

AFRICAN BIODIVERSITY NETWORK
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BIODIVERSITY NETWORK
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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABN	African Biodiversity Network
ACB	African Centre for Biodiversity
AE	Agroecology
AFSA	Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa
AFSTA	African Seed Trade Association
ARIPO	African Regional Intellectual Property Organisation
AWDF	African Women's Development Fund
BftW	Bread for the World
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CB	Cultural Biodiversity
CCAE	Agro-ecology Concertation Framework
CCI	Cross Cutting Issues
CEG	Community Ecological Governance
CELUCT	Chikukwa Ecological Land Use and Community Training
CEVASTE	Centre for Awakening and Stimulation for Children
CIKOD	Community Indigenous Knowledge and Organisational Development
CoP	Community of Practice
CSK	Community Seed and Knowledge
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
EAC	East African Community
EJ	Earth Jurisprudence
FAIEJ	Fond d'Appui aux Initiative Economique de Jeunes
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FNUAP	Fonds des Nations Unies pour la population
FRA	Food Rights Alliance
GENET	European NGO Network on Genetic Engineering
GER	Global Eco-village Rwanda
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
GPIW	Global Peace Initiative of Women
GRABE-Benin	Groupe De Recherche et D'Action pour le Bien-Etre au Benin



ICCA	Indigenous Community Conserved Areas
ICE	Institute for Culture and Ecology
IFOAM	International Federation of Organic Farming Movements
IOF	Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie
ISD	Institute for Sustainable Development
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JVE	Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement
KBioC	Kenya Biodiversity Coalition
LFA	Logical Framework Approach
MEB	Multiple Evidence Base
MELCA	Movement for Ecological Learning and Community Action
NAPE	National Association of Professional Environmentalists
NBA	National Biosafety Authority
OIF	Organisation internationale de la Francophonie
PFE	Principles Focused Evaluation
PGRFA	Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
PVP	Plant Variety Protection
RAINS	Regional Advisory Information and Network Systems
RIDEP	Rural Initiative Development Programme
SAFC	South African Food Sovereignty Campaign
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEATINI	Southern & Eastern Africa Trade Information & Negotiations Institute
SEGNU	Social Empowerment through Group Nature Interaction
SGP	Small Grants Programme
SKI	Seed Knowledge Initiative
SNAK	National Week on Protected Areas
TABIO	Tanzania Biodiversity Coalition
TOAM	Tanzania Organic Agriculture Movement
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USPTO	United States Patent and Trademark Office
YCB	Youth Culture and Biodiversity



1

INTRODUCTION



1.0 Introduction

At the beginning of 2018, the African Biodiversity Network (ABN) secured funding from Bread for the World for a new project, the SEWOH¹ initiative which will run until 2021. This project saw an increase of 50% on the previous grant. Although the original project was meant to be phased out by 2018, SwedBio extended its existing financial support to ABN by an additional two years; this extension will now run until 2020.

Despite these positive developments, ABN has also witnessed the reduction of its funding during 2017 and 2018 compared to previous years.

In spite of this, 2018 proved to be an interesting experience for ABN in terms of how the collaborative work amongst partners could sustain under challenging times and could achieve better results. ABN has achieved visibility and vibrancy within the network.

The start of the year also saw ABN winning a global award with the Lush Spring Prize in the Influence category from the United Kingdom (UK). This prize was a great recognition of ABN's transformative work in agroecology and regeneration. It points to the ABN's capacity to offer alternatives to social and ecological regeneration challenges of the 21st century.

Another breakthrough for ABN during the year was in its documentation practice. The production of its Youth, Culture and Biodiversity Guide was the culmination of many years of pioneering work across Africa in connecting young people with their culture, nature and themselves.

ABN's collaboration with the Gaia Foundation and other ABN partners has also been a very important achievement during the year. This work involved legal drafting, peer review, editing and distributing of the African Model Law for implementing the African Commission's Resolution 372.

This year, ABN has reviewed its structure, integrated its thematic areas and created a post of Regional Programs Coordinator to coordinate the new docket. This was both in line with the 2017 external evaluation report recommendations and an effort to make the structure lean and more cost effective. ABN has also been responsive to the reality on the ground where partners are working with communities in an integrated manner.

In summary, 2018 was a challenging but motivating year in which ABN, as a regional network, learned the fact that being passionate about collaboration and networking will sustain its project results and attract global recognition.

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¹ SEWOH is a German word that means 'One World-No Hunger'



2

COMMUNITY SEED AND KNOWLEDGE





ABN Thematic Areas of Work

2.0 Community Seed and Knowledge (CSK)

2.1.1 Organise inception meeting and provide support to four partners to conduct new baseline research/initial survey and documentations of what traditional seed diversities, knowledge and practices have existed

In 2018, the African Biodiversity Network continued to collaborate with its partners in community seed work, focusing on further strengthening seed governance for the revival of farmers' seed diversity in order to ensure food sovereignty and sustainable livelihoods across Africa. Four ABN partners; ISD (Ethiopia), CEVASTE (Benin), RAINS (Ghana) and Earth Lore (Zimbabwe), have been significantly involved in the SEWOH project. Project progress assessments and evaluating the success at the local level of each partner is based on the Logical Framework Approach i.e. in line with the objectives, outcomes and predetermined indicators. ABN held the 3-day inception meeting in Ethiopia in April to identify and determine the roles and responsibilities of the implementing partners and the ABN Secretariat. CORAT Africa, which is a Kenyan-based consultant firm, facilitated the training on Logical Framework.

Schedules and work plans were discussed and agreed. Partners and ABN harmonised expected results, developed the project log frame, M&E, and discussed community advocacy as well as practical engagement with baseline survey. Following the inception meeting, baseline surveys were conducted by each implementing partner in their respective countries. The ABN Secretariat maintained the follow up activities with partners and started developing a Monitoring and

Evaluation (M&E) framework. The M&E framework will be an important tool for the ABN Secretariat in order to ensure the proper implementation of project activities as per the original plan. Partners will also develop similar M&E framework according to their own contexts. The M&E framework also helps partners to report against indicators and thus to track results.

2.1.2 Provide support to eight partners to build a database of seed categories of the seed banks in each community, with a special category for endangered seeds including baseline surveys

ABN has been working closely with four partners but reaching further as each of these four partners collaborates with others situated in the same country or in the nearby sub region. For example, Earth Lore is sharing their experiences with CELUCT, Biowatch and PELUM



Zimbabwe. CEVASTE too has been working closely with GRABE Benin, JVE Togo and Nature Tropicale. RAINS links with CIKOD and CEVASTE and JVE. ISD has also been working closely with MELCA and PELUM Ethiopia and so on. ABN provided technical and financial support in preparation of setting up seed banks in which all available seeds will be maintained/catalogued while endangered seeds will be identified and restored. In the case of CEVASTE, 51 more seed varieties have been inventoried as lost or endangered seeds, 39 have been found and are currently being multiplied. Some examples are:

✧ **Leguminous plants:** saggan, hegbanomlou, gbehamie, kpokjiguegue, kplobe vovo, doi kplbe wewe, damandi, awanga;

✧ **Cereals:** (maize): atinhuidi, hounvovo, lingbonoukou, djakpe gogododo;

✧ **Tubers:** bassia, klabu kuye, hambete;

✧ **Vegetables:** kekefô, gbogba, ehouzo.





South African based partner- EarthLore, has started the cataloguing process and populating the catalogue template as per the agreement during the seed cataloguing training. They have also started a process to profile farmers and the seed varieties they have in order to get input for the Catalogues. Earth Lore are also using photographs to help describe some features of the seeds as indicated on the template. The compilation of these photographs is useful in gathering information about seeds at different stages of the farming cycle as well as the traditional/social and medicinal, nutritional significance, as understood locally. Cataloguing is envisaged to be a continuous process for the duration of the project and beyond.

ABN supported ISD to train community representatives on indigenous seed restoration and storage systems in which fifty selected target beneficiaries and four development agents took part. In this training, they gathered knowledge that will enable them to take action on seed revival, restoration, more production and on increasing the availability of local indigenous seeds. The 5-Task Group was formed at the end of the training to identify status of seeds at household and local market. They identified fifteen types of seed varieties categorised as either 'abundant', 'endangered' or 'lost'.

