



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

**THE MOVEMENT FOR
COMMUNITY-LED
DEVELOPMENT USA**

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Cover Photo: Movement for Community-led Development members during a Participatory CLD Assessment Tool Training in Cotonou, Benin - August 2024. Credit: MCLD



Participatory CLD Assessment Tool Training in Uganda, 2023. Photo Credit: Baluku Isaya

BOARD CHAIR’S LETTER

This year was a first for the Movement for Community-led Development US (MCLD US) in many ways. After nine years of “incubation” within The Hunger Project, and with their sustained financial support, this was our first year operating as an independent 501(c)(3) charitable organization, with our own banking, human resources, and financial management. It was a year of financial growth thanks to membership dues and grant funding from USAID, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

Perhaps most gratifying has been the strong growth and impact of our sister MCLD National Associations in Africa that MCLD US has been able to support, and our rapidly growing membership in Latin America and the Caribbean. By the end of 2024, the number of legally registered National Associations in Africa had grown to eight, enabling them to steward and in some cases mobilize their own resources.

MCLD is a platform for collective voice and action, and our US members and network partners have demonstrated this through our project grant partnerships, shared office space and our advocacy working group, which organized our first-ever Congressional briefing. We’ve participated throughout the year in coordination with a dozen Minority World and Global NGO Networks and the UN to ensure that all Multilateral and OECD bilateral funding agencies begin delivering on their commitments to shift power and resources to local and community actors.

Through the leadership of our US Executive Director, Gunjan Veda, who also serves as Global Secretary, and our growing team of Regional Coordinators, our democratically gender balanced Global Assembly was established which has ratified a shared set of values and standards for all national associations.

All of these foundational milestones point to enormous opportunities for greater impact and influence in 2025 and the years ahead. While the world is not at all on track for achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, there has never before been such broad agreement that the only viable pathway to success is through unleashing the power of local communities. We in MCLD will work in solidarity with all like-minded people to make this happen.


John Coonrod, PhD
MCLD Founder and Board Chair

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S LETTER: THE FUTURE LOOKS LIKE MCLD

A year ago, on January 1, 2024, I stepped into the most exhilarating and terrifying role of my career as the Global Secretary of MCLD and the Executive Director of MCLD US. Exhilarating because it was an opportunity to be part of a force that was not only re-imagining the world but actively transforming it. Terrifying, because it ventured into uncharted waters.

As I reflect back on the year that was, four words come to mind: courage, commitment, community, and change.

The **courage** of our members, team, board, and indeed partners as we demonstrated that a different way of thinking, being, and doing was not just possible, but was actively taking shape.

In 2024, MCLD US worked with our sister National Associations to complete MCLD’s transition from a movement to a movement organization, one which is fuelled by the collective power of its members and national associations, exercised together! In May, MCLD embarked on a year-long journey of Strategic Planning involving as many of our members as possible. In keeping with its commitment, MCLD US supported all sister National Associations with micro-grants to meet in person and collectively create a roadmap for our future. In July, our democratically elected Global Assembly was created with equal representation from all National Associations, including the US, and in October, this Global Assembly adopted a Structure and Values document that reflects MCLD’s unique model.

Even as we transformed MCLD to reflect what an organization of the future should look like, we continued to transform the world around us, facilitating spaces for collective thinking and action, launching solidarity based initiatives with other values-aligned networks and organizations, holding funders accountable and supporting them in translating their intent for locally-led development into action.

We also continued to challenge the coloniality of knowledge through publications, including a book titled **Community-led Development in Practice: We Power Our Own Change**. Published by Routledge, this edited volume is based on MCLD’s Participatory CLD Assessment Tool and showcases the work of our members from around the world, bringing together community voices and practitioner experience with that of academia.

Throughout 2024, I was inspired and energized by the unwavering **commitment** of our members in the US and across our sister National Associations to undo the harm caused by neo-colonial development and humanitarian paradigms through a **change** in mindset, policy, and practice.

The journey has not been easy - change seldom is - and yet it has been possible because of the strong **community** that is MCLD. A community that is grounded in a deep-seated belief in human dignity, enriched by the diversity of its members, and strengthened through their collective will.

As we enter 2025, the world around us is in turmoil. The rapid shrinking of official development assistance and its devastating impact across the world has once again demonstrated the political economy of aid and the inadequacy of incremental change. All around us, organizations, practitioners, and communities are beginning to talk about the need for a new system, one that fosters interconnectedness, not dependency, collaboration, not competition. And as they do so, they are recognizing the need for a new kind of civil society organization - one that is lean, agile, and sustainable. One that serves as a space for collective action, information sharing, and solidarity. One that is deeply connected to its members and the communities they are a part of, and is powered by this connection.

As we navigate these difficult times, we at MCLD are more committed than ever to continue to take courageous action, challenge hierarchies of power, and strengthen local communities together. To continue the journey we began ten years ago to celebrate the power, potential, and promise of communities, and of each one of us.

Hope is the ultimate act of resistance. And so throughout this year, which marks our 10th anniversary, we will continue to ignite hope by celebrating the courage, commitment, and impact of each one of us, and our collective work. **Because we believe that the future of civil society looks different. It looks like MCLD!**



