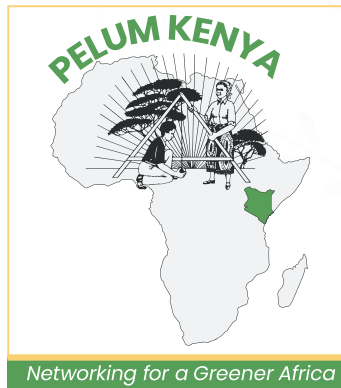




Networking for a Greener Africa



Annual Report 2025



Annual Report 2025





Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Kenya works with its Member Organizations to promote agroecological principles and practices through advocacy and policy influence, networking, capacity building, AgroEnterprise and market development and knowledge management.

The views herein shall not necessarily be taken to reflect the official opinion of PELUM Kenya or its Funding Partners.

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Editorial: **PELUM KENYA**

Design, Layout, and Printed by: **Gloss & Matte Advertising**

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AAH-I	Action Africa Help International
ACEP	Agricultural Community Empowerment Program
ADS	Anglican Development Services
ADS MKE	Anglican Development Services Mt. Kenya East
ADSE	Anglican Development Services Eastern
AGN	African Group of Negotiators
ALIN	Arid Lands Information Network
APaD	Agency for Cross-Border Pastoralists Development
APHRC	Africa Population and Health Research Center
ASTGS	Agricultural Sector Transformation and Growth Strategy
AWMP	Aberdares Watershed Management Project
AWOLA	Africa Women Leaders in Agroecology
BETA	Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CARE	Community Action for Rural Enhancement
CASCOM	County Assembly Sectoral Committee

CEFA-KKWP	CEFA Kithita Kirwa Water Project
CIM	Christian Impact Mission
COSDEP	Community Sustainable Development and Environmental Protection Programme
CPF	Community Practice Forum
CRDD	Centre for Research and Development in Drylands
CSHEP	Community Sustainable Agriculture and Healthy Environmental Programme
EAC	East African Community
EIPMA	Effective Integrated Pest Management Association
EECMY-DASSC	Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus Development and Social Services Commission
FH Kenya	Food for the Hungry Kenya
GAW	Global Green Action Week
GBIACK	Grow Biointensive Agriculture Centre of Kenya
GERRI	Genetic Resources Research Institute
GSAILI	Governance and Social Accountability for Livelihood Improvement
HBF	Heinrich Böll Foundation
ICE	Institute of Culture and Ecology

IPD-K	Institute of Participatory Development Kalamsana
IPSIA	Institute for Peace Development and Innovation
IWGI	Indigenous Women and Girls Initiative
KCOA	Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture
KHEA	Knowledge Hub for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in Eastern Africa
KMCBO	Katoloni Mission Community-Based Organization
KSMS	Kenya School of Monetary Studies
LPC	Laikipia Permaculture Centre
MID-P	Merti Integrated Development Programme
MoALD	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development
MSP	Multi-Stakeholder Platform
NAS	National Agroecology Symposium
NAS-FST	National Agroecology Strategy for Food Systems Transformation
NCCAP	National Climate Change Action Plan
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
NAPs	National Adaptation Plans
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NECOFA	Network for Ecofarming in Africa
NMK	National Museums of Kenya
OACK	Organic Agriculture Centre of Kenya

PAK	Policies for Agroecology in Kenya
PASF	Promoting Agroecology for School Feeding Programme
PCPB	Pest Control Products Board
PFM	Participatory Forest Management
PSAMY	Promoting Sustainable Agriculture and Marketing through Youth Involvement
REFSO	Rural Energy and Food Security Organization
SAPAD	Strategies for Agro-Pastoralist Development
SFK	Slow Food Kenya
SMART	Sustainable Mobilization of Agricultural Resource Technologies
SMAP	Strengthening Market Access for PGS Farmers
STR	Simplified Trade Regime
STIPA	Support for Tropical Initiatives and Poverty Alleviation
TIDO	Trade Information Desk Officer
UDO	Utooni Development Organization
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
WE4R	Women Empowerment for Rights, Resources, Representation and Rural Resilience
WYNA	Building Women & Youth-led Network Alliances for Agroecology and Organic Agriculture
YALTA	Youth in Agroecology Learning Track in Africa
YARD	Youth Action for Rural Development
YPARD	Young Professionals for Agricultural Development

PELUM KENYA AT A GLANCE

WHO WE ARE

ABOUT PELUM KENYA

Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Kenya is a national network that currently comprises 68 Member Organizations (M.O.s). Its members mandate PELUM Kenya to promote agroecological principles and practices through networking and capacity building, AgroEnterprise and market development, information sharing, and advocacy

The members of PELUM Kenya are Non- Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), and other networks working with small-scale farmers. The members of PELUM Kenya are categorized into four networking zones: Nairobi/ Central zone, Upper Eastern & Northern Kenya zone, Lower Eastern & Coast zone, and Rift-Western Kenya zone. The Country secretariat is based in K.U. Boma Estate, House No. 114, along Kenyatta Road, Off Thika Superhighway.

68

Member Organizations
(M.O.s).

4

Networking Zones



OUR VISION

Empowered, prosperous and healthy resilient communities.



OUR CORE VALUES

- Commitment to partnership, participation, and networking
- Commitment to gender equity and social inclusion
- Transparency and accountability
- Quality service delivery



OUR MISSION

To champion Agroecological principles and practices for sustainable and resilient livelihoods among small holder farmers, pastoralists and fisherfolks.

OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

- 1 Advocacy and Policy Influence
- 2 Women and Youth in Agroecology
- 3 Climate Action
- 4 Market Development
- 5 Institutional Capacity Strengthening

PRINCIPLES THAT GUIDE PELUM KENYA NETWORK

1. **Diversity.** Showcasing the diversity of Ecological Agricultural practices amongst members within and without the Network.
2. **Learning and Knowledge Management.** Enable learning for experiences and best practices sharing among members & other actors through networking with others.
3. **Membership.** Ensure that PELUM Kenya is a member-driven Network.
4. **Innovation.** Encourage and support innovativeness across the Network.
5. **Sustainable Ecosystem.** Always striving towards an ecosystem that is healthy and sustainable.
6. **Advocacy.** Advocate for Agricultural ecological issues in favour of small-scale farmers & pastoralists.
7. **Inclusive Practices.** Promoting inclusive practices at all levels as the basis of ownership, empowerment, and sustainability.
8. **Participation.** Recognize participation as an enabling & empowering process (everybody's opinion matters, participation is drawn from the members, enhances ownership of the processes, has the strength of inclusiveness, and accommodates diverse opinions, gender, and social inclusion and involvement the people going.



SUMMARY OF 2025 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



68 MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS
ACROSS **4 ZONES**



3,000+
FARMERS & PASTORALISTS REACHED

Through: exchange visits, demonstration farms, market platforms and expos/symposiums, zonal fairs/forums, GAW, and training on value addition, agro-processing, bio-inputs, IPM, Feed formulation)



1,000+
HOUSEHOLDS' SMES SUPPORTED



5
DEMONSTRATION FARMS ESTABLISHED



2,000+
TREES PLANTED
(Agroforestry, Indigenous and Exotic species)



6
AGROECOLOGY POLICIES INTEGRATED



3
DEGRADED SITES RESTORED



400+
PARTICIPANTS FROM OVER 30 ORGANIZATIONS AT THE 2ND NATIONAL AGROECOLOGY SYMPOSIUM (NAS)



600+
SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT



80+
WOMEN LEADERS IN AGROECOLOGY NETWORK FROM 12 DIFFERENT AFRICAN COUNTRIES



6 STRONG AND VIBRANT WOMEN AND YOUTH PLATFORMS IN PLACE FOR JOINT ENGAGEMENTS THROUGH **PSAMY, AWOLA, GSAILI, WE4R, YALTA, GENDER WORKING GROUP**



OVER **80%**
PLANNED INITIATIVES, PROGRAMMES / PROJECTS SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTED

MEMBERS OF PELUM KENYA

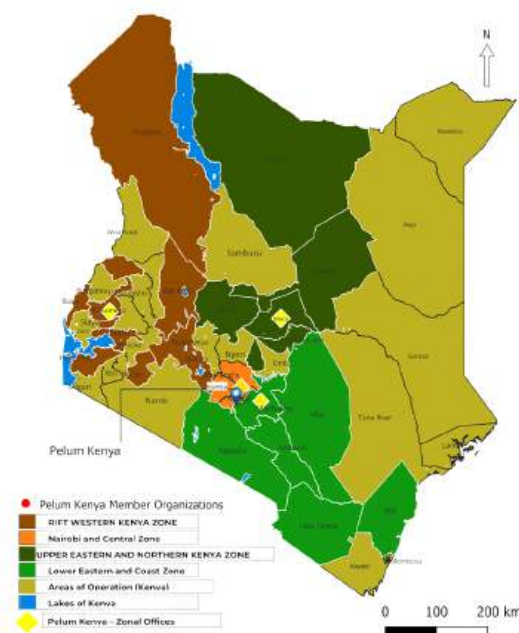
PELUM Kenya Network is divided into four (4) zones based on geographical regions as follows:

Central and Nairobi Zone

18 Member Organizations

Rift-Western Kenya Zone

21 Member Organizations



Upper Eastern and Northern Kenya Zone

16 Member Organizations

Lower Eastern and Coast Zone

13 Member Organizations

CENTRAL AND NAIROBI ZONE

1. Action Africa Help International (AAH-I)
2. Aidlink
3. Arid Lands Information Network (ALIN)
4. CARITAS Nairobi
5. Community Action for Rural enhancement (CARE) Murang'a
6. Community Sustainable Development and Environmental Protection Program (COSDEP)
7. Effective IPM Association (EIPMA)
8. Grow Bio-Intensive Agriculture Centre of Kenya (GBIACK)
9. Hand in Hand Eastern Africa (HiH EA)
10. Institute of Culture and Ecology (ICE)
11. Kenya Organic Agriculture Network (KOAN)
12. Koppert Kenya
13. Micro Enterprises Support Programme Trust (MESPT)
14. Organic Agriculture Centre of Kenya (OACK)
15. Resources Oriented Development Initiatives (RODI) Kenya
16. Self Help Africa (SHA)