In the case of RAINS, five community seed bank implementation committees have been put in place to drive the process within the communities. The project has established a list of indigenous seed varieties: existing, near extinct and extinct. Eighteen varieties of yam have been identified as extinct. One cassava variety, eight cereal varieties and three vegetable varieties have been identified for multiplication.

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2.1.3 Strengthening community seed work and establish seed banks to four partners

Work on seed banks during 2018 has revealed that the understanding amongst partners about what constitutes a community seed banks varies. With some partners, such as Earth Lore, there is a resistance to the idea of communal seed banks. Yet despite this, ABN anticipates that as the project progresses, through continued dialogues, communities will clarify their understanding, agree on protocols and roles, and the nature and modes of operating community seed banks. There is also an understanding that a community seed bank is not necessarily a physical structure/building but a network of seed storage methods at household level. For this reason, Earth Lore has deliberately avoided building modern brick community seed banks. Rather they have engaged the communities they work with towards a robust revival of the Household (HH) seed bank(s). This, they believe, will lead to a strong community seed system. Chiroorwe community, for example, are building their own traditional community seed storage inside their communal garden for display and learning purposes.

On the other hand, 60 households working with CEVASTE are actively involved in setting up three community seed banks in their respective communities. In Ghana, RAINS has helped to put in place five community seed banking implementation committees to drive the process. They have also facilitated the construction of 50 seed banks called silos- these are small structures made of local materials and sometimes with tin/metallic material. The aim is to reduce post-harvest losses. In the case of RAINS, similar to EarthLore, there is a strong



understanding of the fact that a functional community seed bank is dependent on a strong household or family seed bank. They have identified farmers to be members of community seed banks. They also assessed the number of seed banks to be established and explored how household storage systems can feed into a community seed bank.

For ISD, the context differs in Ethiopia. First of all, community members who wish to establish a seed bank need to get piece of land in which to build the community seed bank and then they have to register as cooperatives. During the discussion with the Boru Silassie community that ISD has been working with, it was found that there is a challenge to get enough land to establish community seed bank for farmers. The plan had been to establish a community seed bank in 2018, however, it was a challenge for ISD to implement this activity before the end of the year. They will conduct this activity in 2019, giving them enough time to discuss with government officials and elders to get land that will be used for the construction of a seed bank and demo plots.

2.1.4 Provide support to eight partners to gain experiences from existing community seed banks in ABN through exchange programmes

There is an emerging need for more opportunities to bring together project communities and partners from each of the four countries (Ethiopia, Benin, Ghana and Zimbabwe) for more learning exchanges programs. As explained earlier, this will also involve sharing with other ABN network partners as well as communities such as: MELCA from Ethiopia; Grabe Benin and Nature Tropicale from Benin; CIKOD from Ghana; and CELUCT from Zimbabwe. This activity requires more funds.

Whilst the breakdown of seed networks and traditional practices for exchanging seeds continues to happen, there have been a few encouraging examples observed over 2018; for instance, ABN found that the Boru Selassie community in Ethiopia working with ISD has started sharing and exchanging seeds at their village market centre. ISD accompanied six project farmers travelling to the market to exchange seeds with other farmers. At the market place, ISD also observed herbs and certain grasses for medicine and livestock being freely exchanged. The majority of those participating in exchange and sharing are women. Through interviews and interactions, ISD identified that farmers have a deep knowledge and understanding of seeds and seed networks. The increased interest in local seeds also creates a good foundation for the success in the establishment of community seed bank(s). Communities are really beginning to understand that local seeds are going to be lost unless pragmatic action is taken.

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2.1.5 Follow up with partners on ABN methodologies including training on seed revival, multiplication and agro-ecological practice/ capacity on community dialogue, eco-maps and calendars

Exposition of the ABN resilient methodologies helped the progress of the CSK project and changes taking place at community, partner and ABN Secretariat levels. In July, ABN conducted a capacity building workshop on the methodologies, hosted in Ghana by RAINS. ABN's Regional Programmes Coordinator and Earth Lore's Programmes Manager facilitated the five-day workshop. This brought together seven ABN partners from Togo, Benin, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, Zimbabwe and the host Ghana. The main focus was on the conducting of community dialogues- one of ABN's key methodologies. To provide some experiential learning, the trainers facilitated a community dialogue in which partners participated. The community dialogued around the loss of their indigenous seeds in which they also mentioned loss of nutritional values, taste and resilience. The socio-cultural values of these seeds included their role in rituals and ceremonies. These rituals and ceremonies cultivate community solidarity and integration. The community in Ghana then put together their plans for the revival of the lost seeds and related rituals and ceremonies.

The results of baseline surveys which were done by the four ABN partners (ISD, CEVASTE, RAINS and Earth Lore) also form the basis of monitoring application of ABN methodologies at the partner level. For example, partners organise periodic visits and meetings, mainly monthly, in their respective communities, to observe the progress of activities such as community dialogues, maps and calendars, exchange and learning visits and so on. Partners document the number of seeds they find in the communities they work with, and how community members are applying the knowledge of agroecological practices that was learned and/or revived. Partners also send updates including financial accountabilities on the spending through reports and email communication to the ABN Secretariat.

At community level working with ISD, CEVASTE, RAINS and Earth Lore, target communities organise weekly meetings between them to share agroecological knowledge and make decisions. They also inform respective partners with which they are working with through their spokespersons or may do so when partners conduct the follow-up visits. ABN mainly uses conference calls either with specific partners or with all partners to monitor what is happening and resolve issues that may be raised. We also encourage sharing by all partners on the progress, lessons and challenges especially when all partners are together during trainings. Due to the aforementioned support and accompaniment by the ABN secretariat, Partners are encouraged and motivated to contribute and learn with their counterparts within the network as well as with the ABN Secretariat

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2.1.6 Provide support to 10 partners to strengthen their capacity of hosting others to facilitate learning with their communities and establish country as well as sub regional nodes - including strategic community meetings, exchange and learning at community level

In ABN, the idea of building sub-regional nodes has been fermenting at different levels for some time. Since 2015, the idea has been gaining strength. Sub-regional nodes are clusters of partners which can share experiences, exchange ideas and knowledge on farming, seeds and associated cultural practices, and tools as well as create alliances.

Being in the same geo-climatic zones, partners can pursue creative and cost effective methodologies to connect members and maintain a vibrant network. Such methods include: seed and food fairs, farmer-to-farmer exchange visits, peer learning, cross border community dialogue², and joint advocacy and lobbying.

Since the end of 2017, ABN has conducted some activities with an aim to building such nodes but these have largely been a learning process for future interventions. EarthLore, for example, has been a core part in the current initiative to create a country node in Zimbabwe. An Inception meeting was held in April 2018. Progress has been reported to the ABN Secretariat in a different report.

Similar initiatives have been conducted in Kenya and Ethiopia, in which ABN partners in the respective countries met to discuss the establishment of country nodes. In West Africa too, partners JVE, RAINS, CEVASTE and GRABE-Benin met once to discuss building a sub-regional node but further progress is pending due to lack of basic financial support to kick off the initiatives. Technical support is also required, demanding ABN staff time and some finance.

Over the years of working with ABN, some partners have built their capacity to be Learning Centres, in which they are able to host other ABN partners and; share their successes, showcase their work with communities, train and engage participants with nature experiential learning, AE practices, seed and food fairs, and community dialogues. Such experience and hosting events has helped ABN partners to become active learning centres and help them strengthen ABN's community of practices such as Youth Culture and Biodiversity (YCB), Community Seed and Knowledge (CSK) and Community Ecological Governance (CEG).

