

ANNUAL REVIEW 2021

MOROCCAN
BIODIVERSITY
& LIVELIHOODS
ASSOCIATION





The Moroccan Biodiversity and Livelihoods Association is a non-governmental non-profit association registered in Hay Mohammadi zone, Marrakech under the n° 470.

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OUR MISSION

Founded in 2014 by Moroccan environmentalists, the Moroccan Biodiversity and Livelihoods Association works to support Amazigh communities in carrying out conservation initiatives in the High Atlas Mountains. We work with communities to restore ecological balance, document and enhance traditional conservation practices, and support agriculture-based rural economies.

In collaboration with rural communities, we assess the richness of local flora and fauna to protect endemic species, restore and build water infrastructure, implement and manage community plant nurseries and seed banks, and introduce sustainable land use practices to farmers, shepherds, cooperatives, and youth to support local livelihoods and promote green entrepreneurship.

OUR VISION

We aspire to see the High Atlas Mountains' resources managed sustainably and equitably, with healthy ecosystems and local economies prospering as a result of their commitment to sustainable and climate-resilient practices.



24

Running projects

900

Trained community members

20 000

Planted trees

120 000

Distributed plants

WHERE WE WORK

Our efforts are concentrated in the High Atlas region due to its rich floristic diversity and the increasing external threats it faces. We primarily operate in the following sites and work continuously to expand our reach.

Ourika Valley

Al Haouz, High Atlas

In Ourika's all girls boarding school, we established in collaboration with ABDBO a botanical garden of 6000m², which has hosted our environmental education program since 2014. The interactive workshops we facilitate are designed to develop the girls skills and knowledge of plant conservation, plant uses, permaculture techniques and traditional conservation practices. The girls help with the planting, cultivate thousands of seeds in the garden's greenhouse, which they share with their families and friends, and, most importantly, reap the rewards of their hard work by harvesting delicious fruits and vegetables that last for months, sustaining the school's meals for 150 resident students and staff.



Imegdral

Al Haouz, High Atlas

Many of our projects, including two of our plant nurseries and a seed bank, have found homes in Imdegal commune. The local community's strong interest in our initiatives from the outset ensures seamless functioning of our initiatives on site. Both plant nurseries generate an average of 20 000 seedlings every year, with 12 000 distributed to community members and the rest planted in the wild.



Ait Mh'amed

Central High Atlas

Ait M'hamed commune is the host of another plant nursery and seed bank, generating an average of 35 000 plants per year, which get distributed to local farmers, cooperatives, and schools. The community's favorite plants to receive are rosemary, oregano and holly oak. It is also an important destination for our Farmers Field Schools (FFS) program, which aims to assess livestock management in the region, improve it, and introduce the locals to affordable and sustainable agroecology practices.



Zaouiat Ahnsal

Central High Atlas

In collaboration with the AESVT association, we established a 2400m² community nursery in the village of Agoudime in the commune of Zaouiat Ahnsal in 2021. This community plant nursery aims to protect endangered and endemic species by reproducing them, distributing them to populations, and reintroducing them into the wild. It also supports the local communities by providing aromatic and medicinal plant seedlings to local cooperatives and training farmers in sustainable agricultural practices. A seed bank has been set up in the premises of the Amaguar cooperative for the conservation of endangered species, climateresilient local varieties and endemic species of the region and Morocco.

Oukaïmeden

Al Haouz, High Atlas

In 2019, MBLA collaborated with the local Ait Lkak association to build a community plant nursery, with its agricultural terraces divided into 24 plots and irrigated with a drip irrigation system to save water.

We are currently cultivating 26 endemic, endangered, and valuable plant species, including thyme and lavender. Our community seed bank, which we established to invite farmers to exchange and conserve local seed varieties, is located right next to our plant nursery. The Oukaïmeden plant nursery and seed bank, like our other sites, are open to the local community and visitors from all walks of life. They host a number of environment-related workshops geared toward people who are interested in learning about the local biodiversity, agroecology and ways to achieving harmony with nature. The events and activities hosted by Oukaïmeden's plant nursery help to raise awareness of the region's rich biodiversity and promote it as an ecotourism destination.



BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

OVERVIEW

The rich floristic diversity of the High Atlas faces myriad threats, from overgrazing and climate change to poor water management and anthropogenic pressure contributing to the degradation of biodiversity. Our efforts in conservation include documenting, assessing, and monitoring local biodiversity to slow or prevent its loss. These are essential steps toward implementing in-situ and ex-situ conservation initiatives.

2021 KEY ACTIONS

PLANT NURSERIES IN THE HIGH ATLAS

Over the last year, we were able to distribute 33 000 plants through the community plant nurseries in the High Atlas. Our efforts in this area continue to grow as we established a new plant nursery and seed bank in Zaouiat Ahansal.

A NEW PLANT NURSERY AND SEED BANK IN ZAOUIAT AHANSAL

A New Plant Nursery and Seed Bank in Zaouiat Ahansal

The newly established 'Community Nursery School of Aromatic and Medicinal Plants' was set up in the village of Agoudime of Zaouiat Ahansal commune, in collaboration with AESVT Maroc. The School aims to:

- Contribute to the conservation of endangered and endemic species by reproducing species that are under pressure, distributing them to community members for their plots, and through reforestation;
- Support sustainable livelihoods through the distribution of aromatic and medicinal plant seedlings, with view to promote and market them, supporting women's cooperatives in Zaouiat Ahansal commune, and support the development of ecotourism through this pedagogical garden;
- Train farmers in sustainable techniques through experimental plots – trainers will also disseminate these techniques at the level of the commune to reach more communities.

To ensure interconnectivity between our programs and widen the reach of conservation efforts of the plant nursery, an additional seed bank and plant nursery have been set up in the premises of the Amaguar Cooperative for the conservation of endangered species, climate-resilient local varieties, and endemic species of the region and Morocco.



ESTABLISHING A SECOND PLANT NURSERY IN IMEDGAL

Imedgal commune is home to one of our longest community collaborations and plant nurseries. This first nursery has successfully distributed 6157 plants in 2021 alone. However, this nursery has also been challenged by scarcity of irrigation water and high demand for seedlings.

The community demand for greater plant production prompted us to set up a second nursery in Talat Ness, 1 km from the village of Igherm. With an area of 3000 m², we plan to reproduce more than 35 species and delegate plots for seed production, specifically focusing on local climate-resilient varieties.

STORING OVER 500 SEED VARIETIES

In order to protect and save plant genetic diversity in the High Atlas, we continue collecting, storing, and multiplying viable local seeds in the community seed banks across our areas of work (Ait M'hamed, Imegdal, Oukaïmeden, and Zaouit Ahensal). This supports various conservation goals including lessening the impact of wild harvesting on herbs and aromatic plants, supporting the sustainability of High Atlas seed systems, and ensuring the conservation of local climate-resilient varieties.



— Seeds stored per site :

● Ait M'hamed	● Imegdal
148	328
● Oukaïmeden	● Zaouit Ahensal
33	10



ECOLOGICAL MONITORING IN AGDALS OF OUKAÏMEDEN AND IGOURDANE

The Agdals of High Atlas remain central to our conservation work as they are key sites for biodiversity and livelihoods for the region's communities. In the last year, we organized two field monitoring sessions – the first at the closure of the agdals and a second at the reopening to evaluate the impact on biodiversity. Data collected in our monitoring includes plant and butterfly populations and soil quality assessments across our zones of work. This approach helps us understand the impact of anthropogenic actions on biodiversity, such as the effects of grazing activity. Our monitoring also helps us collect data on enduring challenges such as the impacts of climate change, informing our future actions to maintain a healthy ecosystem.

SALVIA TARAXACIFOLIA CONSERVATION IN MOROCCO'S HIGH ATLAS



In 2021, we launched our program to protect the endemic and endangered plant *Salvia taraxacifolia*. Building on our work in enrichment planting and diverse conservation measures, we were able to initiate our program on this key species thanks to the support of the MBZ Species Conservation Fund.

