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Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in Africa Newsletter



News from the Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in Africa (KCOA)

A service of the project Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in Africa (KCOA)

Dear KCOA partners,

The year is coming to an end and this special issue of the newsletter brings the highlights and insights from the 5th KCOA Networking Meeting. The 2023 edition gathered over **150 participants throughout 4 days of online sessions** with inputs from all five Knowledge Hubs. The meeting featured special sessions on Advocacy and Gender. It facilitated discussion rounds on many relevant topics for the network such as the continuity of the project, market development, and farmer-centred approaches.

During the event, the KCOA Digital Knowledge Platform was launched. We are very happy to share more insights on it here!

In this issue we also share important news with all our stakeholders: our project name now includes agroecology! We are very happy to consolidate what we already do in practice: connecting organic agriculture with agroecology to promote an ecological transformation of agri-food systems.

Finally, we close the year with some highlights from the Hubs and interesting stories from the KCOA

Blog.

We wish all our partners a great end of 2023. We will see each other in 2024 with renewed energy to continue our KCOA journey together!

Enjoy the read!

Your KCOA team at GIZ

Important Announcement

KCOA is now the Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in Africa



New logos of KCOA in English and French

We are happy to share with you an important announcement: our project name has now officially incorporated **AGROECOLOGY**! The KCOA abbreviation will remain the same to maintain the connection with our acronym, but the full project title will now be: “Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in Africa.”

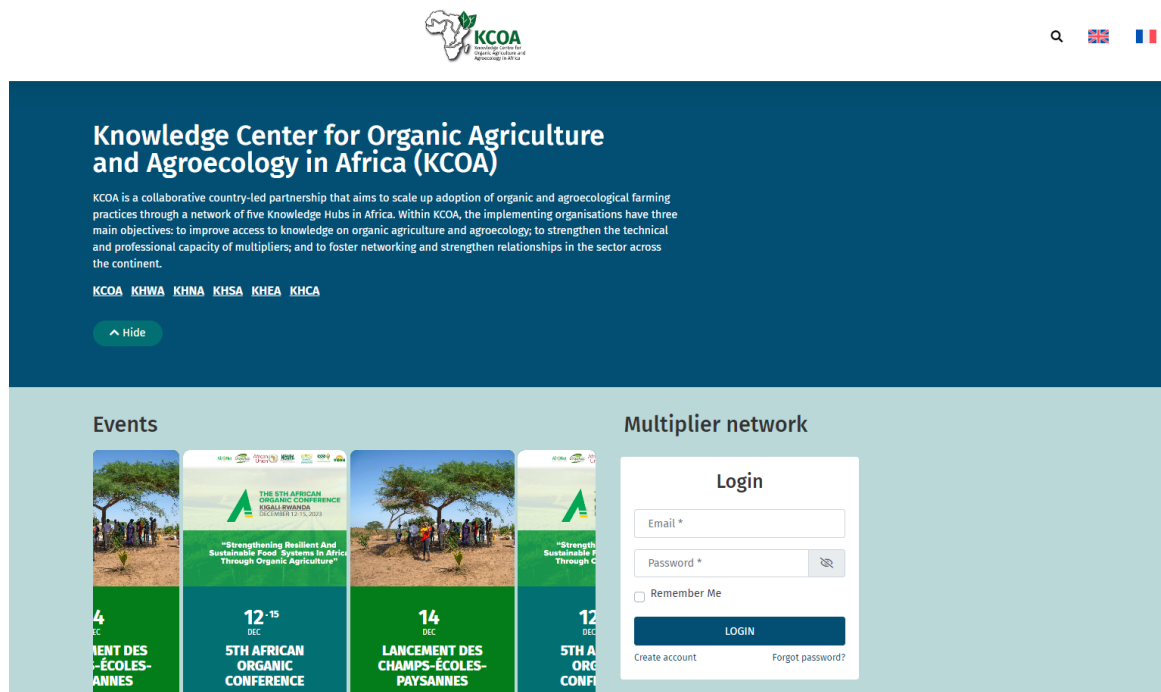
We know that in essence KCOA partners have always worked closely with agroecology. With the reflection of this work in our name, we hope to further strengthen our network. In our view, and reflected in our practices, organic agriculture and agroecology go hand in hand and offer a response to the planetary crises we are facing.

