# EASTERN CONGO INITIATIVE

2020/21 ANNUAL REPORT



## A LETTER FROM OUR FOUNDERS

This past year marked 10 years of our commitment to eastern Congo. From the day we started, we have remained dedicated to lifting up friends and partners, to illustrate the boundless joy and limitless potential of these communities. But it is not without challenges. In a year that ranged from difficult to devastating, our community remained steadfastly resilient.

While much of the world came to a standstill, ECI's community-led programs pivoted and responded to the needs of their neighbors, reinforcing the knowledge that the best solutions come from the brilliance of those who live them. We watched grantees transform programs, global stakeholders make adjustments to supply lines, and the newly acquired Asili model provided vital services during a pandemic: healthcare and clean water.

The past year, coupled with our 10 year anniversary, has reminded both of us of the immense support and trust we received from so many in the early days of ECI, most importantly the Congolese communities we work alongside to this day. We continue to appreciate the invaluable commitments, trust and knowledge we receive from our partners; allowing us to serve the men, women, and children in Congo. Much has changed since the founding of ECI, and we are ever more ready to bring new voices to the table, expand the conversation, and to find new ways to collaborate.

All of us remain incredibly grateful for the myriad of people who support the organization, and hope you join us in a renewed commitment to the future of eastern Congo. *Together*, we will show the world how this work can make transformational change, for good.

Sincerely,



**Ben Affleck**, Co-Founder & Chair



**Whitney Williams**, Co-Founder & Vice Chair



## A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

There is very little that the COVID-19 pandemic did not impact this past year, and ECI is no exception. But, the Congolese people are no strangers to hardship, and the expertise gained during the Ebola epidemic served to fight this pandemic.

As ECI navigated new challenges brought on by Covid, we also found new opportunities: mitigating health risks led to innovative collaborations amongst grantees, and the trust in the Asili brand amongst the community made us an invaluable resource to share the latest in safety measures. Despite global challenges, we deepened relationships with world-wide companies like Nespresso and Caterpillar, who allowed us to forge new progress and break ground on new Asili zones, while lifting up countless coffee farming families.

Having joined the Alight family just a year ago, we have seen the immense benefits, bolstering the ECI team to better lift up the Congolese voices in advocacy, grantmaking, economic partnerships, and the revolutionary platform, Asili.

Since I joined the ECI family through the merger with Asili, and following the progress of the organization since its start, I recognize the impact over the past 10 years and our partnership with the community. Most importantly, over 10 years we have remained dedicated, consistent, and people-centered on our journey towards progress. The success of the past decade is due to the incredible work of our team and our partners, to whom I am honored to work alongside.

I am deeply grateful to each person who shares our development vision of Congo and supports us as we continue the work in a new decade. The future of the Congolese people is bright, and I welcome each of you on this journey.

**Abraham Leno**, Executive Director



THE BEST SOLUTIONS TO THE WORLD'S HARDEST PROBLEMS COME FROM THE BRILLIANCE OF THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE THEM. ECI WORKS SHOULDER TO SHOULDER WITH COMMUNITIES IN EASTERN CONGO AS THEY BUILD A FUTURE OF HEALTH, FREEDOM AND PROSPERITY FOR LIFE.

*Bagged coffee ready for distribution around the world. Photo: Gerry Kahashy*

## STRENGTHENING MARKETS

Before the wars, Congo had a thriving agricultural sector built on a symbiotic relationship that supported the land and the people. Today, ECI introduces global stakeholders to work alongside farmers, with ethical and sustainable practices, to amplify the abundance of eastern Congo. These partnerships improve local farmers' quality of life and are revitalizing a core component of the economy.

Strategic economic introductions are a key way ECI can build bridges between continents and lift up communities in ways that will strengthen the region for decades.