In collaboration with local communities, we integrated in-situ and ex-situ measures and strengthened traditional environmental management practices, to contribute to the conservation of *Salvia taraxacifolia*. The program had three main components: field data collection, creation of germination protocol, and planting of over 4000 seedlings in the wild.

Our team traveled through the Atlas Mountains to pinpoint undiscovered locations of *Salvia taraxacifolia*, collect plant samples, and assess its habitat and climate conditions. We did research with local communities to learn about *Salvia taraxacifolia* local names and uses, which offered us opportunities to raise awareness about the plant and its vulnerable status. We then experimented with growing *Salvia taraxacifolia* in various soil conditions to determine its ideal environment and conditions to thrive throughout the High Atlas region.

You can get your hands on a digital copy of our recent publication about MBLA's year-long journey to protect the endemic plant, *Salvia taraxacifolia*, on our website.

[mblaassociation.org/
publications/](https://mblaassociation.org/publications/)



**Protecting
Salvia taraxacifolia
in the Atlas region.**

Follow the one year long journey of MBLA's biodiversity enthusiasts to help protect the endemic species of *Salvia taraxacifolia* in the Atlas Mountains.





PLANTING 4000 SEEDLINGS IN THE WILD

And finally, based on our field research and the results of experimentation, we carried out an ambitious enrichment planting program. Through the Imegdal community plant nursery, 4000 seedlings were produced and then distributed to farmers, shepherds, and other community members to ensure *Salvia taraxacifolia*'s proliferation in the Imegdal commune and community awareness about the importance of this plant.

BIOCULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

OVERVIEW

Biocultural and environmental education has been a cornerstone of our work since the establishment of MBLA. Engaging youth and community leaders in workshops and training on local biodiversity, and conservation practices contributes to raising awareness about environmental concerns in the communities we collaborate with. Specifically, our annual program with Dar Taliba, a girls' boarding school in Ourika, entails weekly garden teaching sessions and intergenerational workshops to bring youth and community elders together.

2021 KEY ACTIONS

DAR TALIBA SCHOOL GARDEN

Our environmental education program for Dar Taliba's girls covers a range of topics and activities including biodiversity and climate change in the High Atlas, ethnobotanical tours, practical gardening training on seed saving, soil health, and medicinal and aromatic plant use, and sustainable water management. These trainings are done through monthly workshops and activities in the Dar Taliba pedagogical garden. We also hosted two intergenerational workshops on cultural practices of conservation and traditional foods and recipes, both led by community elders. In total, we facilitated 14 activities, 8 practical garden trainings, 2 intergenerational workshops, and an Earth Day event. Our workshop series and trainings were developed into an environmental education manual to capture important lessons from the program.

This year, we also put on an outdoor educational display on local flora and fauna in addition to our normal maintenance of the school garden which contributes vegetables to the cafeteria. We have been approved for additional funding to continue working with Dar Taliba in Ourika and extend our programming to Dar Taliba of Oukaïmeden and initiate another learning garden.



TRADITIONAL DISHES WORKSHOP WITH DAR TALIBA GIRLS

In addition to our in-garden activities, we organised a traditional cooking workshop for Dar Taliba girls where students learned to prepare traditional recipes using medicinal plants such as the dish *Tagula o'Asengar* (corn porridge). This workshop encouraged active intergenerational exchanges and raised awareness about the importance of healthy eating and preserving our grandmother's recipes.





INTERGENERATIONAL WORKSHOP ATTENDED BY THE AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR

We were honoured to have his Excellency, the Australian ambassador, Mr. Michael Cutts and his family join us for an intergenerational transfer workshop facilitated by elders in Ourika. Girls from the boarding school learned about cultural conservation practices that have been implemented by High Atlas indigenous communities for decades, including Agdals and agricultural terraces.

Our Australian guests also got to tour the botanical school garden in Ourika and the community plant nursery in Oukaimeden. This was a great opportunity to showcase our projects with the girls in Ourika, thanks to the support of the Australian embassy.



