



AFRICAN BIODIVERSITY NETWORK
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2019





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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
SEgni	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



INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The year 2019 presented great opportunities for the ABN. It started with global recognition of ABN's work for the "Outstanding Practices in Agroecology 2019". This award highlights practices that empower small-scale food producers, nurture sustainable food production systems, and promote resilient agricultural practices that help maintain ecosystems and strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change. It was organised by the World Future Council in collaboration with the Startup TAGS (Technology for Agroecology in the Global South).

The year also witnessed 37% income growth from €340,257 in the year 2018 to €464,169 in 2019. The year saw two new funding breakthroughs; the two-year support grant of £30,000 from Tudor Trust and secondly, one-year project support of US\$ 100,000 from AgroEcology Fund. SwedBio also extended its funding period by one more year up to the end of 2020 with annual support of €162,000. We retained the existing funding partners- Bread for the World, SwedBio, Tudor Trust and Swift Foundation. With support from our funding partners, we managed 95% of the implementation of our activities. The following is the 2019 report according to different thematic areas.





1

COMMUNITY SEED AND KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE

1.0: COMMUNITY SEED AND KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE

1.1: Objective

12 partners have increased capacity to support communities to implement a wide range of activities/innovations to recuperate and preserve their indigenous and local seed varieties and wild relatives.

Activity 1.1.1

Strengthen collective action on community revival of indigenous seeds system and agro-ecological supportive farming practices such as agro-ecology, conservation agriculture and other sustainable land use management practice, plant genetics and reduction of post-harvest losses.

In 2019, ABN partners worked with their communities to strengthen collective action on community revival of indigenous seeds system and agro-ecological supportive farming practices including the Training of Trainers (ToTs) capacity enhancement on Plant Genetics and Reduction of Post-Harvest Losses. RAINS in Ghana facilitated their communities to develop seasonal calendars¹ and community ecological maps from 15th July – 18th July 2019 and also a two-day learning exchange on 25th and 26th September 2019, while EarthLore in Zimbabwe continued with monthly community dialogues in Bikita, Chiroorwe, Gangare and Mamudse. To strengthen the partners' work on the ground, the ABN Secretariat organised a ToTs Workshop on Plant Genetics and Post-Harvest Losses from 21st – 23rd March 2019.

The Ghana seasonal calendars and community ecological maps attracted the participation of 200 direct beneficiaries in the 5 project

communities. The exercise mobilised communities to show the distribution of seasonally varying phenomena such as economic activities, resources, production activities, problems, illness/disease, migration, and natural events/ phenomena over time. The seasonal weather forecasting highlighted and documented the indigenous ecological indicators used by the farmers to forecast weather phenomena, predict seasonal climate behaviour, and use them in making decisions regarding agricultural activities. The exercise ensured that traditional knowledge was revived and documented for future use. On the other hand, the two-day learning exchange in Ghana attracted participation from 26 farmers across different communities, age, and sex to learn and share through experiences and knowledge.

The three-day workshop on Plant Genetics and Post-Harvest Losses held in Kenya at RODI Training Centre, Ruiru, Kenya had representatives from the Secretariat and four ABN partners. These included the Institute for Sustainable Development (ISD), Ethiopia; RAINS, Ghana; CEVASTE, Benin, and EarthLore Foundation, Zimbabwe. The workshop covered plant genetics and how farmers are managing the use of plant genetic resources, traditional knowledge, harvesting and preservation. The workshop also trained ToTs in Plant Genetics. A field visit to a Participatory Plant Breeding Field School was conducted. Once the partners returned to their home countries, they organised follow-up training with similar exercises with their communities. RAINS, for instance, organised and facilitated training in October for farmers on post-harvest losses. A total of 125 farmers (50 males, 75 women) participated in the training through which they were able to gain more

¹ See Figure 1 on page 4

skills and knowledge on the management of post-harvest losses through off-and-on farm techniques. The training incorporated knowledge on plant genetic resources and was timely because farmers were going into harvesting season. RAINS also did another ToT in August on the production and use of organic manure and the production and use of bio-slurry from cattle and sheep. 70 trainees constituted 40 direct beneficiaries and 30 other indirect beneficiaries from the Yiwogu community. The training was timely because some farmers were preparing to apply compost for the second time, especially for maize crops. The training helped to revive degraded soils as well as build up the structure for cultivation. About 75% of project direct beneficiaries are already utilising this knowledge, a majority of which are women whose cultivation acreage ranges from half an acreage to a full acreage.

These training and processes helped farmers and community members enhance their knowledge through sharing on agroecological practices that help to maintain soil and water nutrients. It is also important to note that all of the 125 farmers who participated in the Ghana training on plant genetics and post-harvest losses adopted practices such as the use of manure/compost, zero or minimum tillage, ploughing across the slope, intercropping, mixed cropping, use of local pesticides, the use of indigenous seed varieties, and storage in mud silos. These practices continue to shape the lives of community members and farmers in a sustainable approach. The intensive monthly dialogues led to the discovery of a lost seed of Tsenza tuber. This was identified as lost in 2015 community dialogues. Tsenza is a very nutritious tuber and is planted on wetlands like rice and thus enhances the wetland areas.

Figure 1:

Regional Advisory Information and Network Systems (RAINS)
Documentation of Indigenous seasonal weather forecasting

INDICATOR	Forecasting/prediction	Time of occurrence	Action to be taken
APPEARANCE OF PLANTS	Above normal fruiting of fruit trees especially Sheanut tree. Shea tree is a wild fruit found around the farm surrounding. When this happens, it is an indication of good rain.	May/June	Farmers should prepare for the abundance of rain and can cultivate long duration crops
	Shea tree not fruiting well is an indication of less rain or drought that year	May/June	Farmers should consider the cultivation of drought-tolerant crops or cultivate early maturing crops
OCCURRENCE OF ECLIPSE OF THE MOON (WUNTANG NVALI GOLI)	When this occur, it is an indication of very good rains to come	June, July	Farmers should take advantage of the situation to make the best out of it by cultivating their crops on time.
COLOUR OF CLOUDS	Dark clouds are usually an indication of rain (heavy rains) within that day	Happens throughout the rainy season	Prepare adequately as this may also result in disasters like flooding
	White clouds is a sign of no rain		

