



A photo Magazine

Stories of Change: Grassroots Champions of Conservation

December 2024

abnsecretariat@africanbiodiversity.org

<https://africanbiodiversity.org>





Thierry Hougbo, a traditional dancer and a partner of The Nature Tropicale

Pages

i Tributes

01 Introduction

02 GER-Rwanda

03 Nature Tropicale-Benin

04 RIDEP-Kenya

05 USIKO-Cape Town, SA

06 ENVIROCARE-Tanzania

06 GDA-Cameroon

Tributes:



Acknowledgment

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to SIDA for their generous financial support, which has been pivotal in bringing this project to life. Your commitment to empowering communities and fostering sustainable development has made a profound difference, enabling us to implement impactful initiatives that address critical needs.

Your support has not only provided the necessary resources but also inspired us to strive for excellence in achieving our shared goals. Thank you for partnering with us to create lasting change and for your unwavering dedication to improving lives.

Dedication

This project is dedicated to the resilient communities whose unwavering commitment, hard work, and collaboration have been the cornerstone of its success. Your active participation and ownership have brought this vision to life, creating lasting impacts for generations to come.

We also extend our heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated partners whose expertise, guidance, and support have been instrumental in every step of this journey. Together, we have demonstrated the power of unity and shared purpose in achieving meaningful change.

To all who played a role, this project stands as a testament to your collective efforts and unwavering spirit.

Appreciation

We extend our deepest appreciation to the Board of Trustees and the Secretariat for their exceptional oversight and steadfast support throughout the implementation of this project. Your strategic guidance, dedication, and commitment have been invaluable in ensuring the success of this initiative.

Your efforts in accompanying our partners and communities, offering encouragement and expertise at every step, have fostered collaboration and trust, laying the foundation for impactful and sustainable outcomes. Thank you for your leadership and for championing this project with such passion and vision. Your contributions have truly made a difference.

Production team

Executive Producer

African Biodiversity Network (ABN)

Conceptualization

Dr. Fassil Gebeyehu, PhD.

Dr. Venter Mwongera, PhD.

Hannah Kigamba

Agatha Yatich

Abdel Karim

Dennis Mwange

Janet Mwikya

Jane Kinya

Joseph Kamau

Post Production

Life Imaging Ltd

Cover photos

Front page:

A community group in campo forest working with GDA in Cameroon.

Back page:

A baobab tree in Tharaka Nithi, Kenya.

Introduction

Welcome to this special edition of Photograph Magazine, part of the broader initiative "*Conserving Bio-cultural Diversity through Strengthening Community and Ecosystem Resilience*", generously supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). The project spans the African continent and brings together 21 committed partners in 14 countries under the African Biodiversity Network (ABN).

To reflect Africa's diversity, our work is organized sub-regionally, fostering vibrant networking and addressing localized environmental, social, and cultural issues. This Photo Magazine showcases some of the inspiring activities led by communities and partners across different sub-regions (Eastern, Western, Southern North and Central Nodes). The featured partners represent a sample of the broader network, with all 21 partners actively contributing to our shared vision of resilient communities and restored ecosystems.

Through vivid photography and compelling stories, ABN spotlights grassroots champions revitalizing landscapes and cultures—from GER Rwanda's ecosystem restoration, to Nature Tropicale's marine conservation in Benin, USIKO's cultural reconnection in South Africa, RIDEP's agroecological innovation in Kenya, and GDA and ENVIROCARE's biodiversity efforts in Cameroon and Tanzania. These initiatives highlight the profound connection between people, culture, and nature, demonstrating how local action is shaping a sustainable future across Africa.

Communities collaborating with GER- Rwanda proudly showcase the outcomes of their learnings from the SIDA-funded project, implemented by the African Biodiversity Network (ABN), from September 2021 to August 2024, in partnership with organisations like GER Rwanda.





Communities collaborating with GER- Rwanda proudly showcase, tree nursery beds and compost manure, as part of the outcomes of their learnings from the SIDA-funded project, implemented by the African Biodiversity Network (ABN), from September 2021 to August 2024, in partnership with organisations like GER Rwanda.