TRADITIONAL DISHES WORKSHOP WITH DAR TALIBA GIRLS

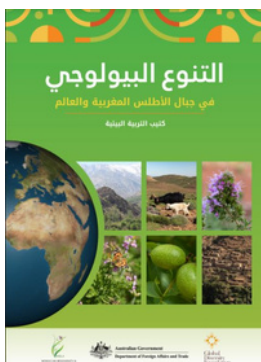
On the occasion of the High Atlas Food Market in October, we organized an agroecology workshop with the students of the Tizgui Association and the girls of Dar Taliba at Terre d'Eveil in Marrakech. Students benefited from an introduction to the values of agroecology, its importance, and its long-term potential for our agroecosystem. Dar Taliba's girls had the opportunity to share their agroecology expertise as students of our environmental education program and in-garden training.





COMPOSTING WORKSHOP FOR DAR BELLARJ MOTHERS

We were pleased to welcome mothers from Dar bellarj to Dar Taliba's garden in Ourika. We introduced them to our biocultural and environmental program targeting girls in the Ourika region. They also learned essential composting tips and tricks that will certainly help them care for their communal urban garden in Marrakech.



— BIODIVERSITY MANUAL

In May 2022, we produced an educational manual on High Atlas biodiversity and environmental issues for local students (12 to 15 years old). The manual provides a succinct overview to raise awareness about biodiversity issues with a focus on the High Atlas, and covers the following themes: biodiversity hotspots, climate change, threats to biodiversity, plastic pollution, and sustainable development goals (SDGs). We distributed printed copies to students of the Dar Taliba boarding school in Ourika and continue to distribute them to other schools in the region. This manual is also a resource for teachers: it includes specific chapters for lesson plans and classroom questions.



— FERTILIZATION BOOKLET

This year, we put together a booklet on soils and natural fertilization techniques for the public. The soil techniques include accessible methods to evaluate soil health, techniques to produce mature compost, and the production of liquid fertilizer from natural products. This brochure is written for a wide audience, with simplified explanations and illustrations in Arabic and French, to transmit the information to as many people as possible.

LOCAL PRODUCT COMMERCIALISATION

OVERVIEW

The local product commercialization program supports community-based initiatives to market local products through market research on products and by-products made by local cooperatives, development of business plans, and building connections for the equitable trade of biocultural products. We also raise awareness about the importance of purchasing products that support local communities' livelihoods that are biodiversity and environmentally friendly.

2021 KEY ACTIONS

CAPACITY BUILDING

Our Local Product Commercialization program continued to provide key capacity building for High Atlas cooperatives. To support rural cooperatives in improving their entrepreneurial skills and help them open up to new and innovative business opportunities, we organized a series of workshops on diverse topics including online commercialisation, marketing techniques, product pricing, product quality, aromatic and medicinal plants, and best practices about the administrative and financial management of cooperatives.



CREATING 6 COOPERATIVES WEBSITES

The Online Local Product Commercialization, Marketing, and Promotion Sustains Biodiversity-Friendly Livelihoods Program was created in response to the cooperatives' visibility challenges. We launched social media campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of purchasing locally produced biodiversity-friendly products and supporting community livelihoods, in addition to creating websites for six cooperative partners.

The websites were created using open-source software, which was then adapted to six rural cooperatives (Al Oulfa, Amaguar, Manahil Al Maghrib, Nisae Aska, Taytmatine and Yamna).

The cooperatives received a year of domain hosting, subscription, web design, e-commerce functionality, and remote technical support. In addition, we created high-quality pack shots of 100 local products, along with product descriptions, for use in online marketing and promotion. With these sites, cooperatives are able to access more consumers and better equipped to continue their sales despite challenges of the pandemic.

<https://aloulfa.com>

<https://coopamaguar.com/>

<https://manahilalmaghrib.com/>

<https://nisaeaska.com/>

<https://taytmatine.com/>

<https://coopyamna.com/>



Al Oulfa

Farm-to-table dairy



"Here, we take care of each other and give endless care to the Alpine goats we raise and breed."



Homepage of Al Oulfa cooperative website.