EarthLore, for example, provided an opportunity for three farmers in Zimbabwe to participate in a learning exchange visit to South Africa by visiting its Seed and Food Fair (SFF). They obtained new varieties to plant; including, orange-fleshed sweet potato tubers, air potato tubers (*Dioscorea bulbifera*), New Zealand spinach runners; Lambs quarter seed/ imbilikicani; Kale; 3 varieties of Heritage maize; Pepperbark isibaha fruit; Vitalis climbing beans; Appaloosa bush bean; Flat White Boer pumpkin; Spaghetti Squash; and Green Hubbard Squash. As is the

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² Cross border dialogue is for neighbouring communities sharing borders different countries to come together and discuss livelihood issues and collaborate in tackling challenges. This would be feasible when sub-regional nodes strengthen and create vibrant networking



practice, these farmers will share with fellow farmers and multiply these varieties as a group and share later to add to their seed diversity. The SFF and learning exchanges also held in Zimbabwe by EarthLore. A local newspaper in Zimbabwe wrote about the Seed and Food Fair: <https://www.masvingomirror.com/2018/09/zimssoff-food-seed-fair.html>

This kind of opportunity also has the potential to remind farmers and the wider community of some important but forgotten wild foods and plants that provided vital nutritional and health benefits in the past. The revival of this knowledge helps farmers to reconnect with local trees, plants and protect them, both for their own sake and for their greater ecological benefits.

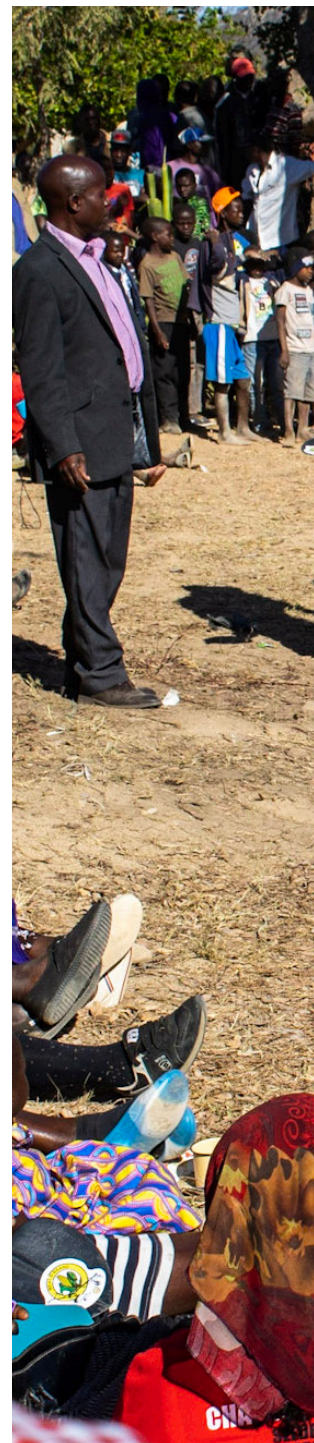
2.1.7 Provide support to 14 partners to participate in relevant gatherings, agro-ecological practices and various events on seeds at regional and international level to engage and articulate CSK practices and to influence policy

ABN partners have been conducting a number of gatherings, exchange visits and experience sharing events in which farmers, elders, youth and women participated at various levels. Youth in particular attended different community gatherings such as community dialogues and seed and food fairs. This initiative in particular inspires youth on indigenous knowledge systems and achieves inter-generational learning exchange. ABN partners are aware that youth participation in any project is becoming very central to sustaining project results. Farming is increasingly being seen as a viable career for many youth, whilst before it was rejected. Strategic targeting of youth and related advocacy will thus be strengthened in years to come.

In April 2018, BftW organised a Regional agroecological networking meeting at SACDEP for partners in which ABN staff also participated. BftW also supported ABN's General Coordinator to attend Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO)'s Second International Symposium on Agroecology from 3-5th April 2018, at FAO Headquarters in Rome, Italy. Other international fora where ABN senior staff members also attended included AACC, KFWOG, AFSA; IGAD-UN, ARIPO SADC, and GIZ/AMBERO.

2.1.8 Strengthen/establish community seed research groups and build their capacities to develop and document case studies and other stories of change

Partners have chosen their own ways of embracing community research groups and each approach is different. RAINS, for example, has chosen the model farmer approach. This has proven for them to be the most proactive way of deepening learning (from model farmers) and advancement of agricultural practices. Other partners, such as ISD, CEVASTE and EarthLore, are learning from community elders and also involve youth and other stakeholders from relevant government ministries. It has been identified that there is a need to build the capacity of





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project participants through training and demonstrating best practices of agroecology to enable farmers to appreciate the project concept, goals and objectives. There has been a general understanding by all project participants that the CSK project goes beyond achieving the results aimed at by the project. Knowledge should be sustained after the project period.



3

COMMUNITY ECOLOGICAL GOVERNANCE (CEG)





3.0 Community Ecological Governance (CEG)

3.1 Facilitate integration of the ABN methodologies to support communities to document their traditional knowledge, values and practices and related governance systems and develop management plans for community and ecosystems wellbeing

During 2018, eight partners using varied ABN methodologies (such as maps and calendars and community dialogues) worked with ten communities in Africa to revive, regenerate and restore critical ecosystems such as sacred natural sites, water shed areas and other water tower areas. These partners were: RAINS (Ghana), CEVASTE and GRABE-Benin (Benin), EarthLore Foundation (South Africa/Zimbabwe), CELUCT (Zimbabwe), JVE Togo (Togo), MELCA Ethiopia and the Institute for Sustainable Development (Ethiopia). These partners conducted six community dialogues to map and analyse their communities' contexts and make plans for action. In July, five representatives from partner organisations were trained on resilience methodologies during an induction training hosted by RAINS. The training was for the four partners implementing the project "One World without Hunger Initiative" (SEWOH). As a result of these trainings and exchanges, the ABN partners participating improved their capacity, skills and experience to support communities integrate resilience methodologies and to document their traditional knowledge, values and practices and governance of sacred natural sites and territories. (Details of this training is explained under the CSK thematic report page 4)

3.2 Conduct Paralegal/Earth Jurisprudence (EJ) capacity building at sub-regional level to raise awareness of national and international legal instruments and support partners and communities they work with to practice EJ principles

ABN and its international partner- the Gaia Foundation, have conducted three training sessions as part of the Earth Jurisprudence (EJ) course. Eight participants were drawn from five ABN potential and full partners: AFRICE (Uganda) and SALT (Kenya) are potential partners, while GRABE Benin (Benin), NAPE (Uganda), MELCA Ethiopia (Ethiopia) and PELUM (Zimbabwe) are full time partners of the ABN. EJ is a philosophy of law and human governance that is based on the idea that humans are only one part of a wider community of beings. The welfare of each member of that community is dependent on the welfare of the earth as a whole. The EJ course

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has helped to guide and strengthen ABN's goal of setting up country and sub-regional nodes. The General Coordinator and the Regional Programmes Coordinator, having pioneered the first phase, are now supporting in the mentoring of the participants of the second phase. New participants come from Zimbabwe, Benin, Kenya, Uganda, Cameroon and South Africa.³ Three sessions of the Earth Jurisprudence course were held in the year, in April, July and December.

Through this, ABN has taken a strong step towards its long-term vision of being a network of communities. Six of the ABN leaders who were trained as EJ practitioners have gone through the training and six more are undergoing. These have continued to drive action in-country and sub-regionally. For the ABN approach and methodologies of resilience to become grounded and practiced, practitioners are needed who have this in-depth understanding and practice ability. These practitioners will continue to be beacons and mentors for others.

3.3 Support partners to pilot and work with Multiple Evidence Based (MEB) Approach, distil and internalise the guiding principles for the knowledge interface and scale up for community and ecosystem resilience

During the ABN Methodology Training hosted by RAINS and induction to the partners on community dialogues, the Ghana communities, traditional chief and partners were able to exchange on different knowledge systems – science, practitioners, indigenous and local knowledge systems within a farming landscape. They shared their experiences from interacting with this space. In moving forward to 2019, the ABN will arrange a more comprehensive interaction with a forest landscape and bring together various knowledge systems.