17. Sustainable Agriculture Community Development Programme (SACDEP)
18. Youth Action for Rural Development (YARD)

RIFT-WESTERN KENYA ZONE

1. Agency for Cross Border Pastoralists Development (APaD)
2. Agricultural Community Empowerment Program (ACEP)
3. Agriculture Improvement Support Services
4. Anglican Development Services (ADS) Western
5. Baraka Agricultural Centre (BAC)
6. Bio- Gardening Innovations (BIOGI)
7. Community Mobilization Against Desertification (C-MAD)
8. Community Rehabilitation and Environment Protection Program (CREPP)
9. Development in Gardening(DIG)
10. Indigenous Women and Girls Initiative (IWGI)
11. Maendeleo Endelevu Action Program (MEAP)
12. Manor House Agricultural Centre (MHAC)
13. Network for Eco farming in Africa (NECOFA)

14. Ripple Effect
15. Rural Energy and Food Security Organization (REFSO)
16. Slow Food Kenya (SFK)
17. Support for Tropical Initiatives and Poverty Alleviation (STIPA)
18. Sustainable Mobilization of Agricultural Resource Technologies (SMART) Initiatives
19. Tenwek Hospital Community Health & Development
20. Trans-Community Organization (TRANSCOM)
21. VI Agroforestry

UPPER EASTERN AND NORTHERN KENYA ZONE

1. Anglican Development Services Mt. Kenya East (ADS MKE)
2. Diocese of Meru Caritas (DOM Caritas)
3. Caritas Nyahururu
4. Community Initiatives for Rural Development (CIFORD)
5. CEFA Kithita Kirwa Water Project (CEFA- KKWP)
6. Food for the Hungry Kenya (FH Kenya)
7. Institute for Peace Development and Innovation (IPSIA)
8. Laikipia Permaculture Centre (LPC)
9. Pastoralists Community Initiatives and Development Assistance (PACIDA)

10. Strategies for Agro Pastoralist Development (SAPAD)
11. Rural Initiatives Development Program (RIDEP)
12. TAI Community Based Organization
13. Rural Children & Women Empowerment Programme (RuCWEP)
14. Centre for Research and Development in Drylands (CRDD)
15. Merti Integrated Development Programme (MID-P)
16. Equal Foundation

LOWER EASTERN AND COAST ZONE

1. 3000 Friends Farm
1. Anglican Development Services Eastern (ADSE)
2. Christian Impact Mission (CIM)
3. Community Sustainable Agriculture and Healthy Environmental Program (CSHEP)
4. Dryland Natural Resource Centre (DNRC)
5. Holy Ghost Fathers Marafa Parish
6. INADES Formation Kenya
7. Institute of Participatory Development Kalamsana (IPD-K)
8. Katoloni Mission CBO (KMCBO)
9. Kitui Development Centre (KDC)
10. Neighbours Initiative Alliance (NIA)
11. Taita Taveta Wildlife Foundation (TTWF)
12. Utooni Development Organization (UDO)

BENEFITS OF BEING A PELUM KENYA MEMBER

- 1 Capacity Development for members on governance, finance management, operating systems, structures, technical aspects (M& E, extension, resource mobilization), etc.
- 2 Increased linkages of members and their staff to others members and partners via learning, exposure and exchange visits.
- 3 Spreading and scaling up of best practices and ripple effect through sharing and networking.
- 4 Joint activities e.g. campaign, advocacy and lobbying and hence can influence policy – there is strength in numbers.
- 5 The members can “benchmark” with other members and partners of the association and hence improve their profile and capacity.
- 6 Members get direct links to the world via PELUM websites thus increasing their visibility and the profile of the members.
- 7 Broadening the members’ skills-base, donor-base, partner base and hence resource base.
- 8 Increases the implementation capacity of the members and thus promoting local networking.
- 9 Providing a reference to PELUM-Kenya members.
- 10 Providing a forum for information sharing e.g. publications, reports, research reports, updates etc.



Despite the challenges posed by a shrinking global civic space, I am pleased to note that the Country Secretariat recorded a **45.7% increase in annual turnover**. This growth is a testament not only to the confidence our partners and donors continue to place in our work, but also to the strength of our internal policies, systems, and governance structures that ensure efficiency, accountability, and sustainability.

Janet Mumo
Chairperson, PELUM Kenya

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

I am honored to present the 2025 Annual Report of the PELUM Kenya Network on behalf of the Country Board of Directors and the entire PELUM Kenya network. The year 2025 was both impactful and transformative, as reflected in the achievements highlighted in this report.

We sincerely appreciate your unwavering support. As a Board, we reaffirm our commitment to upholding the highest standards of transparency and accountability. I am pleased to confirm that the organization's financial statements have been audited in accordance with international audit standards.

The year 2025 also marked the conclusion of our Strategic Plan (2021-2025). Building on the progress made, a new Strategic Plan (2026-2030) has been developed through a participatory process. This strategy will guide the network over the next five years as we deepen our impact towards achieving empowered, prosperous, and healthy communities.

On matters of governance, the network successfully convened its Annual General Meeting on 9th July 2025 at Rainbow Hotel, Ruiru, with participation from 52 delegates. During this meeting, we were delighted to admit six new member organizations into the network: EQUAL Foundation, 3000 Friends Farm Yarumal Missionaries, Merti Integrated Development Programme (MID-P), Holy Ghost Fathers, Institute of Participatory Development-Kalamusana, and the Centre for Research and Development in Drylands (CRDD). We warmly welcome them and look forward to their valuable contributions.

This report also captures the rich history and vision of PELUM Kenya as shared by Mr. Mutura, one of the founding members of the network. His reflections are both inspiring and grounding, reminding us of the journey we

have undertaken and the vision that continues to guide our work. I am encouraged to note that the network remains steadfast and aligned with this founding vision.

In 2025, PELUM Kenya took a leading role in organizing the National Agroecology Symposium, which brought together over 400 participants from diverse sectors. I take this opportunity to commend the organizations that were recognized during the symposium under various award categories, including SMART Initiatives, GBIACK, RIDEP, Groove and Meadow, KOAN, OACK, ADS Western, Slow Food Kenya, and MHAC. It is particularly commendable that eight out of the nine awards presented were received by PELUM Kenya member organizations. Congratulations to all for this outstanding achievement.

“

I take this opportunity to applaud my fellow Board members for their dedication and commitment in steering the network.

Under the flagship AWOLA initiative, the inaugural African Women Champion in Agroecology Awards were launched. I wish to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Ms. Esther Kiruthi, Founder and Director of CSHEP, for receiving this prestigious recognition in honor of her leadership in agroecology transformation, climate action, restoration, and mentorship. Your work continues to inspire many—well done.

I take this opportunity to applaud my fellow Board members for their dedication and commitment in steering the network. To the Country Secretariat team, led by Ms. Rosinah Mbenya, I extend my sincere appreciation for your professionalism, hard work, and continued excellence. To our donors and partners, thank you for your trust, support, and collaboration.

I now warmly invite you to read and engage with this report.

May God bless you all.



Janet Mumo
Chairperson
PELUM Kenya

PELUM KENYA

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Ms. Janet Mumo
Program Director Kitui
Development Centre (KDC)
Chairperson



Mr. John Kariuki
National Coordinator /
CEO Slow Food Kenya
Vice Chairperson



Ms. Rosinah Mbenya
Country Coordinator
& CEO PELUM Kenya
Secretary



Dr. Sebastian Wambugu
CEO - Youth Action for Rural
Development (YARD)
Treasurer



Olivia Nyaidho
Programmes Director,
Development in Gardening (DIG)
Member



Ms. Mercy Thuranira
Aidlink Executive Director,
Girl Child Network
Member



Ms. Rachael MohMoh
Program Coordinator, Trans Community
Organization (TRANSCOM)
Member



Mr. Joseph Lentungoi
Laikipia Permaculture
Centre (LPC)
Member



Dear Readers,

It is with great pleasure and a deep sense of responsibility that I present the 2025 PELUM Kenya Institutional Report on behalf of the management. This report provides a comprehensive overview of the work undertaken by the Country Secretariat in advancing our mission of promoting agroecological practices and principles among smallholder farmers, pastoralists, and fisherfolk.

Rosinah Mbenya
Country Coordinator,
PELUM Kenya

MESSAGE FROM THE COUNTRY COORDINATOR

The report highlights our key interventions across thematic areas including institutional strengthening, networking and capacity development; advocacy and policy influence; climate resilience and sustainable natural resource management; agro-enterprise and market development; and the cross-cutting focus on women and youth in agroecology.

The year 2025 marked the successful conclusion of our five-year Strategic Plan (2021–2025). This period stands out as a transformative phase, particularly with the expansion into the thematic area of women and youth, which has grown significantly and become a core pillar of our work. Building on these achievements, we have developed a new Strategic Plan (2026–2030) through a participatory process. The new strategy places strong emphasis on building healthy communities while reinforcing our commitment to climate action and resilience.

In recognition of our efforts, PELUM Kenya was honored with a trophy during the International Women's Day 2025 celebrations for our outstanding contribution to women's empowerment. This milestone affirms our commitment to inclusive development.

During the year, we implemented a wide range of activities aligned with our vision and mission. Notably, we successfully convened the Second National Agroecology Symposium in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and other stakeholders. The symposium brought together 484 participants from diverse sectors and featured exhibitions, panel discussions, and side events that enriched dialogue on agroecology.