MAY EDITION ●●●



LAUNCHING THE SEMI-ANNUAL HIGH ATLAS FOOD MARKET

We launched the High Atlas Food Markets in 2021 to further support the livelihoods of High Atlas communities by bringing together small local producers, cooperatives, and urban consumers around the sale of biodiversity-friendly local products. The first edition was organized on World Biodiversity Day (May 22), and the second edition of the High Atlas Food Market as part of the Harvest Festival was organized on World Food Day (October 16) in the center of Marrakech. In addition to the sale of local products, we organized food tastings, workshops, and discussion groups to raise awareness about local and healthy food.



Kids cooking workshop using cooperatives products.



OCTOBER EDITION



Flyers of the first and second editions of the High Atlas Food Market



Soap-making workshop using aromatic local plants for cooperatives.

— SELLING POINTS IN MARRAKECH

We established local product stalls during the Harvest Festival to promote the purchase and use of local cosmetic, craft, and culinary products. Products were available for purchase at several of our partners' locations, including three official Harvest Festival points of sale. This included the availability of products six days a week at a boutique in a local hotel and plant nursery as well as a stall at a local wellness center for three days. Partner retail stores also held cooperative products and continue to stock them. Aside from these initiatives, we continue to encourage consumers to make contact directly with the cooperatives and to buy directly from them.



— VALUE CHAIN ANALYSIS OF LOCAL PRODUCTS

Our Local Products Commercialization Program is concerned with the socio-economic empowerment of Moroccan High Atlas communities, principally through the development of sustainable value chains. Our program produced important value chain research and detailed market analyses for selected High Atlas products including lavender, thyme, saffron, and walnut.





— RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP BOOTCAMP



Within our Local Products Commercialization Program, we expanded our support of rural cooperatives through a Rural Entrepreneurship Bootcamp. This Program was developed in close collaboration between Mowgli Mentoring, GDF, and IES. The program identified rural entrepreneurs and developed their potential through concrete business training and mentorship from successful entrepreneurs, to support the entrepreneurs driving sustainable development in their respective regions of the High Atlas.

The program was hands-on and highly collaborative as a small group of carefully selected cooperative leaders accessed 3 months of training and 9 months of mentorship. Each of the participants was chosen because of their ability and experience in building viable rural businesses that can effectively drive long-term economic development in the region.

The four-day Bootcamp held in Marrakech brought together rural entrepreneurs with IES professors, business coaches, and mentors. Fifteen cooperatives producing food, cosmetics, and herbs were trained to develop their business strategy during the Bootcamp, which took place in late June 2021.

This event launched our yearlong effort around rural entrepreneurship, providing training on building and refining business models. We are currently working with entrepreneurs in their final phase of the program to access additional funding for advanced training and services as identified by the entrepreneurs to further develop their cooperatives.



About participating cooperativees :

Benefited cooperative	Location	Products
Cooperative Agricole Feminine Taytmatine	Aït Attab, Azilal	Almonds, Walnuts, Olive oil.
Cooperative Agricole Amaguar	Zaouiat Ahansal, Azilal	Aromatic and medicinal plants and saffron.
Cooperative Nisae Aska	Douar Aghbalou, Al Haouz	Almonds, Walnuts, Olive oil.
Cooperative Manahil Al-Maghrib	Foum Jemaa, Azilal	Hive products (honey, propolis, royal jelly, pollen seed). Argan and Amlou.
Cooperative Agricole Aït Bouali	Douar Ait Bou Oulli, Azilal	Walnuts, Almonds and Saffron.
Cooperative Aboghlo des Femmes d'Ourika	Ait M'Hamed, Azilal	Couscous with herbs; extraction of vegetable oils, aromatic and medicinal plants.
Cooperative Agricole Al Oulfa	Lalla Takerkoust, Al Haouz	Dairy goat breeding and cheese making.
Cooperative Agricole Aswik	Douar Tizguine, Al Haouz	Walnuts and by-products, and extraction of vegetable oils.
Cooperative Tifaouine Angale	Douar Adardor, Al Haouz	Apples, Apple vinegar, Henna, Ghassoul.
Cooperative Feminine Tikniouine	Douar Timit, Azilal	Walnuts, cheese, walnuts oil, jam.
Cooperative Demnatna	Douar Tizeghte, Azilal	Medicinal and aromatic herbs, Coffee and Spices.
Felilou Demnate Agricultural Cooperative	Hay Lkasba, Azilal	Hive products (honey, propolis, royal jelly, pollen seed).
Hiba Atlas Agricultural Cooperative	Jnane Almkhazane, Azilal	Thyme, Carob and Carob by-products.
Cooperative SAMILI	Aïn Sidi Malek, Azilal	Aromatic and tinctorial plants, Carob, Saffron and figs.