3.4 Participation in legislative and policy making processes at national, regional and international such as ACHPR, IUCN, CBD, IPBES and making the AC's Resolution 372 on SNS&T a reality in Africa

During the year, the ABN, Gaia and other partners jointly did legal drafting, peer review, and editing and distributing of the African Model Law for implementing the Resolution 372 of the African Commission (ACHPR/Res.372 (LX) 2017 for strengthening community customary governance systems, recognition and protection of the sacred natural sites. In May, the ABN won Global Lush Spring Prize. This supported the ABN's efforts to take Res.372 to the next level – i) to develop further an African Model Law that establishes a legal framework to protect sacred forests and natural sites; ii) guide partners across Africa in developing in-country legislation and precedents; and iii) ensure that the indigenous and traditional custodians of sacred natural sites have an effective voice in this process. The ABN and Gaia were concerned

³ <http://www.gaiafoundation.org/what-we-do/earth-jurisprudence/trainings-for-transformation/>



that many of the African governments did not have laws, policies or appropriate mechanisms to protect sacred natural sites and territories and comply with Resolution ACHPR/Res.372 (LX) 2017. They decided;

- ✗ To task the working group on indigenous populations/communities to conduct a study on the need to protect and regenerate sacred natural sites together with the related customary governance systems in Africa;
- ✗ That the report and findings of the study be submitted for consideration by the commission at its 64th Ordinary Session; and
- ✗ To call on all stakeholders to support the work of the working group in undertaking the study.

3.5 Coalition building of the custodians of SNS&T at all levels: local, national, regional and international levels, linking local experiences to global debate and creating presence and influence on international policies and support legal litigation as need arises

In May, the African Biodiversity Network, was awarded the Global LUSH Spring Prize for policy influence. The award commended the ABN's work on implementing Res.372. Media coverage included an article by LUSH on Protecting Biodiversity in Africa. The prize supported one Ugandan custodian, Margret Kagole, to participate in the 63rd Ordinary Session in Banjul. At the 63rd Ordinary Session and NGO Forum of the African Commission, the ABN and Gaia presented the draft model law text and guiding principles. A panel session was held with the International Commission of Jurists on "The Plight of Human Rights and Earth Rights' Defenders, and a proposed African Model Law for sacred natural sites and custodian communities" as well as meetings with the Working Group and other Commissioners on next steps. Margret Kagole represented the voice of the custodians from other parts of Africa - Benin, Kenya, and Zimbabwe. In each of these countries community dialogues enabled discussion on the challenges and opportunities for a legal framework.



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3.6 Provide rapid response fund to communities working to revive, protect and promote their CEG practice

No activities or events required emergent community action.



4

YOUTH CULTURE AND BIODIVERSITY (YCB)





4.0 Youth Culture and Biodiversity (YCB)

4.1 Support partners to gain experience on building a youth movement and build critical mass for policy influence

African Biodiversity Network partners who particularly work with young people are increasingly using the ABN's methodologies such as 'back to root', community dialogue and cultural celebrations. Global Initiative for Environment and Reconciliation (GER) from Rwanda, for example, works with farmers, youth clubs, elders' groups and marginalized groups. They facilitated numerous community dialogues to raise awareness and to bridge the knowledge gap by facilitating integration learning and concrete actions towards achieving sustainable environmental protection. This improved the youths' understanding of the importance of the ecosystem, connected them to nature and taught them how to make contributions to the well-being of all earth community.

RAINS from Ghana involved youth in most of its community activities as they believe that youth participation is central to sustaining project results. In the context of communities working with RAINS, farming has become a means to increased income apart from growing crops for food/consumption per se; and this has also been an entry point for youth to be attracted. Lots of sharing and exchange has been conducted between different age group of communities where youth are privileged to learn about agro-ecological skills and related practices.

In the case of ISD from Ethiopia, there is a strong youth programme which builds capacity of school students as well as school drop outs. The environmental school clubs in schools are entry points for the project. Students are trained in gardening and planting vegetables using organic methods. Students also linked with community elders to learn about cultural values including how to make goods/tools from natural objects. Youth who have dropped out of school are also supported to work on land, growing vegetables and local crops to generate income.

Most partners attracted youth to their community work in the course of project implementations using different ABN methodologies. EarthLore, for example, attracted youth press agency where its staff was interviewed during the Bikita Seed and Food Fair which was conducted for the two days. Method Gundidza, programme coordinator of EarthLore, was also interviewed at the International Forum on Well-Being in Grenoble, France. See the link to the interview on Indigenous knowledge and Agroecology titled "*The need to restore the beautiful dance of life*"⁴.

⁴ <http://www.youthpressagency.org/destinazionenews-ambiente?art=209>



4.2 Accompany YCB partners in the process of building youth capacity and changing behaviour through inter-generational learning methods and YCB approaches

There has been growing evidence from ABN partners working with communities on how ABN methodologies are useful in changing youth behaviour and building their confidence around valuing self-identity and culture. One example from Benin shows that it can be possible to draw in youth and their parents if we manage to engage them with creative activities. On 28-29th December, CEVASTE invited the children of Ecolojah School, their parents and members of the communities, to an event highlighting the principles of *Ujima*/Wisdom (Working together) and *Ujamaa* (Sharing cooperative economics). 28th December celebrated the *Ujamaa* principle. The youth led by their teachers and some elders went to the garden to observe the natural harmony among plants, and learn the signs to determine whether a certain plant needed some compost or ashes for the other. They worked together to nourish the plants, learning about the wisdom of associating different plants and why the harvest of the first fruits is a celebration in African culture across the continent. 29th December was about teaching the key principle *Ujima* – the value of sharing and teaching children about establishing cooperative economics when they are adults. The children expressed it through songs, sketches and the adults through tales, and sharing experiences. The representatives of communities joined the celebration by bringing their knowledge and telling the importance of sharing seeds and reviving indigenous knowledge. They used tales to show that it was a divine heritage that ought to be preserved and transmitted from one generation to another. During both days of the celebration, an abundant meal was offered to all participants. It was a festive celebration with deep raising of awareness on how rich the African culture is.

4.3 Support partners to train youth and/or build their capacity on organic food production and marketing to increase their income

ABN did not provide support under this theme in the year 2018 but we observed the cumulative effect of ABN's intervention with its partners which has been fruiting in different parts of the region. For example, ABN has observed through reports, informal discussions and follow-up visits that most partners working with youth (such as RAINS, ISD, MELCA, CEVASTE, JVE, RIDEP and MEAP) are supporting young people to actively participate in agro-ecological activities as well as related cultural practices. This has been benefiting the society in terms of bringing young people to value the wisdom of their parents and appreciate gifts of nature. The experience also reveals to youth how agriculture can be a promising future when it comes to generating income. They began to see that they can make their living in their localities, with their families rather than being displaced and migrating somewhere else.



4.4 Support partners to work with school children and youth to gain experience about indigenous knowledge and practices through their co-curricular activities such as environmental education clubs

There have been interactions with partners on how ABN support should evolve under this theme but not much progress was made due to scarcity of finances for basic activities.

4.5 Conduct research & document case studies and publish at least two stories of changes.

During the year, the ABN made an important breakthrough in its documentation practice by producing its Youth, Culture and Biodiversity Guide. This Guide was the culmination of many years of pioneering work across Africa, connecting young people with their culture, nature and themselves. This work took place in collaboration with partners such as ISD and MELCA of Ethiopia, EarthLore and USIKO of South Africa, JVE Togo (Togo), GRABE, Nature Tropicale and CEVASTE (Benin), RAINS (Ghana), RIDEP and ICE of Kenya, and ENVIROCARE of Tanzania. The Guide will help to spread the work to other regions in Africa through ABN's partners. The content included a focus on spending quality solitary time in the wilderness. Other activities included games, night vigils and cultural celebrations. These cultural celebrations help to amplify community and youth voices to the policy makers. It is important to note that the youth of today are experiencing enormous social and ecological challenges. They are living in an information explosion in which there are so many issues that compete for their attention. The culture and nature around them is disappearing very fast, and few notice the change. Sadly, few know what to do even when they want to change the status quo. It is hoped that this Guide will contribute to a redirection away from this monumental crisis by providing youth leaders with an opportunity to explore and connect with nature, their culture and themselves. The connection with culture and nature has improved the life of many young people and it can also help many in the future.