INDICATOR	Forecasting/prediction	Time of occurrence	Action to be taken
SCORCHING SUN	<i>This is equally a sign of rain in a few hours</i>	<i>Throughout season</i>	<i>Prepare to harvest water for both household and farm use</i>
MOVEMENT& APPEARANCE OF WORMS	<i>The movement of worms is an indication that the rainy season is about to end</i>		<i>No more cultivation of crops or farmers could cultivate short duration crops</i>
APPEARANCE OF INSECTS (ANTS)	<i>The movement of ants along with their eggs from one place to another (a safer environment) signifies heavy rain</i>	<i>Throughout the season</i>	<i>Prepare against disasters or to utilize the rainwater</i>
BIRDS	<i>Birds flying from sunrise to sunset is an indicator of rain in a few hours</i>	<i>Throughout the season</i>	<i>Take advantage of the rain in every way possible; either to plant a crop or act to minimize risk</i>
	<i>Birds weaving their nest around riverbanks is an indication of less rain</i>	<i>January-March/April</i>	<i>Farmers should plan to cultivate short duration crops</i>
ATMOSPHERIC TEMPERATURE	<i>High temperature at night show good rain, and low temperatures at night show rains within that years will come late (late onset of rain)</i>	<i>May-September</i>	<i>Farmers should plan strategically when to plant and what type of crop to plant. Could be short or long duration crops.</i>
WATER SOURCES	<i>When water sources e.g. wells, rivers or dams dry quickly, it's an indication of good rain</i>	<i>June/July</i>	<i>Farmers should plan towards a good rain</i>
SHAPE OF MOON	<i>The moon facing downwards is a sign of rain in a few days, whereas the moon facing upward indicates withholding water.</i>	<i>Could happen anytime of the season</i>	<i>Farming season is beginning</i>
WIND DIRECTION	<i>During morning the wind changes direction from west to east is sign of rain</i>	<i>April/May-October</i>	<i>Farmers should prepare in advance for the rain</i>

Activity 1.1.2

Facilitate at least 4 partners to conduct new baseline and training on seed cataloguing of seed categories in community seed banks and the endangered/extinct seed varieties.

During the year, four of the ABN partners developed seed catalogues on the categories of the seeds their communities are keeping at the household and community seed banks level. Most of these seeds are endangered or on the verge of extinction. RAINS did a seed catalogue document on 27th August, CEVASTE on 13th and 15th November, ISD on 12th August, and EarthLore Foundation on 12th December. ABN also supported ISD to do a five-day community seed mapping process from 15th – 20th November.

The Ghana seed catalogue document was done for each participating community; therefore a total of 5 separate documents were produced. The seed catalogues contained a maximum of 13 seed varieties and a minimum of 10 seeds catalogued for each community. The documents will be periodically updated as and when there is the need. ISD and the Boru Selassie community developed a seed catalogue in which they registered about nine seed species and more than 26 varieties. EarthLore identified 23 seed species with more than 100 varieties where all the seed varieties are registered in the seed catalogue. CEVASTE identified 51 seed varieties. All the identified seeds are farmers' managed seeds, but some of them were lost and revived while others still exist in the hands of farmers. The process of cataloguing continues to be a reference point for the ABN's work with communities on seed engagements, focusing on utilizing the information captured in the document. ABN is consolidating all the four partner catalogues to have one regional seed catalogue for reference by the whole network. The Ethiopian 5-day community seed mapping process in Boru Selassie community was critical in the tracking of the lost seeds and revival of the

community seed banks. All 50 farmers working with the project (20 women and 30 men) plus 3 Government Development Agents (DAs) and 14 students (6 girls and 8 boys) from the nearby high schools participated in the process. The total number of participants came to 64 (24 females and 40 males).

The development to seed catalogues has strengthened the community seed and knowledge conservation. The community ecological seed maps have enhanced community seed governance skills for building larger landscape resilience to multiple ecological crises like climate change and mass biodiversity loss. Accordingly, three maps were produced: a map showing the past environmental situation, the present, and the anticipated future features. The maps provided the scenario and motivation for the community to take action in regenerating their farming landscape.

Activity 1.1.3

Organise and hold seed and food fairs as platforms for exchange and learning visits for sharing on indigenous seeds and related knowledge and practices. Strengthening community seed work and establish seed banks including technical advice training and material support for storage.

In 2019, ABN's partners organised or/and participated in several Seed and Food Fairs across the region. The fairs served as platforms for exchange and learning, and for sharing on indigenous seeds and related knowledge practices. ISD held a fair in Dessie town, north-central Ethiopia in December; RAINS held one on Ghana Farmers' Day, Friday 6th December, the Bikita Seed and Food Fair were held in August in the Bikita district, south-east province of Masvingo, Zimbabwe, organised mainly by women farmers in the community, and in September, the Zimbabwe Seed Fair was held in Harare at the Harare Botanical Gardens.

The Zimbabwe Seed Fair² was a 2-day event (13-14 September) where seed experts, food experts, and communal women farmers congregated to showcase and enjoy various seeds and traditional foods from across the country. 100 farmers working through 47 organizations exhibited their seeds from each of the ten provinces of Zimbabwe, making it a truly national event. Amongst these were farmers working with ABN partners EarthLore, from Bikita district in Masvingo, and CELUCT from the eastern district of Chimanimani, the latter participating in spite of the difficulties and challenges they had faced due to the devastating Cyclone Ida earlier in the year. Over the course of the two days, farmers had the opportunity to interact with farmers from other districts and exchange both seeds and information with each other. In addition, visitors were given an opportunity to learn how various communities are using traditional seeds and foods to combat poverty and hunger. Some of the seeds the farmers were able to buy were sorghum, pearl millet, finger millet, maize and cowpeas, groundnuts and round nuts. Twelve different stalls formed a food court, with deep-fried sadza balls being served alongside Ethiopian food and more traditional Zimbabwean food. 53 different stallholders filled the market section with appropriate technology including solar dryers, livestock, research/universities, small and medium-sized enterprises (SME), and 18 farmer stalls. The organisers estimate that there were around 2,500 visitors to the festival.

The Seed and Food Fairs were all huge successes which helped to highlight the central role of indigenous, locally-adapted seed and traditional knowledge, especially women's knowledge, particularly in achieving seed security and food sovereignty.

2 See link to article and a photo album on the Earth Lore's website: <http://earthlorefoundation.org/bikita-seed-and-food-fair-2019/>

Activity 1.1.4

Provide support to 4 partners to strengthen their capacity to host others to facilitate learning with their communities and establish country as well as sub-regional nodes - including strategic community meetings, exchange and learning at the community level as part of strengthening learning centres.

In a bid to strengthen the capacity of its partners to host others for learning within the network, the ABN conducted a regional conference hosted by the JVE (Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement) in Togo Kpélé District on Wednesday, 4th September. This was during the week-long JVE Agro-Bio-Culture Festival from the 1st to 7th September. The meeting brought together 20 participants from the sub-region including the ABN secretariat, other ABN members from Eastern/Southern Africa. The main goal of the meeting was to reflect on the revitalization and the strengthening of the ABN West African Sub-Regional Node by learning from other sub-regions from Southern Africa and East Africa. National and local leadership welcomed the participants. These included local Chief of Novivé Canton and the Secretary-General of the Kpélé Prefecture (District) together with the Executive Director of JVE Togo.