Our work areas

CULTURAL PRACTICES

OVERVIEW

Highlighting the cultural practices of conservation throughout the High Atlas is at the core of our work. The traditional practices of Amazigh communities and their cultivation of their environment is a key aspect of historical biodiversity management. Documenting, promoting, and supporting the intergenerational exchange of these practices features in our work on agroecology and conservation broadly.

2021 KEY ACTIONS

AIT ATTA: NOMADS OF THE HIGH ATLAS FILM SCREENING

This year, we had the opportunity to screen Ait Atta: Nomads of the High Atlas to the public. The MBLA team supported the filmmakers Eda Elif Tibet and Inanc Tekguc throughout their filming with a pastoralist family as they made their journey across Agdal Igourdane. The film showcases the traditional practices of pastoralism, the management of agdals, and the challenges affecting pastoralists. This screening took place at the French Institute of Marrakech and was followed by a roundtable with filmmakers, community members, and peer associations.



FOCUS GROUPS WITH ELDERLY AMAZIGH WOMEN ON TRADITIONAL FOOD PRACTICES

In November, we held a series of focus groups in Oukaïmeden to better understand women's role in agriculture, document practices in Amazigh gastronomy including food preservation, and discuss opportunities to exchange this knowledge with cooperatives and other community actors. Focus groups were held directly with 15 women and included a visit to the plant nursery in Ait Lqaq.





AGROECOLOGY

OVERVIEW

Agroecology education is a large part of our programming with communities. We work to effectively convey the importance of agroecology for sustainable land management through capacity-building workshops, namely, our Farmer Field School. The target audience for workshops includes youth, women, men, community cooperatives, producers' associations, and local authority representatives.

2021 KEY ACTIONS



FARMERS FIELD SCHOOL PROGRAM: LIVESTOCK ASSESSMENT AND TRAINING

Our Farmer's Field School (FFS) Program provided key capacity building for small-holders and producers on agroecology and biodiversity issues. This year, we strengthened our focus on livestock, starting with an assessment of community needs and livestock issues in Ait M'hamed and Imegdâl. This assessment revealed the livestock conditions in our field sites and informed our livestock management module of FFS. The assessment focused on factors that affect livestock breeding such as disease among animal herds and the integration of livestock in the dairy market.



The FFS module on livestock management addressed the following issues:

- Discussion of Seasonal calendar, including debate and discussion of disease cases occurring through the different stages of the production cycles/seasons
- Participatory documentation of local breeds of goats and sheep
- Reflection on good hygiene practices and analysis of available animal shelters
- Visiting animal herds discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the stables
- Microbial theory, mechanisms of exposure/ infections /disease /cure or death



Participating breeders were very interested in the training provided and welcomed the initiative to increase capacity on preventive methods for disease control.

— HEALTH OF PLANTS IN AIT M'HAMED

In April 2021, we held the second module of our Farmer Field School focused on plant health in the village of Bernat, Ait M'hamed commune. This module was also informed by an evaluation of plant health concerns, which we carried out in collaboration with "RockinSoils" and "DEAFAL". This assessment helped us identify the concerns of farmers and their needs around soil fertilization.

The FFS module on plant health addressed the following:

- Knowledge of the relationship between soil and plant health
- Plant growth
- Role of microorganisms in plant growth and protection
- Plant stress factors
- Natural preparations for the nourishment and protection of the plant



The plant health module was successful in increasing interest in innovative agroecological practices especially due to our participatory approach and flexible exchange with farmers. Attention was also paid to the involvement of farmers in practical training activities that are replicable in their plots such as preparation of biofertilizers and biopests.