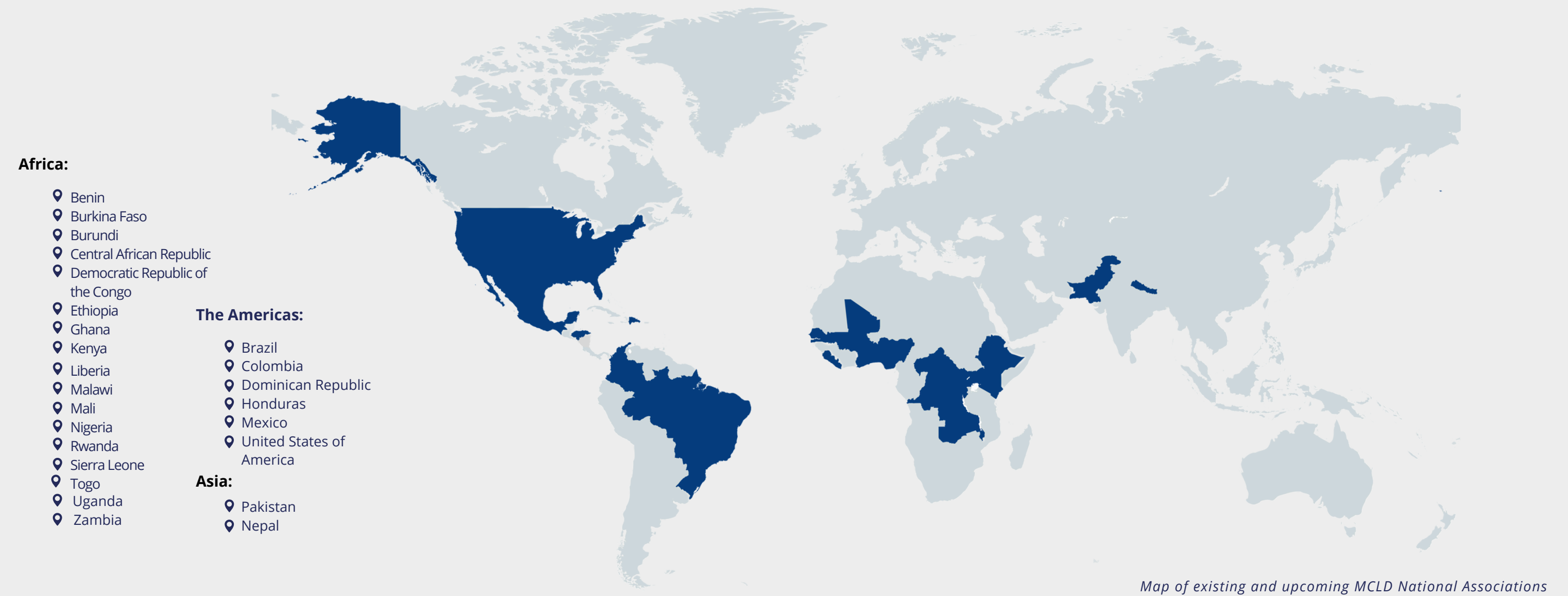
Gunjan Veda
MCLD Global Secretary and MCLD US Executive Director



Photo: MCLD members during a Participatory CLD Assessment Tool Training in Cotonou, Benin - August 2024. Credit: MCLD

THE MOVEMENT FOR COMMUNITY-LED DEVELOPMENT

Placing communities at the forefront of their own progress in:



The Movement for Community-led Development (MCLD) is a Majority World-led network of networks dedicated to fostering sustainable development and ensuring that every person has a voice in the decisions that affect their lives.

Our membership comprises 2,000+ local civil society organizations (CSOs) and 25+ international NGOs and networks.

MCLD’s National Associations are unique, self-governed, and passionate groups driven by a shared vision of community-led development in their communities and across their countries.

After a year of listening and consultation, MCLD inaugurated a new, independent structure on January 1, 2024, transitioning from a movement to a “movement organization”. See more on Page 31.

MCLD’s Key Priorities:

- **Community-Led Development (CLD):** Advocating for and facilitating the transition from traditional, top-down development approaches to locally-led models, ensuring communities are the architects of their own progress.
- **Majority World Solidarity:** Building bridges between Majority World organizations, fostering collaboration, and challenging systemic inequalities within the development sector.
- **Decolonization:** Recognizing and rectifying power imbalances, dismantling colonial legacies, and championing local knowledge as the driving force behind sustainable development.
- **Mutual Capacity Strengthening:** Co-creating tools, knowledge, and resources needed to transform the current system by building on the wisdom that we each carry.

MCLD US

The United States of America is one of 25 countries where MCLD has a growing presence. Our National Association in the US comprises 25 dedicated INGO members and five network partners. We are a civil society initiative and a membership-based 501(c)(3), registered in the state of Virginia.

Our allyship with sister MCLD National Associations ensures access, visibility, and voice for Majority World actors. MCLD US hosts four of our 10 Secretariat staff dedicated to facilitating collective action in National Associations worldwide and bringing about systems transformation.

Our vision is for every community in the world to have the resources, skills, knowledge, autonomy, and equitable partnerships to achieve their own visions and goals.

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

Across MCLD, 2024 was defined by an unwavering commitment to strengthening community-led initiatives across 25 countries, through both established and newly forming National Associations. From Benin to Colombia, MCLD’s members worked to advance sustainable development, focusing on youth involvement, gender justice, local governance, and more.

MCLD US opened 2024 with six goals, aligned with MCLD’s three priorities of Policy, Practice, and Solidarity:

- 1. Influence Policies for Systemic Transformation
- 2. Strengthen the Practice of CLD
- 3. Facilitate Access and Support for National Associations
- 4. Support the Transformation of MCLD
- 5. Expand MCLD US Membership
- 6. Strengthen Solidarity

We enter 2025 with progress in these areas.

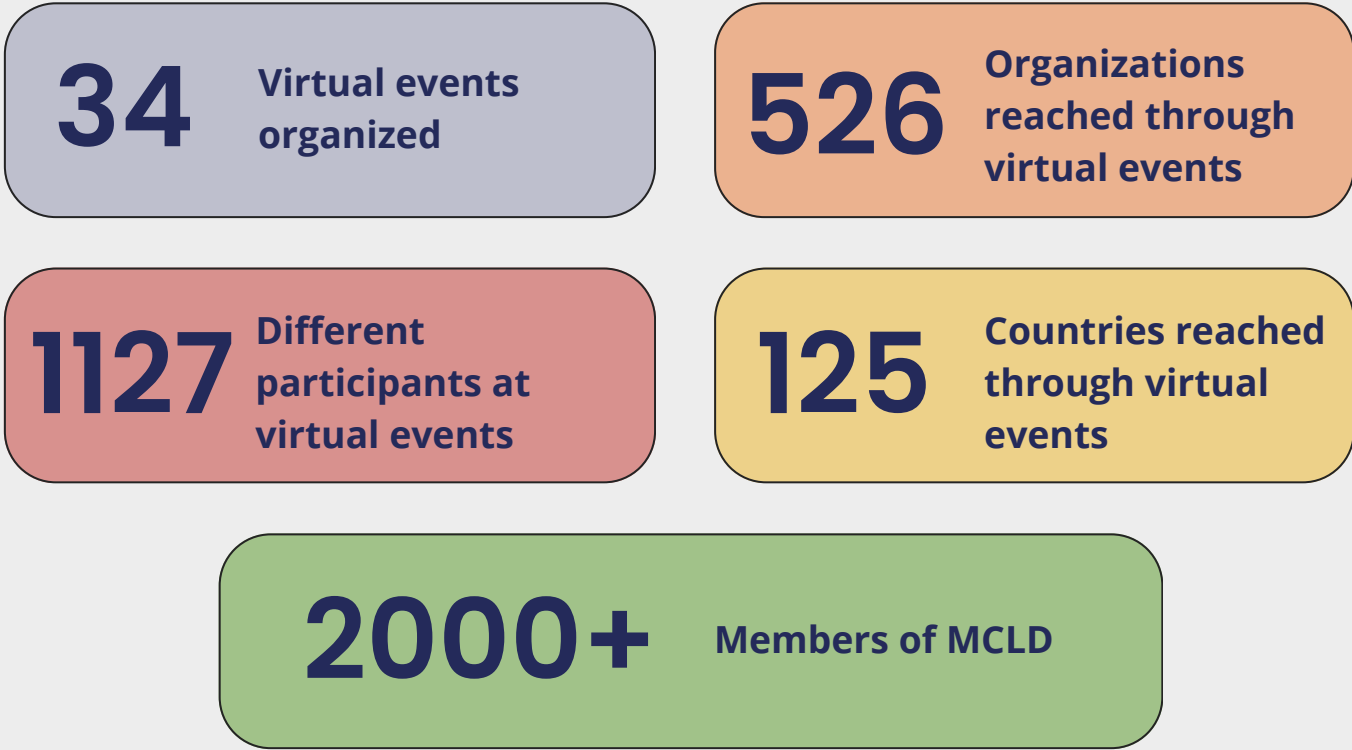
Advocacy with convenors and funders has been a key area of MCLD’s work since our inception. In 2024, this has included convening consultative forums for community-based organizations and USAID, organizing events around the UN General Assembly, and working hand-in-hand with Majority World actors to co-facilitate a guidance document on making international events more inclusive and community-led. We have been persistent in raising critical issues with agencies, foundations, and other organizations and have participated in regular forums on advocacy as well as hosting our own through our new working group on Capitol Hill advocacy.