The event was supported by the ABN Secretariat, local authorities, communities of Grand Kloto and other stakeholders. ABN started piloting work with country national and sub-regional nodes (SRNs). ABN is using this approach to develop a capacity for its partners and communities to become learning centres where other members of the network can be hosted to learn from the experiences of the others. To ensure this pilot works out effectively, the ABN continues to develop basic principles that underpin the smooth functioning of the nodes. The role of the ABN Secretariat has been to facilitate dialogue between members in different countries and to support Sub-regional Nodes in their activities. The basic ABN



principles developed were to be respected and members were encouraged to have a spirit of voluntary service to advance the collective ABN vision. It was further proposed that ABN as a whole should review its structure to accommodate the SRNs so as not to create a conflict of interest where leaders of the Network were concerned. It was also advised to take a keen focus on the current and important issues and trends that revolved around ABNs scope of action to ensure that the 'Leave No One Behind' concept was integrated into all the members' interventions. Participants agreed to work with ABN guiding principles guided by the 'way of life' and that connect at a deeper level.

The following statement expresses a common understanding between the participants regarding the way forward with sub-regional node:

The conference established easy and open communication channels for the members through decentralization. Documented, appropriated and popularised the ABN values, developed joint projects and responses to call for projects for mobilization of resources, enhanced active collaboration and partnerships among members of the SRN, shared responsibility and made the leadership of country and sub-regional nodes rotational, creation of special learning centre for experience exchange and capacity building of members and communities and youth participating programme.

Activity 1.1.5

Strengthen community seed research groups to document on seed and related knowledge and enhance the integration of wild relatives in domestic food systems to promote community health and nutrition.

During the year, community research groups were strengthened through the establishment of demonstration gardens. In Ghana, RAINS

worked with contact farmers to establish model gardens. CEVASTE also used demonstration gardens to undertake market research on seeds.

Bikita community in Zimbabwe and the Boru Selassie community in Ethiopia are working closely with government extension agencies, which are respectful of the indigenous knowledge, and learning to mutually enhance their traditional seeds to make them more resilient to dynamic climatic changes. Here the communities bring their traditional research experience to synergise with science knowledge from the extension government agencies.

Activity 1.1.6

Support Country Seed Trainers to nurture and mentor the ABN seed work and support partners to develop and document case studies and other stories of change.

ABN undertook the ToTs on Bio-fertilizers, Genetic Resources and Post-Harvest losses and Project Management and Evaluation and Seed Catalogue. These TOTs went back to their communities to train more farmers in different areas in agroecology. The ToTs included agronomists and some experienced program staff. These pieces of training happened in Malawi (organised by Seed Knowledge Initiative) and in Kenya at the RODI Training Centre. JVE Togo, MEAP, Global Ecovillage Rwanda, TABIO and the Institute for Culture and Ecology sent their representatives.

Activity 1.1.7

Participate in national, regional and international gatherings to influence policy and to communicate and share community seed and knowledge practice.

ABN participated in Anglophone Africa Regional Trialogue: Bright spot for land degradation Neutrality Pollinators and food security. The Trialogue took place from 28th – 30th September in Nairobi, Kenya. It was a face-to-face three-way communication and

capacity building methodology promoted by the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network (BES-Net). BES-Net Dialogues is a multi-stakeholder platform aimed at strengthening the interface between policy, science/ traditional knowledge and practice, and enhancing national capacity to integrate findings and policy-relevant options from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services' (IPBES) thematic assessments into policies. This event presented the ABN with an opportunity for networking and developing new partnerships. The new partnerships included a pastoralist group that was later invited to the BGM. They also met Mr Kamal from the pollinators group. The ABN team also met with the SwedBio team at the meeting and had a productive discussion around partnership. Pernilla Malmer, Senior Advisor at SwedBio later visited the ABN Secretariat in Thika, Kenya.

ABN participated in an international conference held in Cape Town held from 28th – 30th January. ABN Regional Programs Coordinator together with Director for CELUCT and Programs Manager for the EarthLore Foundation made a presentation on "Connecting Seeds with Culture and Nature". This explored different relationships between seeds and land and nature. It was a great opportunity for the ABN to bring its perspective to a conference with scientists, university professors, and policymakers. Seed and Knowledge Initiative and the University of Cape Town organised the high-profile meeting.

Activity 1.1.8

Accompany and provide technical support to partners in the process, to strengthen community advocacy initiatives and coalition building (radio programs stakeholder meetings/forums, desk research and policy briefs etc.) on seeds issues and regeneration of biodiversity where wild relatives are revived.

During the year, ABN partners and their communities took part in community advocacy initiatives and coalition building. RAINS released news items/statements on seed and agroecology initiative on 6th December; CEVASTE did a press conference and staged advocacy on the UPOV 91 on 12th December; and EarthLore Foundation mobilised Bikita Farmer Cluster for monthly coalition-building meetings in Chiroorwe, Gangare and Mamutse communities.

The community advocacy initiatives in Ghana saw RAINS release news statements on seed and agroecology initiative and continue working with farmers and community people through coalition groups to advance advocacy around seed and its related challenges. These engagements (either through radio programmes, training or meetings) have further developed the capacity of communities to advocate for themselves on the use of traditional seed and storage systems. Sagani Television came to cover a RAINS event which highlighted the relevance of how traditional seed is gradually being lost as a result of the introduction of hybrid seeds. RAINS called on communities to work towards reviving the traditional seed which forms a part of their life. The three communities of Chiroorwe, Gangare and Mamutse, through their Bikita Farmer Cluster formation, met once a month to support each other on their farming activities and to plan joint activities like field visits and to prepare for big events like the Seed and Food Fair. CEVASTE produced advocacy and communication materials out of engagement with the farmers and community people. 45 people attended the Press Conference. The Media List included: ORTB (TV and RADIO, Eden TV (TV and Radio), E-Tele, Fraternite, Nouvelle Tribune, Le Matinal, Banouto, Tokpa FM, and Radio Kpasse. CEVASTE participated in Radio Talk Show with a topic on "Djinukun sèhouétin" meaning Seed Banks. Radio Kpasse also hosted CEVASTE for a Radio Talk Show on endogenous seed banks. This show was followed by 30-minute live calls



by people from the community to discuss agroecology. CEVASTE produced brochures and leaflets through the seasonal calendars and seasonal weather forecasting activity. Similarly, an advocacy and communication document was produced through community discussions with farmers on agroecological practices and indigenous farming. This formed part of an effort to systematically identify and document traditional knowledge on farming practices in an effort to win public opinion on the importance of this body of knowledge. The information materials have since been distributed to the communities and policymakers for official use and archived to conserve traditional knowledge.

Participation in community advocacy initiatives has led to increased awareness on the importance of traditional foods, their storage and preservation and their potential for nutritional value amongst the community members.

Activity 1.1.9

Provide rapid response fund for community action on community seed and knowledge work.

CEVASTE in Benin received additional funding support from the ABN Secretariat for them to do strategic planning with the community.



2

COMMUNITY ECOLOGICAL GOVERNANCE (CEG)

2.0: COMMUNITY ECOLOGICAL GOVERNANCE (CEG)

2.1: Objective

Inclusive and equitable community ecological governance system established based on time-tested community knowledge and practices.

Activity 2.1.1

Facilitate community dialogues, draw eco-cultural maps and seasonal calendars, Earth Jurisprudence and experiential learning exchanges to revive traditional knowledge, values and practices.