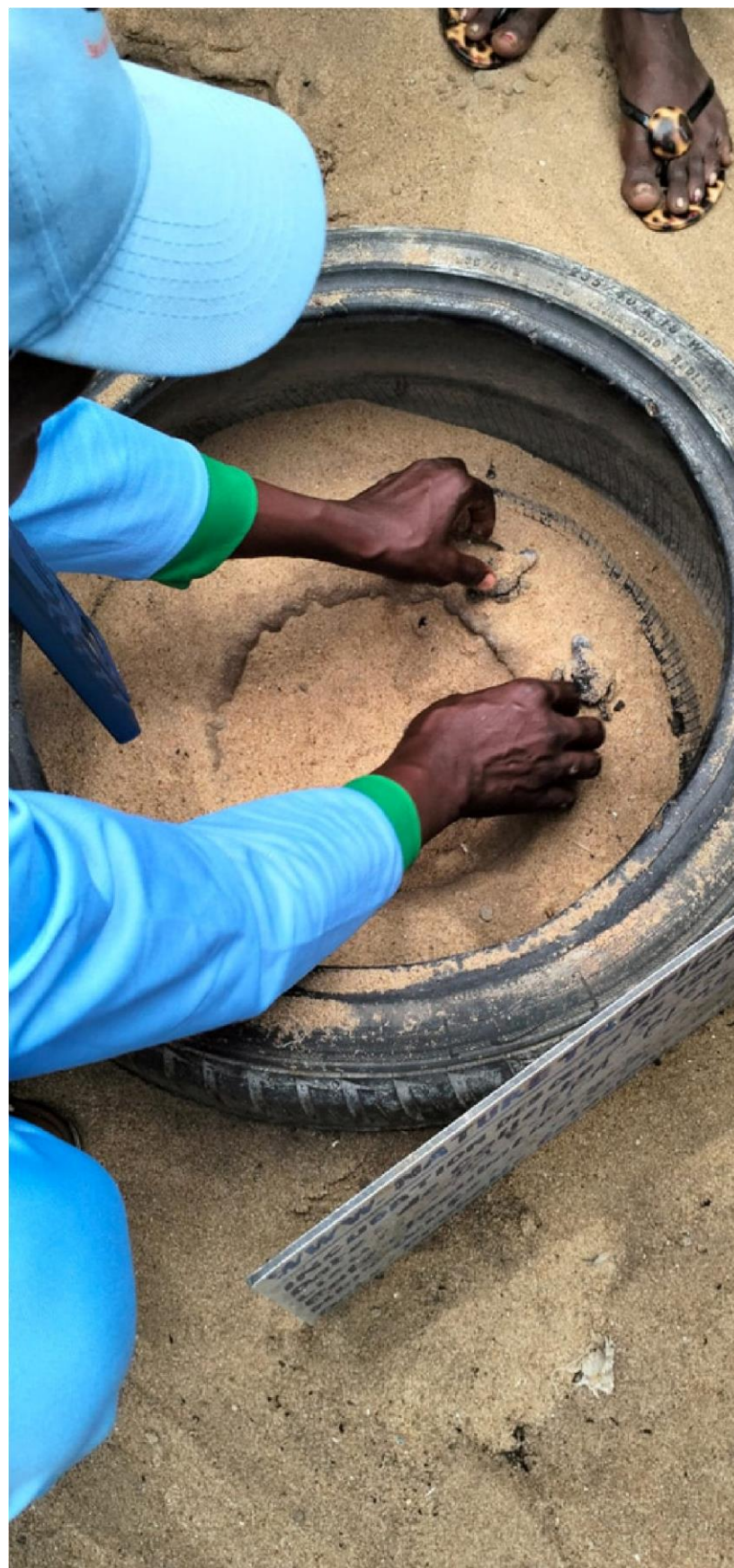




A community collaborating with GER- Rwanda proudly showcase their tree nursery beds as part of the outcomes of their learnings from the SIDA-funded project, implemented by the African Biodiversity Network (ABN), from September 2021 to August 2024, in partnership with organisations like GER Rwanda.