For the first time, PELUM Kenya actively participated in the Devolution Conference, where we co-organized a

side event in collaboration with ISFAA, Murang'a County, BVAT, and the Ministry of Agriculture. Additionally, we partnered with Maseno University and Oslo University to host a Pesticides Action Symposium, and with CARI, IUCN, and GIZ to convene a National Desertification Workshop focused on addressing the urgent challenges in ASALs. The outcomes of this engagement will contribute to the 2026 UNCCD processes.

Under our advocacy and policy pillar, we made significant strides in supporting the implementation of the National Agroecology Strategy for Food Systems Transformation (NAS-FST), launched in 2024. Key achievements included supporting the development of a County Domestication Guide, facilitating county-level policy processes in Nakuru, Vihiga, and Makueni, and signing an MoU with Laikipia County. We also strengthened the capacity of county government staff through targeted training and experiential learning exchanges.

While 2025 marked the conclusion of the Aberdares Watershed Management Project (2017–2025), its legacy continues through strengthened livelihoods and the integration of sustainable practices into new initiatives such as school feeding programs.

In the climate resilience and natural resource management pillar, we intensified efforts to build resilient communities. Our agro-enterprise work focused on scaling Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS), enhancing local organic markets, and strengthening farmer capacities through Training of Trainers approaches. In collaboration with AFSA, we also facilitated a regional dialogue on intra-East African Community trade to promote cross-border market opportunities.

Under the women and youth pillar, we continued to empower young people through cross-border exchange programs between Kenya and Zimbabwe, providing

hands-on experience in agro-enterprise development. We also scaled mentorship and capacity-building initiatives. Notably, PELUM Kenya hosted a continental learning exchange and expo that brought together over 200 women from 12 African countries. Furthermore, we established a new collaboration with NGLC to integrate Courageous Leadership Manifesto skills within the AWOLA initiative.

I extend my sincere appreciation to our member organizations for their unwavering grassroots commitment to advancing agroecology. To our funding partners, we are deeply grateful for your trust and continued support. To our strategic partners, thank you for walking this journey with us and contributing to our shared vision of transformation.

I also wish to acknowledge the guidance of the Country Board of Directors, ably led by Ms. Janet Mumo, for their strategic leadership. My appreciation equally goes to the dedicated Secretariat team whose professionalism and commitment continue to drive the success of the network.

Above all, I give thanks to God Almighty. As we look ahead, I remain hopeful for even greater success, blessings, and prosperity in the years to come.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report, and may God bless you all.



Rosinah Mbenya
Country Coordinator
PELUM Kenya

MEET THE PELUM KENYA SECRETARIAT TEAM



Manei Naanyu
Head of Programmes



Ms. Rosinah Mbenya
Country Coordinator



Simon Mureithi
Head of Finance and
Administration



Geoffrey Kahuho
Programme Manager



Mary Irungu
Programme Manager



Diana Mwangi
Senior Programme
Officer (M&E)



Ndiki Ndungu
Senior Finance Officer



Sarah Wambui
Programme Officer
(Advocacy)



Bathsheba Ratemo
Programme Officer
(Knowledge Hub,
Market Development
and Communications)



Monica Nyaga
Programme Officer
(Gender & Youth)



Irene Nyaega
Administrative
& HR Officer



George Foro
Zonal Coordinator
(Nairobi and
Central Zone)



Ngunjiri Kihoro
Zonal Coordinator
(Lower Eastern
and Coast Zone)



Beth Omae
Zonal Coordinator
(Rift, Western
Kenya Zone)



Benson Isohe
Zonal Coordinator
(Upper Eastern and
Northern Kenya Zone)



Evans Akello
Finance Officer



Esther Karanja
Finance Assistant



Geoffrey Juma
Programme Assistant



Roland Mwalugha
Mechanic & Driver



Susan Kimani
Office Attendant



Michael Muriithi
Security Officer



Joseph Chokera
Security Officer



Irene Gitau
YPARD Intern



Anna Munyoki
Administration Intern



Amos Okora
Programmes Intern

THE SHORT AND LONG 30-YEAR STORY OF PARTICIPATORY ECOLOGICAL LAND USE MANAGEMENT - PELUM ASSOCIATION

By Ngugi Mutura

THE NETWORKS AND NETWORKING - 1994-2025

During the first 25 years of Kenya's independence, the Government continued to educate farmers to transition from traditional to conventional agriculture. What farmers had practised for generations was suddenly found to require external fertilisers and chemicals, monocropping, mechanisation, pesticide spraying, hybridisation, and more approaches. The approaches adopted as government policy, research, extension and training were all guided by this new direction.

In the mid-1980s, some agriculturalists discovered that these methods were a result of the Green Revolution of the 1950s. The implementation of these expensive approaches began to demonstrate their negative side effects. Such effects included deforestation, increased pest resistance, loss of natural soil fertility, narrowing of plant species, and reduction of insect varieties and populations, especially bees and other beneficial types.

Furthermore, the African continent was becoming aware of the possibilities of desertification. Rainfall patterns were becoming increasingly erratic while droughts began following a predictable 5-year cycle. Additionally, the availability of farm inputs was declining due to their high costs and poor transportation networks to farmers working in remote locations without proper road access.

It was against this challenging reality that some individuals began initiating projects aimed at providing alternative approaches to this phenomenon. Led entirely by agriculturalists working within civil society, programmes commenced to challenge what had previously been accepted as conventional, modern, scientific and well-documented agriculture.



It was against this challenging reality that some individuals began initiating projects aimed at providing alternative approaches to this phenomenon.



Mr. Ngugi Mutura
Executive Director SACDEP Kenya
and Founding member, PELUM Kenya

Organisations were formed to implement alternative methods that were proven to be low-cost, environmentally friendly and accessible for farmers, especially the majority smallholders to transform their agriculture positively.

During the year 1987, under the organisation PLAN INTERNATIONAL, I initiated an agricultural approach which I termed Integrated Agriculture. The method was based on nutrient recycling on the farm between crops and livestock. Meanwhile, I connected with

other organisations in Kenya including Manor House of Kitale, Baraka College in Molo, Kenya Institute of Farming in Kabete, and the Sustainable Agriculture project within the National Christian Churches of Kenya (NCCCK). Other programmes we connected with included the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) Philippines, Rodale Institute (USA), and others. This growing connectivity convinced us that there was indeed a need to establish alternatives to the narrow conventional thinking dominating the food and agriculture sector.

THEN SACDEP WAS BORN

From 1987 to 1992, a lot of experience was gained through practical work with farmers whose food and income security had improved by more than 300%. Over 2,000 farmers in the Mt. Kenya region were reporting improved soil fertility, reduced soil erosion, decreased pest infestation and reduced animal diseases. These low-cost approaches were proving effective in increasing household incomes through expanded sales and savings from families producing their food and energy.

Therefore, driven by these remarkable successes, it became necessary to establish additional institutions to advance the strategies of Sustainable Agriculture Models. SACDEP was thus born in 1993. Its projects began around Thika Town, which became the organisational headquarters.

It bears noting that even with all the negative effects known at that time among agricultural stakeholders, government policy remained anchored in conventional thinking. Any individual or institution proposing alternative approaches was branded as unscientific, backwards, unprofessional and even illegal. There were attempts by Ministry of Agriculture personnel to arrest extensionists training farmers and school clubs in Alternative Agriculture Methods, though fortunately there was no legal provision available for use in courts of law.

Driven by these conflicting approaches, by the end of 1994, SACDEP organised a 5-day conference in Thika. This forum enabled professionals to debate the merits and

demerits inherent in both conventional and alternative methodologies. The conference concluded that both methodologies contained strengths and weaknesses. The final determination was that both methods needed to coexist as complementary approaches focused on a common goal - supporting the farmer.

During this conference, the organising committee and I had invited Mr. John Wilson of Zimbabwe to serve as moderator for the debates. At the conclusion, John requested that I guide him to visit institutions carrying out similar work to SACDEP.

I took John to KIOF, Baraka, Manor House and introduced him to a wide variety of farmers across Central, Rift Valley and Western Kenya.

Among the key matters we discussed with John was how to expand Sustainable Agriculture Methods throughout East and Southern Africa. We agreed that a network of organisations was essential. During this period, only a few organisations were members of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movement (IFOAM).

“ I took John to KIOF, Baraka, Manor House and introduced him to a wide variety of farmers across Central, Rift Valley and Western Kenya.

THE AFRICAN INITIATIVES

From the discussions with John, we concluded that IFOAM was a broad organisation initiated primarily to serve the interests of organic farmers in Europe, Australia, Japan, the USA and similar regions. The organisation had minimal understanding of, or action regarding, the status of alternative agriculture for African food production and industry.

Therefore, a home-grown network specifically for Eastern and Southern African countries was urgently needed. This network would identify uniquely African issues and establish national and regional programmes designed to support institutions working to assist farming communities, while enabling civil society institutions to address land use challenges in their respective countries.

THE CONCEPT OF PELUM ASSOCIATION

In February 1995, I travelled to Harare where John had arranged to host a team discussion about establishing a network capable of addressing sustainable land use issues across the East and Southern Africa region. The team consisted of John Wilson, Rob Sacco (Zimbabwe), Richard Librock Clerk (Botswana), Dan Illhale (South Africa), Rwechungura (Tanzania) and Ngugi Mutura (Kenya). We also had a rapporteur, a Zimbabwean lady with a name we found difficult to pronounce: Vzisenei.



1st Board brainstorming meeting in Harare in 1996 (From Left Ngugi Mutura, Rob Sacco, John Wilson, Librock clerk, & Dan Illhale)

We had determined that we needed uninterrupted time with absolutely no disturbances. Fortunately, cell phone technology did not yet exist. We agreed to travel to a small eco-lodge situated in the heart of Kruger National Park in South Africa. This was during a period when taxi operators in South Africa were experiencing what became known as the “bloody taxi wars.” We had hired a taxi van from Harare that could easily be mistaken for the competing South African taxi vans. To avoid being

targeted in this confusion, we covered all four sides of our vehicle with large textile banners marked “PELUM Association of East and Southern Africa.”