Community dialogues are the bedrock of the ABN's work. During the year, ABN Secretariat and partners held a number of community dialogues. In December, ABN held regional community training dialogues in Rwanda. This regional event brought the ABN partners from South Africa, Togo, Kenya, Tanzania and the host Rwanda. The regional training dialogue was facilitated by the Regional Programs Coordinator and Director of AFRICE, an ABN partner who has been working with ABN methodologies and approaches for several years. The dialogue was held in Bugesera community, situated in the Eastern part of Rwanda. Other communities that participated included Muhaga and Ruhango. Partners had the opportunity to learn how to conduct dialogues through the community dialogues in Bugesera community. The Bugesera district is the location of two memorial sites of the Tutsi Genocide in Rwanda at Ntarama and Nyamata. During the dialogues, the community came to terms with genocide and how this was fuelled by colonialism and foreign religion as opposed to ethnic divisions. The colonialists and foreign religion used ethnic diversity in Rwanda to fuel the division between Hutu and Tutsi. The community dialogues have become part of healing and reconciliation process and slowly the Hutus

and Tutsi are realizing that the foreigners made them kill each other after living in harmony and at peace with each other over a period of many years. The community dialogues ignited memory and revival of cultural values and practices that held them together for millennia. The community dialogues weave in harmonious relationship with people, their land and territory and their natural world. Once these relationships are well maintained, there is strong community and ecosystems balance and resilience.

ABN supported dialogue in a new community working with ISD at the Boru Selassie. The community dialogue was powerful and helped shift mindsets in terms of how they relate to their culture and nature. The Boru Selassie community, which is predominantly Muslim, removed their shoes during the mystical, walked barefoot, and argued that traditionally they relate to their land with bare feet. After two days of the meeting, the community left feeling inspired and in control of their livelihoods.

Activity 2.1.2

Evolve Earth Jurisprudence and train partners on the concept and encourage them to practice the principles of Earth Jurisprudence in their work with communities.

ABN in collaboration with Gaia Foundation worked to evolve an Earth Jurisprudence Movement across eight countries in Africa – Kenya, Uganda, Benin, Ethiopia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo. ABN has been piloting in-depth Earth Jurisprudence (EJ) training towards developing a cadre of 'barefoot lawyers'. EJ, or Earth Law, is a critical part of ABN's long-term approach. It builds on

indigenous and local knowledge, values, and principles of human relations with the natural environment which recognises both the rights of humans and other members of the Earth Community. Barefoot lawyers work with communities to articulate and enforce these home-grown rights. It's complex and will be difficult to bring into practice, given today's legal practices and approach. But it represents a fundamentally new way of looking at things, which is gathering momentum in a world of crises due to our separation from Nature. The first batch of EJ trainees completed their training in 2017 and a second batch is currently undergoing training. The strength of the training can be seen, for example, in the way those trained can now confidently and articulately explain the EJ approach. This has led to them being able to participate in various UN activities in order to advocate for a link between EJ principles and all 17 of the SDGs. The on-going development of this training is the basis of an ABN leadership programme across the continent.

In collaboration with Gaia Foundation, the ABN Regional Programs Coordinator, EarthLore Foundation Programs Manager, and Director for AFRICE (all members of the UN Harmony with Nature knowledge network) shared their work and reflections on accompanying indigenous and traditional communities to revitalise and safeguard their sacred relationships with water. The webinar was organised by the Global Alliance on Rights of Nature (GARN)³.

Activity 2.1.3

Pilot Multiple Evidence-Based (MEB) approach and distil guiding principles for knowledge interface, scale-up MEB and community ecosystem assessment techniques within the ABN network.

ABN continued to work with Multiple Evidence Base Approach (MEB) methodology on knowledge interface and taking it to different scales. On December 28th – 31st, a walking workshop was held in a forest landscape. This was a follow-up to the one done in Tharaka in an agricultural landscape. The walking workshop was done in the slopes of Mount Kenya at the Bantu Mountain Lodge, Nanyuki. It brought together custodians of different sacred forests in Kenya, from Tharaka, Kivaa, Meru, Kiambu, Nyeri and Narok. These custodians were joined by scientists, researchers, policyholders, media, water, bee and forest experts and the members of civil society. They all discussed various ways of protecting and relating to forest ecosystems using diverse knowledge systems. The workshop reviewed the way forward on how to ensure conservation of critical ecosystems, more specifically sacred and indigenous forests, using indigenous knowledge, practices and values. It also aimed at understanding the policies in place regarding indigenous knowledge and communities. The gathering heard that there is a global understanding that conventional knowledge alone cannot solve the current challenges and therefore there is need to keep exploring the contributions by different knowledge systems in resolving the challenges we face in the world today. MEB was likened to a basket of approaches on how to conserve biocultural phenomena, bringing together different knowledge systems to resolve conservation challenges of the 21st century. While these choices are not entirely new, world decision-makers have realised that a mistake was made when indigenous and local communities were encouraged to abandon their biocultural knowledge and practices. MEB aims to revive indigenous knowledge, practices and values that have been undermined or suppressed, and revalue and use them to strengthen community and ecosystem resilience today. MEB promotes respect and collaboration between different knowledge systems in conservation. Every knowledge base needs to be valued and respected for it to be useful.

³ <https://www.gaiafoundation.org/african-earth-jurisprudence-practitioners-speak-in-water-is-life-webinar/>



The meeting heard that there are a number of international and national laws and policies around indigenous knowledge and rights of the traditional communities and that most of the indigenous communities are suppressed, as they are not aware of their rights and what the constitution says concerning them. Communities were urged to understand the benefits of local biodiversity and protect it from outsiders who come in the name of learning or tourism, then end up taking resources away which they use to benefit themselves without recognizing or benefiting the communities. Indigenous herbs and other medicinal plants are the worst hit by bio-piracy, but it is now extending to other biological materials. It was noted that there are certain dangers and threats towards indigenous biodiversity and attendant knowledge especially the sacred forests. These include climate change, forest fires, lack of intergenerational knowledge transfer and extinction of traditional crop varieties.

Activity 2.1.4

Initiate, train and nurture community coalitions to build their skills for advocacy and lobby for the recognition of their traditional ecological governance system.

ABN supported the training of partners on community dialogues to build community analytical skills to be able to lobby and advocate for the recognition of traditional ecological governance systems. In this regard, some ABN partners like AFRICE, GRABE Benin, and EarthLore are taking lead in consolidating customary laws and clan constitutions for legal recognition.

Activity 2.1.5

Develop case studies and precedents for recognition and adoption by the African Commission in respect of the plural-legal system and customary laws in Africa including

supporting partners to implement AU Resolution on the protection of SNS through the development of an African Model Law that provides a common tool for implementing Resolution 372 (ACHPR/Res. 372 (LX) 2017) at the national level.

