TROPICAL FOREST AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

RAPPORT ANNUEL 2023

(We care for us, we care for our community of partners and for landscape sustainability)

WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

It was very important to find time and money to do this activity. This was done with a view to listening to our key stakeholders (PACLs). We are happy and have more peace of mind. We can ask ourselves the following questions: do our stakeholders have confidence? Is there compliance between our actions and our partners? The answer is yes "except fish farming in Bifolone".

We hope that at the end of this retreat everyone has taken ownership of the success of TF-RD, of TF global. Our work has been qualified as good by the FFE, by the United Nations through the Equator Prize, by ECOCERT, by Noé, by Up2Green Reforestation, etc.…. We shared our challenges with certain partners. If Noé wants to work with us he must pay the right price. Thanks to the ECOCERT certificate, we will explore the FOUNDATIONS for mobilizing funds. We looked at the forecasts taking into account almost all the parameters (fixed costs, operations, salaries, etc.), hence the need to mobilize more funds to cover them. We look forward to TF-FC next year with its important contribution to support conservation.

We have oriented the content of our annual report and we have noted that the capitalization of our work contributes to the achievement of several SDGs (TF-RD's efforts towards achieving the SDGs). Thus, we can talk about "our solutions for sustainable development".

We must remain vigilant because we will not be loved by everyone. We looked at our values which can make us better both in our work and in our personal lives. We also looked at the themes and we want everyone to take ownership and strengthen their expertise in their theme; that it can lead to publications, that it can generate money, that it invades social networks, that our presence and our visibility are maintained. We have a lot to do in Yaoundé; there is planning, there is budgeting, we hope that depending on the projects, everyone can do all their TORs during the month of January.

Kagnol will expand in 2024 and we will write story telling there, we will see how culture can be a solution to poaching, we will innovate in Kagnol. "Are there solutions for conservation through culture? ". Thank you everyone for participating in this retreat, thank you to the staff, thank you to the communities, thank you to the catering service.

The floor was then given to the participants to give their impression of the retreat and everyone was able to express their gratitude and their feelings after the three days of intense work.

Epanda Manfred Aimé

TF-RD President

ABOUT TF-RD

Mission

Tropical Forest and Rural Development (TF-RD) is a Cameroonian conservation and sustainable development association created according to the association declaration receipt n°0000528/RDA/JO6/BABP of May 5, 2010. Its mission is to build resilience, those of partner communities and the landscape through transformational support based on its approach to supporting community development with a view to strengthening the conservation of ecosystems around and in the protected areas of the Congo Basin.

Vision

TF-RD's vision is to contribute to creating a socio-economic environment supporting the empowerment of local communities and which contributes to the conservation of biodiversity.

Areas of intervention

• Securing the lands of local and indigenous communities by developing or enhancing existing resources

