

**AFRICAN
CONSERVATION
LEADERSHIP NETWORK**

Strong Leaders
Effective Organizations
Transformative Impact

Strong Leaders ▶ **Effective Organisations** ▶ **Transformative Impact**

► Overview

The African Conservation Leadership Network (ACLN) works to strengthen and develop a rising generation of African conservation leaders and their organizations.



ACLN has two key components:

A cohort-based leadership development program, based on a tailored curriculum and peer-to-peer learning approach.

A network of African conservation leaders that fosters long-term connections, relationships, and collaboration.

ACLN helps the best African conservation organizations become stronger so that they can achieve more, work together, and support each other in their careers and their missions.





Conservation efforts in Africa are at a critical time, with rapid social and environmental changes putting tremendous pressure on wild landscapes and ecosystems.

We need to quickly grow and scale conservation efforts that reconcile economic development needs with sustainable management of wildlife and other natural resources.

To do that, African conservation needs more dynamic, effective, and entrepreneurial leaders that can grow strong organizations and drive collaborations that can achieve large-scale change.

Conservation needs a new generation of African conservation leaders, rooted in their communities, landscapes, and social and political contexts, who can step up to the challenges of the present.

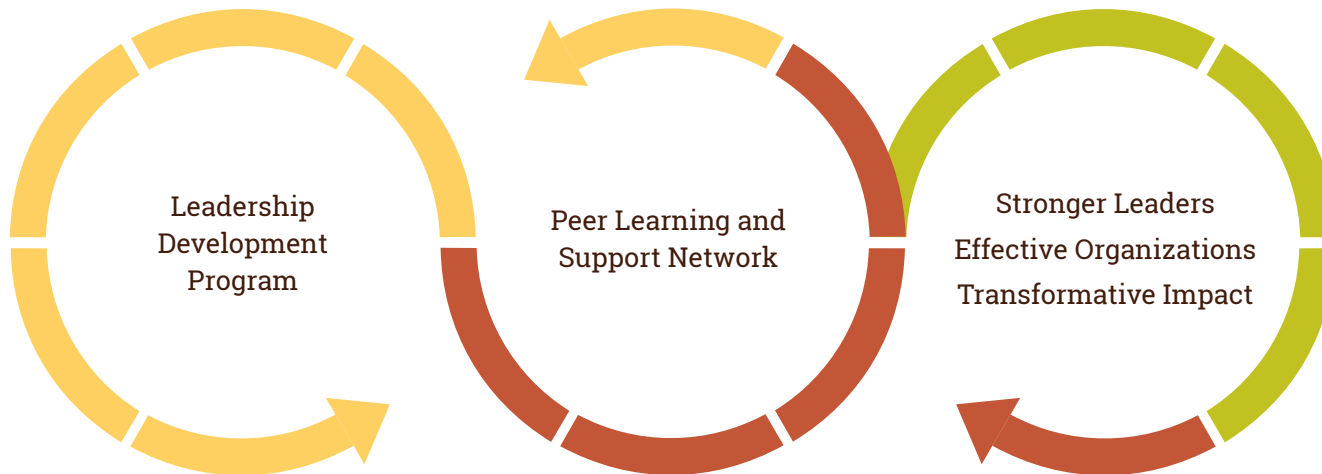




► Theory of Change

Our belief is that exceptional leaders and their organizations are critically important to catalyzing social change.

By finding and investing in the best emerging African conservation leaders in an intensive and tailored way, we can foster a new generation of talented and connected leaders.



ACLN's leadership development program has 3 defining features:



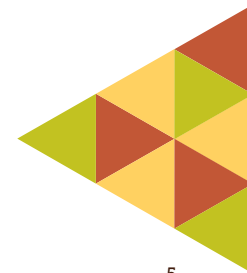
1 **A carefully selected annual cohort** of about 8 leading African conservation organizations. Each sends their top two people to participate. Cohorts are sourced in part through recommendations from previous cohorts and their networks.