MCLD US continued to prioritize supporting organizations to translate intentions to become more locally led into action through trainings, publications, and learning platforms. Our Monthly Global Calls and Leadership Development Calls are two of the avenues through which we facilitate this shift.

Allyship and solidarity with our sister National Associations have remained a priority for us, particularly in ensuring visibility, access, and voice for them. Even as it strengthened its own policies and governance systems, MCLD US has spent time this year formalizing its relationship with other MCLD National Associations.

MCLD US raised the bar on membership this year and, in consultation with the Board, set out new guidelines for what member contributions look like. Membership has remained at 25 members and 5 allies. A goal for 2025 is to strengthen our community, especially in light of the shifting political landscape.

2024 AT A GLANCE



CHAMPIONING MCLD’S THREE PILLARS

MCLD US focuses its work around the Movement for Community-led Development’s three pillars:

- 1. **Policy** - Transform policy through global advocacy
- 2. **Practice** - Enhance the practice of CLD through collaborative research and mutual capacity strengthening
- 3. **Solidarity** - Strengthen global solidarity, particularly among Majority World Networks, and support funding, access, and visibility for sister National Associations.

POLICY

In addition to engaging in advocacy in support of our sister National Associations, in 2024, we especially focused on influencing policies in the US to advance localization. To amplify our reach and impact, we partnered with like-minded organizations and networks.

Throughout the spring and summer, we facilitated consultations for local actors to have a voice in the US's locally-led development agenda, partnering with Peace Direct (see Page 12). In September, our working group on US government advocacy organized a briefing with Congressional staff (see Page 13). In October, we were one of several outside organizations invited to host a panel at USAID's Local Capacity Strengthening (LCS) forum - a fishbowl discussion with USAID missions and local organizations on access and partnership, where we also highlighted some recommendations from our consultations on USAID's localization efforts.

Building on discussions on accountability of funders and international partners with CIVICUS, NEAR, Peace Direct, and WINGS, MCLD co-organized a side event at the UN General Assembly in September on Local Action, Global Accountability. We heard from funders about how they are living up to their commitments to locally-led development and from local actors on what real accountability looks like and what more is needed.

Speakers included:

Local Organizations: CCEPI (Nigeria), PDWRC (Central African Republic), St. John's Community Centre (Kenya), Youth Net and Counseling (Malawi), Indonesia for Humanity (Indonesia), Peace Initiative Network (Nigeria), and Fundación Váyalo (Venezuela).

Funders: UN PBSO, USAID, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, UK Mission to the UN, Danish MFA, and Ford Foundation.



From the event, we learned:

1. Trust, patience, and co-creation are essential for the meaningful implementation of the locally led agenda.
2. Re-imagining how we work and decentralizing power, through all aspects of work including decision-making, funding models, dialogue, expertise, language, etc., are fundamentally required to institute real change toward locally-led development, humanitarian action, and peacebuilding.
3. Accountability within the new way of doing and thinking cannot just be at a headquarters level but must be multi-directional and reach all parts of an organization, foundation, government, or multilateral agency.
4. Transparency in our progress towards the locally-led agenda, including both failures and successes, is essential for our collective learning.

The side event was made possible with support from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and the Ford Foundation. As part of our own accountability, in 2025, we plan to continue this conversation and follow up on actions suggested and promised.

MCLD US staff also participated in several forums of policy discussions, including:

- Participation in panels and events (OECD, WomenLiftHealth, World Movement for Democracy, Devex, Africans Rising, Afrikki)
- Working on the funder report card with Peace Direct and CIVICUS

See Pages 26-27 for a full list of events we participated in.

We engaged with other global networks through a group of convenors and bodies like RINGO. Our ED also joined a group of change-makers visioning and strategizing for the future of our sector through the Respace initiative, led by Conducive Space for Peace, Reos Partners, and the NEAR network.

These efforts are part of how we lived up to Devex's title of one of 24 organizations to watch in 2024.

Photos:

Left: Dr. Rebecca Dali at the UN General Assembly, September 2024

Right: Speakers at our UN General Assembly Side Event, September 2024



CASE STUDY: SUPPORTING USAID TO BECOME MORE LOCALLY-LED



Photo Credit: Franklin's Marketing and Media Solutions, 2024.

In 2024, MCLD US partnered with Peace Direct to undertake a project to ensure USAID's locally-led development agenda is shaped by local and community-based organizations. The project, supported by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, aimed to bridge the communication gap between USAID and civil society. It created spaces for local actors to speak directly to USAID at the mission, regional, and global levels. These discussions were co-created with local organizations and USAID and looked at key issues like mutual capacity strengthening and partnership.

