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Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture in Africa Newsletter



News from the Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture in Africa

A service of the project Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture in Africa

Dear KCOA partners,

During a full week in July and August, partners from all Knowledge Hubs came together in Germany to attend Biofach – the world's largest fair for organic products – as well as the 4th KCOA Networking Meeting. The week in Germany had two main goals: learn about innovative solutions in and the potential of the organic sector on the one hand and strengthening the KCOA network while engaging in discussions around project implementation on the other hand.

The days at Biofach were filled with checking out the uncountable fair booths and talking to

exhibitors and other participants. The days in Schwäbisch Hall gave an overview of an entire organic value chain made by farmers for farmers and allowed for exchanges about challenges, ideas, and success stories between members of all five Knowledge Hubs.

This newsletter special issue gathers some personal reflections and learnings from the participants.

We hope you enjoy the read!

Your KCOA team at GIZ

Impressions from BIOFACH

Margaret Arwari

KHEA Market Development and Networking Officer / BvAT (Kenya)



Photo: Pamela Magino

Organise fairs in Africa:

It will be important for the KHEA to facilitate our farmers/farmer groups to exhibit, learn from fellow exhibitors and participants, network with potential business partners, and support organisations in participating at fairs such as Biofach. Biofach could have an African chapter. We can engage in advocacy campaigns with the African Union and other stakeholders to organise regional or continental trade fairs in Africa.

Develop a holistic value chain:

There is a need to focus on specific value chains for a holistic value chain development. In this case, strengthen the aspects of the 4Ps of marketing, e.g. product, price, place and promotion; including proper and innovative packaging of organic products. We need to support and train smallholder farmer groups and work through partnerships with value chain actors to directly market organic products, avoiding too many intermediaries. This will help them fetch fair prices for their products.

Mougib El Rahman Fouad

KHNA Networking Intervention Manager / HU (Egypt)

Establish contacts:

I worked in the agriculture sector for many years, accomplished a few things, and finally ended up in the KHNA project. Attending Biofach 2022, I was amazed to experience the diversity of participants from public and private sectors with different thoughts and cultures. It allowed us to meet and establish personal and direct relationships with key multicultural players of the organic world.

Get insights into innovations:

Through the discussions with the different stakeholders and their success stories, I learned a lot from

what they went through in similar projects and got new ideas for agricultural practices and new innovations. For example, we saw lots of innovation in packaging and product marketing. I hope to see more African companies participate in the next Biofach, and we hope to also participate to share innovative African products.



Photo: Caro Kadatz

Marie Pauline Voufo

KHCA / SAILD (Cameroon)



Photo: Jean Kana

Food security through organic farming:

What I have learned from Biofach 2022 is that food security can be achieved with organic farming. It is possible to think big with organic farming. Moreover, certification processes, which are normally very expensive for organic producers, are now becoming more accessible thanks to the grouping of local certification groups.

Organic operators as a source of inspiration:

We will highlight some of the organic operators interviewed at Biofach in a publication of the agricultural newspaper “**La Voix Du Paysan**” published in Cameroon. This action shows the public that the objective of the KHCA / KCOA is indeed achievable.

Justin Lekoto

KHWA Country Project Coordinator / Centre Songhai (Benin)

The importance of certification:

The Biofach exhibition has shown the importance of working on the certification of our products to better position ourselves in today's market.

The importance of politics:

The involvement of politics in Organic and Ecological Agriculture is necessary in order to support and to better promote the work of our producers. Madagascar's example at Biofach demonstrated us this.



Photo: Justin Lekoto

Rose Bell

KHSA Country Project Manager / Kusamala (Malawi)



Photo: KHSA comms team

Packacking from recycled materials:

Biofach was well-organised with an excellent exhibition of organic products from around the world. The use of recycling materials for packaging was impressive as was the work done by the German Research Institute into biological pest control. It is unfortunate that representation from Africa was minimal – this was a missed opportunity to market products from the region.