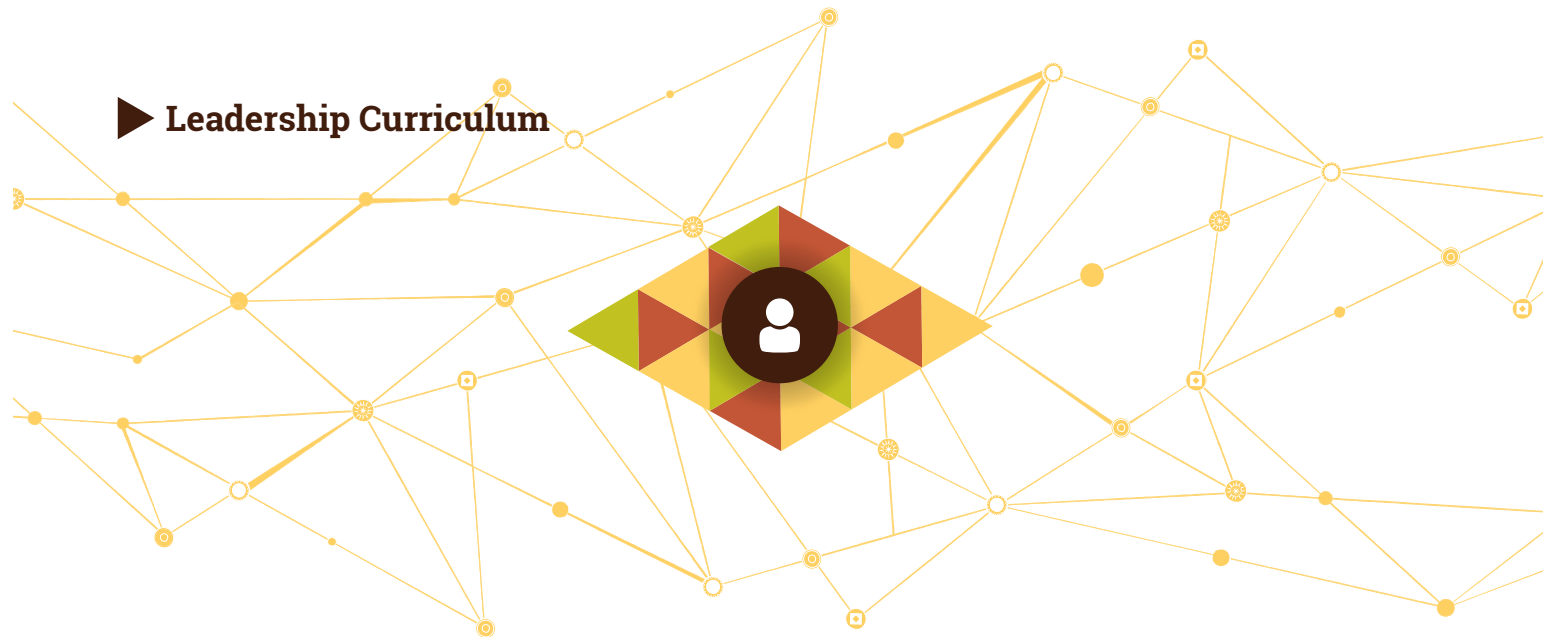


2 **A peer-to-peer learning** and facilitation approach that fosters new relationships and a support structure for the participants.



3 **A curriculum** that integrates personal, organizational, and systems-level approaches to leadership development.





Individual Leadership

Strengthening individuals' personal skills and characteristics as leaders, developing self-awareness of personal preferences and tendencies, managing relationships, personal wellness.



Organizational Leadership

Managing for results; building, managing, and retaining teams; organizational strategy; communications and fundraising.



Systems Leadership

Influencing change at the scale of multiple organizations and different actors whose interactions are critical to achieving large-scale, systemic change.



► The Network

ACLN serves as a growing network of top African conservation leaders and their organizations.

The network connects individuals and organizations through a range of communications tools and activities. A centerpiece is a biennial gathering—the African Conservation Leadership Forum—that brings the cohorts together to interact amongst each other as well as with other leading conservation practitioners, academics and funders.

The focus of this event is on peer learning, sharing innovative ideas and solutions, and creating space for developing or deepening collaborations amongst different organizations.



"ACLN has become this space for me where I come and engage with like-minded leaders in a free environment where I can ask questions that otherwise I would not get the ability to ask in any other forum."

–JOHN KAMANGA, Director, South Rift Association of Land Owners (SORALO)

"ACLN provided the right platform and trusting environment to develop meaningful collaboration and exchanges of ideas. ACLN made this collaboration possible."

–LEELA HAZZAH, Executive Director, Lion Guardians



► Connecting & Collaborating

ACLN provides a platform for top African conservation groups to develop new relationships and collaborations with their peers.

Since ACLN was launched, a web of new collaborations have emerged, ranging from field-level initiatives and new projects, to collaboration between African groups on international policies.



► **Track Record**



Since piloting the program in 2016, ACLN has grown to include **46 leaders** from 24 organizations working across Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Zambia, and Namibia.



► **IMPACT | Building African Leaders**

Through the leadership training, participants changed their understanding of and approach to their individual roles as leaders.



“The three ACLN sessions have shifted my view of leadership. I’ve taken more leadership roles in my organization. I’ve learned enough to give me confidence in guiding others, at the same time embracing my new role as a manager.”