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5

STRENGTHENING NETWORK PRACTICE AND DEVELOPMENT





5.0 Strengthening Network Practice and Development

5.1 Support documentation and publications of ABN practices, methodologies on various thematic areas for sharing and wider distribution within ABN network and beyond - consolidate and publish available information and translate into French

ABN and some *Tharaka* communities in collaboration with Lush UK produced an article and audio documentary as part of the 'Guardians of Earth Planet' series. This featured its regenerative approaches. The ABN General Coordinator visited the UK to participate in the Lush⁵ Spring Prize showcase. Thematic coordinators have consolidated the ABN methodologies guide for refinement in preparation for an integrated barefoot guide in 2019.

5.2 Conduct exploratory and follow-up visits to both existing and potential partners for mutual assessment, induction, mentorship, integration and up scaling of the network practice. Data base of partners and their baseline information for ease of access to information for sharing and networking

Only a few partners were visited in 2018, due in part to lack of funding but also because many of the events that took place during the year were hosted by different partners. This gave the ABN Secretariat the opportunity to engage with partners then. However, a visit to the ISD communities as part of follow-up training and further accompaniment was undertaken by the General Coordinator. In addition, the thematic coordinator attended the EJ meeting hosted by CEVASTE in Benin. After the induction training on community dialogues in Ghana, which was hosted by RAINS, ABN's partners have also been accompanying communities to ensure the integration and inclusiveness of all in the community dialogues.

⁵ Article: <https://uk.lush.com/article/guardians-planet-earth-protecting-biodiversity-africa>
Audio documentary: <http://player.lush.com/channels/times/radio/guardians-planet-earth-protecting-biodiversity-africa>



5.3 Concept on development and guide for sub-regional nodes and translation to various languages

All the three regions- Western, Southern and Eastern - were able to hold at least one country/ sub-regional node meeting to deliberate on how they would conduct their processes and working relationships. The information from which will be used in the finalisation of a draft guide for sub-regional nodes in 2019 at the partners' biennial meeting.

5.4 Study and review of ABN gender relations and power play and its implementation in ABN methodologies

This desktop review has not yet been done due to scarcity of funds to hire a consultant. Limited financial and human resource in the ABN Secretariat also added to the difficulty in commissioning this work. The proposed desktop research will be commissioned in 2019.

5.5 Strengthen and coordinate information sharing/ support and coordinate actualisation of country and sub-regional nodes

ABN Secretariat held several skype calls meeting with partners to discuss progress of the project work with communities. This included areas of challenges and how partners have coped with them. As explained in the report on CSK, partners at the sub-regional level have held meetings to deliberate on how to strengthen the nodes and develop joint activities within their region. For the Eastern node, Kenyan partners have held a couple of meetings & action plans produced. In Zimbabwe, which is part of the Southern node, partners together with other allies held a meeting where ABN partners such as CELUCT and EarthLore presented the principles of ABN. In West Africa, the ABN partners came together from Benin, Ghana and Togo and held a meeting and agreed to form coalitions. The process is still ongoing. Partners are also heavily interacting and sharing ideas including organising exchange learning visits between them and or their communities.

Regarding sharing of information and learning, the Institute for Culture and Ecology (ICE) in partnership with Coady International Institute and Compass Africa, hosted the training on Endogenous Development. Participants were drawn from five countries in Africa (Kenya, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Ethiopia and Uganda). ABN was also represented by the advocacy and communication officer. The training used Endogenous Development as an approach to address threats that inhibit the issues around ecology, food and seed, especially among pastoralists and communities living in semi-arid areas. The overall experience inspired a strong community of learning and practice, a network of like-minded organisations, and a sense of solidarity. As a next step, participants were tasked to implement and document learnings from the workshop in their own organisations and share for follow up.



5.6 Support capacity enhancement on cross cutting and emerging issues that affect ABN's work and strengthen institutional support, for example, project management, financial management, reporting, gender, documentation and so on

Through the Bread for the World (BftW) local support services, four key ABN Staff were trained on concepts of Participatory Monitoring and & Evaluation. Practical lessons were provided at CORAT Africa Management Development Centre (CMDc), Nairobi, Kenya on the 23-24th of April 2018. The focus of the training was on how to develop the log frame both for M&E and fundraising. In addition, the advocacy officer and thematic coordinators also attended a BftW training on lobbying, advocacy and networking.



Regarding sharing of information and learning, the Institute for Culture and Ecology (ICE) in partnership with Coady International Institute and Compass Africa, hosted the training on Endogenous Development. Participants were drawn from five countries in Africa (Kenya, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Ethiopia and Uganda).



5.7 Organise and hold quarterly reflection and bi-annual meetings for the Board and Core Group to analyse and assess ABN practice

The board was able to meet twice during the year, in February and November. Their key strategies for turning around ABN fundraising were discussed and how partners will drive the network in the future. A revised operational structure was developed, aimed at decentralising the role of ABN secretariat at partner level with respect to networking and leading project works. This integrates the three thematic areas CSK, CEG and YCB under Community and Ecosystem Resilience work. The February meeting with the board also came up with a working structure for the next period. Cost cutting measures were agreed and salaries were reduced subject to review in the future depending to the availability of funds

5.8 Strengthen/develop ABN monitoring and evaluation manual for use with partners and communities

ABN Secretariat in consultation with the four SEWOH project partners, developed and shared a 3.5-year project planner to aid in tracking results. The comprehensive M&E framework and Resource Mobilisation log frame was also produced and is ready to be shared with stake holders for further comments.



5.9 Resource mobilisation including secure funding, develop and maintain relationships with funders by participating in donor meetings, trips, conferences and roundtables

ABN did engage in intensive fundraising and several funding applications and concept notes were submitted to potential funders. We also created several relationships with new partners such as Tudor Trust and Tides Foundation. In May, ABN was awarded a global prize from the Lush Spring Prize 2018 for its outstanding project on social and ecological regeneration. The prize was received in London by the Regional Programmes Coordinator.⁶ He used the opportunity to link with potential funders and establish relationship with different organisations who attended the Lush event from around the world. Later, in September, the ABN was invited to attend the Lush Prize Showcase event in Manchester. This was attended by ABN's General Coordinator who participated in many side events and was part of the panel about regeneration and sustainability on the 'Think tank' stage. Lush tweeted these debates and some quotes from the ABN General Coordinator were included in the Lush call for the 2019 Awards. This prize demonstrates the innovative capacity of the ABN in providing alternatives to the challenges facing modern society. By connecting people with culture and nature, the ABN's approach brings hope and reconnection to Africa and the world at large. ABN is bringing direction to a continent that has lost its way in terms of its relationship with natural resources and its own cultures. This is critical at a time when climate chaos is ravaging the planet. ABN and the communities it works through with its partners have thus attracted attention. To read more about the winning ABN project, click [here](#).⁷

5.10 Strategic plan review and institutionalisation of ABN M&E system including implement learning from 2017 on external evaluation and partners' project visits

The strategic plan review began and this has been happening through desktop reviews of the available documents, conference calls and reviews of the planning environment. The process is also reviewing the findings of the previous external evaluation. The process is still ongoing.

⁶ <https://springprize.org/2018-winners/>

⁷ <https://springprize.org/search-filter-projects/>
https://drive.google.com/a/lush.co.uk/file/d/10EY_7FJR3S_-Ok_uxAC_y439y3yx8ZCn/view?usp=drive_web;
<https://uk.lush.com/article/guardians-planet-earth-protecting-biodiversity-africa>.



6

ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION





6.0 Advocacy and Communication

6.1 Continuously identify, monitor and synthesise emerging issues relevant to ABN Community of Practice (COPs) and develop common understanding on the same within the network. Engage a consultant to conduct a desktop research and develop a policy brief on how ABN partners can engage the regional blocks, for example, SADC and COMESA to influence policies

ABN is working with African Centre for Biosafety (ACB), Eastern and Southern Africa small-scale Farmers Forum (ESAFF) to jointly analyse the East Africa Community (EAC) seed legislations, especially the harmonisation. ABN was involved in the process of preparing a petition to collect 1 million signatures to urge EAC Heads of State to lead a legal mechanism to legalise a 10% national budget allocation to agriculture. ABN shared the petition link across the network and WhatsApp group⁸. A press conference was held to inform and engage the media⁹. From 16-18th August, ABN participated in the ARIPO, SADC and COMESA workshop in Zambia. After the workshop, EAC partners and coalitions agreed to follow up on the issue of the seed harmonisation policy. ABN is working with ACB to analyse the document with the potential to organise a review workshop after which a memorandum to the EAC committee will be developed.

