

# Five-Year Strategic Plan 2025–2030

For environmental justice, gender equality, and the resilience of rural communities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

# FOREWORD BY THE CHAIR OF THE **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Dear partners, colleagues, and communities we serve,

It is with great pride and a deep sense of responsibility that I present to you MKAAJI MPYA's Five-Year Strategic Plan 2025–2030. This document is more than just an action plan, it reflects our organization's renewed commitment to human dignity, gender equality, environmental justice, and the resilience of rural communities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Since 2016, we have humbly but resolutely planted the seeds of change through our Rural Women's Leadership Centres (RWLCs), Schools Without Violence Clubs (SWVCs), Rural Conservation Clubs (RCCs), and a wide range of initiatives focused on biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation, and the promotion of Indigenous Peoples' rights. These years have shaped our experience, sharpened our vision, and solidified our position as a credible local actor, deeply rooted in the territories and attentive to the voices of the most vulnerable.

The coming period will demand courage, innovation, and coherence. The challenges are many: gender-based violence, climate crises, deforestation, population displacement, food insecurity... But our strength lies in our ability to build collective, inclusive, and sustainable solutions. This strategy is structured around six strategic pillars, placing women, youth, and Indigenous and local communities at the heart of the ecological and social transition we strive for. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to this strategic process, our team members, technical and financial partners, community leaders, youth, teachers, and rural women. This strategy belongs to

Together, we will continue to sow hope, justice, and transformation. With commitment and solidarity,



Ms. Esther Mubalama President of Board of Directors, MKAAJI MPYA asbl



# SUMMARY OF OUR STRATEGY FOR 2025 – 2030

### Who Are We?

MKAAJI MPYA asbl is a Congolese non-profit organization founded in 2016 to improve the well-being of marginalized rural communities, with a particular focus on women, girls, children, Indigenous Peoples, and youth. We work at the intersection of social, environmental, and climate justice, building bridges between national and international policies and local needs through programs rooted in community realities.



## What this Strategy means for our investments?

We will direct our resources toward highimpact, transformative initiatives: the empowerment of women and girls, biodiversity protection, climate resilience, institutional strengthening, environmental media and governance, and humanitarian assistance. We will invest in the co-creation of sustainable solutions grounded in local knowledge and social innovation.



# Why is now the time for bold transitions?

Global challenges such as climate change, pandemics, conflicts, biodiversity loss, and sexual and gender-based violence require systemic, agile, and inclusive approaches. Communities once labeled as vulnerable now hold the keys to resilience. It is time to recognize their central role and embrace a true paradigm shift.



# What this Strategy means for our Beneficiaries?

It reflects genuine listening, tailored support, and the full participation of women in decisions that affect them. In practice, this will translate into the establishment of new support centers, the expansion of training programs, improved access to essential resources, and greater recognition of their rights. Their struggles, voices, and local solutions will be more visible, valued, and supported. This will contribute to sustainable and inclusive transformation within their communities.





### I. INTRODUCTION

### Strategic Objectives

The 2025–2030 strategy of MKAAJI MPYA aims to deeply transform local resilience systems in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It responds to a social, ecological, climatic, and political urgency, aspiring to build a model based on equity, sustainability, gender justice, and respect for human rights.

We believe the best way to contribute is to strive to:

- Place women, girls, and Indigenous communities at the heart of our actions;
- Invest in nature-based solutions, community dialogue, and local knowledge;
- Influence international, national, and local policies for more inclusive governance;
- Maintain an active presence in vulnerable areas through decentralized structures;
- Combine humanitarian action and sustainable development for an integrated response.





# II. WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED FROM OUR PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES (2016–2025)

### a. Our Support to Beneficiaries

Our interventions between 2016 and 2025 have demonstrated that integrated and context-specific approaches yield sustainable results. We have seen rural women transform their communities through the RWLCs and RCCs, and youth engage through the SWVCs. Psychosocial and economic support for survivors has facilitated their social reintegration.

### c. Our Work with Others

Partnerships with local and regional civil society organizations, public institutions, and donors have enabled us to amplify our impact. However, complementarity requires coordination, clear roles, and collective learning mechanisms, which we will strengthen.

### b. Our Support Policy

We have learned that a top-down approach is insufficient. Our strategy has gradually integrated co-creation, prioritizing active listening and shared responsibility. Direct funding to community initiatives has proven to be more transparent and relevant.

# d. Our Commitment to Accountability

We have strengthened our accountability tools toward our beneficiaries and donors. Transparency in resource management, participatory evaluation, and the communication of results have become pillars of our governance.