KCOA remains committed to the four IFOAM organic principles ([read more here](#)), which already reflect important agroecology values. Technical solutions can only be effective with a holistic approach which addresses socio-economic aspects, gender, the health of people and the planet, and many other systemic issues.

Together, organic agriculture and agroecology foster the needed transformation of our agricultural and food systems. KCOA and all Knowledge Hubs reaffirm this commitment once more to keep enhancing our impact in Africa and beyond!

KCOA Digital Knowledge Platform goes live in October 2023 during the 5th Networking Meeting

During the first day of the Networking Meeting 2023, the KCOA Digital Knowledge Platform was launched and officially released to the public after months of joint work between partners, programmers and advisors.



Website overview (December 2023)

For the launch, the GIZ-KCOA team hosted an informal talk-show with questions and answers on the platform's features. The talk-show interactively highlighted the key aspects of the Multiplier Network, giving an overview to the audience of how they can benefit from the multiple functionalities.

About the Digital Knowledge Platform (DKP)

The Digital Knowledge Platform (DKP) was created for the dissemination of knowledge on organic agriculture and for networking among relevant actors at the continental level.

It is comprised of two websites, the Database and the Multiplier Network. These two come together to provide the background structure for the dissemination of knowledge products and the exchange between multipliers and partners.

The Multiplier Network features multiplier profiles, multiplier stories, a social media registry, an event calendar, and integrated access to the database. The aim of this network is to provide a space for self-promotion, networking, and inspiration. Multipliers can register on the Multiplier Network website and can list their education, field of expertise, professional experience and contact details.

[Access the Multiplier Network here >>>>>](#)

Numbers from the Multiplier Network



+550
multipliers
registered



+30
events
registered



+20
Blog
stories

**Knowledge
Products**

625
uploaded

414
validated



Infographics with main numbers from the Multiplier Network Website. Data: December 2023

Impressions from the annual KCOA Networking Meeting 2023

Diane Mukantwari

KHEA / ROAM (Rwanda)

Cross-cutting issues and comprehensive approaches to promoting agroecology

The most valuable learning from the networking meeting was the emphasis on policy advocacy in implementing agroecology. As Country Implementing Partners, engaging agriculture sector leaders and raising awareness is a priority. Gender dynamics in OA practices were addressed, recognizing women's struggles in accessing training due to family responsibilities. Motivational measures, like involvement in group reading committees, were initiated. Market development discussions revealed challenges faced by producers, highlighting the need for support aligned with advocacy. Setting fair prices for produce was identified as crucial.



Photo: Diane Mukantwari



Photo: Scenic Photography Studio

Bathseba Ratemo

KHEA / PELUM Kenya (Kenya)

Synergies and the power of the Digital Platform

The KCOA Project has created synergies. We were able to share what all the five hubs are doing. There were a lot of learning moments from the networking meeting that reflect the variety and uniqueness of all partners. Moreover, the launch of the KCOA Digital Platform will now enable a continental repository of the knowledge products on organic agriculture. This will complement the KCOA Project and will also be utilized by different actors in agriculture (policy makers, researchers etc).

Muketoi Wamunyima

KHSA / PELUM Zambia (Zambia)

Innovation and connections

There are many similarities between the interventions undertaken by the different hubs, despite differences in location and culture, which speaks to the common challenges facing Africa. Some very innovative initiatives involving successful women's and youth groups were presented, which is critical as we need the youth to start engaging with agroecology and organic farming. The cross-learning and exchange happening within KCOA is precious.



Photo: KHSA

Advocacy, KCOA and Knowledge products

It is clear that we need impactful advocacy work to transform Africa's food systems. The regional meeting reaffirmed my belief that PELUM Zambia is on the right track with its advocacy work and can deepen its impact through enhanced lobbying for financial and political support for agroecology and organic agriculture in the country. The KCOA platform is a valuable tool in this regard with its wealth of evidence-based knowledge products.

Marie Pauline Voufo

KHCA / SAILD (Cameroon)

Learnings from other hubs

Two things in particular caught my attention: the micro-interventions and school-based environmental clubs presented by the Knowledge Hub in North Africa (KHNA).