How? Through a series of virtual and in-person consultations in multiple languages with 350+ local and community-based organizations (CBOs) globally, to which USAID's team came to listen and understand.

The consultations:

Virtual: Global, West Africa Region, Latin America and Caribbean Region

In-person: Malawi and Uganda

Hundreds of local actors, particularly community-based organizations who seldom get to meet funders, came together to share what was needed to realize USAID's commitment to become more locally-led. They discussed power dynamics, sustainability, trust, and capacity strengthening, including addressing a lack of opportunities for community-based organizations to engage with USAID directly and how to more meaningfully involve community-centered design in programming. They highlighted the need for recognizing the capacities of local organizations, particularly those closest to the communities, and the need for access. USAID staff and mission leaders voiced their commitment to collaborating more closely with local organizations and continuing to work in local systems.

On the impact of the consultations, Blessings Ngwangwanya, a MCLD Malawi member, noted:

"I'm Blessings Ngwangwanya from Vision for Development Organization, a local NGO based in Chiradzulu, Southern Malawi. Participating in this meeting was incredibly valuable - engaging directly with funders and influencing their framework on localization helped me to share my perspective of meaningful partnerships. I strongly recommend such engagements be held regularly."



CASE STUDY: HILL BRIEFING ON THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCALLY-LED DEVELOPMENT

The US Government and Capitol Hill Advocacy Working Group organized a Hill briefing in September alongside UnLock Aid. MCLD US Executive Director Gunjan Veda, as well as Dr. Moses Isooba (Executive Director of the Uganda National NGO Forum), Louino Robillard (Program Director of Rasin Devlopman in Haiti), and Dr. Cassandra Jean François (Co-Founder and Coordinator of Konbit San Pou San in Haiti), met with staffers from the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Hosted by Representative Sara Jacobs, with Sophie Jones, Democratic staff director on the House Foreign Relations Committee, this meeting was a chance for practitioners to share stories of success and demonstrate the sustainability and impact of locally-led development and Congress's role therein, in preparation for any new administration.

The Working Group also rapidly mobilized a [sign-on letter](#) pressing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to include locally-led development in the National Defense Authorization Act, in an effort to preserve the localization agenda for future administrations. Within just a couple of days, 36 organizations signed on.

Photos:

Left: Local organizations and USAID Malawi team at the in-person meeting between local organizations and USAID Mission in Lilongwe, Malawi.

Right: MCLD US ED Gunjan Veda with MCLD members and allies at the Hill briefing (Credit: Roots of Development, 2024.)

PRACTICE

The Movement for Community-led Development is committed to mutual capacity strengthening and collective learning. In 2024, MCLD US supported this by facilitating trainings and ongoing platforms for learning and exchange, as well as contributing to publications and podcasts.

Monthly Global Calls

These calls feature discussions led by MCLD members and partners, often with a few guest speakers. They are our more formal opportunities to explore topics most relevant to our collective CLD work, engage in meaningful dialogues, and share various perspectives across our global network. In 2024, our Global Calls explored the state of civic space, funding for grassroots women’s initiatives, youth leadership, the state of our sector, systems healing, accountability, and partnerships in a transformed system. We welcomed guest speakers from 15 organizations to share insights.

Leadership Development Calls

These monthly calls began in 2020 as a way for members to connect as peers. They continue as a space to build connections, renew our energy towards CLD, and share with and support each other. Movement members come to these calls to learn and brainstorm, whether it's a new approach, a useful tool, an insightful perspective, or a new development within MCLD. In 2024, topics included how National Associations work together, communications and technology tips, pitching your work and making the most of conferences, engaging youth in CLD, addressing trauma in leadership, examining MCLD’s language and terminology, mitigating conflict, and different forms of leadership.

(Un)Learning Labs & Community-led Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Initiatives

These sessions focus on mutual capacity strengthening and are facilitated by an MCLD member or ally. Each workshop is centered around a technical topic relevant to CLD, where we unlearn some of the traditional, top-down practices in our sector and relearn them with one another through a community-led lens. Currently, we’re exploring Community-led Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (CoMEL), expanding our skills for collaborating with communities across the evaluation cycle.

In 2024, we looked at community-led approaches to developing learning questions and indicators, collecting data, and analyzing data with facilitators from OneVillage Partners in Sierra Leone, Outreach Philippines Inc. and Outreach International, the Firelight Foundation in Tanzania, Impact Managers and the University of Zambia, Grassroots Action and Support Organization (GASO) Malawi, and UNITAR.

Later in the year, the facilitators of all the (Un)Learning Lab CoMEL sessions were featured in the event [we hosted](#) at the gLOCAL forum.

“The community-led MEL calls have had a meaningful impact on both my work and my community. Through these sessions, I've gained valuable insights into participatory MEL practices that have strengthened how my organization engages with and learns from the communities we serve. The knowledge shared has been practical and deeply rooted in real experiences, which has helped us improve our approach to monitoring and learning. I truly appreciate the support from MCLD and would love to continue attending meetings and participating in future initiatives.”

-Mambu Alpha Sannoh,
Coordinator of Women & Youths' Development Center (WYDC) Sierra Leone

Participatory CLD Assessment Tool Training

In 2024, MCLD US joined our regional and national colleagues to hold trainings on the **Participatory CLD Assessment Tool** in Ethiopia, Uganda, and Benin.

MCLD’s Participatory CLD Assessment Tool was designed by a team of practitioners as a way for organizations to assess their programs’ alignment with the 11 characteristics of community-led development. The tool uses a dialogic process to understand the community's involvement in decision-making, accountability mechanisms, and how facilitation processes are managed.

The tool is intended for practitioners, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) specialists, local government, and community facilitators. It is meant for anyone with a deep understanding of program implementation and outcomes, and can be used with community leaders to gather insights from their work and partnerships. The tool is currently available in 9 languages and is being used extensively by INGOs, local organizations and local governments globally.

CASE STUDY: PARTICIPATORY CLD ASSESSMENT TOOL TRAINING IN COTONOU, BENIN

In August, MCLD US joined nine of our sister National Associations from West Africa in Cotonou, Benin. Members from Benin, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Togo, the Central African Republic, Liberia, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Ghana came together for a bilingual training on the Participatory CLD Assessment Tool facilitated by MCLD US Executive Director, Gunjan Veda. After completing the training, we applied the tool with community members in Allada, where CLD Benin member Casa Grande is located.