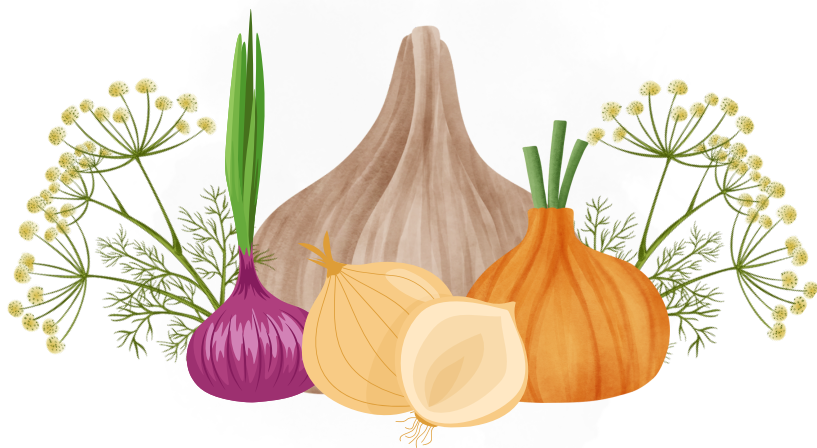
— TRAINING OF TRAINERS OF AGROECOLOGY

The Training of Trainers in Agroecology workshop series was a highlight of our agroecology programming in 2021. We put on 11 workshops for 8 community researchers, whose training equipped them to become educators of agroecology in their communities.

— AGROECOLOGY IN OUKAIMDEN

As our programs in Oukaimden expand, our agroecology program did focus group research with farmers from the region on local agricultural production. We gather men and women farmers to discuss the agricultural crops produced locally, fertilization techniques used, disease and pest treatment methods, sources of irrigation water, cultural practices related to agroecology, womens roles in crop production and livestock management, as well as the significance of agroecology for the region.

We learned that the region of Oukaimeden is threatened by the introduction of agro-chemical influences in their production, whether for fertilization or the treatment of pests. Farmers were concerned about the short and longterm impacts of chemical use. We also found a strong interest in training on agroecology and in returning to traditional agricultural practices that are more environmentally sound.



Our field team

Omar Saadani Hassani

Omar is the lead of MBLA's agroecology program, he holds a PhD in Biotechnology & Environmental Sciences and is very passionate about working with local farmers in the High Atlas, and plays an important role in the success of our Farmer Field Schools.





AGROBIODIVERSITY

OVERVIEW

Aside from agroecology education, we also support local seed systems through research on the characteristics and availability of local, disappearing, and new seed varieties across the High Atlas. This research informs our management and support of community seed banks and plant nurseries. We support farmers to make informed decisions about the management of their agricultural plots and crop diversity.

2021 KEY ACTIONS

FOCUS GROUPS ON SEED ENTREPRENEURS

As our work on seeds grew in 2021, we started exploring how to support seed entrepreneurs. Discussion with community collaborators took place throughout the fall to understand the issues facing seed producers in the region of Damnate and interest of small producers and cooperatives in seed production and training.



LOCAL CROP VARIETIES CHARACTERIZATION WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY USING DATAR

Our agrobiodiversity program sought to better understand local agrobiodiversity status, production, consumption and exchange – we used new tools and protocols to do conservation assessments on agrobiodiversity, including the Diversity Assessment Tool for Agrobiodiversity and Resilience (DATAR). With this tool we held 6 focus groups in Ait Ikak, Anamer, Ait Bougmez, Iminifri, Ait Mhamed, and Tamda n Amrcid. These discussions were complemented with 150 household surveys across the Al Haouz, Damnate, and Azilal hubs to understand community characterization of seed varieties in depth.



LOCAL CROP VARIETIES CHARACTERIZATION WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY USING DATAR

This agrobiodiversity team also looked at seed systems more broadly, visiting six weekly local markets, the principal locations for seed exchange in the High Atlas. Understanding which varieties farmers use, and understanding their preferences is important for identifying suitable interventions to increase both access and availability to seed. The data collected is based on the varietal status of five crops cultivated across the High Atlas: two cereals (*Hordeum vulgare* and *Triticum durum*), two annual legumes (*Vicia faba* and *Pisum sativum*) and one perennial legume (*Medicago sativa*). This research offered new insights on the status of seeds and seed availability, further complementing the participatory research within communities.