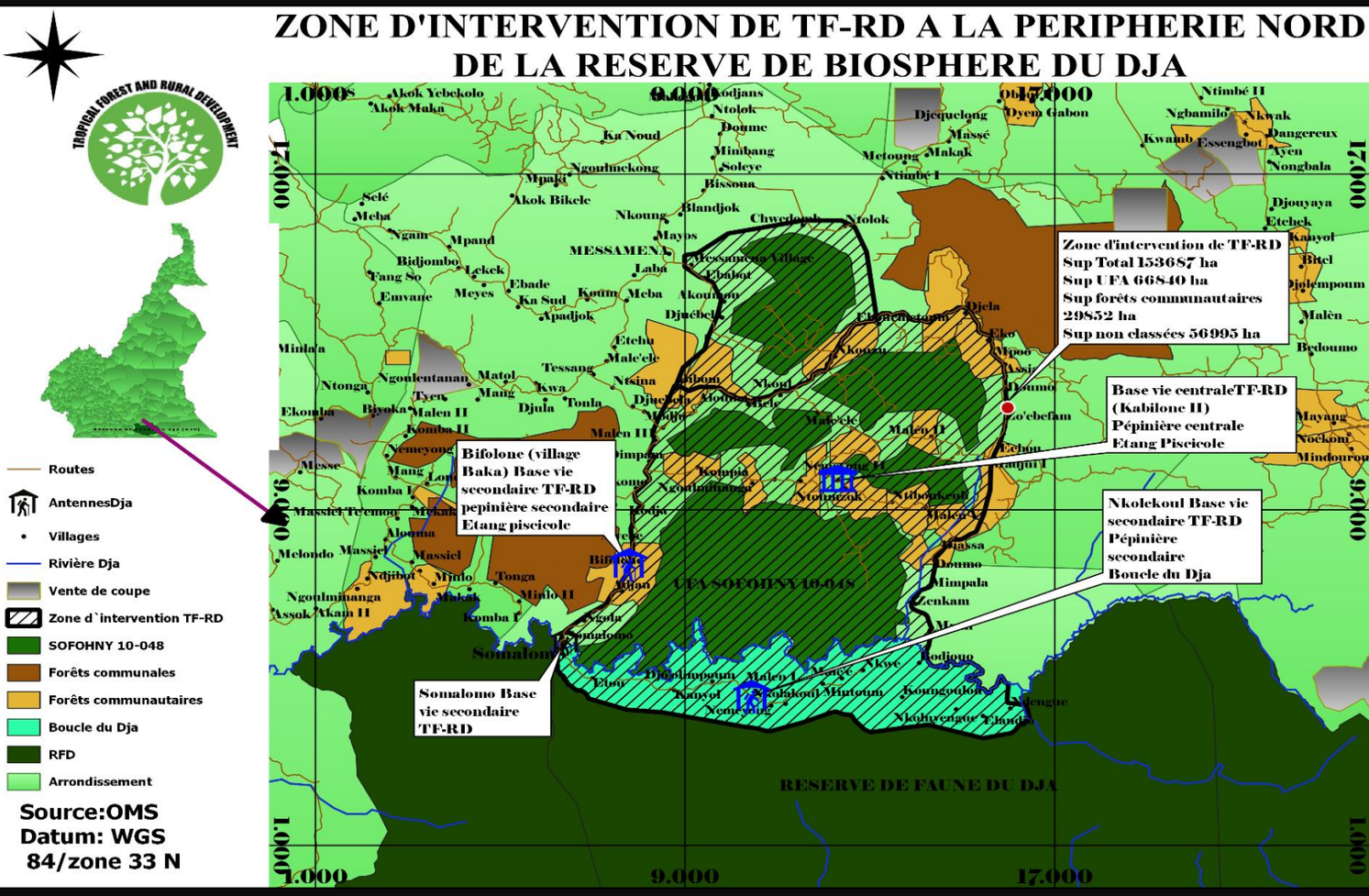
• Promote green jobs through agroforestry, ecotourism and the valorization of PFNL

• Promote joint projects with the private sector and civil society to support community resilience