The Participatory CLD Assessment Tool allows us to self-assess and deepen CLD approaches and principles across all aspects of programming. With these values in mind, the last day was used for joint visioning around MCLD’s 2025-2029 strategic plan.

“The Participatory Community-Led Development Assessment Tool Training in Benin has been one of the very successful MCLD meetings. It helped us gain increased knowledge and awareness that there is always room for learning from each other, and to reshape development initiatives in Africa to human- or community-centered development.”

- Lossie Konneh, MCLD Sierra Leone member and Program Supervisor, OneVillage Partners



Photos: MCLD members in Cotonou and Allada, Benin, August 2024. Credit: MCLD

LOCALLY-LED DEVELOPMENT IN FRAGILE ENVIRONMENTS (LIFE) PROJECT

For the past few years, MCLD has partnered with The Hunger Project and World Vision in Ethiopia and Bangladesh on the LIFE project, under a grant from USAID, to identify and understand how community dynamics in non-permissive environments may affect facilitation and community leadership.

In 2024, MCLD US ED Gunjan Veda traveled to Ethiopia to train partner teams on community-led monitoring and evaluations. The teams underwent training on the Participatory CLD Assessment Tool, carried out theory-building workshops where community members identified their own theory of action and change, and worked with communities to develop training modules.

MCLD US also had the opportunity to share some of its experiences and key findings thus far in a webinar with USAID’s Local Works staff from Syria and Burma at USAID’s Agency Learning and Evidence month and at the European Evaluation Society Conference in Rimini, Italy through a joint session with IDS, Sussex.



Photo: The LIFE Project Ethiopia team (World Vision and The Hunger Project at a training on the Participatory CLD Assessment Tool training with the Bui Area Program, Credit: MCLD

PODCASTS AND PUBLICATIONS

APJE: OUR DATA OUR PROCESS: RE-IMAGINING THE COMMUNITY-LED MONITORING AND EVALUATION DISCUSSION

MCLD’s Gunjan Veda co-authored an article with Samahan para sa Pagsulong at Pag-unlad ng Capaculan (SPPC), a community-based group from Masbate province in the Philippines, and Nancy Bobadilla from Outreach Philippines Inc (OPI).

The [article](#) was published in the Asia Pacific Journal of Evaluation, and as far as we know, it is the first time a journal has recognized community ownership and authorship by featuring a community as the first author. MCLD US is thrilled to have been part of this progress in underscoring the importance of empowering communities in evaluation processes.

BROOKINGS INSTITUTE: DEVELOPMENT INTERDEPENDENCE: LOCALLY DRIVEN, GLOBALLY INFORMED

In September, the Brookings Institution published a [series of essays](#) that featured a number of MCLD member organizations, including Oxfam, Save the Children, Peace Direct, and Care. The authors explored the changing role of international experts and INGOs in locally-led development, including USAID’s policies, how different organizations conceptualize meaningful engagement, and how INGOs can position themselves to support localization.

MCLD US Executive Director, Gunjan Veda, and Board Chair, John Coonrod, co-wrote the essay, “[Embracing locally led approaches for equitable and effective outcomes](#),” offering insights on localization, how to best position civil society to thrive with agency and leadership, and sharing seven steps for USAID to strengthen the local ecosystem.

“For communities to thrive, there must be a well-financed and responsive first tier of government able to work in effective partnership with grassroots civil society. Strong local governance is a key pathway to sustainability, and it has largely been ignored and starved for resources and decision-making autonomy.”

- Gunjan Veda and John Coonrod in [Embracing locally led approaches for equitable and effective outcomes](#)

PODCAST: RESILIENT CONVERSATIONS WITH PARTNERS GLOBAL

Gunjan Veda features in the episode *From Grassroots to Global: The Role of Local Communities in Development Agenda*, with Kyra Buchko, Co-Executive Director of PartnersGlobal, and Dr. Moses Isooba, Executive Director of the Uganda National NGO Forum.



Together, they explore the interconnectedness of the localization agenda and decolonization and the perspective of local actors on the future of locally-led development. In this podcast, Gunjan spoke about power dynamics at play, the agency of local actors, and the impact of USAID’s Localization Policy.



PODCAST: PEACE DIRECT'S "THE PROBLEM WITH PARTNERSHIPS"

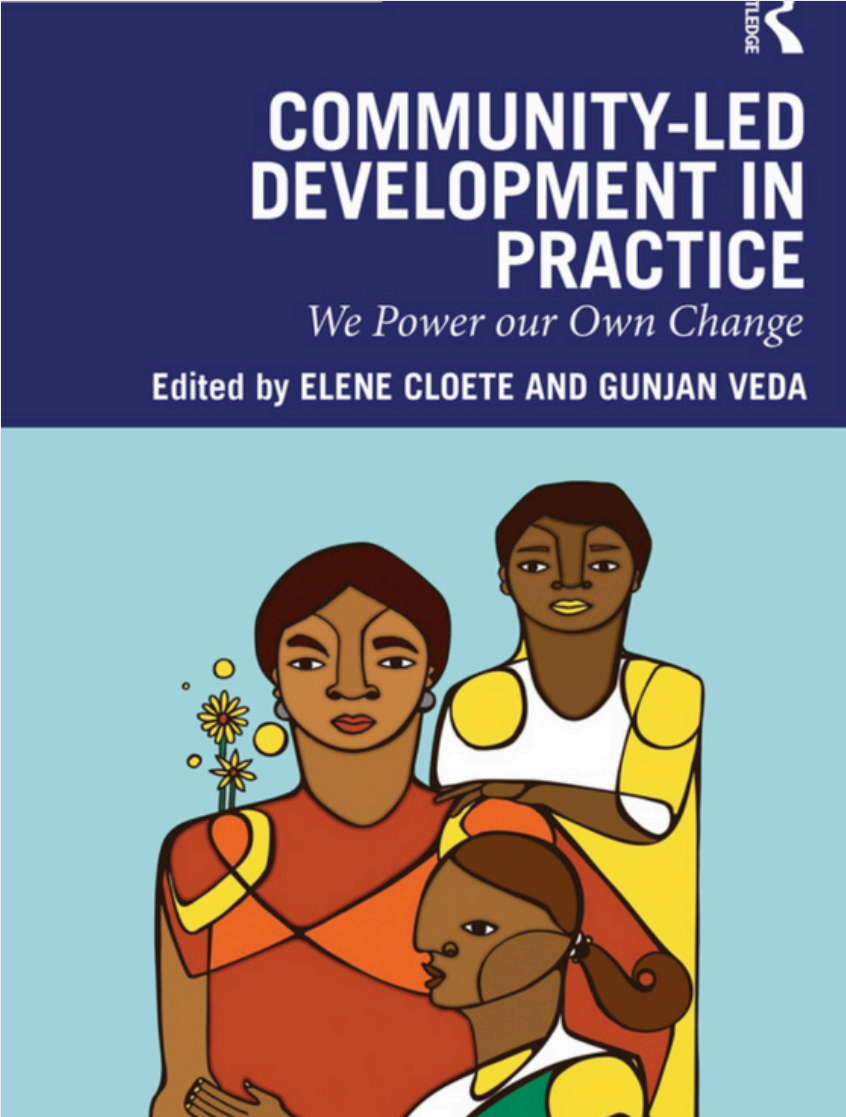
MCLD member Peace Direct started a podcast in 2024 to explore the problems our sector faces. Gunjan Veda was one of nine ‘experts’ featured on the podcast series, appearing in Episodes 2, 3, 4, and 5.