ABN's collaboration with AFSA collaboration has been strengthened in 2018. In March, ABN and AFSA organised a pastoralist meeting for the Eastern and Southern Pastoralist Network (ESPAN). During the meeting, participants from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, South Sudan and Namibia reviewed the IGAD Protocol on Transhumance and submitted it to IGAD. It was easy to engage because the IGAD representative was invited to the meeting. This meeting strengthened ABN's collaboration with IGAD and also its continued collaboration with AFSA on continental activities.

In July 2018, ABN was invited to participate at the Regional CSO learning and information sharing meeting on seed regulation, PVP systems and national responses. It was organised by the Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), partnering with the Zambia Alliance for Agroecology & Biodiversity (ZAAB) and the Third World Network Africa, recognising the important role that Civil Society Organisation (CSO) plays in influencing public policy direction. The meeting was in response to ongoing regional policy harmonisation processes related to Intellectual Property Rights on Plant Genetic Resources (GR) and Seed Marketing laws, and the considerable

⁸ <https://chn.ge/2Oe9x0q>

⁹ <https://youtu.be/yipjW7ym3Zo>.



implications for national food and agriculture systems, nutritional outcomes, Farmers' Rights and Africa's long-term capacity to build resilience to climate change. The three-day Regional CSO learning and information sharing meeting focused on seed trade laws, Plant Variety Protection (PVP) regimes and national responses. The workshop included presentations by various renowned national and regional subject experts providing context and overview of the seed systems in the region. It also featured group discussions for all participants to deepen the discourse. After the workshop, EAC partners and coalitions agreed to follow up on the issue of seed harmonisation policy, ABN collaborated with ACB and AFSA to analyse the document and organised for a regional workshop held in March 2019 in order to present concerns to the EAC policy drafting committee. Letters were written to the EAC Committee and EALA with no response. During the collaboration, the best strategy to reach out to the Regional Economic Blocks to be able to create civic space for smallholder farmers and civil society organisations in order to participate in the policy making process at regional levels was discussed.

6.2 Prepare advocacy or change communication materials, for example, newspaper supplements during relevant international days, policy brief on GMOs, newsletters and YouTube clips

In 2018, the ABN also continued to produce its newsletters, with editions on various themes published including culture, pastoralist issues, and Genetically Modified Organisms. Our partners PELUM Zimbabwe and Biowatch South Africa also produced and shared newsletters with the ABN for circulation and wider coverage within the network. The ABN YouTube channel was activated in 2018. All the available videos were uploaded including the latest video on Bt. Cotton experience in Burkina Faso and the "Back to Root", Konso film. During the National Biosafety Authority Annual meeting, KBioC was to stream the Bt Cotton Burkina Faso video but the National Biosafety Authority, Kenya (NBA) officials requested them not to after pre-watching it and realising that it had clear evidence how Bt. Cotton has failed in Burkina Faso. Despite this, government had approved its commercialisation in Kenya. The officials promised to give the coalition an opportunity to meet at their office for further discussion.

During the World Environment Day 2018, ABN joined other CSOs for a coal demonstration in Nairobi against the Kenyan and Chinese governments to mine coal and open a coal-fired power plant near the Indian Ocean coast since it will have destructive effect on the environment and health of the local population and goes against Kenya's commitments under the 2015 Paris climate accord. ABN supported by printing T-shirts with a key message to the policy makers: "Coal Ni Sumu," a Swahili message meaning 'coal is poison'. ABN called upon the government, and those who act on its behalf, to respect citizens' right to express themselves on issues that affect them, and learn to consult and engage widely with the community stakeholders.

ABN is now a member of several like-minded organisations and networks. It is a member of the Eastern and Southern Pastoralist Network (EASPN) whose headquarters are in Nairobi based at Pastoralist Development Network (PDNK), and a member of PACJA a Pan African Network



on climate change and the Non determined Contributions global coalition which was formed to implement the Paris Agreement 2015. ABN is also a member of the deCOALonize national movement which organised the coal demo on World Environment Day.

6.3 Hold a regional sensitisation workshop to strengthen the capacity of the advocacy champions based on the GMO testing findings in Kenya

There are no GMO testing kits in Kenya and this is still work in progress. Testing kits are still to come from either a European country or South Africa. A consultant has already trained students to assist in the collection of samples and testing. Regarding the debate on Bt. Cotton approval, a Technical Committee meeting was organised by KBioC to analyse the approval and make a public rejoinder to protest the illegality of that action and explain to the public that “confined field trials” are not possible. On the contrary, it is in fact, the first step towards deliberate contamination of non-GMOs seeds, from cross-pollination, and a preamble to commercialisation of the harmful Bt. Cotton. ABN coalition members have credible evidence that this same Bt. Cotton is a failed GMO (like all other GMOs) as evidenced from Burkina and Indian Failed Experiments. ABN is working closely with ACB on Biosafety issues through capacity building and information sharing, which is useful while synthesising evidence-based information.

On 16th November 2018, three organisations such as Route to Food Initiative (RTFI), Kenya Biodiversity Coalition (KBioC) and Greenpeace Africa joined ABN and organised a press conference to demand public participation in the adoption of the policy on genetically modified food. The collaboration termed the move to introduce genetically modified cotton in the country as unsafe for both humans and animals and asked the government to reconsider its decision¹⁰.

6.4 Five days Web 2.0 and social media for development training

This activity turned out to be very expensive, and thus due to the funding situation we have not been able to conduct the training. However, the ABN has been actively linked with a range of stakeholders and worked on a number of issues through personal communications, physical meetings and making presentations in conferences, public gatherings and regional/ International fora. ABN shared information through Facebook, which is synced to Twitter, at least twice a week. Synthesised information was also shared using the ABN Google list serve.

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¹⁰ https://media.reelforge.com/player/view/?file=/2018/11/16/BDA_20181116_128PB7GBH3HU.pdf&name=download_PICTORIAL: Speaking_out_Business_Daily_16-Nov-2018 : Page_12; https://www.nation.co.ke/news/Experts-oppose-genetically-modified-cotton/1056-4853704-h7u1ehz/index.html



6.5 Hold regional lobby and advocacy training to partners and accompany journalists in East and West Africa on ABN work

ABN invited all the partners working in Benin and Ghana to be part of the training on advocacy, lobby and coalition building which was held in Benin from the 18-20th of September. According to the pre-assessment evaluation and the evaluation that was conducted after the training, partners gained skills and knowledge on advocacy. They all already have coalitions. ABN will continue strengthening the existing coalitions. For instance, CEVASTE and JINUKUN are members of the national coalition known as De Benin Federation who are engaged in lobbying and influencing government authorities' actions and policies.

6.6 Provide rapid response fund to partners, coalitions and partners to respond to emerging issues - to create awareness on advocacy issues and foster support on evidence based arguments

Partners especially SEWOH partners are developing advocacy action plans. It is expected that they will work with other ABN partners who are not directly supported by BftW in order to build support for critical mass to amplify their issue(s). ABN developed advocacy action plan templates and revised policy and advocacy guides which were shared with partners to enable them to plan their advocacy activities. This strengthened the capacity of partners to effectively plan and implement advocacy activities at the local and national level. The partners are using the action plans as a monitoring tool for advocacy and therefore strengthening community coalition. We have noted many changes with communities working with partners through exchange visits, and they are able to articulate issues and express themselves confidently. In Benin, for example, CEVASTE is advocating on agroecology issues by use of art, particularly drama and traditional songs.

ABN participated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Stakeholder Engagement Framework Workshop from 5-6th March 2018. CSOs at the workshop drafted the SDGs implementation framework for Kenya. ABN is a member of the SDGs Forum in Kenya. This collaboration has strengthened ABN work on sustainable development goals through interacting with other organisations working on different SDGs. This has increased ABN's collaboration with government, specifically Ministry of Planning and Devolution in Kenya, SDGs networks and like-minded organisations.