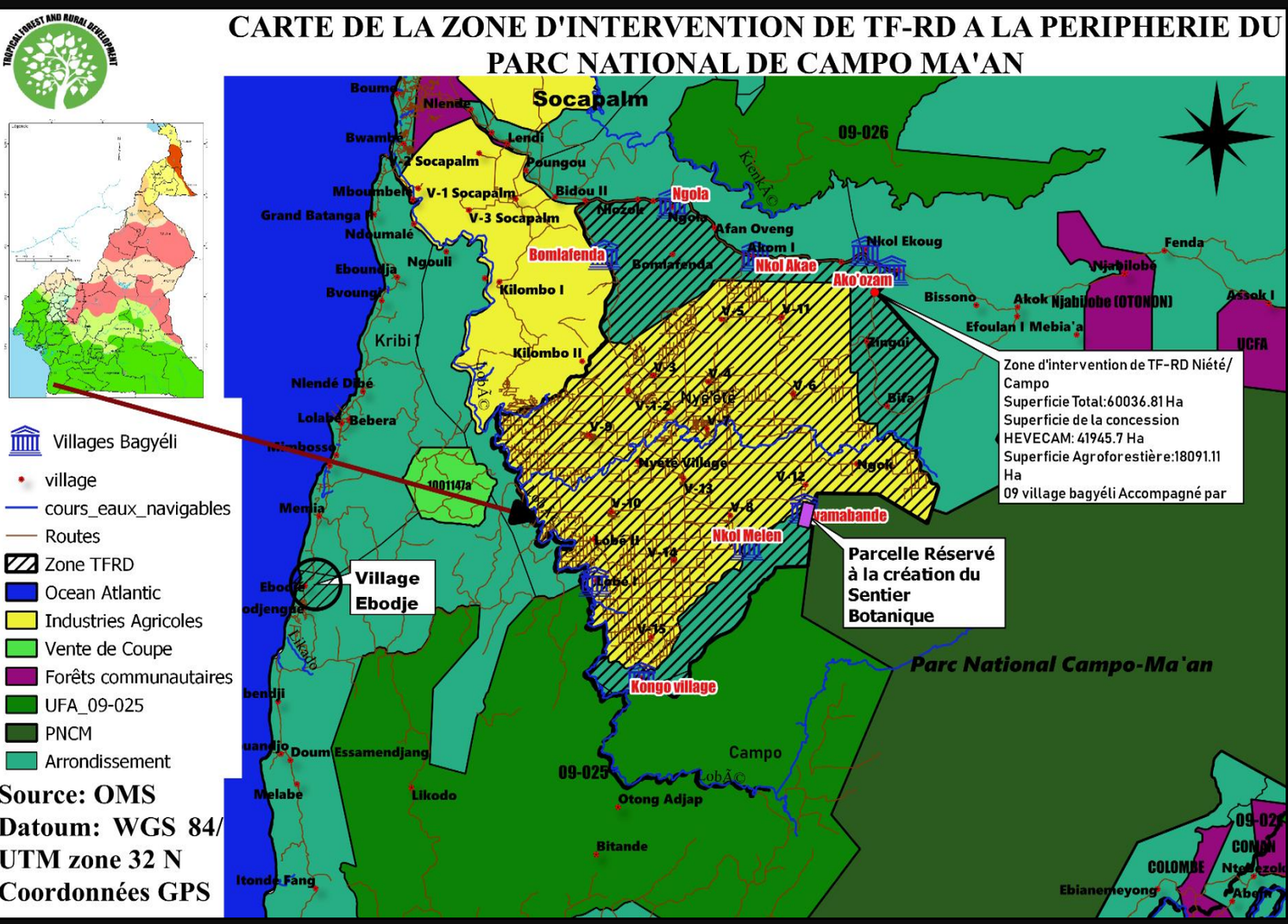
• Support for self-determination in terms of sustainable development and resilience of structured groups and partner communities

AREAS OF INTERVENTION IN CAMEROON

ZONE D'INTERVENTION DE TF-RD A LA PERIPHERIE NORD DE LA RESERVE DE BIOSPHERE DU DJA



CARTE DE LA ZONE D'INTERVENTION DE TF-RD A LA PERIPHERIE DU PARC NATIONAL DE CAMPO MA'AN



TF-RD AND SDG

Operating around the Dja Biosphere Reserve around the Campo Ma'an National Park and the Manyange-na-elombo Marine Park in the south of Cameroon, Tropical Forest and Rural Development (TF-RD) is empowering Indigenous communities through cacao-based agroforestry value chains and the collection of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and other fruits. The group has planted over 70,000 trees for production and provides training in collection quality standards to obtain higher prices for food and cosmetic products. Agreements between Indigenous women collectors and government agencies secure access and use rights in the Reserve. The model's viability is proven through avoiding deforestation and a reduction in poaching in the communities. The initiative focuses on the economic inclusion of several Indigenous groups, some of them pursuing traditional semi-nomadic lifestyles, through access to education, the registration of community businesses, and jobs for 500 women collectors of NTFPs and 300 cacao producers. TF-RD maintains partnerships with several food and cosmetics wholesalers.