MCLD has spoken out for years about the need for improved inclusion in our sector. The episodes Gunjan participated in explore what inclusion looks like, the discriminatory roots of international development, and neo-colonial attitudes in Minority World organizations. Peace Direct has compiled takeaways from each episode [on their website](#), including key quotes and action items.

“It’s not a matter of who amongst us, it’s a matter of changing the shape of that table. That’s what we need to do together. And we need to trust each other to be working for that same agenda, because not all of us can be in all the spaces.”

- Gunjan Veda, “The Problem With Partnerships” Episode 2

NEW RELEASE: COMMUNITY-LED DEVELOPMENT IN PRACTICE



Over 30 experts and scholars from 15 countries worked together over the past two years to create an edited volume on community-led development. [The book was published by Routledge](#) and released on December 13, 2024. MCLD US’s Gunjan Veda co-edited the volume with Elene Cloete, Outreach International (member of MCLD US).

At a time when organizations and institutions are grappling with the “how to” of shifting power and localizing amidst reduced funding and increased authoritarianism globally, this new volume offers both practical insights and operational frameworks for those committed to inclusive and sustainable development. Voices of development practitioners and academics from both Majority and Minority World contexts offer an exploration of what it truly means to accompany communities and support their priorities.

After a note by H.E. President Joyce Banda and a foreword by community-driven development pioneer Scott Guggenheim, the work of 13 organizations is featured over 16 chapters, organized based on the framework of the [Participatory CLD Assessment Tool](#).

“This volume, edited by Gunjan Veda and Elene Cloete, provides rich insights and evidence for what community-led development means in practice. Cutting through much of the rhetoric surrounding 'localization' to highlight practical ideas and approaches, the editors and the authors provide a roadmap for what community-led development is and how it is done. The volume builds on Veda's expertise in the field of international and community-led development, and her keen and unique understanding of both history and current practice. Her insightful lens and excellent writing and editing skills make this a rewarding read that invites action.”

-Sia Nowrojee, The UN Foundation

SOLIDARITY

No network can transform the system alone.

MCLD has always believed that our sector needs to move from the current competitive framework to one that recognizes and strengthens our interconnectedness. Towards this end, MCLD US has consistently sought to collaborate with sister National Associations and the Global Secretariat in forging values-based campaigns and initiatives, grounded in care, respect, and mutual support. It also was able to facilitate micro-grants to National Associations through members like Save the Children, OneVillage Partners and The Hunger Project. Throughout 2024, MCLD US worked with networks from across the world, particularly those based in the Majority World, to develop resources and transform policy and practice across the development, humanitarian, and peacebuilding sectors.

This year, MCLD US was invited to participate in conversations with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC), including joining their 2024 CSO Dialogue. In addition to these initiatives, MCLD US continued to participate in the Local Public Sector Alliance (LPSA) Working Group and to meet regularly with convenors of Minority World networks to strengthen the practice of locally-led development.

POWERED BY THE PEOPLE

Social movements power change. This year MCLD US joined a 28-member consortium led by Partners Global supporting non-violent social movements. MCLD US's role was to facilitate the creation of a global repository that enables movements to share their stories and build global solidarity through their own words, songs, art, and artefacts. We brought together 200 participants from over 40 countries to discuss the kinds of stories and resources they want to document and access, what that could look like, and how to preserve them safely.

As part of the program, MCLD US also administered grants to three of our sister National Associations: Benin, Uganda, and Kenya, strengthening both their influence and ability to manage grants.

In June and July, we held virtual consultations and in-person retreats to shape this repository. These events were also opportunities to gather social movement leaders for solidarity, inspiration, and well-being.

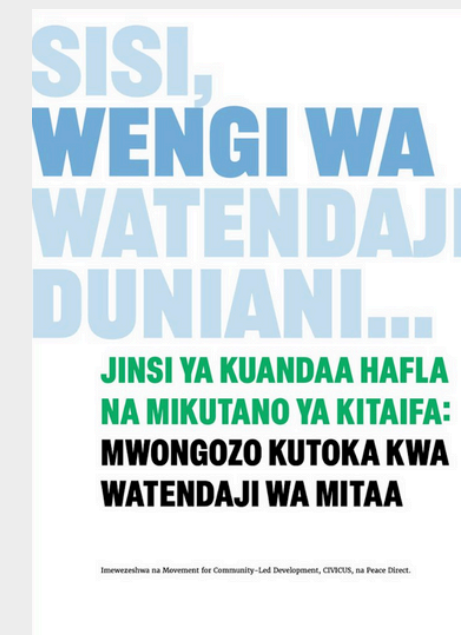
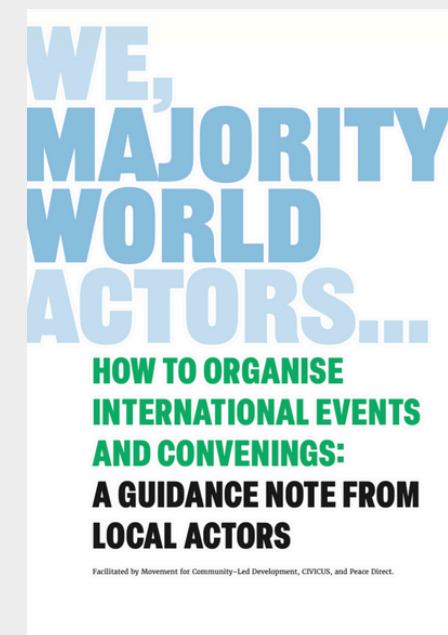
MCLD US also facilitated the participation of the Global Secretariat team and members from various National associations in key events in Johannesburg, Nairobi, Benin, Uganda, Colombia, Panama, Thailand, and Ghana, ensuring that the voices of grassroots movements and organizations are present at key policy and advocacy forums.

