

**Community  
Forests International**

# Annual Report 2023

## Your generous support makes our work grow

Community Forests International is deeply grateful to all of our supporters for helping to protect and restore forests in Canada and around the world. We couldn't do it without your continued support.

You can support in many ways, including monthly and one-time donations, gifts of stock, gifts of land, as well as bequests. To learn more about giving options, please visit [forestsinternational.org](https://forestsinternational.org), or contact Natsuki Kyokane at [natsuki@forestsinternational.org](mailto:natsuki@forestsinternational.org) to discuss what pathways might be best for you.



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*Community Forests International's office and the forests that we care for are on the unceded and unsundered lands of the Wolastoqey and Mi'kmaq Nations. We commit to respecting the underlying Indigenous title to these lands and working in the spirit of the Peace and Friendship Treaties.*

# Changing things for the better, together. 🌱

Today I'm writing from my home surrounded by the beautiful Wabanaki forest and ancestral territory of Amlamgog First Nation. I'm thinking of you and all the people who will read this, and wondering which Indigenous Nation's territory you find yourself on right now?

Understanding and respecting those place histories and connections is really important, and becoming more and more central to Community Forests' work. We hope to keep growing our partnerships and solidarity with Indigenous land defenders across our home region and around the world in the years to come.

The past year has been a challenging chapter as we grapple with an increasingly destabilized climate. The huge wildfires from Hawaii to the Northwest Territories to Nova Scotia have made the climate impacts on forests and communities more severe than ever before.

Your support for our work heartens me though, and gave us the solidarity to benefit more people and forests than ever before too.

Together we've saved endangered Wabanaki forests with communities in eastern Canada, increased food security and climate resilience with communities in East Africa, and responded to the climate crisis in a thousand big and small ways. In all of this work a really clear realization has emerged—that justice and upholding community and Indigenous rights are fundamental to supporting people, and that supporting people is how we support forests.

The lessons we've learned from the people we work alongside shape everything we do. Forests in Zanzibar not only stabilize the climate and support a diversity of life, but help people make a good living with forest-based spices and provide food security when traditional crops fail. Our colleagues from the Wolastoqey Nation in eastern Canada are showing us how relate to forests in new, deeper ways— combining climate science with Indigenous practices and replacing “forest management plans” with “forest healing plans.”

As we look forward to the year ahead, I am excited about the possibilities to take all this work further. Combining diverse ingenuity and solidarity to fix big problems together is how we help more people & more forests right now—and doing that helps shape our future in positive ways for everyone. Thank you.

**“By combining diverse ingenuity and solidarity to fix big problems together, we can create a better future.”**



*Daimen Hardie*  
Executive Director



# Taking **Action** That Inspires

Community Forests International's mission is to protect and restore Earth's climate by enabling communities and forests to thrive together. In this mission, we are guided by our values and act with courage to:



## **Enable**

More people to have positive impacts on the forests and to enjoy the benefits of climate justice.



## **Generate**

Cumulative and quantifiable improvements to the well-being of people, biodiversity, and the climate.



## **Renew**

Relationships build on strong trust with partners, practitioners funders, and communities.



## **Create**

Enthusiasm and courage for more collaborations and partnerships.



## **Invest**

Resources into developing new ways to benefit people and forests together.





# Sowing The Seeds of Change

Suleiman Mrisho Mwita,  
pictured (left) alongside  
Community Forests' Spice  
Officer Ali Said (right).



Hadi Abdullah Ebid is a visionary farmer who has turned his spice farm into a thriving oasis of diversity. When Hadi first joined Community Forests, his farm was dominated by cassava. With each passing year, his yields were decreasing, leaving him unsure of his farming future.

With the help of one-on-one training from Community Forests Pemba (CFP), and access to our community-run nurseries, Hadi embarked on a journey to revitalize his 3.7-hectare farm. Hadi's farm is now adorned with 1,000 vanilla plants, alongside a

diverse mix of fruits, vegetable crops, and spices such as turmeric, black pepper, cinnamon, and more. The structural and ecological diversity of his Spice Forest is fostering a healthy soil ecosystem for his crops and the wider ecosystem alike.