KEY FACTS Equator

Prize winner 2021

Location

Peripheries of the Dja Faunal Reserve, Campo Ma'an National Park and Manyange-na-elombo Marine Park, Republic of Cameroon

Beneficiaries

2,266 direct beneficiaries, including 600 women and 1,416 children; 80,000 indirect beneficiaries

Thematic areas

Forest conservation/sustainable development; Sustainable livelihoods; Biodiversity conservation

Fields of work

Protected area management; Carbon credit scheme; Policy, regulatory or legal advocacy

Sustainable Development Goals addressed

CONSTRUCT A LOCAL MODEL

Tropical Forest and Rural Development (TF-RD) takes a multi-dimensional approach to sustainable development and conservation. The organization has built an innovative model that assists communities along the peripheries of protected areas to conserve their lands, improve local perceptions about wildlife, and prosper from green enterprise. TF-RD's model focuses on the adoption of income-generating activities that avoid deforestation, including agroforestry, sustainable harvesting of nontimber forest products (NTFPs), and production of local natural products. Key to its success, TF-RD supports communities by establishing wide-reaching market connections, creating local green enterprise network groups, and offering ongoing training in quality and compliance with national and international standards. The model also includes training and resources for community monitoring and surveillance committees, empowering local stewardship and protection of natural resources and wildlife. Education, training, and organizing are effectively carried out by 30 community representatives who liaise between their own communities and TF-RD, ensuring community decision-making, feedback loops, and communication chan

SUSTAINABLE HAVESTING OF NTFPs

Harvesting non-timber forest products (NTFPs) allows communities to engage in profitable economic activities that minimize deforestation and degradation linked to tilled crops, cattle grazing for beef, mining, and logging. To build the NTFP sector, TF-RD organizes Common Initiative Groups (CIGs). These groups allow community members to assemble based on their interests and sectors, establishing continual networks for learning and growth. CIGs host training in best practices for harvesting highquality, premium products. TF-RD also provides critical support in establishing NTFP value chains. Through its private partner Tropical Forest Food and Cosmetics (TF-FC), TF-RD markets products, researches buyers, and offers expertise on national and international standards. TF-RD staff and their local liaisons share their value-chain research and

knowledge so community operations can reach the highest quality standards yielding premium prices. For example, TF-RD canvassed potential buyers for moabi oil-based products in Europe and the United States. The organization also provided training for community members on nursery techniques, quality assurance, and international compliance standards. Through work in value-chain development, TF-RD and community partners have established markets for products created from native trees: African oil bean (Pentaclethra macropylla) locally known as mbalaka, Njangsang (Ricinodendron heudelotii), wild Mango (Irgvingia gabonensis), and Moabi (Baillonella toxisperma). TF-RD and CIGs also collaborate to internalize value-added processes that typically occur outside source areas. Value added processing allows communities to earn higher percentages of product profits, concentrating more value at the source. For example, within the framework of the BIONAT project (organic and natural products from Cameroon) implemented by TF-RD, earnings are being reinvested by community members, resulting in village savings and loan associations, savings funds for upcoming projects, advances in children's schooling, and the opening of small businesses in the neighborhood.