MAJORITY WORLD ACTORS SHARE HOW TO ORGANIZE INCLUSIVE EVENTS

You cannot have inclusion and voice of community stakeholders if they aren't at the table. Thus, a core part of MCLD US's solidarity is advocacy to ensure local and community-based organizations are included in global policy spaces and forums. Decisions around everything from funding to travel arrangements and languages spoken at international events can either foster exclusion and leave the most valuable local voices out of global dialogues, or support their inclusion and amplify their leadership.

In 2024, alongside Peace Direct and CIVICUS, MCLD facilitated discussions among Majority World members and partners on how to make these decisions. **The resulting Guidance Document on Locally-led Events and Convenings offers recommendations for international conveners.**

This guidance document builds on the letter that Majority World actors issued in November 2023. This letter was met with widespread support, and the 20+ conveners, INGOs, and funders who signed onto it requested more guidance on how to adhere to the principles of the letter. The new guidance document outlines specific actions before, during, and after convenings that organizations can take to be more inclusive to local and community-based organizations.



CASE STUDY: MCLD’S INCLUSIVE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS



In 2024, MCLD launched an ambitious strategic planning process with members and National Associations globally. This year-long process enables all members to shape MCLD’s strategies and activities from 2025-2029. As part of this process, National Associations came together to examine different future scenarios, imagine the world we want to see, and devise approaches we can collectively take to support that vision, at the national, regional and global levels.

In addition to undertaking these exercises itself, MCLD US also supported its sister National Associations with micro-grants to convene in person for these strategic visioning sessions. These were opportunities for National Associations to not only collaborate on the strategic plan but also build community.

The completed strategic plan will be presented and ratified by the Global Assembly in June 2025.

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

In 2024, MCLD US continued to expand its work through existing partnerships with The Hunger Project, USAID, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, and a new partnership with the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. These partners supported initiatives strengthening local development, community-led MEL, social movements, and local networks.

In early 2025 and at the time of publishing, the landscape of our activities is shifting dramatically. Like thousands of organizations in our space, our two USAID-funded projects – Powered by the People and LIFE – have been terminated. How we take forward the learning and contributions from members and local organizations globally will be a key question for us in 2025.

While the landscape of our partnerships will shift in 2025, MCLD US remains committed to collaborating with like-minded organizations to strengthen community-led development and the agency of local actors.

TESTIMONIALS

MCLD was honored to receive the Commitment to Community Award at member [Roots of Development's](#) 2024 Annual Washington D.C. Event. MCLD was recognized alongside Gwoup Konbit and Ayiti Community Trust. Pictured below is MCLD Founder and Board Chair John Coonrod accepting the award alongside the other honorees.

Photo Credit: Roots of Development, 2024



“Gunjan Veda, Executive Director of MCLD, said this on our panel on Local Power & International Aid last April: ‘We are operating in a system that was not designed for community-led development. We are operating in a system that has very colonial roots. The aid system is a political design. And therefore, it was never designed to center community voices.’ Roots is proud to be working with the Movement for Community-led Development to change that reality.”

– Charlie Estes, [Roots Strategic Initiatives & Communications Director](#)

MCLD IN THE SPOTLIGHT

In addition to hosting our own monthly dialogues, MCLD US organized and/or spoke at 15 forums, contributing to the global dialogue around localization.

MARCH
NEW YORK, USA

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN PANEL
“Holistic Approaches to Empowering Women and Girls, Building Resilience” hosted by Tzu Chi

APRIL
WASHINGTON, DC, USA

HAITI: FROM CRISIS TO CATALYST PANEL
at American University hosted by Roots of Development

APRIL
DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA

WOMEN LIFT HEALTH CONFERENCE:
Reimagining Leadership in Global Health: What’s Power Got to Do with It?

MAY
VIRTUAL

USAID’S AGENCY LEARNING AND EVIDENCE MONTH:
Where Partnering Locally In Non-Permissive Environments Works

JUNE
VIRTUAL

GLOBAL EVALUATION INITIATIVE’S GLOCAL EVALUATION WEEK
“Community-led Monitoring and Evaluations: Five Questions, Five Answers, Five Mini-Sessions”
-MCLD hosted

JUNE
NAIROBI, KENYA

RESPACE INITIATIVE EVENT

JULY
VIRTUAL

DEVEX PRO WEEK WEBINAR
What do we need to actually move the localization needle?
Devex Pro Week webinar

JULY
VIRTUAL

OECD PEER LEARNING CONSULTATION EVENT
Learning by example: pathways towards effective locally led development co-operation

SEPTEMBER
RIMINI, ITALY

EUROPEAN EVALUATION SOCIETY CONFERENCE

SEPTEMBER
NEW YORK, USA

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY SIDE EVENT
Local Action, Global Accountability
- MCLD co-hosted



Photo Credit: WomenLift Health, April 2024

OCTOBER
WASHINGTON, DC, USA

USAID LCS POLICY FORUM SIDE EVENT:
Making Locally-Led Development a reality: lessons from engagement with USAID missions - MCLD hosted

NOVEMBER
WASHINGTON, DC, USA

GLOBAL HEALTH LANDSCAPE SYMPOSIUM:
Leadership and Policy in Global Health: Navigating New Frontiers

Photo Credit: MCLD, August 2024



NOVEMBER
WASHINGTON, DC, USA

THE TOBIAS CENTER’S WORKSHOP ON LOCALIZATION AND MERL

NOVEMBER
WASHINGTON, DC, USA

GRADUATE CLASS GUEST LECTURE, AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

NOVEMBER
VIRTUAL

PANEL WITH THE LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The [full audit report](#) and our [990 filing](#) are at [mclcd.org/usa](#). Assets include accrual of multiyear commitments.