Beyond the ecological benefits, Hadi's spice farm has brought him economic stability and resilience. By diversifying his crops, he has gained adaptability and a steadier source of income throughout the year – and he's not alone. In a recent survey of Community Forests' farmer-beneficiaries, 74%

of CFP's new agroforestry farmers reported higher incomes!

## **Journey into Hadi's Spice Farm**

Suleiman Mrisho Mwita is another exemplary agroforest farmer. Just two years ago, Suleiman embarked on a partnership with Community Forests Pemba and International to embrace agroforestry and diversify his farm.

Suleiman was given 400 vanilla seedlings and 300 passion fruit cuttings to start, covering about half an acre of land. Today, his

farm flourishes with 2,600 vanilla vines and a thriving passion fruit production. By growing these high-value crops, he has transformed his livelihood and the lives of those around him.

In addition to economic impacts, Suleiman Mrisho recognizes the interconnected benefits of his agroforestry practices. By keeping large productive fruit trees like breadfruit and mango on his farm, he ensures a healthy ecosystem, shade for his valuable vanilla vines, and additional food for anyone in the community who might need it.

## **This year, Community Forests Pemba's Agroforests:**

- **Empowered Farmers:** Through distributing thousands of diverse spice, fruit, and vegetable seeds and seedlings, we are supporting farmers to diversify and climate-adapt their crops and incomes.
- **Promoted Food Security:** By supporting the growth of spice, fruit, and vegetable crops, we are strengthening local food systems, ensuring a supply of nutritious produce, and reducing reliance on imports.
- **Improved Biodiversity:** We are increasing local ecosystem biodiversity and promoting ecological integrity, creating a healthier environment for farmers and all life that calls Zanzibar home.
- **Fostered Sustainable Agriculture:** Farming practices are contributing to the restoration of fertile soils, conservation of water, and increasing resilience to climate change.

# Impact At A Glance



# Highlights

## VIUNGO wrapped

2023 marked the finale of the four-year VIUNGO project, a collaborative effort between local and international organizations in the region. Community Forests and our partners supported thousands of small-scale farmers, empowered hundreds of women and youth, and connected Zanzibari farmers to opportunities for economic growth and development, strengthening Zanzibar's food system and climate-resilience.



## Solar powered growth

Supporting farmers with the resources they need today while building their resilience for tomorrow has always been the Community Forests way. That's why we worked to build two community-run solar dryers and processing hubs to be used by spice farmers to process their spices like cloves, vanilla, and more. Farmers can now more easily meet the quality standards required to reach organic markets locally and internationally.



## *This year in Zanzibar, you helped:*

- Reach 90 different communities.
- Support nearly 3,000 women through various gender-focused programs.
- Distribute nearly 150,000 seedlings, plants, and cuttings.
- Construct two solar dryers for community use.
- Provide 336 farmers with water conservation materials.
- Establish 194 new Farmer Field Schools.
- Plant over 22,000 mangrove seedlings in community-led restoration projects.
- Establish 194 new Farmer Field Schools.
- Train over 6,500 people in climate-smart agriculture.
- Launch 95 Kitchen Garden model farms as learning hubs.



## A cross Pemban exchange

Community Forests Pemba travelled to Cabo del Gado, Pemba, Mozambique for an exchange of experiences and learnings aimed at increasing community-led action and awareness of the effects of climate change in the region. As Omar says, "Communities in Pemba (Tanzania) and the communities in Pemba (Mozambique) have a similar culture, tradition and norms, [making] the idea of mangrove restoration easily understood."

# Wabanaki Forest Protected for the Future

We need healthy forests now and for the future. That's why we're proud to be protecting the Wabanaki Forest in Eastern Canada today and for the future. Through the Forgotten Forests campaign, we're on a mission to protect and restore a diverse mix of endangered old forests and young forest landscapes that will be actively managed to restore a vibrant forest habitat.

Found across what is today known as New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, these forests are a diverse mix of restoration, mid-succession, and old forest ecosystems. The older forests we care for offer a glimpse into the Wabanaki Forest's full potential, and are home to stores of biodiversity that could help return the full vibrancy of this forest to the wider landscape.