In 2020, three coffee cooperatives, the Kalehe Coffee Growers' Cooperative (CCKA), the Kalehe Arabica Coffee Cooperative (KACCO), and the Kabare Cooperative of Coffee Planters (CPCK), produced over 240 metric tons of coffee to be distributed around the world by Starbucks. This has generated over \$1.3 million, supporting over 11,000 coffee household members. Partnerships like these are key in the cooperatives ability to expand their enterprise. Last year, the cooperatives built a coffee washing station and secured bank loans for over \$500,000 for further growth! Together we're building an enduring economic resource, and sharing delicious Congolese coffee with the world.

3

COFFEE  
CO-OPS

240

METRIC TONS OF  
COFFEE PRODUCED

\$1.3

MILLION  
GENERATED

11,000

COFFEE HOUSEHOLD  
MEMBERS SUPPORTED



*Several women from Watalinga read during a literacy training class offered through the EWEZO Project. Photo: Masudi Katembela*

## IMPACT STORY:

# THE WOMEN OF WATALINGA

Beginning in 2018, ECI implemented the 3-year *Ewezo Project* (Swahili for “I can”) to improve the well-being of women cocoa farmers and their families in Watalinga county. The project trains women in the skills of economic participation — numeracy and basic literacy.

Initially projecting 240 participants, over 380 women attended training in 2020! Graduates learned to calculate prices when selling cocoa and other products from their farm. The project also focused on understanding the content of inheritance documents, which often include the entirety of the cocoa farm. This knowledge is vital if their husband passes away, due to the farm typically being the largest family asset. Additionally, mothers are now empowered to help their children in completing homework. This simple but treasured skill for many of the women shows the value of education for generations to come.



*Women of Un Jour Nouveau pose in their beautiful masks, made to keep their neighbors safe during the pandemic. Photo: Claude Ndayake & Luc Kambere for Un Jour Nouveau*

## GRANTMAKING

### GRANTMAKING UPDATE

At the end of 2019 we contributed \$300,000 in funding to 7 Congolese partners. However, as our partners began to implement activities, COVID-19 arrived in Congo. This drastically changed projects and necessitated ECI's focus on three themes throughout 2020.

#### FLEXIBILITY:

Given the dramatic need for pandemic preparation, ECI offered the option to restructure existing projects. Most grantees pivoted programming to either include virus safety measures or rescope to work specifically on COVID-19.

- **Heal Africa** quickly expanded their Ebola prevention efforts to include information regarding COVID-19.
- **Un Jour Nouveau** helped youth entrepreneurs launch a mask line to meet the rising demand for personal protective equipment, ultimately making over 100,000 masks!

**\$500** ..... **\$50,000**

INVESTMENT FROM ECI

IN SALES FOR 100,000 MASKS  
MADE BY UN JOUR NOUVEAU

### COMMUNITY:

Many of the issues tackled by our partners, including COVID-19, are best solved with collaboration among our grantees. This community thinking is critical and ECI will continue to facilitate joint projects.

- As **ALPHAGEDE** prepared to launch their literacy campaign, they worked with Un Jour Nouveau to source PPE for all their staff.
- Trainings and materials developed by Asili medical teams were made available to all grantees to help spread clear safety information to their clients.



*With help from the Panzi Foundation's Women's Land Access project, these women received the titles to their own land on September 4, 2020.  
Photo: John Achiza Mushaga / Panzi Foundation*

#### **GRANTEE HIGHLIGHT:**

### **Panzi Foundation secures land rights for women**

“Women’s access to land remains an enormous challenge in Congolese society, particularly in the eastern DRC,” explains Me Aline Bahati, attorney and coordinator of the Panzi Foundation’s legal clinic. “Some antiquated customs maintain that a woman, a simple homemaker, has no right to any property, and that she is destined solely for marriage.”

Fortunately, those antiquated customs don’t have the force of law. With funding from ECI, the Women’s Land Access Project aims to raise awareness in South Kivu about women’s legal rights. This includes helping 15 women secure their legal titles to in 2020.