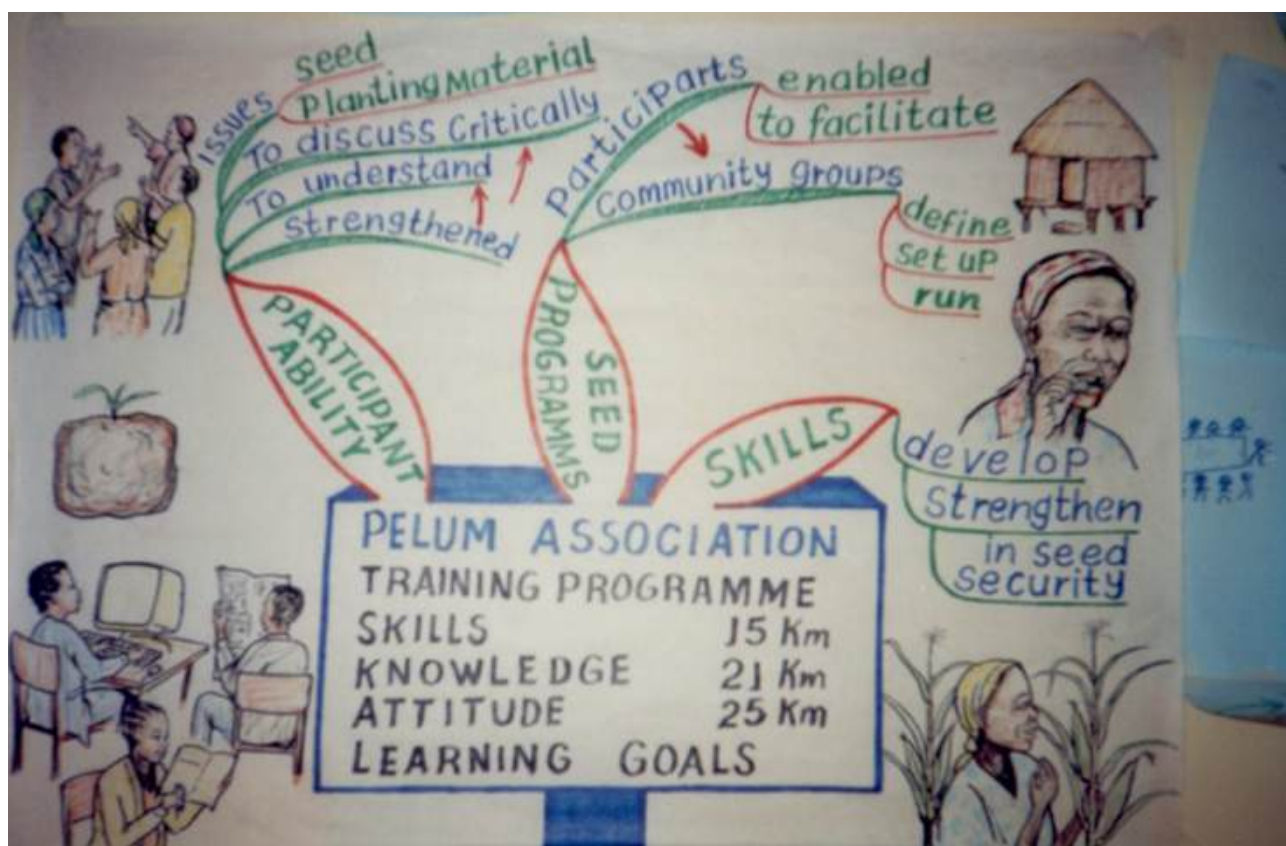
Thus protected, we drove from Harare through Masvingo and further south, crossing the border at Beitbridge. We arrived at Kruger in the evening after a 14-hour journey without incident, only enduring countless stops by Zimbabwean and South African police.

THE BIRTH OF PELUM ASSOCIATION

Over the following 11 days, we worked extensively through long sessions. We developed the name, network structures, legal status across countries, constitution, types of programmes to address, and governance frameworks for each country. Additionally, sub-regional structures were established covering East Africa (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania), the Central region (Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique) and Southern Africa being South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, now Eswatini. Other countries would be incorporated within two years, including South Sudan,

Rwanda, Burundi, Namibia and Somalia. With these frameworks established, a logo and corporate colours were agreed upon.

It was during these sessions that we developed programme policies and operational rules. The critical policy established was that the Association would focus on programmes addressing regional challenges. At the country level, the association would serve as an enabler for matters that individual member organisations could not tackle independently.



A poster showing the future of the PELUM Association in Krugar Park in February 1995

Accordingly, a guiding principle was established that secretariats would never implement initiatives that might appear to compete with members. This created a safeguard ensuring that secretariats would not transform themselves into development agencies beyond their role of serving the boards at regional and country levels.

To make this system functional, we created a structure beginning with member organisations in each country. Members would then form a Country Working Group (CWG) where they would elect a country board. The board would subsequently establish a country working desk. Each country would elect a country chair, and all chairs would constitute a regional board.

To ensure coordinated programme design, the regional board was assigned to have a chair and establish a regional working desk.

We also established that there would be bi-annual general meetings. This assembly would bring member countries together to set national agendas for 2-year periods. All countries would then conduct their country assemblies to establish country-specific agendas at intervals of their choosing.

Notably, we designed PELUM to be dynamic, focused, issue-responsive and results-oriented. Consequently, we deliberately avoided traditional terms like “secretariats,” instead adopting terminology such as country working groups, country desks, regional desks, and regional working groups. The common denominators here are “**working**” and “**desks**.”

We had already agreed on the regional constitution, which would serve as the reference framework for member countries’ constitutions.

We departed Kruger with our organisational “baby” already born, named, and with minimal time needed before it could begin walking. The challenges facing us at that time meant the original regional board had to begin operating immediately.

Consequently, we deliberately avoided traditional terms like “secretariats,” instead adopting terminology such as country working groups, country desks, regional desks, and regional working groups. The common denominators here are “working” and “desks.”

TAKING OFF AT HIGH SPEED

In April 1995, we convened approximately 100km east of Harare at Nyanga National Park. This 3-day regional group planning meeting further refined PELUM's structure and approach. Membership had expanded to around 40 organisations, with 6 members from Kenya: SACDEP-Kenya, Tree Shades of Kenya, NCKK, ACK Diocese of Mt Kenya East, ACK Diocese of Nakuru, and Baraka College Molo. On the fourth day, the entire group travelled to Harare where PELUM Regional was officially launched during a spectacular 2-day extravaganza.

The launch featured exhibitions, songs, dance, art and speeches. The Assistant Minister for Agriculture, a focused and well-informed leader graced the occasion with her presence.



Mr. Ngugi Mutura (L) and Mr. Gathiremo (R) during the launch of PELUM Association at Tree Shade Clubs of Kenya in April 1995.

Regional programmes were immediately prioritised, including member empowerment in governance, resource mobilisation, and project monitoring & evaluation. A regional magazine titled **“Ground Up”** was also launched during this period.

The provisional regional board was established and proceeded to set up the regional desk in Harare. The regional board composition included:

Chairperson:	Russel Mchanga (Zambia)
Vice Chair:	Ngugi Mutura (Kenya)
Secretary and CEO:	John Wilson (Zimbabwe)
Members:	Father Machel (Tanzania), Linga Miihowa (Malawi), Clerk (Botswana), Dan Mhale (South Africa), Rob Sacco (Zimbabwe)

Additionally, Richard Librock (Botswana) was co-opted as a member to provide regional coordination across countries.

The original policy required country desks to be physically hosted by member organisations, so SACDEP hosted PELUM Kenya from 1995 to 2003.

In 1997, the first regional annual assembly was held in Nairobi. SACDEP-Kenya and the six board members hosted this 5-day event at Ngong Hills Hotel on Ngong Road. The interim regional board was confirmed with additional country representatives joining, including

Monica Kapiri from Uganda. Initial regional projects encompassed seed security, GMO control, member governance, communication skills, land access and use, renewable energy, and global trade in food and agriculture.

In Kenya specifically, member projects focused on seed policies and security, institutional governance management and organisational growth. Member organisations received training in institutional management, fundraising skills, rural development, policy structures, national food security and agricultural trade.

GMO control became a major PELUM initiative that raised awareness among Kenyans including farmers, extensionists, trainers, researchers, teachers and traders. Training extended to spiritual leaders, politicians and government officials. The media fraternity, publishers and feature writers also received education about this emerging technology.

For the East African Region, SACDEP and PELUM jointly implemented a project titled **“Food Security and Conflict Management.”** This initiative received funding from the USA President’s Fund on Conflict Management for the Greater Horn of Africa. The project involved comprehensive brainstorming sessions addressing security in food, water, energy and land particularly for marginalised communities. Workshops, exhibitions and policy recommendations were conducted in Kenya (Thika), Tanzania (Arusha), Uganda (Kampala), Rwanda (Kigali) and South Sudan. Due to geopolitical constraints, accessing Djibouti proved challenging, preventing the inclusion of Ethiopia and Somalia.



The very 1st newly elected PELUM Association Board after a meeting in Ngong Hills Hotel Nairobi, in 1997.

THE RESILIENCE, THE EYE ON THE BALL

In order to enable PELUM to grow from initiation to stability, there was a need for resilience to deal with the pitfalls. The first challenge was funding for the County desk. SACDEP was initiated in 1993. So in 1995, which was 2 years after SACDEP's commencement of work, PELUM came in as a desk within the organisation. Funding was in short supply for young SACDEP. Yet a **"competitor"** in the name of PELUM was in the offing.