I understand that micro-interventions are micro-projects led by the multipliers themselves. The point



Photo: KHCA

is to be able to capitalize on them and publish them as knowledge products that can be duplicated by other entrepreneurs. The environmental clubs promoted in schools in North Africa are ideal frameworks for planting the seed of organic farming in children at a very early age, who are in fact future multipliers. The Knowledge Hub in Central Africa (KHCA) should draw inspiration from the work already carried out by KHNA. The opportunity to learn from others experiences and to gather inspiration from other hubs was very valuable.

Tanja Reischl

KHNA / Sekem (Germany)

Cross-learning between people and the hubs

The GIZ KCOA Networking Meeting 2023 is a perfect example of how to host a well-managed, informative and entertaining series of online meetings. It was also a reminder of how important it is that the different Knowledge Hubs communicate with one another. It was enriching not only on a professional level but also on a personal level. As different as the Hubs are from each other, we are all working hard towards the same cause, and we can learn a lot from each other – the Networking Meeting was a great occasion to do so.



Photo: Christine Arlt

Hepzibah Ebe

KHWA / NOAN (Nigeria)

The KCOA networking event in 2023 was an exceptional virtual experience. The organization was impeccable, creating a highly engaging atmosphere that almost felt like one big room. The activities and knowledge sharing among the Hubs were highlights, especially the inspiring stories and experiences, particularly in communication and advocacy. I'm eagerly anticipating the next one.



Photo: Personal archive

Dr Arfang Mafoudji Sonko

KHWA / Enda Pronat (Senegal)

Tools and methods for producing Knowledge Products

The most important learning: this workshop enabled us to know and understand what's going on in the other knowledge hubs outside the KHWA. It allowed us to learn something too. The workshop gave us the tools we needed to set up new working methods for producing KPs and to cascade training.



Photo: El Hadji Diallo

Updates from the hubs

Knowledge Hub Southern Africa (KHSA)

Permaculture Blitz, Zambezi Region, Namibia



Rainwater-harvesting and biomass trenches dug in pathways. Manure is added and trenches are filled in to create an environment where soil microbes can thrive. Photo: NNF

From 13 to 17 October 2023, 14 Namibian lead farmers and KHSA multipliers, accompanied by Namibian Nature Foundation staff, participated in two permaculture blitzes (Perma Blitzes). A permaculture blitz is a one-day event in which a group of people design or redesign a garden or farm area according to permaculture principles. They learn by doing. The focus at Bornventrue Lizazi's home garden on the Zambezi floodplain and at Pherdinant Mate's home garden in Kwandu Conservancy was on setting up systems to aid with water conservation (rainwater harvesting and sinking water into pits and trenches) and on building soil fertility (mulching, compost and biochar production). The group sleeps in tents on site. A follow up event at the same venues will be held later in 2023.

Knowledge Hub North Africa (KHNA)

From micro to meso-interventions: the example of the Moroccan multiplier Younwa Lahlou



Photo: Joihara Ben Maachou

After successfully implementing micro-interventions in the first project phase, several KHNA multipliers are moving on to meso-interventions. Their ideas and knowledge sharing formats proved to be successful. Now, they are scaling up their interventions. One example is the Moroccan multiplier Younes Lahlou. He is sharing his knowledge about feeding organic laying hens using hydroponic cultures to make Azolla, which is produced in partnership with the Hassan II Agronomic and Veterinary Institute. Azolla, a small aquatic wonder fern, is protein-rich sustainable and profitable organic feed. Younes chose the Fayoumi breed because they are tough birds with remarkable disease resistance and heat tolerance. They are also very fertile and good layers. Younes' innovative meso-intervention was recreated by many interested participants. The intervention had theoretical and practical components so that everyone could not only hear but also see how the Azolla-production is carried out.