These women’s legal victory is just one step in a long journey — but Bahati sees the future clearly. “It’s up to every man and woman,” she says, “everyone who’s passionate about a society where social cohesion reigns, to support women’s emergence as full participants in the community.”



*ECI Regional Director, Valéry Namuto, and students from a local elementary school at the neighboring water point.  
Photo: Jon Atwell*



A revolutionary model, Asili runs as a business that provides essential services, like quality healthcare and clean water, at prices the community can afford. By charging small monthly fees, Asili creates immediate accountability to its clients and their communities, responding to their needs with dignity and value they deserve. Asili is already serving over 120,000 clients in South Kivu and is growing its network to serve a total of 500,000 customers by 2023.

The pandemic demonstrated not only the importance of this life-saving infrastructure, but Asili's deep relationships within the community. From the beginning of the outbreak, all retail points pivoted operations to deliver resources safely. In the communities they serve, Asili water points are the only source of clean water for handwashing, and Asili health clinics are one of the only reliable sources of medical help. When people stopped by to get water or see a doctor, Asili staff provided trusted advice and best practices. Asili clinics aren't a temporary aid station, but a permanent community resource with known Congolese medical staff. That trusted consistency was an invaluable resource for keeping neighbors safe.



Fontainières at a water point. Photo: Aaron Britt

## WATER UPDATE

Eastern Congo was impacted not only by COVID-19, but also outbreaks of Ebola and Cholera. Despite these ongoing challenges, Asili continued its water service *every single day* throughout 2020. Using these daily interactions to inform customers of how they could proactively protect themselves and their families meant our communities received accurate information throughout the outbreaks.

To date, we have sold over 41M liters of clean water across 28 retail locations. We have also completed the technical design of the newest Asili water system in Minova, which is currently under construction. We are excited to bring it to fruition for our community.



Patients wait inside an Asili health clinic. Photo: Gerry Kahashy

## HEALTH UPDATE

While much of the health clinics' work surrounded COVID-19 response, we also continued to evolve our services based on communities' needs.

Staff found that some patients were delaying or avoiding care altogether in fear they might need overnight attention. Asili piloted overnight care as a new service in several zones. Patients with acute or severe diseases had a safe place to stay for up to 72 hours, at an all-inclusive rate of \$5 per night. This led to an immediate increase in consultations.

To ensure patient confidentiality and secure recordkeeping, ECI worked with the healthcare company VecnaCares to design a clinic management system specifically for Asili. The software covers patient registration, consultations, medication management and reporting, streamlining the customer experience.

# FINANCIALS

## 2020

Photo: Christopher Michel

### CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ECI'S FINANCIAL POSITION AS OF MARCH 31, 2021

Note: Due to a change in the organization's fiscal year, please find 2 statements in this report: January-March 2020 and April 2020 through March 2021. Henceforth, financials will reflect the April to March fiscal year.

#### Assets (all in \$)

CURRENT ASSETS	AS OF MARCH 31, 2020	AS OF MARCH 31, 2021
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 1,232,830	\$ 2,646,718
Receivables	1,279,021	1,582,831
Inventory	128,830	117,029
Prepaid expenses	32,930	17,521
<b>Total current asset</b>	<b>\$ 2,673,611</b>	<b>\$ 4,364,099</b>

#### PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT

Land	\$ 153,303	\$ 153,303
Buildings	606,274	606,274
Furniture and equipment	1,333,002	1,335,002
Vehicles	277,912	277,912
<b>Total property and equipment</b>	<b>2,370,491</b>	<b>2,372,491</b>
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(669,043)	(801,019)
<b>Net property and equipment</b>	<b>\$ 1,701,448</b>	<b>\$ 1,571,471</b>

#### OTHER ASSETS

Deposits	\$ 22,288	\$ 7,400
Grants receivable: net current portion		\$ 400,000

<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 4,397,347</b>	<b>\$ 6,342,970</b>
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#### Liabilities and net assets (all in \$)