ABN and Gaia Foundation did a study of the African Commission's Working Group on "Indigenous Populations / Communities on the Situation of Africa's Sacred Natural Sites and Territories", in response to ACHPR/Res. 403 (LXIII) 2018. Both the organizations researched on the role of Africa's sacred natural sites and territories (SNST) for biodiversity, food and seed sovereignty, climate change resilience and adaptation, cultural identity, spirituality and traditional knowledge. They also explored the rights and responsibilities of custodian communities, their customary laws and governance. Interviews were carried out with stakeholders from 13 African countries - custodians, traditional authorities, protected area and government officials, politicians, civil society. The focus of the study was on Sub-Saharan Africa and draws especially from ongoing work by custodian communities, civil society groups and policymakers in Benin, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, with additional case studies from Madagascar and South Africa. The study took its orientation from the experience of custodians, with a view to better understand the issues they face and provide recommendations for implementation of ACHPR/Res.372. Over the course of the study, interviews were conducted with custodians, members of local/district government, civil society, academics, protected area authorities and state representatives. Core questions provided a structure for the interviews and conversations, to canvas opinion about effective measures for the implementation of ACHPR/Res.372. The majority of the answers were relevant to all ACHPR member states, while some were country-specific. Consultations, combined with the overall findings of the study and the six case studies, led to a series of recommendations for

heeding the call made by ACHPR/Res.372. These include core principles that should guide any domestic legislation or measures for the recognition and protection of SNST and their custodial governance systems.

The study inspired setting precedents in domesticating Resolution 372 of the African Commission on the ground. GRABE Benin, AFRICE and Earth Lore Foundation are taking the lead in developing the precedents. Already AFRICE has documented customary laws and clan constitutions that have been recognised by the local government of Uganda.

Activity 2.1.6

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

ABN supported the Institute for Sustainable Development (ISD) to conduct community dialogues and exchange learning between

communities. This community dialogue session took place from 17 - 18 December in Boru Selassie, South Wollo Zone. A total of 31 people participated (10 female and 21 men), drawn from farmers, influential religious leaders and youths from within and the adjacent farmers association. All the dialogue sessions were organised and conducted by the ABN Secretariat in collaboration with ISD.

The ISD mapping was initially not planned, but it became necessary owing to the challenges facing the community that required a holistic approach. The community is experiencing mass rural-urban migration to Addis and other cities including Arabia. Other challenges included cultural erosion and drying of streams due to eucalyptus.



3

YOUTH, CULTURE AND BIODIVERSITY (YCB)

3.0: YOUTH, CULTURE AND BIODIVERSITY (YCB)

3.1: Objective

A strong proactive youth movement that celebrates and engages with issues on culture and biodiversity across Africa.

Activity 3.1.1

Celebrate community events and join youth to learn through cultural practices, music and art/ Support partners to bridge the intergenerational gap through training and integration of YCB methods into the school curriculum.

In July, the ABN partner, Institute for Sustainable Development (ISD), organised the Cultural Biodiversity Celebration Week in Ethiopia which was hosted by the Konta community located some 450 km South-East of Addis Ababa.

The Youth, Culture and Biodiversity (YCB) event was attended by Jane Kinya and Fassil Gebeyehu from the ABN Secretariat in Kenya and Ethiopia respectively. From partners, NAPE of Uganda and USIKO of South Africa attended. The State Minister for Tourism officially opened the event. Motivational speeches were made by local authorities, the invited guests and the ISD director. There were several presentations on issues of youth and the importance of nature and culture to sustain life as we bring development to the nation. Fassil Gebeyehu gave a presentation on the importance of culture in building peace and development. Darius Salvester from USIKO made a speech and shared his experience in South Africa. He later reflected and shared his thoughts saying:

"Visiting Konta truly enriched my soul because I felt at home and was part of a living celebration of different cultures. The one thing that stood out for me most was the young people who took part in the celebrations, embracing their culture, showcasing and teaching the rest of their country, Ethiopia, Africa and the world on to come together. This was an example of how different cultures can come together to share and to celebrate and that way bring healing to our nations and lands that nourish us. The second thing that stood out for me was the way in which people live in harmony with the land, taking care of it to receive reciprocal ecosystem services. I was astonished to see how people still continue to farm in the same manner they did 200 years ago using natural fertilizers and pesticides. I've also come to learn that butter and honey is a delicacy and felt like royalty when I was fed honey and bread. The heart-warming welcome and hospitality will be engraved in my heart. I was inspired to become a warrior that will protect the rights of indigenous people and the land we live in ensuring that indigenous peoples rights, culture and land will be protected".

The Minister also opened the school exhibition organised by students who had come from different parts of the country and thus representing diverse cultures in the country.

ISD's YCB program is a program that aims to promote knowledge and confidence of the young generation regarding the value of their culture, biodiversity and associated local knowledge. It is about bridging the gap between the young and old generation

in which the knowledge gap would be narrowed, and experiential learning would help to augment the classroom learning in a modern setting. Through the YCB program, ISD mobilises Environmental Clubs in schools and also reached out to youth groups out of school. The cultural biodiversity celebration is one of the three interlinked pillars in ISD's YCB program. Depending on funds availability, ISD has been organizing these celebrations at least once every two years for the last 15 years. During the Cultural Biodiversity Celebrations, students under ISD's program bring their experiences such as stories of changes, cultural and environmental knowledge, traditional materials, medicinal plants and seed diversities among many other things.

The YCB program succeeded at bringing together policymakers at the village level and the international participants to share experiences of working with young people in Africa.

Activity 3.1.2

Support partner and youth on nature experiential learning to promote the connection of young people with themselves, nature and their cultural roots and identity.

Nature Tropicale (Benin) in collaboration with ABN and other partners in Benin organised a nature experiential training session for young people from the Ouémé Valley. ABN provided Nature Tropicale with financial support for this. The host of the nature experiential training event was in Hozin, District of Dangbo. This session entirely dedicated to Weme culture enabled more than twenty young people to become aware of the importance of promoting their culture, not only by taking a close interest in it but by documenting endogenous knowledge. The following results were achieved through the training:

- ⊙ Increased contribution to create and maintain strong links between the

present and past generations to make deep connections between nature, biodiversity and cultural beliefs to ensure a sustainable future.

- ⊙ Increased level of environmental awareness of stakeholders on the concept "Living in harmony with Nature," and focus on the importance of forests and sacred sites and the roles of religious leaders;
- ⊙ The strengthened operational capacity of young environmental leaders by developing concrete activities on the ground through the operation "Future Seed" or "Graine Future";
- ⊙ Increased promotion of "Analog Forestry" on a pilot site in the Valley of Ouémé

Activity 3.1.3

Participate in national, regional and international gatherings with an aim to influence policy and to communicate and share YCB practice and link up with other like-minded youth movements.