–SAM SHABA, Program Manager, Honeyguide

“ACLN has greatly helped me in building on my leadership skills, including understanding my strengths and weaknesses, how to manage teams and understanding team dynamics.”

–DANIEL SOPIA, CEO, Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association



“I never thought I was the leader that I am. I only thought I was somewhere within the vehicle, I didn’t know if I was driving or being driven.

Within two sessions, I realized my importance in the organization and why I really have to make use of myself for the betterment of our vision. The practical tools, techniques and models of planning are things we can carry and apply to managing meetings, staying focused, relating to others and thinking about strategy. The whole package is something that I feel we need as an organization.

—Bupe Banda, National Administrator, Zambia National Community Resource Board Association



“ACLN was a unique experience. In those three weeks I was reinvented and what my organization has now is a man on a mission to ensure its success. It’s amazing how each level built upon the other so well and I cannot place one over the other as I have experienced myself applying them all in my work.”

–ALFRED MWANAKE, Coordinator, Taita-Taveta Wildlife Conservancies Association

“Everything I have learned, all the skills, all the tools, all the leadership qualities everything that we have done, I have been able to pass back to my team in Samburu, so the training has not just been impactful for me but has made a difference to a whole team in northern Kenya.”

–SHIVANI BALLA, CEO, Ewaso Lions, Kenya

► IMPACT | New Collaborations



One of the most exciting impacts of the ACLN experience has been catalyzing new collaborations.

These range from tackling international and national policy issues, to field-level exchanges between many organizations, particularly those within a single country (e.g. Kenya) or transboundary ecosystems (Kenya-Tanzania).

New relationships and friendships borne from the ACLN experience enabled these partnerships to emerge, and are laying the foundations for a conservation leadership network that puts collaboration at its core.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of field-level collaborations drawing on connections from ACLN have emerged. For example, Grevy's Zebra Trust, Community Health Africa Trust (CHAT) and Ewaso Lions have worked together to mobilize funding and deploy emergency health supplies to communities in northern Kenya.

"I believe the most important and useful outcome of the ACLN is the continuity of an active and connected network of conservation organizations who share similar values and visions, and leveraging this network for the greater good of wildlife conservation. Currently, I feel like we are all atoms flying around in all different directions. The ACLN could be the covalency that connects us all together into a powerful collective molecule."

—SPORT BEATTIE, Game Rangers International, Zambia

"What an amazing group of conservation leaders that ACLN is working with. This approach is providing a hugely important niche in African conservation, and one that has been sorely lacking. With such remarkable individuals and leaders, ACLN will not only create a great learning and networking opportunity, but also enable a truly African conservation centric movement."

—RICHARD DIGGLE, WWF in Namibia



► Building the Network

To strengthen and expand this growing network, ACLN aims to train more exceptional African conservation leaders, create more opportunities for member organizations to connect and collaborate, and help them build links to other partners and supporters.

Creating opportunities for ACLN learning events around topics of mutual interest at the national or regional level. For example, during the coronavirus lockdowns there have been online learning events around key topics such as remote team management, fundraising, and wellness.

Continue to expand ACLN through new annual cohorts of the leadership development program that continue to bring outstanding leaders and their organizations into the program and network.

Holding a biennial African Conservation Leadership Forum, bringing together cohorts and building links with funders and other strategic partners.

Build communications and network platforms for ACLN members to engage, learn, and share from their network peers.

Supporting a joint ACLN "voice" and greater influence through the production and dissemination of op-eds, journal articles, and materials to influence policy and garner external support for ACLN members.

Providing mentorship for ACLN alumni.

► Convened and supported by



Maliasili is a non-profit organisation that supports the growth, development and performance of leading civil society organisations and social enterprises working to advance sustainable natural resource management practices in Africa. Through long-term and adaptive organisational development services, targeted bridge financing, and technical expertise, Maliasili is helping its partners achieve their full potential and scale up their impact – for people and nature. Maliasili leads the design, facilitation, and overall management support of ACLN.

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The Nature Conservancy is the leading conservation organization working around the world to protect ecologically important lands and waters for nature and people. The Nature Conservancy's vision for Africa is rooted in the people, who have not always been at the table during planning for a sustainable future. Our success depends on involving local communities. Why? The vast majority of Africa's lands and waters are community property – shared resources that sustain some of the world's most iconic wildlife and most vulnerable people. Moreover, most of the wildlife lives or migrates beyond park and reserve boundaries onto these communal lands and waters. TNC's conservation approach everywhere it works focuses on helping local communities, governments and organizations conserve and enhance Africa's critical shared resources. TNC provides technical and financial support to ACLN, in line with its goals to support its African conservation partners working in priority landscapes.

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▶ Participants