OUR SOLUTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Promoting equality for women TF-RD prioritises women's equitable access to program benefits, land rights, and income generation. In particular, women's groups have benefited significantly from value added product pipelines. TF-RD assists women's groups in establishing partnerships with private sector companies that specialize in selling and marketing women-made products. They also support women with training in NTFP harvesting, processing, value addition, and sales. TF-RD women's groups now produce and sell an array of products, including virgin oils, butters, soaps, and moabi oil-based cosmetics. In the Baka community of Bifolone, women were integral in transferring land rights to Baka residents from Bantu owners. This transfer aided Baka women in benefiting from the development of moabi, wild mango, Njansang, and Mbalaka value chains. TF-RD also works with the Bifolone community on training to increase competitiveness in the market. The transfer of land rights and development of NTFP value chains, production, harvest, and sales provided new resilience for women in maintaining the health and management of their households during the COVID-19 pandemic. On the Dja Faunal Reserve periphery, women's groups were vital in establishing resource-sharing agreements with logging companies. Several meetings and consultations were held with critical stakeholders, including the Ministry of Forests and Fauna (MINFOF), representatives of the forestry company, women's groups, and other community groups. The meetings and discussions resulted in a memorandum of understanding (MOU) authorizing community collection of NTFPs on one logging concession, or Forest Management Unit (FMU)

FIELD BASE

1- Program approach

- TF-RD is field-based and has life bases in all its intervention areas;
- TF-RD can confidently rely on the relay people who become the champions of its approach;
- TF-RD conducts scientific research and the actions carried out are guided by the research results;
- TF-RD operates in continuity and in a sustainable manner;

2- Results

- TF-RD's results speak for the organization;
- TF-RD is the leader in its field of work;
- TF-RD produces results beyond expectations.

- The complementarity of skills between TF-RD, TFFC and CERCOD promotes the quality of interventions;
- TF-RD is able to maintain dialogue as long as possible ;

3- Autonomy

- TF-RD has the capacity to pre-finance projects;
- TF-RD's work has led to the creation of a functioning agro-industry: TFFC;
- TF-RD has its own cultural heritage with a website where virtual ecotourism can be done;
- TF-RD is loyal in paying salaries
- TF-RD brings together structured cocoa collectors and producers who are starting to operate autonomously;

4- Legitimacy

- TF-RD, a success story, its reputation is an example to follow;
- Changing mentalities through real-life stories = using true and real-life stories to bring about change;
- TF-RD is able to retain its partners;

COMMUNTY LED CONSERVATION

One of the breaking points in the relationship between local, indigenous communities and conservation services and agencies is the definition of the role of each stakeholder in ensuring biodiversity conservation. Some present themselves as conservationist and therefore define local and indigenous communities as poachers. This is illustrated very well by the gradual decline in wildlife density as a consequence. Yet, community-led conservation encourages the involvement of all. Sixteen conservationists among which six women were trained on community-led conservation from the 02nd to the 06th May 2023. It is at the Dja Fauna Reserve. Participants included the Conservation Service of the reserve, Baka indigenous peoples, community practitioners in development NGOs, leaders of cocoa farmers cooperatives and women specialized in NTFP valorization, and managers of agricultural training schools. All characterized by their proximity to local and indigenous communities on daily basis and their success as well as their failures to implement conservation and development approaches with communities. At the end of this training, many were pleased to identify that they were already using some of the eight PARTNERS principles in their interactions with local and indigenous communities. This training complemented the eights principles and put them in a coherent order to promote community-led conservation. Participants now feel more armed to promote a more peaceful relationship between conservationist, local and Indigenous communities. From now on, all stakeholders feel involved and the search for solutions to conservation problems will be easier. The success of this training is mainly the fact that the participants had a background on community-led conservation issues. The sustainability of such an approach depends heavily on the support of the government, which guarantees all biodiversity conservation policies. This training heralds a new era towards community-led conservation practitioner training throughout the Congo Basin.