Our field team

Meryem Aakairi

Meryem is the lead of MBLA's agrobiodiversity program, she supports the development of this program in the High Atlas through community engagement and delivering participatory action research on cultural practices of conservation, sustainable land use practices and capacity-building activities.

Our work areas

GOVERNANCE & POLICY

OVERVIEW

We collaborate with community representatives from across Morocco to identify and analyse challenges related to community governance systems. We work to support community conserved areas (ICCA) in our areas of work and work on research on the policy implications of our projects.

2021 KEY ACTIONS



CONTRIBUTING TO THE FIRST EDITION OF CARREFOUR ICCA'S

In 2021, the first 'Carrefour des APAC' or national conference on Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas was held by the Consortium APAC Maroc (CAM), of which MBLA is a founding member. This online conference allowed exchanges and new meetings between the different ICCA communities of Morocco and Africa more broadly through the participation of the African regional network.

CAPACITY BUILDING ON THE INTERNATIONAL PLANT TREATY TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Capacity building is a central part of our governance and policy activities. This year, we held a workshop on the International Plant Treaty (ITPGRFA) and its connections to national agricultural strategy. The workshop was held at Dar Taliba in Ourika and gathered small producers and cooperative representatives from across the High Atlas. We also used this opportunity to better understand community members' experience of the pandemic and its impacts on their livelihoods.



MEET OUR TEAM



Marrakech team

Dr. Rachid Ait Babahmad

Dr. Soufiane M'sou

Dr. Abdellah Aghraz

Meryem Aakairi

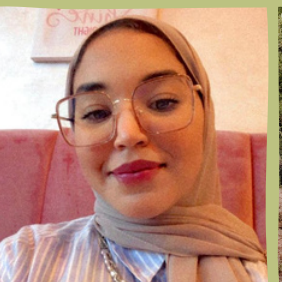
Dr. Omar Saadani Hassani

Ibtissam Bouseta

Khaoula Khaldoun

Community researchers

Youssef Rouchdi - Touda Atiya - Hamid Ait Baskad - Fadma Ait Iligh - Hassan Ouchacha - Meryem Oulfakir - Hammou Malih - Rachid Ait Elhadj - Mohamed Ait Boujamaa - Ahmed Oukdim



Board members

Najwa Es-siari

Pr. Abdelaziz Ait Mansour

Pr. Mohammed Cherkaoui

Pr. Abdelaziz Bacaoui

Chaima Benzaya

Ahmed Imoula

Karima Benrazzouk

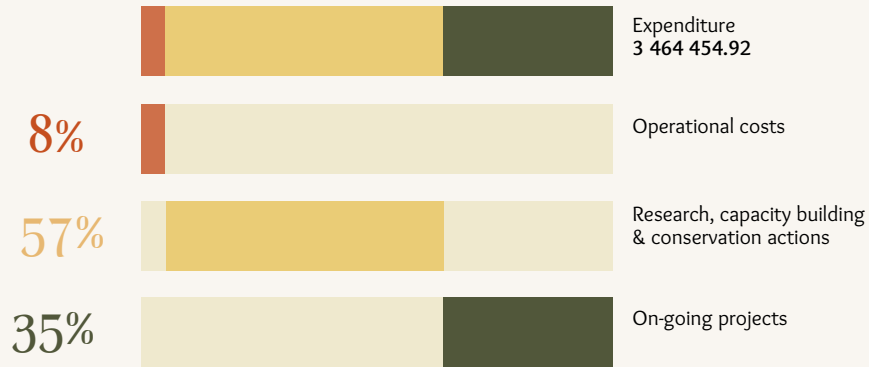
2021 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

REVENUE

IN MOROCCAN DIRHAM

5 335 963.38

2021 BUDGET BREAKDOWN :



OUR PARTNERS



OUR SUPPORTERS



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