### II. OUR STRATEGY

### Our targeted Goal

The main objective of MKAAJI MPYA asbl for the 2025–2030 period is to strengthen resilience, social and environmental justice in marginalized rural communities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We aim to build bridges between women's empowerment, biodiversity protection, climate change adaptation, environmental justice, and humanitarian responses. By focusing our actions on Indigenous Peoples, women, and youth, we seek to achieve sustainable, equitable, and replicable transformations through six strategic intervention pillars.

# What does well-being mean for Indigenous and Local Communities, Women, Girls, and Children?

Well-being means having the opportunity to live with dignity, to live in safety, to access education, healthcare, and sustainable livelihoods, and to participate in decisions that affect them. It includes respect for their cultures, knowledge, territories, and fundamental rights.



Well-being, to me, means when a girl can go to school without fear, when a mother can farm without fearing conflict, and when a community can decide its own future.

Mrs Alphonsine Kaningu Member,

RWLC/Kalehe

### What do Appropriate and Sustainable Policies Mean?

These are policies based on equity, civic participation, human rights, and ecological sustainability. Such policies must recognize the essential roles of women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples in governance, conservation, and development. They should promote effective decentralization and equitable access to resources.



## What does well-being mean for Women and Girls?

Well-being for women and girls means living free from violence, enjoying their economic, social, and political rights, having access to basic services, and being able to express their leadership. It involves their empowerment, safety, mental health, and education.



# What does well-being mean for the Natural World?

Well-being for the natural world means preserving ecosystems, regenerating biodiversity, maintaining landscape integrity, and respecting ecological cycles. It involves active steward communities and policies that protect nature while addressing human needs.





# III. OUR GOAL FOR THIS STRATEGY: THE SIX PILLARS OF INTERVENTION

# PILLAR I: Combating Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and Empowering Women and Girls

Since 2016, MKAAJI MPYA asbl has developed an integrated approach to combating SGBV, combining protection, empowerment, and social transformation. Between 2016 and 2025, we established 5 Rural Women's Leadership Centres (RWLCs), 5 Listening Clubs, and 7 Schools Without Violence Clubs (SWVCs), supporting over 3,000 survivors through resilience, care, and reintegration pathways. For the 2025–2030 period, we will strengthen this momentum through the following actions:

**Expand the RWLCs** to at least 15 new rural areas, targeting regions most affected by conflict, multidimensional poverty, and climate vulnerabilities;

Support Indigenous, local, and rural women and girls in the fight against gender-based violence, strengthening their leadership, rights, participation, and role in governance through inclusive community-based approaches.

Integrate a holistic package including psychosocial support, access to justice, economic empowerment training, and climate education to support survivors toward resilience and independence;

Establish links between SWVCs and formal schools to promote a protective educational environment and equip children, both girls and boys, to face SGBV, exclusion, and the effects of climate change;

Promote rural women's leadership, particularly among young women, in social, economic, and community spheres;

Advocate for survivors' rights through local, national, and international advocacy efforts aimed at advancing access to services, restitution, and recognition.

When a woman rises, an entire community rises with her.



### PILLAR II: Biodiversity Conservation

As part of its interventions in the forests of Tshopo and South Kivu, MKAAJI MPYA asbl has implemented several innovative community projects supporting community-based conservation. By 2030, our ambition is to strengthen our contribution to biodiversity conservation through the following priorities:

Strengthen the protection of wildlife, both inside and outside protected areas, including aquatic biodiversity, in partnership with local communities;

Restore at least 50,000 hectares of critical ecosystems (forests, wetlands, savannas) by mobilizing nature-based approaches and community governance of resources;

Promote and defend the rights of Indigenous Peoples, particularly in the implementation of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, grounded in the recognition of their knowledge, territories, and role in conservation; **Support 5,000 women and youth** in local initiatives for conservation and sustainable valorization of biodiversity;

Strengthen the participation of women and youth in biodiversity governance at local, national, and international levels by facilitating their involvement in the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its protocols;

Support the sustainable livelihoods of Indigenous and local communities by defending their land, cultural, and political rights, as well as their equitable access to natural resources;

Promote scientific research and indigenous knowledge on biodiversity, including the documentation of species, habitats, and local conservation practices.

Our interventions will specifically align with Targets 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 21, and 22 of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, as well as the objectives outlined in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP).