Knowledge Hub Eastern Africa (KHEA) & Knowledge Hub Central Africa (KHCA)

Benchmarking Visit by the Knowledge Hub in Central Africa (KHCA) Team to the Knowledge Hub in Eastern Africa (KHEA) BvAT Offices in Nairobi, Kenya



KHEA Team & KHCA team with GIZ Contact for KHEA – Florian Peloschek at GROW BIOINTENSIVE Agriculture Center of Kenya (G-BIACK) a Centre of Excellence for PELUM Kenya on the project. Photo: KHEA-KHCA

From November 05 to 12 2023, a team of three representatives from the Knowledge Hub in Central Africa (KHCA) implementing organizations - CIPCRE, GADD and Inades-Formation Cameroun - made an exchange trip to the Knowledge Hub in Eastern Africa – BvAT Offices in Nairobi, Kenya. The general aim of this exchange trip was to contribute to strengthening the technical and institutional capacities of KHCA. The trip enabled the representatives to learn the following lessons: how to define the challenges of agroecology and organic farming; how to measure the importance of structuring players and integrating functions between the various implementing partners; how to identify common challenges, in particular that of recognition by the state and populations of the importance of agroecology and organic farming for health and sustainable environmental management.



Photo: KHEA-KHCA

The 5-day mission combined presentation and talk sessions, field and partner visits, and a visit to the government's Intellectual Property Rights regulatory body, Kenya Copyrights Board (KECOBO). This benchmarking visit explored examples of successful components and related practices in line with the project objectives.

Special Article

Gender: 1st Women In Agroecology Expo

PELUM Uganda in partnership with The Alliance for Food Sovereignty and other partners in Africa (AFSA) held its very first African Women in Agroecology expo at Freedom Square



Participants of the event together. Photo: KHEA

Partners from KHEA and KHSa represented KCOA during the event, which brought together women from across Africa.

The event's main objective was to showcase the contributions of women and youth in agroecology and agroecological entrepreneurship, with a specific emphasis on their pivotal role in improving health and nutrition outcomes, while highlighting their innovative practices, knowledge, and successes in sustainable agriculture. The expo served as a central platform for celebrating women's achievements and featured interactive sessions, exhibitions, and presentations, providing an opportunity to engage with a diverse audience.



Photo: KHEA

During the expo, a declaration named Harvesting Her Power: African Women Leading Agroecological Transformation was read and officially launched.

[Click here to access the declaration >>>](#)

Moreover, during the event, mentors and mentees from **AWOLA (Africa Women Leaders in Agroecology)** from Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe were present and showcased their progress. AWOLA is a leadership career development initiative of the PELUM network (PELUM Uganda, PELUM Kenya and PELUM Zimbabwe), with the aim of equipping women working on agroecology, sustainable agriculture and food systems with leadership skills.

The Government of Uganda was represented by Dr. Mujuni Bernard, Commissioner Equity and

Rights, Directorate of Social Protection, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development who graced and officially launched the expo as the Guest of Honour.

Blog Stories

Check out our selection of multiplier and success stories posted on the Multiplier Network!



The Transformative Journey of COPROBIO-Cooperative through Mushroom Farming

Discover the power of transformation of mushroom farming in the Ngoma District, Rwanda.

[Read the full story >>>](#)



Agroecology is a Project for Society – An Interview with Mariam Sow

In this interview, Mariam Sow (Director of ENDA Pronat, KCOA Partner in Senegal) speaks about her journey on agroecology and her views for the future.

[Read the full story >>>](#)



Senegal: Shaping the country's agroecological transformation by creating networks

Binta Ndèye shares her journey on establishing networks and new markets in her village in Senegal.

[Read the full story >>>](#)

[Click here to discover more stories »](#)

Upcoming events

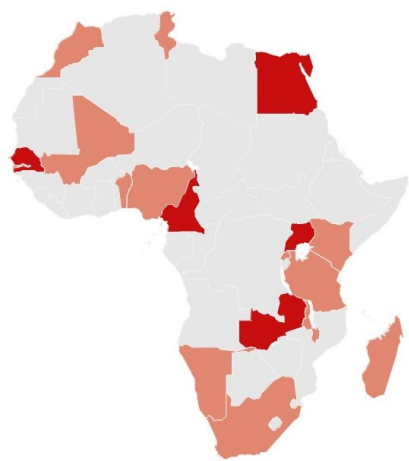
Want to know more about upcoming events?

Or are you a registered multiplier and want to share your next event?

[Access the Multiplier Network and check out our event calendar! >>>>>](#)



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 and Agroecology 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 30 non-governmental organisations in 18 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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