## 8,767

To date, we've secured nearly nine thousand acres of forest to protect and restore for generations to come.

## 1,782

We've restored over 1.7 thousand acres with native and climate-adaptive trees.

### Going beyond tree planting.

This year, we have supported the restoration of thousands of native trees, increasing the variety of species in our forests. This not only ensures healthier ecosystems but also helps combat the impacts of climate change by creating resilient forests that can adapt to changing conditions.

The forests we protect are located on the unceded lands of the Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik communities. We are committed to working together with Indigenous knowledge-keepers and communities to ensure these forests are cared for by and for their rightful caretakers.

## Impact At A Glance

*This year in Canada, you helped:*

- Conserve 12 unique forests in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.
- Protect 2,300 acres of Wabanaki forest for long-term climate benefits.
- Restore 268 acres of forest for future generations to enjoy.
- Plant over 329,300 climate-adaptive native trees.
- Host 45 workshops and events with participants across the Wabanaki region.
- Treated 16.5 hectares of ancient Hemlock forest in partnership with Ulnooweg.
- Published "Into the Wabanaki", a comprehensive guide for forest caretakers.
- Trained over 300 forest professionals in climate-adaptive forest management.

# Working hand in hand: The Threat to Our Ancient Forests

We are working with our partners, Ulnooweg Education Centre, to safeguard the Hemlock forests of Asitu'lisk. This is a collaborative endeavour in solidarity with our partners on the ground.

This year, you were invited to watch "[Healing the Hemlock Forests of Asitu'lisk](#)" and to learn more about how you get involved in the fight for our Hemlock forests.

When you step into a Hemlock forest, the world transforms. The soft light filters through millions of delicate needles, creating a dappled shade unlike any other. These Eastern Hemlock trees offer more than just beauty – they provide a haven for countless species and hold generations of traditional knowledge. But now, these forests face a threat that we cannot ignore: hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA). This pest decimates Hemlock forests, killing over 80% of the trees in just a few years of infestation.

The loss of Hemlocks, devastating on its own, also disrupts the delicate balance of life these forests sustain. We are working hand in hand with our partners, Ulnooweg Education Centre, to safeguard the Hemlock forests of Asitu'lisk. This is a collaborative endeavour, with Community Forests International standing in solidarity with our partners on the ground.

Our strategy includes precise chemical treatments for individual trees, long-term biological control at a landscape level, and sustainable forest management practices. We are collaborating closely with local communities, Mi'kmaq elders, and experts to ensure a comprehensive and informed approach.

**We've saved  
just over  
4,050  
Hemlock trees  
from the  
invasive HWA  
with the very  
generous  
support of  
volunteers and  
staff.**

[Learn more about our collaborative work at Asitu'lisk](#)



## Highlights



### Enhancing forests

In addition to restoring previously clear-cut lands, Community Forests works to increase the biodiversity and climate-resilience of the Wabanaki Forest through enrichment tree planting: a process of adding carefully selected tree seedlings within an existing forest. This year for the first time, our tree-planting partners at Forests Canada planted 10,000 enrichment trees in degraded forests; in addition to an incredible 319,000 trees across Community Forests' restoration forestlands.

### More citizen forest carbon solutions

This summer, the pilot phase of the first-ever carbon offset program for East Coast family forest owners officially came to a close. With the success of this initiative, Community Forests International extends heartfelt gratitude to all involved and continues to search for and build citizen-based carbon solutions, ensuring that Wabanaki forest caretakers are supported to play their critical role in maintaining healthy forests in our world today.



### Climate adaptation at the forefront

This year, communities in the Wabanaki region saw devastating wildfires, including the largest wildfire ever recorded in Nova Scotia. The density of the Maritime Region means that wildfires are increasingly likely to impact the communities who live within and near the forests. This year more than ever before, we collectively saw the importance of adapting and building climate resilience to the impacts on our communities.

# A guide for anyone who wants to **connect and care** for the forest.

This year, we were thrilled to release our newest resource for Wabanaki Forest caretakers, “Into the Wabanaki: A Forest Care Guide.” This Forest Guide will be used by landowners and forest professionals alike to strengthen connection with the forests.