Replication

In 2010, TF-RD began working with eight villages on the northern periphery of the Dja Faunal Reserve. The innovative approach gained momentum and was gradually replicated in the peripheral areas of other protected areas. In 2018, the model was launched in the Boucle du Dja and the Campo Ma'an National Park with the Bagyelis Indigenous communities and the Ebodjé local community. Through the replication of TF-RD's model, this work has expanded from eight original villages to 33 villages, including 500 people in 20 villages around Dja and 150 people in 10 villages on the periphery of Campo Ma'an National Park. To support replication in other areas, TF-RD also organizes exchange trips with organizations interested in the approach. TF-RD posts activity reports and newsletters on social networks and collaborates on scientific publications, allowing its crucial conservation actions to gain more exposure.

Scalability

TF-RD initiatives hold great potential for scaling up more broadly. Many TF-RD ideas and actions have already garnered local and national policy support. For example, TF-RD's work to implement Reciprocal Environmental Agreements (REAs) with community members to promote mutual economic and environmental benefits and establish Memorandums of Understanding MOUs with extractive companies for fair community access to Forest Management Units (FMUs) involves support from local and national leaders, including the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife. Importantly, TF-RD's model for change includes concerted efforts to build and restructure the broader consumer marketplace around non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and natural products. As market demand for sustainably harvested goods and local products increases, the model has the potential to scale more broadly. TF-RD also formed network affiliation opportunities, enabling community members to assemble nationally and regionally based on their interests. Networks are places where members share experiences and support mutual development. For example, a popular network is the Great Apes Management Alliance in Central Africa. These networks are vital incubators for scaling and amplifying TF-RD solutions.

Sustainability

TF-RD puts community members in an empowered position of ownership and control that is more likely to lead to long-term success. The strategy relies on education, training, and establishing community rights of access to land and natural resources. The high adoption rates of community agroforestry operations and eco-businesses demonstrate the success of the model. With increased job opportunities and profits, an upward cycle of reinvestment into the community has begun. TF-RD members are launching new businesses, investing in children's education, and improving homes and community infrastructure. Financially, TF-RD has the support of government and non-government partners to implement special projects that support mutual goals in ecosystem restoration and community development.

OUR MANAGEMENT INDICATORS

■ More than 500 people in 23 villages near Dja are engaged in conservation activities.

■ More than 150 people in 10 villages near Campo Ma'an National Park are engaged in conservation activities.

■ Representatives have been appointed in 30 communities to provide coordination between villages and TF-RD.

■ Monitoring and surveillance committees have been established in 17 villages.

■ Five native NTFP value chains have been established.

■ NFTPs generate incomes for 600 women and 250 men.

■ Approximately 5 tons of certified cacao per year are sold to food and cosmetics wholesalers.

■ Deforestation has been avoided on more than 181 hectares.

■ REAs have been established in 35 villages on the northern periphery of the Dja Reserve.

■ Land rights have been secured on 665 hectares.

■ About 150 members of the Baka Indigenous community of Bifolone have gained land rights.

■ Community access has been granted across 66,000 hectares in one Forest Management Unit (FMU).

■ TF-RD has supported 36 women's groups to be formed.

■ Women's group branded products include household soaps in liquid and in pieces, toilet soap, hair oil, massage balm.

■ Approximately 600 women have participated.

PARTNERS

■ Hévéa du Cameroun SARL: Provides training and technical capacity building on nursery production methods and sustainable rubber plantations.

■ Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MINADER): Supports solutions to issues in rural agriculture.

■ Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development (MINEPDEP): responsible for the development and implementation of government policy on the environment and nature protection from a sustainable development perspective.

■ Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOF): Supports forestry and wildlife interventions as the supervisory body.

■ Société Forestière du Haut Nyon (SOFHONY): Collaborates with women's groups to improve access to the resources of the Unité Forestière d'Aménagement.

■ Tropical Forest Food and Cosmetics (TF-FC): Provides training and technical capacity building on NTFP primary processing protocols and buys NTFPS like cocoa produced by TF-RD.

■ Well Grounded: Assists with capacity-building in organizational development and leadership.

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