CURRENT LIABILITIES	AS OF MARCH 31, 2020	AS OF MARCH 31, 2021
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 275,427	\$ 313,276
Grants payable	2,340	
Due to Alight	259,699	227,381
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 537,466</b>	<b>\$ 540,657</b>

#### NET ASSETS

Without donor restrictions	\$ 3,425,683	\$ 3,443,690
With donor restrictions	434,198	2,358,623
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>\$ 3,859,881</b>	<b>\$ 6,342,970</b>

<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 4,397,347</b>	<b>\$ 6,342,970</b>
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*Pictures colored by young patients at the Zone 2 health clinic hang on the wall. Photo: Carly Lunden*

## CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGE IN NET ASSETS

Note: Due to a change in the organization's fiscal year, please find 2 statements in this report: January-March 2020 and April 2020 through March 2021. Henceforth, financials will reflect the April to March fiscal year.

	JANUARY 1, 2020 TO MARCH 31, 2020			APRIL 1, 2020 TO MARCH 31, 2021		
<b>SUPPORT AND REVENUE</b>	<b>WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS</b>	<b>WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS</b>	<b>WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Contributions	\$ 13,622	\$ 935,700	\$ 949,322	\$ 638,910	\$ 3,804,580	\$ 4,443,490
Sales	31,897	-	31,897	136,823	-	136,823
Other revenue	8,400	-	8,400	125,084	-	125,084
Net assets released from donor restrictions	1,465,666	(1,465,666)	-	1,880,155	(1,880,155)	-
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>1,519,585</b>	<b>(529,966)</b>	<b>\$ 989,619</b>	<b>2,780,972</b>	<b>1,924,425</b>	<b>\$ 4,705,397</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>						
International Programs	\$ 669,428	-	\$ 669,428	\$ 2,273,292	-	\$ 2,273,292
General and Administrative	65,561	-	65,561	368,498	-	368,498
Fundraising	893	-	893	76,845	-	76,845
Total expenses	735,882	-	\$ 735,882	2,718,635	-	\$ 2,718,635
<b>Change in net assets before other items</b>	<b>783,703</b>	<b>(529,966)</b>	<b>253,737</b>	<b>62,337</b>	<b>1,924,425</b>	<b>1,986,762</b>
<b>OTHER ITEMS</b>						
Loss on Foreign Currency Exchange	(44,330)	-	(44,330)	(8,986)	-	(8,986)
Change in net assets	18,007	1,924,425	1,942,432	774,717	(529,966)	244,751
Net assets at beginning of period	3,425,683	434,198	3,859,881	2,650,966	964,164	3,615,130
<b>NET ASSETS AT END OF PERIOD</b>	<b>\$ 3,443,690</b>	<b>\$ 2,358,623</b>	<b>\$ 5,802,313</b>	<b>\$ 3,425,683</b>	<b>\$ 434,198</b>	<b>\$ 3,859,881</b>



# BOARD AND LEADERSHIP

*View from the perspective of our fontainières, who oversee Asili water points - children gather for water.  
Photo: Erin Luhmann Hinrichs*

## Board of Directors

Ben Affleck, Chair  
Whitney Williams, Vice Chair  
Maura O’Neill, PhD, Treasurer  
Mvemba Phezo Dizolele, Secretary  
Ward Brehm  
Muadi Mukenge  
Dave Olsen  
David Segel  
Nima Taghavi  
Richard Voelbel

## Management Team

Abraham Leno, Executive Director  
Hermann Aho, Finance Director  
Masudi Katembela, Grant Coordinator  
Salomé Kaliza, Community Engagement Manager  
Tad Lunden, Product Manager  
Johny Muhindo, MD, Medical Coordinator  
Valéry Namuto, Regional Director  
Josée Ntakwinja, Water Operations Manager  
Elizabeth Reim, Development Manager  
Maryline Vira Mwenge, Human Resources Manager

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