After nearly two decades of working with landowners across the Wabanaki’k (Maritime) Region, we understand that many landowners are deeply connected to their forests -- but don’t necessarily have the tools and resources needed to act on these values.

With the release of this Forest Care Guide, we hope to inspire landowners to connect with their woodlands and provide them with the knowledge to make informed management decisions, all while expanding our outreach across the region.

We identified a significant gap in resources available to private landowners, who collectively own a substantial portion of the Maritimes’ forests. With over 90,000 landowners and 5.4 million hectares of forestland, their decisions are pivotal for the Wabanaki ecosystems and our collective climate impact.

The guidebook was created with the intention of being relevant and useful to a wide range of people, and to encourage a stronger connection between forests and landowners who have varying levels of experience in managing forests.

At its core, the Guide is meant to inspire active involvement in the care of woodlands, and to help people make well-informed choices that will improve the long-term storage of carbon.

We hope that this resource will make it easier for landowners to protect their forests, encourage them to pursue their interests, link their values to actions that care for the land, find the information they need, and express their desires for a better future for the forests.

This Forest Care Guide marked a significant step in our climate-focused forest management

initiatives, engaging and educating landowners for a greener future.

This Forest Care Guide marked a significant step in our climate-focused forest management initiatives, engaging and educating landowners for a greener future.

Into the Wabanaki: A Forest Care Guide is not just a resource; it’s a testament to our commitment to enabling communities and forests to thrive together, protecting and restoring the climate.

## 300

hardcopy Forest Care Guides put into the hands of new or learning forest landowners, plus hundreds of digital copies downloaded.



[Read the full Forest Care Guide today.](#)



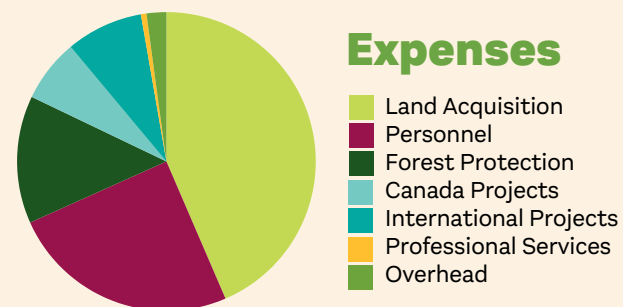
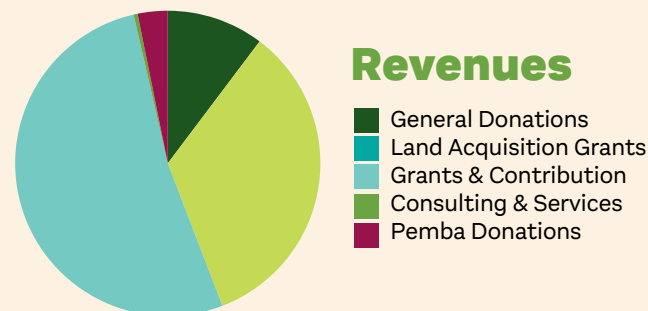


# Financials

In 2023 Community Forests International experienced strong growth with an increase in year-over-year financial support of 36%. The detailed and complete audited financial statement is [available on our website](#).

	2022	2023
<b>Revenues</b>		
Land Acquisition Grants	763,208	1,173,632
General Fund Donations	973,070	355,866
Pemba Fund Donations	51,511	109,897
Consulting & Other Services	53,023	14,636
Grants & Contribution Agreements	601,478	1,808,432
Carbon Offsets	95,815	746
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$1,774,897</b>	<b>\$2,289,577</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Land Acquisition	790,612	1,173,632
Forest Protection	383,942	372,672
International Projects	82,110	224,823
Canada Projects	115,530	183,710
Personnel	543,400	667,868
Professional Services	43,378	16,211
Overhead	41,628	57,596
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$1,209,988</b>	<b>\$1,522,880</b>
<b>Excess of Revenue Over Expenses</b>	<b>\$564,909</b>	<b>\$766,697</b>

Note: Land acquisition revenue and expense are excluded from totals.



# Community Forests

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