Impressions from the KCOA Networking Meeting

Joseph Nyamesegere

KHEA Monitoring and Evaluation Officer / BvAT (Kenya)

Plan activities well:

The implementation of the project activities should start with the end in mind. All our activities should address the needs of our target groups: the potential users of the organic agriculture knowledge being disseminated. The insights from the networking meeting will help us to plan and guide the implementing partners on the relevant activities.

Organise networking meetings at the hub level:

Overall, it is very important and impactful to regularly have networking and sharing meetings. Such a

format can even be applied at the hub level, where the partners from the implementing countries could share on their progress and results, have enough time for engagements, and learn from each other.



Photo: Pamela Magino

Khaoula Mokrani

KHNA Regional Knowledge Manager / CTAB (Tunisia)



Photo: Caro Kadatz

Physical encounters are necessary:

The first benefit is getting to know people in person and in a human way without going through a screen that severely limits our warm and friendly side. It was the potential to expand our personal and professional knowledge of each other. In a few words, KCOA co-workers are amiable, assertive, engaged, and humble.

Get insights into local knowledge and experiences:

Meeting KCOA members and visiting the town of Schwäbisch Hall and the association gave us the chance to develop skills and get new perspectives on the professional world. The work spirit of this association, that encompasses

all links in the value chain from breeding to processing, is an example that could be applied in organic agriculture in Africa, using all the potential we have.

Georges Ngougni

KHCA / GADD (Cameroon)

The challenges are similar across Africa:

The physical meeting and in-depth exchanges with the other knowledge hubs enabled us to realise that the challenges linked to the development of agroecology are almost the same in the 5 corners of the African continent, notably the absence of leaders, the quasi absence of national regulations in the matter, and climate change. The information market taught us that agroecology is broad in practice and content and that small initiatives can be used on a national and international scale and make big differences.

How to make such an event work:

On the organisational level we learned that the success of a networking event relies on a good

identification of stakeholders, selection of facilitators, selection of content and modern communication tools. This increases the quality of learning and exchange.



Photo: Ornelle Ngalani

Mama Sow

KHWA Monitoring & Evaluation Officer / FENAB (Senegal)



Photo: Harouna Sow

Creating stronger connections within KCOA:

The networking meeting allowed us to build relationships between the different participants. This is an essential element in the process of strengthening professional relations between the different knowledge hubs and also with GIZ.

Identification of similarities and differences:

We all gained a lot by sharing our experiences. This allowed us to identify similarities but also differences in contexts and therefore in practices related to the world of organic agriculture and agroecology.

Angela Coetzee

KHSA Project Director / Sustainability Institute (South Africa)

Meaningful contacts for transformation:

Spending time with the broader KCOA group was a very rewarding experience. It was truly special to get to know other hubs, learn how they approach their work, and connecting with their passion for transforming our food system. Every person we met and spoke to ignited interesting conversations and colourful perspectives that we could engage with meaningfully.

New perspectives:

The great care that GIZ took in planning our field trips and



exposure to success stories in Germany provided new perspectives and a sense of hope for a new way of addressing challenges that we might face in our work. The one-day meeting after the weekend of field trips almost felt too short to really grapple with and appreciate all that KCOA is about. We appreciate the opportunity to have shared this experience and are deeply grateful to be part of this project and important work.

Photo: KHSa comms team

About the project



The hub bases (dark red) and the current project countries (light red). © GIZ

Legal disclaimer: This geographical map is for informational purposes only and does not constitute recognition of international boundaries or regions.

The Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture in Africa (KCOA) aims to scale up adoption of organic/agroecological farming practices through a network of five Knowledge Hubs in Africa. The Knowledge Hubs are set up as collaborative country-led partnerships.

KCOA is commissioned by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and currently 29 non-governmental organisations in 17 countries across Africa. The project runs from 2019 to 2026.



These organisations are part of the KCOA network. The PELUM logo is listed only once. PELUM is a network with several national, independent chapters. KCOA works with PELUM Uganda, PELUM Kenya and PELUM Zambia.

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