Eight ABN partners from Kenya, Ghana, Benin, Togo, and Burkina Faso including the ABN secretariat participated in the JVE international event on Agro-Biocultural celebration held in September 2019. A visit to the Centre for Studies and Training in Agroecology (CEFA) was made. The ABN members marked the ongoing development of the CEFA which will be a key centre for youth learning on Agroecology seed conservation and experience sharing. Partners graced the centre with the planting of more than thirty tree seedlings. Training on agroecology was organised by JVE in collaboration with different partners and stakeholders including Assimé Forest University and the University of Lome. Several modules were tackled during the week with facilitators aiming to ensure the youth absorbed not only the concept of Agroecology but also get the chance to see and practice. The sessions were conducted

in the natural environment in the cocoa tree plantation next to a river while it was raining, and other times the participants walked up the mountain. The Assimé Forest University led the sessions on forests and climate change. Partners had the chance to share their unique experiences from an organizational perspective from their countries, and how they encourage youth and stakeholders to mobilise and form alliances and take the lead in creating awareness and practising sustainable farming as agroecology presents it. There were very interesting sessions on Agroforestry lessons, including practical demonstrations delivered by Prof. Amouzouvi of the University of Lomé. He conducted the sessions while in the mountainous forest. He equipped participants with the necessary tools to engage in agroforestry as practitioners, as well as sensitize the communities.

The event successfully brought together local and national policymakers, and players in the higher institutions of learning, to listen to the issues affecting the young people and contribute through training and skills share. The event also enhanced deeper relationships between the young people and the elders, their natural environment, and their cultural heritage.

Activity 3.1.4

Promote innovative ways to document, publicize and share widely youth write-ups and performances, music and art related to ABN and work on biodiversity conservation /at least 3 publications targeting youth, children, comic books etc.

One of the significant achievements regarding publications and documentation during 2019 was the launch of the YCB Guide. The purpose of the guide was to give both conceptual and practical guidance to those

who want to facilitate a SEGNI program and help users explore the relationships between culture, nature and oneself. This was launched online at the end of September. The Guide is authored by Dr Million Belay in collaboration with ABN. Dr Belay took the approach of youth nature experiential learning (IMBEWU) from South Africa and started a similar program in MELCA Ethiopia under the SEGNI. The term SEGNI means “seed” in Oromifa language of Ethiopia which has the same meaning of IMBEWU in the Zulu language, South Africa. The guide brings out the story and development of the cultural biodiversity program in ISD and the link with IMBEWU programme in South Africa where the inspiration was taken from. The YCB guide is designed to support practitioners in the process of mentoring youth to reclaim their identity, culture and indigenous knowledge. The book is documented as an innovative way of storytelling. The flow has been achieved through systemic step by step lesson learning. (See the attached the full publication).

Activity 3.1.5

Provide rapid response fund to support sustainable livelihood projects among the youth

ABN supported USIKO to outline its work with vulnerable boys during the December school holidays. This intervention with 15-20 boys from the Mountain View area in Stellenbosch works with the boys in a safe setting where they will learn new skills about sustainable farming practices, exposure to nature and a wilderness setting to work on goal setting for their future. This initiative is part of a holiday intervention but will go beyond the December 2019 holidays.



4

STRENGTHENING ADVOCACY, COMMUNICATION AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION

4.0: STRENGTHENING ADVOCACY, COMMUNICATION AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION

4.1: Objective

ABN network is increasingly documenting and sharing a wide range of experiences and actions within the network and beyond as well as collaborating with different stakeholders to influence attitudes and policies on prioritised issues at the local, national and international levels.

Activity 4.1.1

Strengthen national coalitions and alliances to spearhead national campaign and policy influence on issues that affect community through editors breakfast meetings, dialogue meetings between the media, policymakers and coalitions.

During the year, ABN worked to strengthen coalition and alliances to spearhead national and regional campaigns and policy influence through the development of country and sub-regional nodes. A number of events were organised around sub-regional meetings, one of which included the West Africa sub-regional node meeting. It was attended by 250 participants from nine countries who included the ABN partners coming from Eastern and Southern Africa and local stakeholders. The objective of the meeting was to reflect on revitalization and strengthening of the West African sub-regional node for more collaborative action at the decentralised level for the advancement of ABN principles. Educational and discovery trips and nature learning was used to awaken the participants' curiosity by connecting them to nature and imparting a sense of responsibility towards safeguarding these critical ecosystems.

There has been increased participation of

significant stakeholders, such as women and youth, and also increased support from local leaders and government authorities and farmers showing more understanding and implementation of agroecology and resilient seed practices, and experiencing the benefits of these practices. There are also communities showing increasing levels of self-organizing, and Institutions that support the food sovereignty framework and ensuring a funding mechanism that supports critical elements of the work but does not lead to dependency.

Activity 4.1.2

Train partners on the effective use of social media as a communication, networking and advocacy tools.

ABN is fully committed to training its partners on the effective use of social media as a communication, networking and advocacy tool. The aim is to increase skills and knowledge of its partners to interact and develop campaigns through social media using photography for documentation and report writing as well as other methods. The increased skills will boost ABN's online presence thus ensuring ABN's advocacy, campaigns and communication work has a wider reach and platform. In December, ABN held its Biennial General Meeting (BGM) in Nanyuki, Kenya. The meeting was attended by 33 participants from 23 of ABN's partner organizations including strategic partners across Africa, the Board and the Secretariat staff. During the BGM, a session was dedicated to training partners in social media presentation. The session addressed the benefits and potential pitfalls of social media, and also gave participants a tutorial on how

to use Twitter, areas that many partners were not well-versed in. The session also explored how to leverage social media to advance ABN's mission and objectives. Partners are also using WhatsApp, Skype, Zoom calls to connect with one another and with the ABN Secretariat. The partners have increasingly been using social media platforms to share materials, pictures of different events, and other kinds of information.

Activity 4.1.3

Strengthen evidence-based documentation efforts for advocacy among the partners and communities such as participatory video, policy briefs, newspaper supplements on important international days, YouTube clips etc.

During the year, the ABN produced a Quarterly Newsletter that is distributed to its network as a way to increase ABN's visibility and advocate for the important work that the ABN partners are doing on the ground. Since December, ABN has also embarked on a desktop study on gender to clear contentious issues relating to gender and culture. ABN works with indigenous and local knowledge and there has been a need to clearly spell out the ABN experience in working with gender issues in ways that do not undermine either gender. ABN has a Gender Statement and the desktop study will help to back up through evidence the position that ABN takes. The report will be ready before the end of April 2020.

Activity 4.1.4

Facilitate participation of Partners and communities in national, regional and international meetings/fora for linkages and networking.

Partners and communities participate in national, regional and international meetings for linkages and networking to present or discuss policy issues on GMOs, Agroecology, Climate change and Agriculture. Links and

partnerships are established for resource mobilization to deepen ABN practice and influence policy. In September, running under the theme *Promoting consumption and marketing of healthy oils from Zimbabwean Traditional seeds*, the Zimbabwe Seed Fair started with a day of farmer dialogues and marketing opportunities. This was followed by a day dedicated to seeds. 100 farmers working through 47 organizations exhibited their seeds from each of the ten provinces of Zimbabwe, making it a truly national event. Amongst these were farmers working with ABN partners EarthLore from Bikita in Masvingo province, and CELUCT from the eastern district of Chimanimani, the latter exhibiting despite the difficulties that Cyclone Idai brought earlier in the year.