Therefore, I had to conduct fundraising for both institutions. Occasionally, getting them linked in proposals and presentations. Funny enough by this year, I had left PLAN INTERNATIONAL only in early 1990. So, in my verbal presentations, it was common for me to mention PLAN, PELUM and SACDEP in the same sentence.

The other challenge was to convince the SACDEP Board of Trustees and staff that PELUM was an important network for SACDEP and other development agencies. By extension, the farming communities and institutions. Worse still, SACDEP was handling the desk as a project of SACDEP had to invest in terms of Human, material, equipment, office space and funds. The auditors had to maintain the question of why the SACDEP funds continued to be used for a **"Non-SACDEP expenditure"**.

The initial years of PELUM required a lot of time investment. As a founder and regional board member, the position demanded a lot of time investment and Communication was not as developed as it is today (2025).

Computers had started being acquired in Africa. They were few and expensive for institutions like young SACDEP. The fax machine had also just been discovered and acquired by SACDEP. There was no internet, no cellphones and other modern communication gadgets. As such, all meetings had to be physical. This situation made me travel extensively in all the Counties in East, Central and Southern Africa. A lot of time and money invested by SACDEP and when not possible personal financial resources. Expenditures continued to make the SACDEP fraternity in constant demand for justification.

In many instances, I would assign a SACDEP staff to be responsible of the PELUM desk. Most would handle the desk with lukewarm acceptance. Negative comments would be that the person was spending time on non-SACDEP additional and unproductive work. For me, I knew PELUM was going to grow and make an impact in alternative agriculture especially among small holders in the Region.

THE KENYAN RELUCTANCE

In Kenya, the individuals whom I contacted to work with me as the Country Working Group and Board would soon become fatigued. For instance, the 1st Team of 6 that we travelled with for the Launch in 1995 were initially excited. After returning from Harare, they attended another 2 Board meetings. Within 6 months, they fell off and left the Board. It was difficult for me to make them acquire a shared Vision.

In some cases, it was like real drama. For instance, the Board had a scheduled meeting in Nakuru. While Ms. Everlyne Ijai a SACDEP staff and I were driving there, we gave a lift to a Board member from Nairobi. We arrived at the venue of the meeting,

but none of the Board Members turned up. Not even the member we had given a lift to Nakuru.

Ms. Everlyne continued to get frustrated, and by 1 pm the hotel brought in the lunch for 8 in the meeting room but they were surprised to find only 2 of us. We had to **"eat"** and of course pay for teas, snacks and beverages for 8 persons.

As I drove back to Nairobi and Thika, my colleague continued to get surprised. She could not understand the level of my **"stupidity"** when I insisted that we would still call another Board Meeting within two weeks.

This meeting eventually took place. We booked the boardroom of a Member Organisation in the city but when we went for the meeting, the boardroom was occupied by another meeting. Ours was given no opportunity as it was not a priority for the Member Organisation. We held our meeting in

an open space next to the parking lot. Yet PELUM Association Kenya and the Region soldiered on. A case of determination, conviction and Resilience. Today, the impact so far made by PELUM can only make individuals conclude **"All is worth the resilience bottlenecks notwithstanding."**

PELUM – THE STABILIZATION STAGE

By 2004, the network had grown robust and was achieving greater stability. Membership had increased to approximately 10 organisations. Partnerships with funding organisations had expanded significantly, including Misereor (Germany), GAIA Foundation (UK), Trocaire (Ireland) and support through the regional desk in Harare.

By this time, SACDEP had also experienced substantial growth with a strong institutional profile. This made it advantageous for the PELUM desk to leverage SACDEP's infrastructure for funding purposes. The desk received comprehensive support including human resources, office space, equipment, transport, and financial management systems. In banking operations, SACDEP's board and management standards provided the framework under which PELUM operated as one of SACDEP's projects.

By 2003, SACDEP had successfully raised funds from PACT of the USA on behalf of the CWG. With well-

developed financial, human resource and operational structures in place, the SACDEP board decided to grant semi-autonomy to the CWG.

Mr. Zachary Makanya was serving SACDEP as manager for the Scheduled Courses Sector simultaneously working part-time with the PELUM desk within SACDEP.

Following eight years of PELUM operating within SACDEP, the SACDEP management was tasked with providing mentorship to the newly separated desk. Under Makanya's leadership, the team successfully expanded the desk's projects, budgets, human resources, equipment and overall capacity.

This period also marked my transition, handing over leadership to a new country board under the chairmanship of Mr. Eliud Ngunjiri, with Mr. Makanya serving as secretary, Ms. Magdalene Nkando of ALIN as the treasurer and members being Ferdinand Wafula of KIMA CBHC, Charles Onyango of CMAD & Ruth from Meru Dryland. This transition occurred during a country working group meeting at the Water Duck Hotel in Nakuru.

By 2006, the desk achieved complete autonomy from SACDEP, though SACDEP continued providing office space within its Thika compound until 2019.



Mr. Ngugi Mutura (R) during the handover of PELUM Association Desk to Mr. Zachary Makanya(L) in 2006 in Nakuru

THE ASSOCIATION HAS CONTINUED

Throughout the years, SACDEP has maintained its support to the desk through board participation. Madam Polly Wachira and Paul Karanja served for more than 10 years as treasurers to the board, demonstrating the enduring partnership.

PELUM ASSOCIATION MEMBER AND SACDEP: YEARS OF MUTUALISTIC SUPPORT

Thirty years have now passed since the birth of the PELUM Association. During this period, millions of farming families have benefited from PELUM's collective efforts as an association. At the country level, hundreds of thousands have experienced transformed lives through projects implemented by member organisations with country-level support.

Regional interactions throughout the East African region have continued to strengthen. Moreover, the PELUM Kenya desk and board continue implementing diverse initiatives through SACDEP as a key implementing member.

Reflecting on this journey, I feel deeply satisfied that networks prove critical to human development across East and Southern African countries. They provide capabilities in areas where individual organisations cannot achieve meaningful impact independently.

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YEARS OF RESILIENCE,
PURPOSE AND PROGRESS

PELUM - WHERE IS THE FUTURE?

Given all that has been accomplished, given the aforesaid, it makes me feel satisfied that it was worth the invested brainwork in the creation of PELUM Association.

Thirty years later, PELUM has demonstrated resilience while many other networks have come and gone. This longevity indicates that PELUM was established on admirable foundations. Despite occasional shortcomings, the network continues displaying strong indicators for the future, while many others have unfortunately been swept away by various challenging dynamics.



PROGRAMMES / PROJECTS FACT SHEET

1 Promoting Ecological Land Use Management (Pelum) for Networking and Livelihood Improvement (PENELI) IV

Period: 2022-2028

Goal: To contribute towards resilient livelihoods through sustainable agricultural and environmental practices among smallholder farmers and pastoralists.

Objectives

To strengthen the PELUM Kenya network to advocate for the integration of Agroecology in policy as an effective strategy for food security and resilience building;

To enhance Agro-enterprise initiatives among SHF & Pastoralists for increased household incomes and adoption of Agroecological practices;

To enhance the resilience of smallholder farmers and pastoralists to the effects of climate change and environmental degradation;

The governance, management, and operations of PELUM Kenya Network institutions are functioning and delivering services effectively

Key expected results:

PELUM Kenya MOs actively advocate for the integration of agroecology as a strategy for food security and resilience building in the National and County agricultural sector and other related sectors policies;

Agro-enterprise initiatives among SHF/Pastoralists adopting agroecological practices are successfully linked to markets;

SHF and pastoralists have adopted practices that are climate resilient and counter environmental degradation; and

The governance, management, and operations of PELUM Kenya network institutions are functioning and delivering services effectively.

2 Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative (EOA-I) in Africa

Period: 2022-2025

Goal: Vibrant EOA in Africa for enhanced food security, household incomes and environmental sustainability and Sustainable development in Africa by 2026.

Objectives

To establish and strengthen coordinated multi-stakeholder platforms for EOA Institutions at Regional and National levels by 2026.

To lobby and advocate for mainstreaming of EOA practices into public policies and investment plans.

To strengthen the Institutional Capacity and Collaboration of the pillar implementing partners at the National level.

Key expected results:

Ecological organic research is mainstreamed into the national agricultural research system.
EOA curricula are established and implemented in agriculture institutions at all levels and sectors.
It has improved extension systems responsive to farmers' needs and demands for information and services in EOA.
Increased availability and accessibility of information on EOA for use by stakeholders
Improved access to organic products and markets by smallholder farmers and consumers
Strengthened partnerships and networks among EOA actors in Eastern Africa.
Relevant policies and programmes for the promotion of EOA influenced
Improved institutional capacity and coordination of EOA initiative actors.

3 Knowledge Hub for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in Eastern Africa (KCOA- KHEA) Project

Period: 2022-2026

The Knowledge Hub for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in Eastern Africa (KHEA) Project is in its second phase of implementation for the 2nd Phase. KHEA Project Phase II is part of the initiative by the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through its executing agency GIZ to support a network of regional knowledge hubs for organic farming in Africa. Biovision Africa Trust (BvAT) is the lead coordinating agency of the project in Eastern Africa with co-hosting arrangement with Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Uganda.

The project is based on four main action fields namely:

Collecting / preparing of knowledge in

organic agriculture: Validated technical and methodological knowledge for the promotion of organic agriculture, including processing, is prepared for the context of the participating countries and stakeholder groups.

Dissemination of knowledge to many users:

Validated knowledge, strategies and good practices in the field of organic agriculture, adapted to the contexts of the countries participating in the regional knowledge hubs, are disseminated to various target user groups.

Networking within agricultural value chains:

Key actors in the organic agriculture value chains of the participating countries in the three regions are networked in an exemplary manner for replication.

4 Global Green Action Week Project

Period: 2025-2028

GAW is an annual campaign funded by SSNC to amplify the power of sharing communities to bring about sustainable consumption.