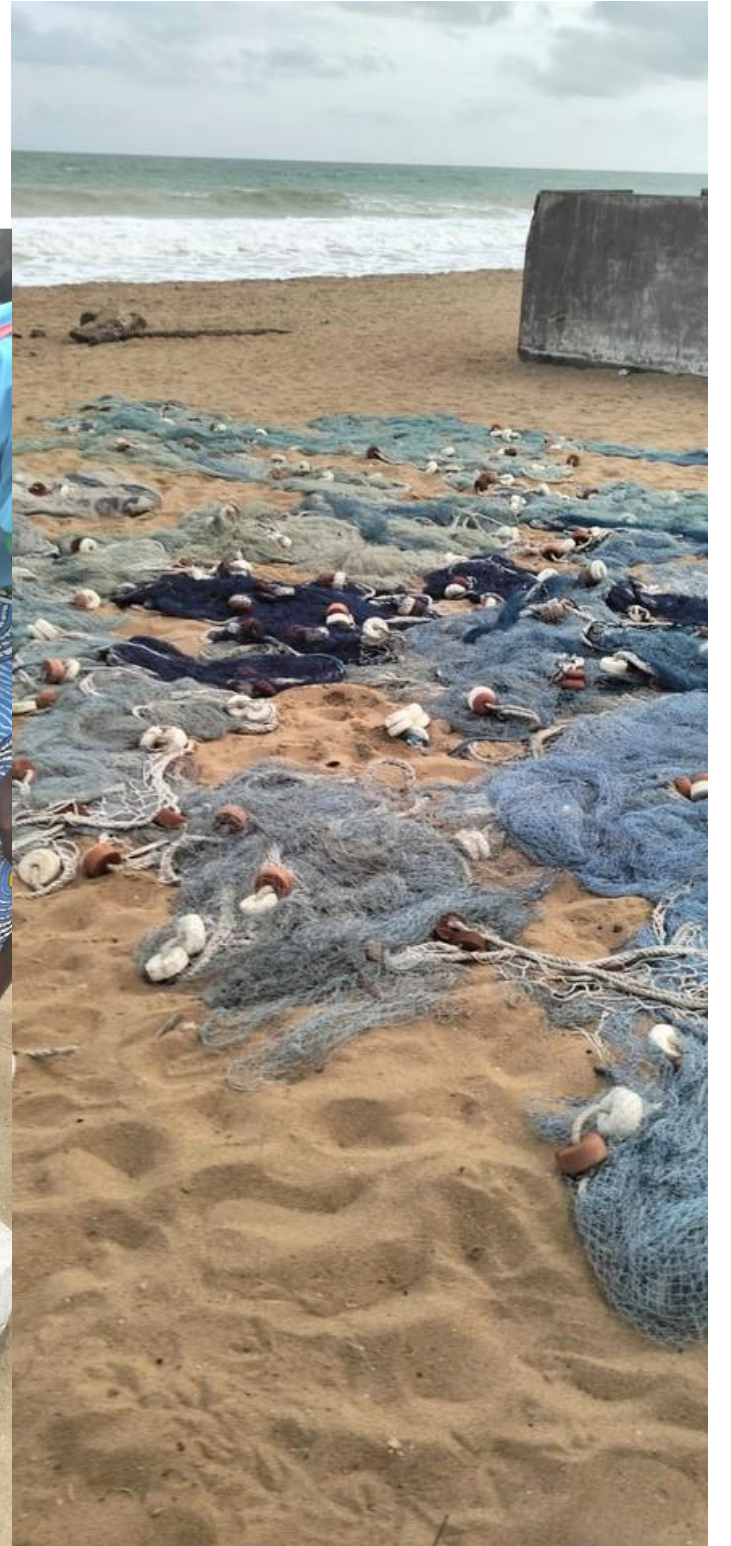
The sea turtle incubation site at Djéffa Plage, located in the community of Seme Podji, collaborates with The Nature Tropicale (TNT) to conserve the marine ecosystem in the region. TNT, a partner of the African Biodiversity Network (ABN), has been working on the SIDA-funded project to restore marine ecosystem since September 2021, continuing through to August 2024. This partnership has enabled TNT to release approximately 15,000 baby turtles into the Atlantic Ocean annually, contributing significantly to marine conservation efforts.



The sea turtle incubation site at Djeffa Plage, in the community of Seme Podji, showcases how community members carefully bury turtle eggs and later unearth them when they are hatched and ready to be released into the ocean.



Elders regularly visit the members of the Zogbedji Women's Group to support their activities, including removing plastics in the Atlantic Ocean, releasing baby turtles into the sea, and participating in governance meetings. These visits reassure the group of continued support in restoring the ecological balance of the region's ecosystems. The Zogbedji Women's Group partners with Nature Tropicale in these restorative efforts. Nature Tropicale is a key partner of the African Biodiversity Network (ABN) in Benin.



Members of the Zogbedji Women's Group dance and pour water on the entrance path to the homestead as a sign of reverence in welcoming their visitors. In another photo, the group is seen collecting plastics and other pollutants from the Atlantic Ocean, placing them into sacks. They use nets to gather the waste, actively contributing to the conservation of the ocean and its surrounding environment.