6.7 Host community radio programme at national level

RAINS records and airs weekly radio programmes estimated to reach 50,000 listeners to strengthen the voices of farmers for policy influencing and access to land, particularly for women. ISD also linked with the FM radio station in Dessie Town. In July 2018, a 1-hour Radio



programme was broadcasted in which six elders from the Boru Silassie community were invited to a panel discussion where other agricultural experts were also a part of. Discussants underlined the importance of producing and retaining local crop seed varieties in relation to maintaining soil health/fertility, human health, and in building ecosystem and community resilience. CEVASTE also established a regular program with the Radio station in which it broadcasts issues related to environment, agroecology and farmers' rights

6.8 Provide support partners to undertake policy discussions/advocacy events related to community seed and knowledge -at least two policy briefs related to community seed and knowledge

Policy briefs were developed by Dr. Peter Mokaya of Organic Consumers Alliance (OCA), a member of Kenya Biodiversity Coalition (KBioC) working at the National level with ABN. One policy brief, *the role of organic foods in promoting biodiversity, culture and better health*, was shared during the global Carbon Climate Week forum held in April 2018 at the UN headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. In attendance was ABN Staff, a female smallholder farmer from Tharaka, JVE ABN's partner from Togo and KBioc Coalition representatives. ABN also displayed local/indigenous seeds from Tharaka community and shared publications and film. The second policy brief titled "*The threat to African indigenous SEEDS and related traditional knowledge by multinational seed companies: The unfolding "story"*" was also developed and shared across the network. In May, ABN developed and printed information materials that were shared during the Lush Prize Award event in the UK.





7

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNT





7.0 Challenges and Lessons Learnt

7.1 Challenges

- ✂ A key challenge has continued to be communication with some of the Network's partners. ABN Secretariat is using strategies to improve this such as encouraging partners to form communities of practice, country and sub-regional nodes and by using phone calls and Zoom calls to enhance communication across the network.
- ✂ Sustainability of ABN's work is also something that management of the ABN need to continue to grapple with. With the right community structures on the ground, it is possible for work to continue beyond a period of donor funding. ABN thus continued to work to revitalise community-based traditional governance systems and institutions as well as introducing country and sub-regional nodes.
- ✂ Many communities working with ABN partners face multiple challenges in their food system, land and integrated livelihood. An example on food system includes introduction of GMO and hybrid seeds which work only with pesticides and other expensive chemicals that farmers cannot afford. Many drought resistant traditional seeds suited for the local conditions, like millet, have gradually been replaced by new hybrid maize whereby its genetic trait is altered and thus it has less adaptation capacity to the local environment compared to the long lived traditional grains. The experience shows that ABN needs to reach out more and initiate movements to influence policies. Funding continues to be a challenge in this regard.
- ✂ Women farmers face an additional level of burden, that of gender discrimination. Their roles and responsibilities within the family and community have been systematically undermined by commercial interests and government, who promote hybrids and chemicals mainly to men, eroding the role of women as custodians of seed and food.

7.2 Lessons learnt

- ✂ ABN should increase its work of information sharing and collaboration across the network as this was proved valuable when KBIOC (Kenya) collaborated with ABN and Green Peace and organised a press conference on Genetically Modified Organism (GMOs) with support from Henrich Boll Foundation (HBF). The offshoot of this collaboration was increased visibility of the participating organisations and more collaboration and media follow ups.
- ✂ That ABN should facilitate consolidated action plans for vibrant networking and sharing/ learning to enhance capacities of joint activities/actions with case studies by partners for evidence based advocacy to influence policy.
- ✂ That the ABN's practice should be shared and supported widely across the network and beyond, for instance, during the Food Systems and SDGs Conference.





- ✂ That ABN links and establishes partnerships for resource mobilisation, to deepen ABN practice and influence policy.
- ✂ That ABN should pay attention to and put greater emphasis on agro-ecological approaches to recognise initiatives of small scale farmers in defense of their rights to grow their seeds according to their social, cultural, economic and ecological needs.
- ✂ That the ABN needs to collaborate more with national, regional and international SDG forums and events to contribute to the success of Global movements on sustainable development.
- ✂ That the ABN should appreciate the fact that it is not only funding that is required to sustain a network but also the inbuilt relations. It is of critical importance to keep on strengthening relationships and linkages. ABN has witnessed the drastic reduction of its funding during period 2016 to 2018, with year 2018 recording the lowest ever. However, what is important to note and appreciate is that even with the reduced funding, this period has also seen the ABN's visibility and vibrancy within the network increase. For example, winning of a Lush Spring Prize Award. This was due to its collaborations with other like-minded organisations, networks, sharing among the ABN partners and increased levels of joint planning and activities.
- ✂ The ABN observed that there is a growing interest and an appreciation of the role and importance of indigenous knowledge and communities in averting environmental destruction. During the year 2018, ABN witnessed an increase in invitations to key forums and platforms, locally at country levels, regionally and at international meetings just to share its methodologies and approaches and the regenerative work with the communities. Going forward, ABN will need to strategically identify, coordinate, mobilise resources and promote and share its lessons/evidence of how it is working/ the knowledge within different cultures and so on, for wider action and recognition of IK.
- ✂ That the ABN still struggles in coming up with a robust, practical, real time system, for capturing the moments, identifying, documenting and sharing widely the small changes/ shifts/impacts happening within the communities. It also requires resources to do this adequately.
- ✂ That the ABN needs to do a lot more at the community level by strengthening community coalitions to be at the forefront of articulating issues.
- ✂ That the ABN needs to continue collaborating with regional organisations like ACB and AFSA and to engage more at the Regional Economic Community, for example, IGAD, COMESA, EAC and SADC, in order to find civic space and articulate issues during policy making processes.

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8

CONCLUSION



8.0 Conclusion

2018 has been a year of learning and gaining experience for ABN through an increased collaborative work particularly with the four partners, ISD, CEVASTE, RAINS and EarthLore. In the course of collaboration with these partners, including in the events of trainings, community dialogue, exchange visits or other activities such as capacity building on ABN methodologies, the host partner (among the four) invited other partners which may be in the same country or nearby sub-region. In this way ABN managed to reach to all its partners. The experience reveals that establishing close relationship with small number of partners and building strong collaboration could also help spreading the work and reaching out to more partners/communities.

In 2018, ABN has been successful in all thematic works as partners achieved revival of seed diversity, indigenous knowledge, as well as build their experiences of community advocacy to influence policy. On advocacy, many partners formed community coalitions to strengthen advocacy on farmer's rights and this has been achieved through media. RAINS for example, recorded and aired weekly radio programmes estimated to reach 50,000 listeners. Similarly, ISD and CEVASTE have reached out to the wider community through Radio programmes.

ABN's seed work has also been progressed. Many ABN partners are preparing to build community seed banks which is an integral part of seed revival by building a backup mechanism to household seed storage facilities. A number of seed varieties already revived in communities working with ABN partners

At the secretariat level, ABN participated in regional and international conferences and presented its work with communities through partners. The Lush award ceremony in May (in which ABN received the award) and later in September provided significant platforms and opportunities for ABN's visibility. ABN collaborated with ACB and AFSA on seed and plant variety harmonisation bill and contributed to the submission of letters and a press release to the EAC Secretary. The ABN's collaboration with the Gaia Foundation and other ABN partners in drafting the African Model Law has also been a very important achievement.

To sum up, although ABN has been encountered with reduction of funds and this also has impacted some of its work, the year 2018 can be said to have been a successful year in many aspects.