Goal: To promote sharing and exchange of farmer-managed seeds/indigenous seeds and knowledge in PELUM Kenya.

Objectives:

To create awareness of the importance of indigenous seeds/farmer-managed seeds, local vegetables, herbs, and spices.

To promote and teach the culture of community sharing to sustainably produce and multiply indigenous/farmers-managed seeds.

To improve interactive networking among Member Organizations (M.O.s), producers, marketers, and consumers.

5 Aberdares Watershed Management Project (AWMP)

Period: 2024-2025

The **Aberdares Watershed Management Programme** is a two-year initiative implemented by **PELUM Kenya** in partnership with five of its member organizations (SACDEP-Kenya, ICE, OACK, RODI-Kenya, and COSDEP) across the Aberdares ecosystem, covering **Murang'a, Kiambu, Nyeri, and Nyandarua counties**. The project aims to enhance the resilience of the watershed through the development and advocacy of five key environmental policy frameworks:

Wetlands and riparian areas conservation for Muranga and Nyeri Counties,

Invasive and alien species management (Muranga County),

Natural resources Management policy (Nyandarua County) and an

Agroecology policy and bill (focused in Kiambu).

Through stakeholder engagement, technical support, legislative sensitization, and grassroots advocacy, the programme seeks to strengthen county-level environmental governance, promote sustainable natural resource use, and increase community participation in conservation efforts.

6 Promoting Sustainable Agriculture and Marketing through Youth Involvement (PSAMY) project

Period: 2023-2025

Promoting Sustainable Agriculture and Marketing through Youth Involvement (PSAMY) is a 3 year youth exchange project implemented by PELUM Kenya and FACHIG Trust, Zimbabwe.

Objective: To increase youth participation in sustainable agriculture and agricultural market value

chains through knowledge and cultural exchanges between Kenyan and Zimbabwe.

Key expected results:

Participants have strengthened their leadership skills and capacity to disseminate knowledge and skills on Sustainable agriculture in 25 farmer groups.

Participants have strengthened their leadership skills and capacity to disseminate knowledge and skills on formation of market Association to PELUM Kenya Member Organisation (Mos)

Small holder farmers in 1 District with Increased knowledge and skills on sustainable agriculture practices.

Small holder Farmers in PELUM Kenya network Increase their knowledge on value chain based marketing strategies for increased income from agriculture produce in 4 Counties, Kenya.

PELUM Kenya Increased institution knowledge on markets association and value chain development.

FACHIG increases institution knowledge on sustainable agriculture practices and innovations.

PELUM Kenya and FACHIG increased networking and partner collaboration.

7 Policies for Agroecology in Kenya (PAK)

Period: 2024-2026

The sustainability of food systems in Kenya and beyond is increased through coherent policies and favourable institutional frameworks that enable food systems transformation.

Objectives:

Horizontal (across sectors) and vertical (across scales) policy coherence in Kenya is increased resulting in enhanced support for agroecology and

Food system actors in Kenya have increasingly equitable agency in policy development processes.

Expected Results

Multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) at County and national level established or strengthened.

Enhanced coordination and information flow across sectors (e.g., agriculture, environment, health, economy) and scales on food system related policy processes.

Small scale Farmer, women and youth groups are empowered and capacitated on effective engagement in policy processes.

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Small scale Farmer, women and youth groups are empowered and capacitated on effective engagement in policy processes.

8 Governance and Social Accountability for Livelihood Improvement (GSAILI)

Goal: To Enhance Governance and Social Accountability for Livelihood Improvement.

Objectives:

Strengthen communities/citizen engagement in water governance by collaborating with Water Resource User Associations (WRUAs) and core partners in 5 counties by 2025.

Increased implementation of national and county government plans and budgets on sustainable agriculture, climate action, agrobiodiversity, by 2025.

Enhanced community voices in climate action plans and budgeting.

Agroforestry, and sustainable agriculture policies are adopted and implemented at local and global levels to enhance attainment of the right to food.

9 Africa Women Leaders in Agroecology (AWOLA) Initiative

Period: 2022-2024 and 2024-2028

Africa Women Leaders in Agroecology (AWOLA) Initiative is a leadership career development initiative of the consortium of PELUM Kenya, PELUM Uganda and PELUM Zimbabwe to equip women working on agroecology, sustainable agriculture and food systems with leadership skills.

Goal: Capacitated women assume leadership in positions and contribute to a higher share of women in important sector positions to promote & implement Agroecology.

Expected Results

Critical mass of women mentored and coached on agroecology leadership at all levels.

Women agroecological business initiatives & innovations enhanced /developed.

Improved capacity for women in AE principles, practice and enterprise development.

Women actively participating in AE policy influencing.

10 Visibilize 4 Climate Action

Period: 2024-2026

Goal: to make visible, through **research, public and policy engagement**, the impacts of climate change on the nutritional status and mental health of vulnerable populations in the East African drylands to catalyze context-specific climate policy and practice change at scale.

Objectives:

To help communities in drylands in Kenya understand the concepts of climate change and climate impacts, obtain views on various climate practice and policy options, and communicate research evidence through participatory public engagement.

To promote evidence-informed decision-making regarding climate policy and practice change at scale in Kenya and the Eastern Africa region, through knowledge sharing, advocacy and policy engagement.

Expected Results

Improved understanding of the concepts of climate change and its impacts and on factors that contribute to vulnerability to climate change impacts, and empowerment of communities in drylands in Eastern Africa to apply adaptation measures.

Adoption of context-specific and scalable climate change policies and practices in Eastern Africa's drylands.

11 Strengthening Climate Resilience by Scaling Up Agroecology: Collaborative Research and Advocacy to Advance Food Systems Transformation

Period: 2024-2026

Is a collaborative initiative led by Biodiversity and Biosafety Association of Kenya (BIBA) Kenya in partnership with PELUM Kenya and Effective IPM Association (EIPMA), Implemented across Kiambu, Murang'a, West Pokot, and Makueni Counties.

Goal: To address the climate and environmental impacts of fossil fuel-based agrochemicals by promoting agroecological alternatives.

Objectives:

To support the development and implementation of agroecology policy frameworks in West Pokot and Makueni Counties.

To promote the adoption of agroecological practices among smallholder farmers, with a focus on women and youth.

To build knowledge and capacity in participatory research methodologies for co-creating agroecological innovations and informing policy.

To Strengthen partnerships and collaborations at both county and national levels to support agroecology and climate resilience efforts.

To increase the recognition and integration of agroecology in national and global climate change discussions and policies.

12 Strengthening the Implementation of Kenya's Agroecology Strategy to Accelerate Food Systems Transformation

Period: 2024-2026

The project supports effective implementation of Kenya's National Agroecology Strategy focussing on strengthening institutional and coordination capacity, developing coherent agroecology policy frameworks, and promoting the use of bio-inputs as a critical lever in transitioning away from sole reliance on inorganic fertilizers and enhance the advocacy capacity of civil society, community, and farmer-led organizations.

Goal: To accelerate food systems transformation in Kenya, ultimately contributing to improved food security, poverty reduction, and sustainable economic growth for smallholder farmers.

Expected Results

Institutional Strengthening and Coordination.
Advocacy for the Implementation of the National Agroecology Strategy.
Result Measurement and Reporting Framework for National Agroecology Strategy Implementation.
Support for Production and Use of Bio-Inputs.
County-Level Agroecology Policy Formulation and Implementation Support.

13 Accelerating AE and FRN impacts through scaling deep, scaling out and scaling up

Period: 2025-2026

Goal: To implement and evaluate various scaling strategies for accelerating AE's transformative impacts.

Objectives:

Developing/reviewing/ supporting implementation of AE policies and strategies.
Facilitating meetings, experiential learnings, tracking implementation, communicating, documenting the process and learnings.
Evaluating the effectiveness of the policy engagement process.

14 Youth in Agroecology Learning Track in Africa (YALTA)

Period: 2024-2028

YALTA is a youth initiative implemented in Kenya, Rwanda, Ethiopia and Uganda that aims at mentoring youth in their agribusiness to scale up and effectively participate in policy spaces.

Goal: Tapping and channeling youth potential in Agroecology for strengthening agri-food systems in Africa for resilience, transformation and socio-economic development.

Expected Results

Enhanced knowledge, skills and business initiatives for participating youth.
Enhanced participation of youth in policy spaces.

15 Capacity Enhancement for Women Change Agents through the 3Rs

Period: 2024-2026

Project seeks to contribute to women's resilient transformation anchored on the 3Rs (Rights, Resources, Representation) by ensuring women's economic empowerment through the 3Rs is important for sustainable development. The project is implemented in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Malawi.

Goal: Capacity enhancement for women change agents and selected male allies to stimulate their agency to amplify voices for women's rights, access to resources, and representation in the context of land and rural livelihoods resilience in Africa.

16 Promoting Agroecology for School Feeding Programme (PASF)

Period: 2025-2028

Goal: Improving food security, nutrition and retention of pupils in public primary schools for livelihood improvement in Muranga County by 2028.

Overall Objectives

Improve attendance and retention of pupils in 30 public schools.
Enhance local food systems through market access for agroecological farmers.
Increase adoption of agroecological practices among the local and school communities.
Enhance child nutrition and health through diverse, nutritious meals,
Improve academic performance of school pupils in Murang'a County.
Increase incomes of smallholder farmers linked to schools and local markets.

17 Building Women & Youth-led Network Alliances for Agroecology and Organic Agriculture (WYNA)

Project Period: 2025-2026

Goal: To strengthen women and youth leadership in agroecology and organic agriculture, foster collaboration, and create green jobs and market opportunities through sustainable farming practices.

Overall Objectives

Increase awareness of, perception of, and interest in, agroecology, organic agriculture, and agri-food systems, especially amongst women and youth.
Strengthen capacity of young agri-food systems professionals in agroecology and organic agriculture practices and knowledge exchange, with an emphasis on entrepreneurship and market linkages especially amongst young women and youth.