As of December 31, 2024 in USD	
Total Revenue and Support	2,345,772
Total Program Services	994,898
Management and General	92,091
Fundraising	14,763
Total Supporting Services	106,854
Total Expenses	1,101,752
Change in Net Assets	1,244,020
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	502,244
Net Assets, End of Year	\$1,746,264

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Biraj Patnaik

National Foundation
for India



**Carrie Hessler-
Radelet**

Global Communities



Grace Boone

CDA Collaborative
Learning



**Janet Edmond
(Secretary)**

Conservation
International



**John Coonrod
(Chair)**

Sarvodaya USA



**William von
Schrader**

Save the Children



**Ramatoulie
Isatou Jallow**

Center for Ethics
and Rule of Law



**Rujuta
Teredesai**

GlobalGiving



Remembering Karen Hirschfeld

The MCLD family grieves the recent loss of Karen Hirschfeld. Karen was a committed ally to MCLD, serving on our board of directors since January 2024. She was an active member of the US Government and Capitol Hill Advocacy Working Group, and a thought partner with great passion for community-led development.

As Senior Manager of Aid and Development Finance at Oxfam America, Karen was committed to strengthening communities. Alongside her passion, kindness, and creativity, Karen was a tireless advocate for redistributing power and wealth to local communities.

We grieve her loss alongside our Oxfam colleagues.

OUR TEAM



Gunjan Veda
Executive Director



Nelly Mecklenburg
Senior Manager,
Learning and
Network Weaving



Cassidy Miller
Executive Assistant



Sera Bulbul
Senior Associate,
Research,
Communications,
and Learning

MCLD US INGO MEMBERS:



NETWORK PARTNERS:

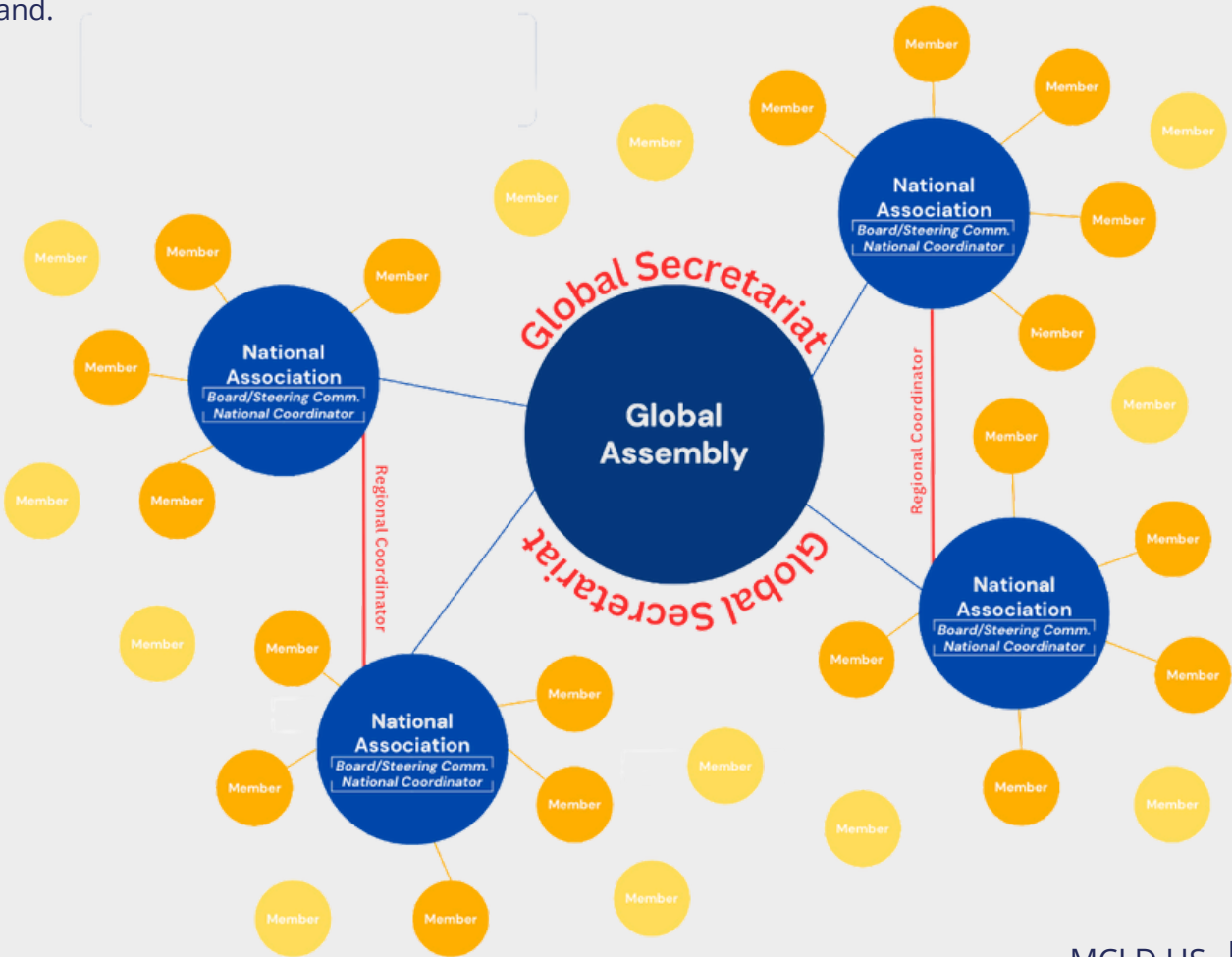


UNDERSTANDING MCLD’S STRUCTURE

MCLD’s new structure emerged out of a year-long process of listening and consultations with our members. As of January 1, 2024, MCLD became fully independent of The Hunger Project and transitioned from being a movement to a movement organization. In other words, while we have a formal governance structure, we retain the characteristics of a movement: energy, dynamism, values-based collective action, and shared leadership.

Three critical components make up MCLD’s governance structure.

- **National Associations:** Self-governed groups of civil society organizations and individuals that embody MCLD’s values. Each is made up of an elected Steering Committee or Board, a National Coordinator, and members. The Steering Committee sets policies based on annual general meetings, while the National Coordinator mobilizes collective action.
- **Global Secretariat:** The team that supports National Associations by ensuring compliance, facilitating decision-making and knowledge sharing, providing support services, and advocating for policies. It links National Associations with the Global Assembly and drives MCLD’s visibility, access, and funding. It includes regional coordinators who act as the bridge between National Associations and the Global Secretariat, facilitating communication and support.
- **Global Assembly:** Provides strategic direction and drafts policies for MCLD, ensuring alignment across National Associations while respecting their autonomy. It also oversees the use of the MCLD brand.





www.mclld.org



Movement for Community-led Development



Movement for Community-led Development



@communityleddev

[Give a gift to MCLD here.](#)

The Movement for Community-led Development US (MCLD US) is registered in the USA as a 501(c)(3) charity.