Activity 4.1.5:

Accompany and provide technical support to partners in the process to strengthen of community advocacy initiatives and coalition building (radio programs stakeholder meetings/forums, desk research and policy briefs etc.) on seeds issues and regeneration of biodiversity where wild relatives are revived.

ABN worked to strengthen its community advocacy and lobbying to influence policy on smallholder agriculture. In particular, RAINS, our partner in Ghana, released news items and statements on seed and agroecology initiative and continues to work with farmers and communities through coalition groups to advance advocacy around seed and its related challenges. These engagements (either through radio programmes, training,

or meetings) have further developed the capacity of communities to advocate for themselves on the use of traditional seed and storage systems. During the seed fair in Ghana, RAINS invited a national television channel to cover the event and telecast it as a news bulletin. During the coverage, RAINS gave an interview which highlighted the relevance of its work, focusing on how traditional seed is gradually being lost as a result of the introduction of hybrid seeds and the need to revive it. RAINS further called on communities to work towards reviving the traditional seed which forms a part of their life. The essence of the programme was part of the project efforts to communicate to the world the objectives of the project, but most importantly galvanise support for the use of indigenous crops in relation to farming practices.





5

STRENGTHENING NETWORK PRACTICE AND DEVELOPMENT

5.0: STRENGTHENING NETWORK PRACTICE AND DEVELOPMENT

5.1: Objective

Improved networking and collaboration among communities, partners and allies.

Activity 5.1.1

Support documentation and publication of ABN practices, methodologies on various thematic areas for the ABN partners to integrate ABN philosophy, culture and practice in their organizations.

ABN made a publication that amplifies its philosophy and approach. On September 20, the Youth Culture and Biodiversity (YCB) guide entitled *"A path to youth leadership: Connecting youth with culture, nature and self"* was launched, also known as the SEGNI Guide. It came out of a collaboration between many elders and youth who helped make the program a powerful tool for youth leadership. ABN organised the series of training, experience exchange events and spread the program into the following seven countries: Ghana, Togo, Benin, South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia. MELCA Ethiopia's staff also participated in experimenting, implementing and enriching the program. The SEGNI program is being conducted in more than 100 schools in Ethiopia and is a regular program in Togo and some schools in South Africa.

Activity 5.1.2

Strengthen coordination of Communities of Practice across all the ABN Thematic Areas and develop COP Guide for each Thematic Area n translate to other languages.

Quarterly conference calls between partners and the Secretariat were well coordinated. There has been improved communication

to clarify issues as they emerge between partners and the Secretariat and among the partners too. Since early 2019, there has been close coordination of Communities of Partners by partners taking up more roles. This has led to strengthened horizontal networking (country and sub-regional level) and sharing among the communities of practice. For example, CEVASTE seconded one of its staff members to learn from RAINS. The closer working relationship among the partners is also strengthened through the implementation of multiyear project/activities. Due to the interactions and close relations, as a network, ABN has identified various resource persons from within the network who are also supporting the other partners. For example, Method Gundidza and Dennis Tabaro, from EarthLore and AFRICE respectively, have been supporting and sharing knowledge on community dialogues and other ABN methodologies.

Activity 5.1.3

Conduct exploratory and follow up visits to both existing and potential partners for mutual assessment, induction, mentorship, integration and upscaling of the network practice and engagement.

ABN conducted follow up visits to five partners and combined this with project monitoring visits. The partners visited during the year included CEVASTE, ISD, RAINS EarthLore, and JVE Togo. Thematic Coordinators also organised two sub-regional meetings in West Africa and country meetings in Ethiopia and Rwanda. A few potential partners were invited and oriented on ABN methodologies and approaches. Increased mutual learning and understanding between the Secretariat and targeted partners was achieved.

Activity 5.1.4**Organise and hold quarterly reflection Core group meetings and bi-annual physical meetings for Board meetings and Core Group to analyse and assess ABN practice.**

The ABN Board of Trustees continued with its oversight role over the network. We had no Board members leave or join the Board in 2019. The executive board and staff held several strategic meetings to deal with the issues of staffing, funding, relationship building, among other items. The board executive was able to have two physical meetings, whereas the full board was only able to meet once, as was necessary. However, the Board met several times virtually. Efforts to recruit more female Board members continued. During the BGM, partners gave proposals for consideration.

At the Secretariat, the staff did both physical and online meetings through Skype or Zoom. As part of the ABN practice, these meetings started with a mystical to set the frame of mind into the critical discussions on the ABN philosophy and practice. The Board and Core Group meetings ensured alignment in decision making and the implementation of the work on the ground with partners and communities.

Activity 5.1.5**Support capacity assessment and enhancement for organizational development and institutional strengthening of partners and secretariat.**

With the support from the Bread for the World (BftW) Consultancy and Support Service Provide, some of the ABN Partners and the Secretariat staff were taken through the results-based monitoring which has since helped enhance report on the project impact based on clear indicators. The partners meeting presented an opportunity for the

partners to attend various thematic related capacity enhance on various issues relating to seed and seed policy and plant genetics. The Finance and Administration also participated in various professional exposure training that helped them familiarise with the revised Employment Act and Tax Regulations.

Activity 5.1.6**Study and review of ABN Gender relations and power play and its implementation in ABN methodologies, human rights and empowerment to peoples with disability, environmental crime etc.**

ABN commissioned a desk study and review to explore how different perspectives on gender are reflected in the work of the network. The study will identify challenges and opportunities presented by ABN methodologies, approaches and strategies in dealing with power relations between men and women, within the prevailing diverse cultural conditions, and come up with recommendations as well as clear indicators of successes. The study will seek to provide greater clarity on how power relations between men and women are manifested at the individual, community and wider societal levels of decision-making, community and ecological governance. It will also inform policies and practices to be developed to enhance women's participation, value and recognise their knowledge, and enable female as well as male members of the community to participate in decision-making processes in agriculture, food production, and ecological governance. The final report will be ready by end of April 2020.

Activity 5.1.7**Strengthen/Develop ABN Monitoring and Evaluation Manual for use with partners and communities.**

Once again, with the support from the BftW Consultancy and Support Service Provide, some of the ABN Partners of BftW project and the Secretariat staff were taken through the results-based monitoring and reporting system. This has been particularly helpful in tracking results at the various levels, i.e. the network, partners and community levels. The M&E Framework is now being revised to incorporate the ABN's Principle Focused Evaluation (PFE).

Activity 5.1.8

Organise and coordinate the ABN Biennial meeting and revisioning of ABN Strategic Plan (2017 - 2019).

ABN held its 7th African Biodiversity Network Biennial General Meeting (BGM) from the 9th to the 13th of December at the Bantu Lodge in Nanyuki, Kenya. The meeting was attended by 33 representatives from 23 of ABN's partner organizations including strategic partners from 11 African, the Board of Trustees, and the Secretariat staff. The objective of the meeting was to review the performance of ABN in the previous two years, and forged the strategic direction for the next period as outlined in the Strategic Plan. The ABN 2019-2021 Strategic Plan was also launched at the meeting. The ABN Vision and Mission were also reviewed to align with a new strategic direction.