Boost self-confidence and improve professional skills of youth and female agri-food systems professionals, enabling them to take on leadership and entrepreneurial roles.

Broaden awareness of the benefits of networks, especially the KCOA network, PELUM Kenya, CPF/AGSN and YPARD, resulting in increased participation, peer learning and sustained collaboration.

Support youth-led innovation and knowledge exchange by creating spaces for experimentation, storytelling and co-creation within agroecology and organic agriculture.

Facilitate access to decent employment and green entrepreneurship opportunities in agroecology and organic agriculture, contributing to rural transformation and youth retention in agriculture.

Youth and Women's leadership in agroecology and organic agriculture is nurtured, inspired, and fast-tracked for food transformation in Africa.

18 Biodiversity for Building Resilient Agricultural Landscapes (B-REAL)

Period: 2025-2026

Project pathways;

Enhance integration of biodiversity conservation, ecosystem health, and climate resilience into agricultural landscapes;

Strengthen enabling environment for sustainable and socially equitable biodiversity use and management;

Enhance equity and inclusivity in the access, use, and benefits sharing of biodiversity genetic resources among women, men, youth, and marginalized communities.

Objectives:

Support Kenya in translating key portions of NBSAP to local implementation mechanisms.
Assist sub-national governments in incorporating NBSAP N+ and AE measures into development plans and strategies.
Encourage policymakers to incorporate soil and land conservation incentives in economic plans.
Conduct a policy assessment based on the visions outlined by different groups. Provide gender responsive policy recommendations.
Conduct policy dialogue workshops/meetings with relevant stakeholders to validate and disseminate the recommendations.
Establish a support network for women leaders in biodiversity conservation.

19 Strengthening Market Access for PGS Farmers in Kenya (SMAP)

Period: 2025-2026

Goal: To enhance marketing capacities and promote understanding among PGS farmers in Kenya.

Specific Objectives

To map and document existing PGS groups in Kenya for better coordination and support.
To enhance farmer capacity through PGS training, access to markets using trained PGS Assessors and KCOA Project Multipliers.
To promote an awareness campaign on agroecology and the Kilimo Hai Mark at the grassroots level.
To facilitate youth engagement in agroenterprises value addition and innovations







INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

PELUM Kenya is a vibrant, member-driven network comprising 68 member organizations spread across 47 counties in Kenya. The network recognizes the importance of enhancing member capacity in agroecological practices through training, information exchange, and on-site support. By focusing on institutional strengthening, networking, and capacity development, PELUM Kenya aims to foster an environment conducive to the adoption of agroecology. This approach facilitates knowledge sharing, skills development, and confidence-building among farmers and stakeholders, ultimately leading to the establishment of sustainable, resilient, and equitable food systems that positively impact the lives of Kenyans.

2025 Annual General Meeting for PELUM KENYA Members

PELUM Kenya Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on 9th July 2025 at Rainbow Hotel Ruiru, where 52 delegates participated. The Members were briefed on the progress of the activities implemented. The members were taken through the 2024 Audit Report. It was reported that the Secretariat had received thirty-one (31) new membership applications for admission to the network, and after rigorous background checks, which included Secretariat and appointed member visits, six (6) member organizations were approved by the board of directors for admission. EQUAL Foundation, 3000 Friends farm Yarumal Missionaries, Merti Integrated Development Programme (MID- P), Holy Ghost Fathers, Institute of Participatory Development- Kalamusana and Centre for Research and Development in

Drylands (CRDD). Other key matters, It was unanimously resolved to ratify the appointment of Africa Registrars as the company secretaries for PELUM Kenya for 2025. Election of the PELUM Kenya Board of Directors, Mr John Kariuki Mwangi the Chief Executive Officer Slow Food Kenta was unanimously re-elected to the board as a member representing Rift & Western Kenya Zone.



Group Photo of PELUM Kenya Members during the 2025 AGM meeting

Sharing and Networking events



Stakeholders during the 2nd National Agroecology Symposium 2025

2025 Networking symposium - Kenya School of Monetary Studies Nairobi 10th to 11th July 2025

PELUM Kenya Members organized a 2 days 2nd National Agroecology Symposium at Kenya School of Monetary Studies (KSMS), with over 400 participants from the government, CSOs, farmer groups, strategic and funding partners. The event registered a total of 48 exhibitors showcasing agro ecology practices, enterprises and value addition. The Members were also competing for the best exhibitors from 3 categories.

The Winners emerged as follows:

- **Agroecology Diversity and Integration Category:**
1st position - SMART Initiative
2nd Position - Grow Biointensive Agriculture Centre of Kenya (GBIACK)

3rd position - Rural Initiatives in Development Programme (RIDEP)

- **Innovation and Value Additions Category:**
1st position - Groove and Meadow
2nd position - Kenya Organic Agriculture Network (KOAN),
3rd position: Organic Agriculture Centre of Kenya (OACK)
- **Outreach and Coverage Category:**
1st position - Anglican Development Services (ADS) Western
2nd position - Slow Food Kenya,
3rd position - Manor House Agriculture Centre (MHAC)

4th Indigenous, Culture and Food Harvest Governors Ground Nanyuki - 14th and 15th October 2025

The Event was organized by Inter-Sectoral Forum on Agrobiodiversity and Agroecology (ISFAA) PELUM Kenya a key member of the forum was represented by 5 Members, Laikipia Permaculture Center (LPC), Grow Bio Intensive Center of Kenya (GBIACK), Slow Food Kenya, Strategies for Agro-Pastoralists Development (SAPAD Kenya) and Merti Integrated Development Programme (MID- P) Over 300 participated in the exhibition event held at the Gorvenors ground. The event was hosted by the County Government of Laikipia. The theme of the event was " Collaboration in nurturing Indigenous Seeds and Foods for a better Future. The Deputy Governor who was the Chief Guest emphasized the importance of indigenous and climate-resilient seed varieties in addressing food security, climate change mitigation, conservation of peoples' culture and collective wisdom of people. The event attracted over 200 participants from at least 11 Counties of Kenya namely Laikipia, Baringo, Muranga, Nyandarua, Machakos, Nakuru, Nairobi,

Kiambu, Kitui, Trans Nzoia, and Embu. Over 50 Members participated in the exhibition event.

Other key members of the forum involved in organizing the event were; Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD), the National Museums of Kenya (NMK), Genetic Resource Research Institute (GERRI), Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO), Biodiversity and Biosafety Association of Kenya (BIBA Kenya), PELUM Kenya, Seed Savers Network (SSN), Growth Partners Africa, Biovision Africa Trust (BVAT), Heinrich Boll Foundation (HBF), HIVOS, Alli Trust for Indigenous Culture and Health Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT (ABC), Slow Food Convivia Association of Kenya, Root to Food, TICA, and Consumer Grassroots Association (CGA) and Grassroots Organizations Operating Together in Sisterhood (GROOTS) - Kenya

The Pesticides, Environment, and Health Interdisciplinary Symposium was held in Kisumu, Kenya, on 5th and 6th November 2025.

The Symposium was convened by Maseno University in collaboration with the University of Oslo. The symposium brought together representatives from civil society organisations, environmental and social scientists, and regional policymakers from Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. The meeting provided a platform to share and promote knowledge on the environmental harms associated with pesticide use, examine achievements and gaps in pesticide politics and policy, and identify priorities for future research, networking, and advocacy-key steps toward a regional phase-out of Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs). PELUM Kenya Members Organic Agriculture Center of Kenya (OACK), Community Rehabilitation and Environmental Protection Programme (CREPP), Resources Oriented Development Initiatives (RODI) Kenya and Slow Food Kenya Officers and farmers participated in the forum to share and showcase alternative practical agro ecology farming technologies,

The Members also shared utilization of Bio inputs for enhancing soil fertility, pesticides elimination, key barriers and enablers influencing the uptake of these alternatives. A farmer from Gilgil Slow Food Kenya shared first-hand perspectives on the health and environmental impacts of HHPs



Stakeholders photo during the Pesticides, environment and Health Symposium

Visit by Ethiopians 28th to 30th October 2025

PELUM Kenya hosted 4 Participants from Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus Development and Social Services Commission (EECMY-DASSC), EECMY DASSC Programs Director, Resilience Building Program Manager, EECMY DASSC Southwest Bethel Synod Branch office (SWBS BO) Manager and EIIFCCA Project Manager. (EECMY-DASSC) is a faith-based national non-governmental organization operating across Ethiopia. The main aim of the visit was to engage with like-minded organizations and explore their models, strategies, and

best practices in forest conservation and climate action. This includes Participatory Forest Management (PFM) Forest-based enterprises among others. The learning comprised of field and exposure visits with farmers from Institute of Culture and Ecology (ICE) - LARI Community Forest Association (CFA) Uplands, Resource Oriented Development Initiatives (RODI) - Kenya Nyeri Hill conservation site and 3000 Friends agro ecology demonstration farm Rongai during the period.



Ethiopian visitor at Nyeri Hill Visited RODI Kenya



Ethiopian visitor visited ICE Kenya at Upland forest (Aberdare Forest)

1st Africa Agroecology Symposium Eswatini 23th -25th September 2025 also Celebrating PELUM Association @30 and PELUM Eswatini @15 years of existence

PELUM Association in collaboration with PELUM Eswatini. This continental event builds on PELUM Association's 30 years' of experience in promoting ecological lands use management, Agroecology and farmer Managed Seed System for food system and livelihoods transformation of small holder farmers and Agro pastoralists in Africa.

The First African Agroecology and Food Systems Symposium 2025/1stEswatini Sustainable Indaba organised by PELUM Association, PELUM Eswatini and the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini. Under the theme: **Agroecology for Food systems resilience and Climate Justice** at the Mavuso Trade and exhibition Centre, Eswatini brought together over

400 participants representing small holder farmers, women, youth, small holder farmer organizations, women organizations, youth networks, CSOs, Continental networks, Research and development organization, Government representatives technocrats from over 14 African countries.