### PILLAR III: Climate Change Adaptation

Through its Rural Conservation Clubs (RCCs), MKAAJI MPYA asbl has already supported the establishment of resilience committees in three pilot territories. Building on this experience, the organization aims to intensify its efforts by 2030 to strengthen the adaptive capacities of rural, Indigenous and local communities in the face of the growing impacts of climate change. The strategic priorities are as follows:

Support Indigenous, local, and rural communities in planning and implementing community-based climate adaptation initiatives grounded in local knowledge and participatory approaches;

Support and expand resilient livelihoods through economic diversification, the promotion of sustainable local value chains, and equitable access to natural resources;

Strengthen community-based climate risk management through the One Health approach, taking into account the interconnections between human, animal, plant, and environmental health;

**Develop income-generating activities** based on sustainable agriculture and the green economy, including agroecology, ecotourism, renewable energy, and ecological processing.

Integrate climate mobility into our programs while promoting inclusive and participatory local climate governance.

Support the formulation and implementation of local adaptation policies aligned with the real needs of communities and national frameworks.

Promote agroecology and agroforestry as local strategies for adaptation and ecosystem restoration.

Actively contribute to the implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), the National Adaptation Plan, and the UNFCCC, while strengthening the participation of women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs).

# PILLAR IV: Capacity Building and Inter-Institutional Collaboration

As part of its commitment to inclusive and sustainable governance, MKAAJI MPYA asbl aims to establish strong partnerships with the Ministries of Gender and Environment at both national and provincial levels. To enhance the systemic impact of its actions, the organization intends, by 2030, to strengthen technical and institutional cooperation through the following actions:

**Sign active collaboration agreements** with at least four national technical departments to ensure long-term engagement on cross-cutting issues related to gender, environment, and development;

Train 200 public administration officials (at national, provincial, and local levels) in integrated gender–environment–human rights approaches, in order to strengthen their capacity to incorporate these dimensions into public policy planning and implementation;

**Support the development and adoption of integrated,** participatory, and gender-sensitive local policies, particularly in the areas of natural resource management, climate change adaptation, and the fight against gender-based violence;

**Support the Congolese government** in the effective implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) at national and local levels, ensuring improved outreach, community ownership, and independent monitoring.

Capacity grows stronger when institutions grow together.





Ecosystem restoration with Rural Conservation Clubs in the Ruzizi Plain.

We do not run from the climate.
We face it together.

M. Gervais Muderhwa
Project Officer and Director of the
Environment, Conservation, and
Climate Change Department.

MKAAJI MPYA Strategic Plan 2025 to 2030

#### PILLAR V: Media and Environment

Through the MKAAJI Biodiversity Journalists Network (MBJN), MKAAJI MPYA asbl has already trained 60 journalists and published over 20 articles dedicated to biodiversity and climate change issues. By 2030, our ambition is to make the media a lever for awareness, public accountability, and the defense of environmental rights. Our priority actions will include:

Strengthen the integrity of environmental information in the DRC by combating misinformation on climate change, biodiversity, and environmental policies;

**Develop the capacities of journalists** and media outlets to cover environmental issues with professionalism, rigor, quality, and consistency;

Increase the participation of women journalists and promote a gender-sensitive approach in covering environmental, climate, and biodiversity issues;

Train journalists to investigate public finances and climate finance flows, including budgets, international biodiversity funding, local adaptation and conservation projects, as well as Indigenous knowledge and practices, while ensuring the protection of the rights of affected communities; and promote solutions-oriented and science-based journalism.;

**Expand environmental coverage** to all 26 provinces of the DRC by relying on a network of MBJN member journalists who are active at the local level;

Launch a digital platform for environmental education and journalist protection, named "Connect Journalists", to strengthen communication, visibility, and the safety of environmental journalists;

Create a support fund for local environmental journalism, aimed at financing investigations, media productions, and awareness-raising initiatives led by grassroots environmental journalists.

# PILLAR VI: Peace, Education, and Climate- and Gender-Sensitive Humanitarian Action

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where conflicts and climate change mutually reinforce each other, especially around natural resources such as water and agricultural land, MKAAJI MPYA asbl is committed to strengthening the resilience capacities of affected communities, with particular attention to women, children, and Indigenous Peoples. By 2030, we will focus our actions on:

Strengthening the sustainable livelihoods of displaced or conflict and climate affected people through local initiatives for economic recovery, climate-adapted agriculture, and community-based resource management;

**Developing community-based** early warning and conflict prevention mechanisms related to access to natural resources;

Multisectoral response for women and children in distress, including access to basic services, protection, and socio-economic integration;

Promotion of inclusive and safe education in rural and crisis-affected areas, with particular attention to the protection of girls and children;

Advocacy for increased participation of women in peace processes, mediation, and conflict resolution;

**Implementation of literacy programs** for displaced women, incorporating human rights;

Documentation of climate-related losses and damages suffered by vulnerable communities, accompanied by advocacy for compensation, climate justice, and strengthening of local resilience.