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9

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHT YEAR 2018

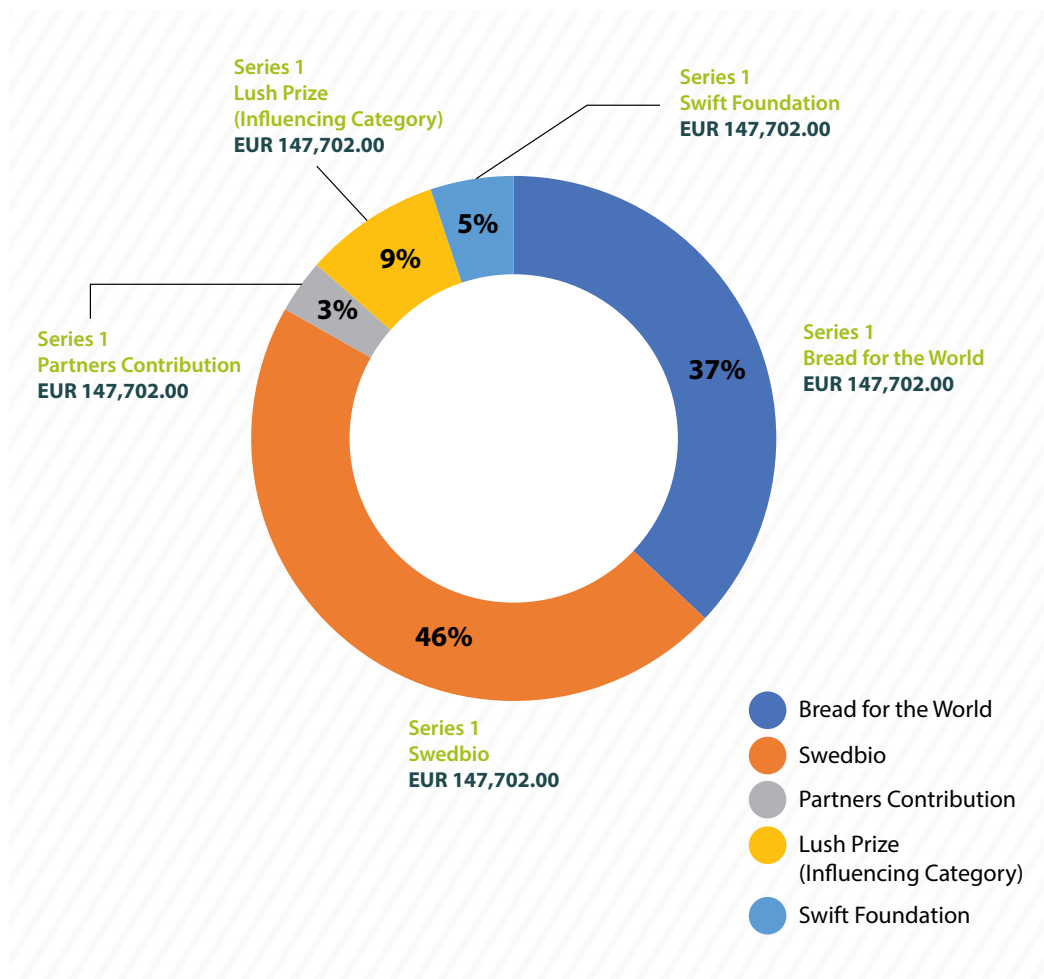




9.0 Financial Highlight Year 2018

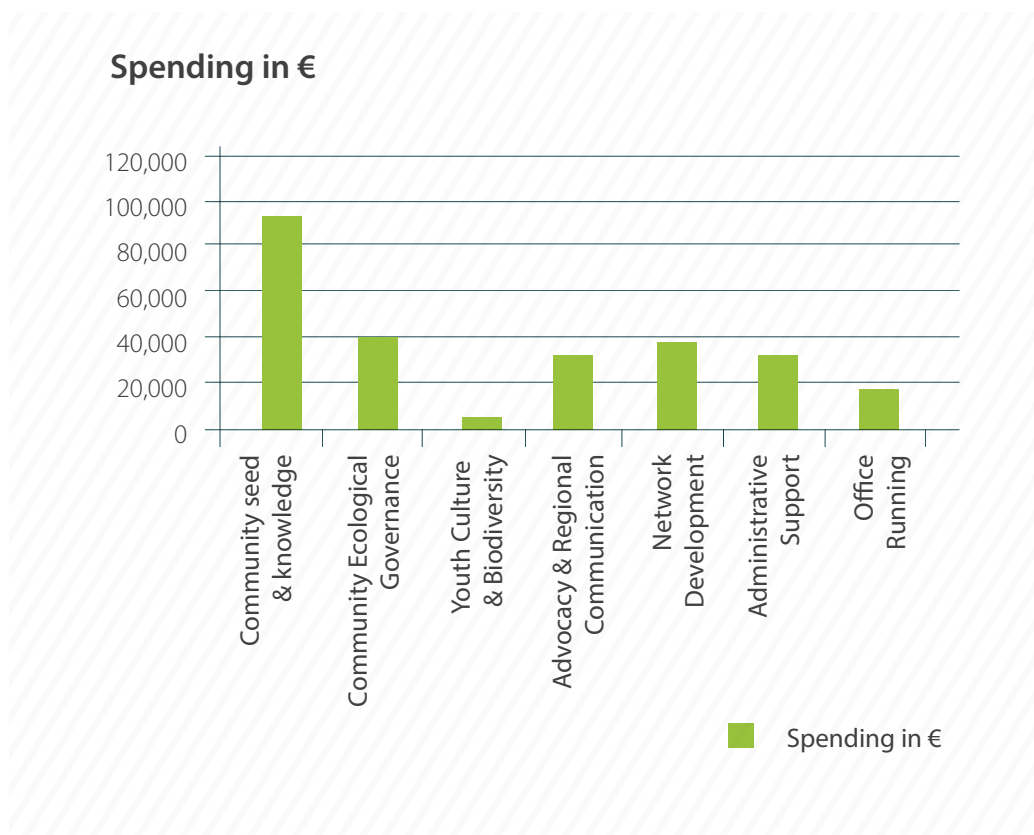
The year began with lots of vibrancy following the commissioning of the 3.5yrs bundle project, 'Strengthening community seed sovereignty and revival of farmers' seed diversity for food sovereignty and sustainable livelihoods in Africa being implemented in four countries Benin, Ethiopia, Ghana and in Zimbabwe by four partners and funded by Bread for the World and SwedBio. Being the first time for ABN to implement such a project, the learning and experiences from the project implementation will be shared among the other network partners. Overall, the funding reduced and as such, the spending went down compared to previous years' financials.

On funding, we began the year with an opening balance of €19,542, being funds remaining for activities rolling over to the subsequent year. A total of €319,777 equivalent to 67% of the annual budget, was received during the year. A lot of fundraising efforts were done with new relationships being created however no new funding breakthrough was achieved in the year. In order to realise largely most of the set targets for the year, the board and management strategically agreed on some cost-efficiency measures which included cutting costs on personnel and non-core costs. The finances during the year comprised of the following:





In terms of funds utilisation, the total expenditure for year amounted to (€300,501); 55% of annual budget and an overall absorption rate of 89% of the available funds in the year. From the overall annual expenditure, 80% €239,784 was spent on programme/thematic areas work while the balance was spent on support staff and secretariat coordination costs as illustrated below.





List of ABN's Partners

Eastern Africa

ENVIROCARE
INADES-FORMATION
Institute for Culture and Ecology (ICE)
Maendeleo Endelevu Action Program (MEAP)
Movement for Ecological Learning and Community Action (MELCA – Ethiopia)
National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE)
Rural Initiatives Development Programme (RIDEP)

Southern Africa

Biowatch South Africa
Chikukwa Ecological Land Use Community Trust (CELUCT)
EarthLore Foundation

Western Africa

Centre For Indigenous Knowledge And Organisational Development (CIKOD)
Groupe De Recherche et d'action pour le Bien-Etre au Bénin (GRABE-BENIN)
JVE International
Nature Tropicale
Regional Advisory Information & Network Systems (RAINS)

Strategic

Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA)
Kenya Biodiversity Coalition (KBIOC)
PELUM -Kenya

International

The Gaia Foundation



ABN Presence in Africa



The African Biodiversity Network (ABN) works with partners, allies and communities in 12 African countries:

- Benin
- Botswana
- Burkina Faso
- Ethiopia
- Ghana
- Kenya
- Rwanda
- South Africa
- Tanzania
- Togo
- Uganda
- Zimbabwe



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