Members of the Djeffa Plage and Zogbedji Women's Group release baby turtles into the Atlantic Ocean, with children and youth actively participating in these activities. This intergenerational approach allows the younger generation to learn from their elders. The Zogbedji Women's Group also showcases the yellow petals and flowers harvested from their farm, which they use in the preparation of various herbs for diverse purposes. This blending of conservation and traditional practices reflects the community's deep connection to nature.



Communities working with RIDEP in Tharaka Nithi, Kenya, showcase their recuperated indigenous seeds, which offer diverse nutritional benefits, improving their health. These seeds, including various types of millet and sorghum, were recovered through the intervention of the SIDA project.

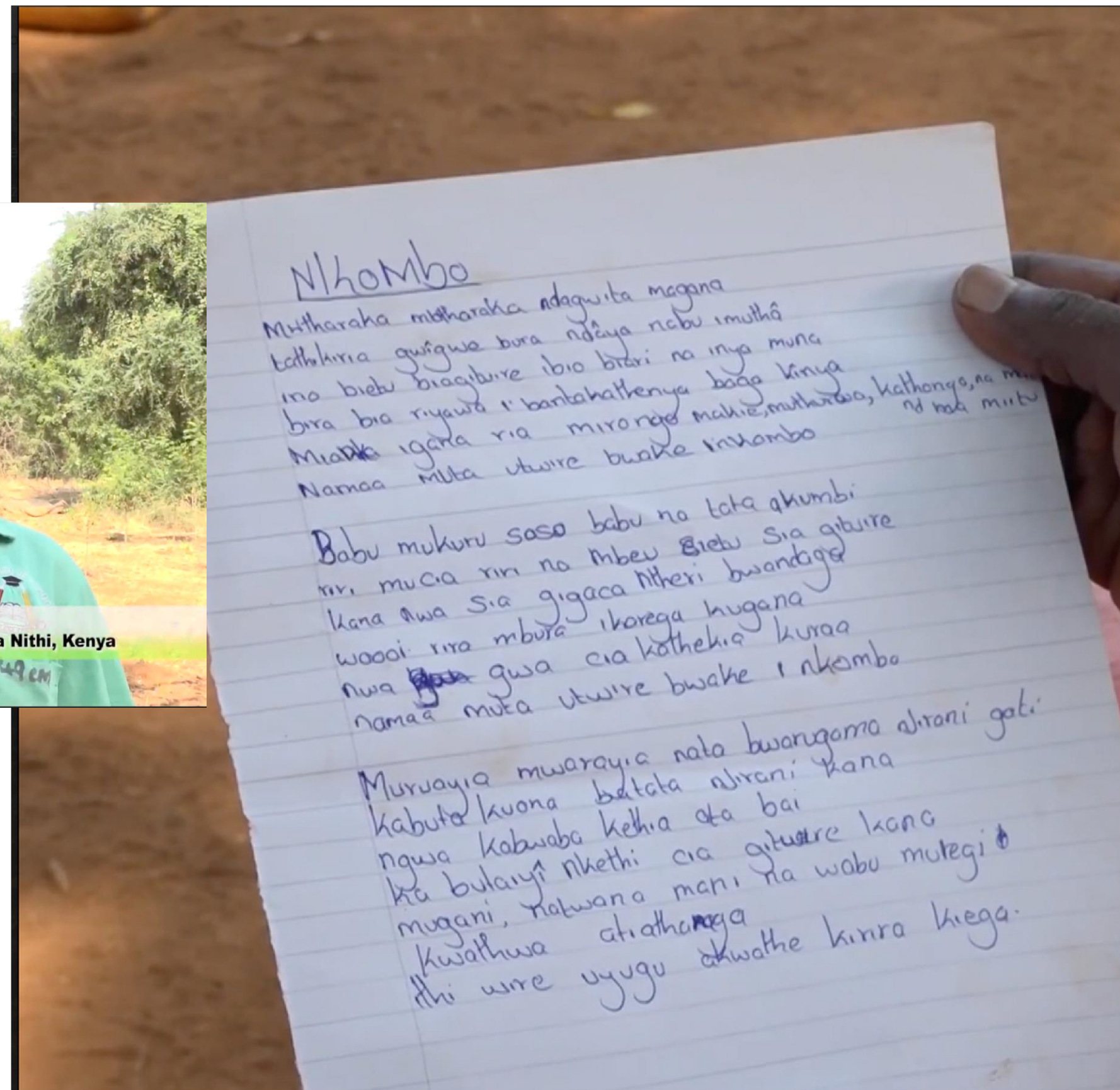
RIDEP, a partner of the African Biodiversity Network (ABN), has been actively involved in the biocultural diversity and ecosystem restoration project, promoting sustainable agriculture and the preservation of indigenous knowledge.