Activity 5.1.9

Secure funding, develop and maintain relationships with funders by participating in donor meetings, trips, conferences and roundtables.

In the year, there were two new funding breakthroughs; the two-year support of £30,000 from Tudor Trust and secondly, one-year project support of US\$ 100,000 from the Agroecology Fund. To increase its fundraising efforts, ABN got the services of Sara Davies, a consultant who has been

supporting the team in fundraising and in scouting for new funders., ABN also subscribed to the online site "fundsforNGOs" to help increase our awareness and access to new resources and skills and be up-to-date on current information on calls for proposals and available funding. f On partnership development – representatives from the BftW and SwedBio visited ABN Secretariat in Kenya during the year. Pernilla Malmer of SwedBio visited ABN in August for their annual review meeting, and updated the Secretariat on Swedbio's strategic plan, checked the implementation of the external audit, and gave feedback on the ABN and SwedBio relationship and future collaboration. From Bftw, our new Project Officer, Imke Friederike paid a brief visit to ABN in September, as also wanted to clarify a few issues with the current project. Ulrike Binder who had been the project contact person previously had retired from BftW. We also held several Skype meetings with the Swift Foundation with the staff for programmatic updates and to identify areas of closer collaboration.



6

LESSONS LEARNT

6.0: LESSONS LEARNT

The following are some of the lessons learnt over the year:

1. Criteria for partner organisation hosting other partners.

In deciding the venue for the ABN partners meeting, proximity will be put into consideration in decision making. The proximity of the location of the venue and willingness of the regional government to be part and parcel of the planning for the event, participate, contribute and as well involve the national government in the event. This way the event will have an effective capacity for lobbying and advocacy.

2. Rewards in form of sharing and exchange of cultural gifts

The need to share and exchange in cultural gifts, in accordance with the wisdom of our ancestors, has come up as something that should be practised by ABN as the norm. The elders and regional government have always prepared several gifts for the visitors. This is a very enriching cultural and one feels part of the community. In addition, it is a motivational tool for everyone.

3. Documentation and wider sharing of the knowledge within the network

Every day we wake up to new experiences and knowledge and we have always wondered how best all the richness should be shared widely, within and out of network. We have had several media but would they document everything! Normally media documents what would constitute news to them and therefore ABN and partners should always make an effort of documenting for wider coverage.

There was a lot of knowledge sharing among the elder to youth and among peers. The biggest challenge is how to harness all the rich knowledge system, document for wider sharing.

4. ABN visibility and the need to be deeply involved in the process for widespread of its methodologies

The practice has been that ABN takes a few of its partners to learn and also make contributions to the event. In future ABN could, for example, have a slot within the programme where it could show a short film.

5. A key challenge and the power of YCB Alumni

At the school club level, one key challenge is the lack of motivation at times from the youth. There is neither a mechanism for bringing previous club members to share their experiences with existing school children/ youth, which could be a strong motivating factor nor mentors for new students to join environmental clubs. The Alumni's meeting was the starting point and it should be encouraged with partners follow up being a catalyst to ensure it kick starts and functions. This is critical for continuation and sustainability.

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)

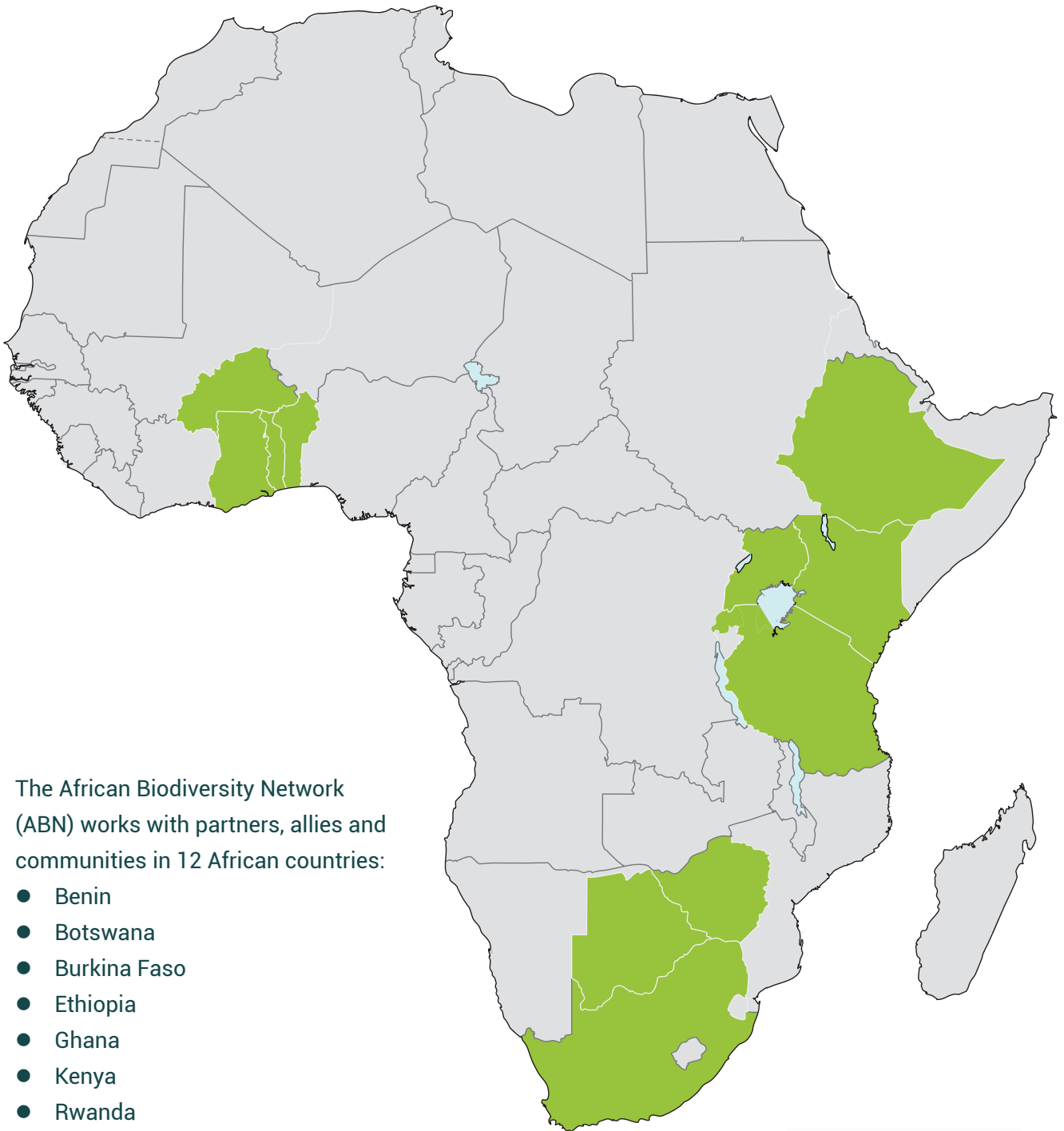
Kenya Biodiversity Coalition (KBIOC)

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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