# IV. WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE AFTER FIVE YEARS?

This strategy builds on the lessons learned and achievements of our 2016–2025 roadmap, while committing us to undertake bold transitions to face the challenges of the coming decade. By 2030, we aim to be recognized not only as a committed actor but also as a catalyst for sustainable social and environmental transformations in the DRC, particularly for women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities.

We hope that our actions will have enabled us to:

**Significantly reduce sexual and gender-based violence** in at least 50 rural areas, with survivors supported, rehabilitated, and empowered to become agents of change themselves.

Strengthen the empowerment of women and girls through inclusive education, sustainable economic programs, consolidated community women's leadership, and expanded, empowered RWLC and SWVC structures.

**Actively contribute to biodiversity conservation** through the restoration of at least 50,000 hectares of ecosystems, protection of key species, valorization of Indigenous knowledge, and increased participation of women and youth in environmental governance.

**Integrate climate change adaptation into local development strategies** through concrete actions on mitigation, community resilience, and early warning systems in at least 15 vulnerable territories.

**Institutionalize strong partnerships** with the Ministries of Environment and Gender, as well as local authorities, through co-developed policies, implemented action plans, and lasting synergies between the state, civil society, and communities.

**Amplify the environmental voice through the media,** with an active MBJN network in all 26 provinces, recognized journalistic productions, expanded access to environmental information, and a more informed citizenry.

Become a leading reference in the management of gender- and environmentallysensitive humanitarian affairs by delivering agile, inclusive, and resilient humanitarian assistance in areas at high risk of natural disasters or community conflicts.

True change is not a destination, but a journey we shape with courage, vision, and unity.

Ms. Gloria Magadju Deputy Coordinator, MKAAJI MPYA asbl In summary, by 2030, our success will be measured by the genuine empowerment of marginalized communities, tangible impact on ecosystems, transformation of gender relations and rural women's leadership, innovation in our partnerships, and the recognition of MKAAJI MPYA as a driver of justice, hope, and collective resilience.

### Implementation Plan

To ensure the successful implementation of this strategy, MKAAJI MPYA asbl will adopt a structured, iterative, and participatory approach based on the following pillars:

**Annual Planning:** Development of operational action plans aligned with the six strategic pillars, featuring SMART indicators, realistic budgets, and territory-specific targets.

**Strengthening Partnerships:** Establishment and consolidation of strategic partnerships with state institutions (such as the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, Ministry of Gender, etc.), UN agencies, national and international CSOs, communities, and traditional leaders.

**Resource Mobilization:** Implementation of a diversified financing strategy (grants, public–private partnerships, fundraising campaigns, self-generated income) to support the five-year objectives.

**Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms:** Creation of an integrated monitoring and evaluation system to adjust actions, document lessons learned, and showcase impacts.

**Innovation and Digital Transformation:** Use of digital tools for climate education, community awareness, advocacy, environmental journalism, and real-time monitoring.

**Institutional Development:** Strengthening internal capacities (governance, gender, human rights, finance, communication) to support sustainable organizational growth.



**Strategic Communication:** Implementation of a proactive communication plan to amplify beneficiaries' voices, share successes, influence policies, and strengthen MKAAJI MPYA's visibility at national and regional levels.

**Action Research:** Research will serve as a lever for advocacy, social innovation, and strengthening local capacities, to support deep and informed transformations in response to current ecological and social challenges.

Thus, between 2025 and 2030, MKAAJI MPYA asbl commits to transforming challenges into concrete opportunities for communities, based on their realities and with their full participation. MKAAJI MPYA asbl is dedicated to developing cross-cutting scientific research integrated into its priority areas: gender, biodiversity, and climate change. This participatory approach aims to produce contextualized data, valorize local knowledge, analyze differentiated vulnerabilities, and support just, sustainable, and appropriate solutions.

### **Accountability Framework**

MKAAJI MPYA asbl is committed to strengthening accountability at all levels of its strategy implementation. This framework ensures that commitments made to communities, donors, partner institutions, and internal members are followed by measurable, ethical, and shared results.