Charity Mwikali
Pupil - Kamatungu Primary School, Tharaka Nithi, Kenya

RIDEP has also partnered with primary schools and elders to pass on the knowledge of preserving biocultural diversity in the region. Pupil Charity Mwikali composed and recited a poem, shown in the photo, highlighting the importance of preserving people's culture. This collaboration fosters intergenerational learning and strengthens the community's commitment to protecting their cultural and ecological heritage.



Nkhombo

Mutharaka mutharaka adagwita magana
kathakira gwigwa bura ndaya naku mutha
ina biev biagibire ibio biari na inya muna
bura bia riyawa i bantakathanya boga kinya
Mudaka igata ria mirongo makie, mutharaka, kathanga, na muna
Namaa muna utwira bwake i Nkhombo

Babu mukururu saso babu na tata akumbi
riri mucia riri na mbeu biev Sia gubire
kana nwa Sia gigaca Ntheri bwandiga
waozi rira mbura ikorega hugana
nwa gwa cia kothekia kuraa
namaa muna utwira bwake i Nkhombo

Murugaya mwaraya nato bwangoma ahani gati
kabuta kuona batata ahani kana
ngwa kabwaba kethia ata bai
ka bulanyi Nkethi cia gubire kana
mugani, katwana man na wabu mategi
kwathwa atathanga
thi ure uyugu kwathe kina kiga.



Researcher Bevan Thomas of The Biosphere Educational and Research Centre, Cape Town, partners with USIKO to train communities on agroecological approaches for restoring soil health on their farms. Alongside is a photo of a healthy carrot harvested from the USIKO garden in Stellenbosch, showcasing the success of these sustainable farming practices in improving soil fertility and crop yield.



Pupils from Weber Gedenk Primary School participate in planting vegetables in the USIKO garden in Stellenbosch, under the mentorship of John Nkhata, a soil expert. The pupils harvest these vegetables to enrich their school meals, promoting better nutrition. Alongside is a river that provides water for the garden throughout the year, ensuring the crops thrive and continue to benefit the pupils' health and well-being.





The Umangu Women's Group in Arusha collaborates with ENVIROCARE to learn agroecological practices, including indigenous seed selection and saving, composting, and preparing farmyard manure. They also focus on processing and packaging surplus crops for sale to improve their income while managing post-harvest losses. ENVIROCARE, a partner of the African Biodiversity Network in Tanzania, supports these efforts, empowering the group to implement sustainable farming practices and enhance their livelihoods.



The Umangu Women's Group, in collaboration with ENVIROCARE, showcases their preserved indigenous seeds and packaged products for sale, including ornamental items that the group prepares to boost their income. These efforts not only promote the conservation of indigenous crops but also contribute to the economic empowerment of the women in the community.





The Umangu Women's Group showcased their expertise in preparing compost manure for use in their farming activities, demonstrating an eco-friendly alternative to chemical fertilizers. They also highlighted their skills in planting and processing herbal plants for both human and animal use. The group shared their achievements with the 21 partners from 14 countries involved in the SIDA project during the annual project review exercise held in Arusha, Tanzania, in 2024. Their presentation exemplified sustainable agricultural practices and the value of traditional knowledge in improving both environmental and economic outcomes.

GDA collaborates with communities living within the Campo Forest are learning about agroecological approaches to promote soil health, improve crop yields, and enhance productivity during the harvesting season. These valuable lessons were imparted during the SIDA project phase, empowering the communities to adopt sustainable farming practices that contribute to both environmental conservation and improved agricultural outcomes.





The communities proudly showcase the indigenous seeds they recuperated during the project phase. The women are jubilant about the support they received, as it has led to improved nutrition for their families, enhanced livelihoods, and healthier soil. These successes reflect the positive impact of the project, fostering both environmental sustainability and economic resilience.





The communities living within the Campo Forest proudly showcase the food made from crops harvested from their farms, served alongside other delicacies like fish. Their nutrition has improved thanks to a diverse range of crops grown after they recuperated lost indigenous seeds. The community members meet once a week to monitor and evaluate the progress of assimilating agroecological practices on their farms. Staff from GDA (in green shirts) also visit the communities and actively participate in their weekly environmental cleaning activities, further supporting their sustainable practices and fostering a strong sense of community engagement.



ABN Staff and Partners participating in a Training on Resource Mobilization and Reporting and Documentation





abnsecretariat@africanbiodiversity.org

www.africanbiodiversity.org