### **Guiding Principles of Accountability**

- Transparency: Clear sharing of information, decisions, budgets, and impacts.
- Participation: Inclusion of beneficiaries in planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- Listening and Feedback: Establishment of mechanisms to hear complaints, suggestions, and community needs.
- Continuous Learning: Incorporation of mistakes, lessons learned, and improvements in programming cycles.

#### Mecanisms

- Suggestion boxes in RWLCs, SWVCs, RCCs, and Listening Clubs (LCs); annual satisfaction surveys; community complaint hotlines.
- Semi-annual public reports and participatory audits in intervention areas.
- Establishment of accountability committees composed of community members and local partners.

### A human rights-based cross-sectoral approach

The integration of human rights into all our actions constitutes a fundamental pillar of our strategy. We are committed to defending the dignity, participation, and empowerment of marginalized groups, particularly women, children, and Indigenous Peoples.

### **Integration Pillars**

- Equal access to natural resources, land, education, and political participation.
- Analysis of power relations and identification of marginalization factors.
- Advocacy for the implementation of international legal frameworks, including CEDAW, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and environmental conventions.
- Capacity building for beneficiaries on rights, legal remedies, and civic participation.

### Risk Management and Mitigation Measures

The environment in which MKAAJI MPYA operates is dynamic and exposed to various risks that may affect the effective implementation of our strategy. Proactive analysis enables better anticipation of these risks.

#### **Identified Risks**

- Security: Instability in certain areas (armed conflicts, crime).
- Political Context: Changes in government priorities or restrictions on CSOs.
- Climate Risks: Floods, droughts, bushfires affecting communities and our facilities.
- Funding: Volatility of international funding.

### **Mitigation Measures**

- Decentralization of operations to ensure continuity in stable areas.
- Strengthening relationships with local authorities for political alignment.
- Insurance and diversification of funding sources.
- Risk management training and contingency planning.

### Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL)

We will establish a robust monitoring and learning system to ensure the effectiveness of this strategy:

- **Regular Monitoring:** Standardized tools will be used to collect data on activities, outcomes, and impacts. Frequent field visits will be conducted.
- **Periodic Evaluations:** A mid-term evaluation (2028) and a final evaluation (2030) will be scheduled to adjust the strategy if necessary.
- Participatory Learning: Annual learning workshops with beneficiaries, partners, and teams will be organized. This will help identify what works and document best practices.
- Transparency and Feedback: Results will be regularly shared through public reports, community briefings, and internal newsletters.

### Resource Mobilization and Indicative Budget

MKAAJI MPYA asbl will implement a proactive, targeted, and realistic resource mobilization approach. Given the challenges related to climate justice, environmental rights, gender, and inclusion, our strategy is based on diversifying funding sources and rigorous resource management. To realize this strategy, we aim for effective and focused resource mobilization:

### Sources of funding

Bilateral cooperation, development agencies, foundations, climate financing, partnerships with international and local NGOs, promotion of local potential, etc.

#### **Estimated budget** PILLAR 1 \$1,200,000.00 PILLAR 1 PILLAR 5 \$900,000.00 PILLAR 2 \$800,000.00 PILLAR 3 13.6% \$600,000.00 PILLAR 4 \$400,000.00 PILLAR 5 PILLAR 2 PILLAR 6 \$500,000.00

### **Fundraising strategies**

Development of high-quality proposals, strengthening the visibility of our results, strategic partnerships, and targeted advocacy with donors.

Rewilding of hippopotamus habitat in Katogota, Ruzizi Plain, South Kivu.

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Investing in human dignity is securing a future for the planet.

M. Jacques Assumani Communications Officer, MKAAJI MPYA asbl

MKAAJI MPYA asbl

### V. GENERAL CONCLUSION

The 2025–2030 strategy of MKAAJI MPYA asbl marks a pivotal step in our commitment to building a more inclusive, equitable, and resilient society in the face of environmental, social, and humanitarian challenges. We are strengthening our vision through an ambitious plan grounded in proven field experience, a deep relationship of trust with local and Indigenous communities, and a demonstrated capacity for social innovation.

This strategy is not merely a roadmap for our organization, it is a collective call to action. A call to listen to the voices of rural women, to value the knowledge of Indigenous peoples, and to unite civic, institutional, and scientific forces to co-create a future where sustainable development is a lived reality for all, beginning at the territorial level.

Every project we lead is a promise made to communities: a promise never to leave them alone in the struggles for dignity, nature, and equity.

## Ms. Euphrasie Mwamini

Administration and Finance Officer, MKAAJI MPYA asbl