PELUM Kenya was represented by PELUM Kenya Board Chair - Ms Janet Mumo, PELUM Kenya Board Member Mr Joseph Lentuyoi, former PELUM Kenya Country Coordinator Mr Zachary Makanya and Senior Programme Officer Capacity Enhancement and Networking Mr. Jeff Kahuho who also participated in plenary sessions.

National Desertification Workshop 16th to 18th September 2025 Nanyuki

PELUM Kenya in partnership with CARI, GIZ and International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN) organized the National Preparatory workshop on desertification. The workshop provided a forum for civil society contribution to policy recommendations in dialogue with national authorities in decision-making on Arid and Semi Arid Areas (ASAL) on indigenous knowledge to preserve biodiversity drought management and combat desertification as well as propose actionable practices that would inform UNCCD reporting in UNCCD forums to be held in Tunisia and Mongolia in the Year 2026 thus create strategic alliances to implement inclusive solutions adapted to local contexts while influencing global policies.

The forum attracted representation from the Ministry of Agriculture NEMA, Ministry of Environment, County Government Representatives, Scientist, Farmers, CSO and Scholars Representatives. 40 participated in this workshop. The members had an opportunity to visit Laikipia Permaculture Center (LPC) on exposure to sand dams project and dryland farming techniques and enterprises such as omputia an invasive species which has become a source of income for the community due to its products oil.



PELUM Kenya HOPs Ms Manei Naanyu During the National Desertification Workshop.



Stakeholders field visit to LPC to learn on the various value addition enterprises supported and farmer groups in Laikipia North utilizing the Opuntia invasive species for livestock feeds, biogas fuel and cosmetics.



Agro Ecology and Natural Resource Management

Established Demonstration Sites Slow Food Kenya - Subukia Nakuru

Slow Food Kenya established a demonstration site Kieni Community Group in Subukia Nakuru County to enhance adoption of agroecology technologies in the region. The demo site was established in Subukia to enhance farmers capacity in sustainable food production, soil health management, integrated pest control, and agroforestry.



Photo taken during demo farm establishment at Subukia Nakuru

Taita Taveta World Life Forum (TTWF) - Voi

A demo site was established by Taita Taveta World Life Forum (TTWF) at Lushangonyi, Taita Taveta County for showcasing agroecology practices such as land preparation using minimum tillage, making compost piles, setting up nursery beds, and planting diversified crops (vegetables, legumes, herbs, and fruit trees.)



CARE Muranga- Nyeri

CARE Muranga was supported to establish a demo site in Kieni Nyeri County where a 3-day workshop for farmer groups, stakeholders and CARE Murang'a staff. The farmers were trained on organic farming, sustainable soil management, crop diversification, and ecological pest management. The demo site was established to show case agro ecology practices and serve as a training ground for the community.



Serem in pink shirt supporting Care Muranga to establish a Demo Garde at Kiwara in Nyeri.

Tree planting event in Narok

On 29th May 2025, PELUM Kenya, in collaboration with PARAN Women and the Namaiyana Women Group, led a tree planting initiative at Kotolian Secondary School that mobilized students, teachers, county representatives, and KFS officers. The exercise saw the planting of 500 indigenous trees and 30 fruit trees, strategically aimed at ecological restoration, soil stabilization, and improved food and nutrition security for the school community. Beyond planting, the event integrated environmental education, cultural storytelling, and capacity building, inspiring students—organized through 4-K and environmental clubs—to take personal

responsibility for nurturing the trees. The involvement of the Namaiyana Women Group was pivotal, providing seedlings, technical expertise, and mentorship, while demonstrating the power of women-led grassroots conservation movements. The initiative not only strengthened intergenerational partnerships but also sparked conversations on scaling similar efforts to neighboring schools and embedding tree planting into county-level strategies. As a follow-up, the women's groups pledged to return for World Environment Day celebrations, supporting students with additional trees, sanitary pads for girls, and sports equipment for boys.





ADVOCACY AND POLICY INFLUENCE

POLICY INFLUENCE AND ADVOCACY ON AGROECOLOGICAL PRACTICES

Existing agricultural and environmental policies largely favour conventional farming over agroecological practices, which are more sustainable and eco-friendlier.

This approach not only leads to environmental damage but also contributes to health issues. Unfortunately, most extension officers are also not supportive of agroecology, which in turn discourages farmers from adopting these practices.

Furthermore, women and youths face significant barriers in terms of land ownership, control, and access, which are crucial for agricultural production. This lack of access to arable land results in low productivity, reduced income, and underutilization of resources.

Moreover, communities have limited participation in the budget-making process, leading to insufficient allocation of resources for agricultural and environmental projects. Both at the national and county levels, the allocation of funds for these critical sectors falls short of the recommended benchmarks, despite agriculture's significant contribution to the GDP.

To address these challenges, there is a pressing need for advocacy and lobbying efforts to integrate agroecology into policy frameworks and development plans at both county and national levels. PELUM Kenya aims to champion the implementation of policies that promote and scale up agroecological practices for a more sustainable agricultural future.



PELUM Kenya signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Laikipia County

PELUM Kenya signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Laikipia County to:

- a. Offer support in technical support in the formulation of agroecology strategy.
- b. Support mobilization of resources towards the formulation of the agroecology strategy.
- c. Mobilize various stakeholders and partners to offer their support for the formulation of the agroecology strategy
- d. Identify and create synergies with other programs and project activities that would advance and accelerate the formulation of the agroecology strategy



Counties' domestication of National Agroecology strategy for Food System Transformation.

Agroecology has gained significant recognition globally and nationally as a key pathway for transforming food systems.

Vihiga County launches Agroecology policy

In April 2025, Vihiga County officially launched its Agroecology Policy, marking a significant milestone in advancing Agroecology. PELUM Kenya, in collaboration with Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT and other partners, spearheaded the policy formulation process through a multi-stakeholder and participatory approach.

The overall goal of the policy is to achieve a sustainable and resilient food system for communities in Vihiga County.

Policy Objectives:

- i. Promote agroecological practices to enhance resilience within the agricultural and food systems in the county.
- ii. Support the production and consumption of safe, nutritious, and diverse foods to improve community health and nutrition.
- iii. Strengthen the inclusion and participation of vulnerable and marginalized groups in agroecology initiatives.

- iv. Improve access to agricultural markets and financial services for agroecology products and value chain actors.



Group photo during Launch of Vihiga county Agroecology policy

- v. Foster co-creation and participatory, adaptive research on agrobiodiversity within the Vihiga ecosystem



Makueni County launches Agroecology Policy

In alignment with these aspirations and priorities of NAS-FST, the Makueni County Agroecology Policy presents a strategic opportunity to address biodiversity loss while delivering multiple co-benefits, including climate adaptation, food and nutrition security, water conservation, ecosystem resilience, sustainable livelihoods, and the promotion of human rights.

PELUM Kenya, in collaboration with the county government and key stakeholders, played a pivotal role in both the formulation and launch of the policy. This support involved facilitating multi-stakeholder consultations, providing technical expertise, and strengthening participatory processes to ensure the policy reflects the needs and priorities of local communities and agroecology actors.

The policy provides a comprehensive framework upon which agroecology scaling efforts can be anchored.

It outlines seven priority policy areas:

- i. Transition to sustainable agri-food systems;
- ii. Agroecosystem restoration and climate resilience;
- iii. Agroecology enterprises and markets;
- iv. Food and nutrition security for all;
- v. Knowledge development, training, and capacity strengthening for agroecology transition;
- vi. Creation of an enabling environment for agroecology; and
- vii. Social equity, inclusion, and governance.



Nakuru county launched agroecology policy

PELUM Kenya played a key role in the development of The Nakuru County Agroecology policy by providing technical leadership, facilitating multi-stakeholder consultations, and supporting participatory processes that ensured the inclusion of farmers, civil society, private sector actors, and government institutions.

This collaborative approach strengthened ownership and alignment of the policy with local needs and agroecological priorities. The Nakuru County Agroecology Policy is anchored on the following strategic objectives, aimed at driving a sustainable and inclusive transformation of the county's food systems.



PELUM Kenya during the launch of Nakuru AE policy launch

Policy Objectives:

- i. Advance evidence-based agroecological transitions through participatory, interdisciplinary, and farmer-centred research, training, and knowledge co-creation.
- ii. Enhance the adoption of agroecological practices to improve food and nutrition security, promote sustainable diets, and strengthen resilient livelihoods.
- iii. Promote the restoration and conservation of agrobiodiversity and associated ecosystems to ensure long-term sustainability and resilience.
- iv. Strengthen agroecological enterprise development and improve market access through strategic infrastructure investments, targeted incentives, and supportive business development services.
- v. Establish an enabling environment for agroecology through the development and implementation of a harmonized, supportive legislative and institutional framework.
- vi. Promote inclusive agroecology by ensuring the active participation and empowerment of vulnerable and marginalized groups and communities.

Development of counties' domestication guide for NAS-FST 2024-2033

The National Agroecology Strategy for Food System Transformation (2024-2033) provides a clear framework for aligning Vision 2030, the Agricultural Policy (2021), and ASTGS & BETA with agroecological principles.

Successful transformation of Kenya's agri-food systems depends on the active participation of County Governments. Devolution offers an opportunity to localize national priorities, promote inclusive development, and implement context-specific solutions.

The strategy places counties at the center of implementation. This guide acts as a companion to the NAS-FST, helping counties interpret, adapt, and apply the strategy in line with their local policies, plans, and food system contexts.

It provides practical steps for domestication, including policy development and action planning, while emphasizing stakeholder engagement, advocacy, extension services, financing, capacity building, risk management, and monitoring and evaluation.

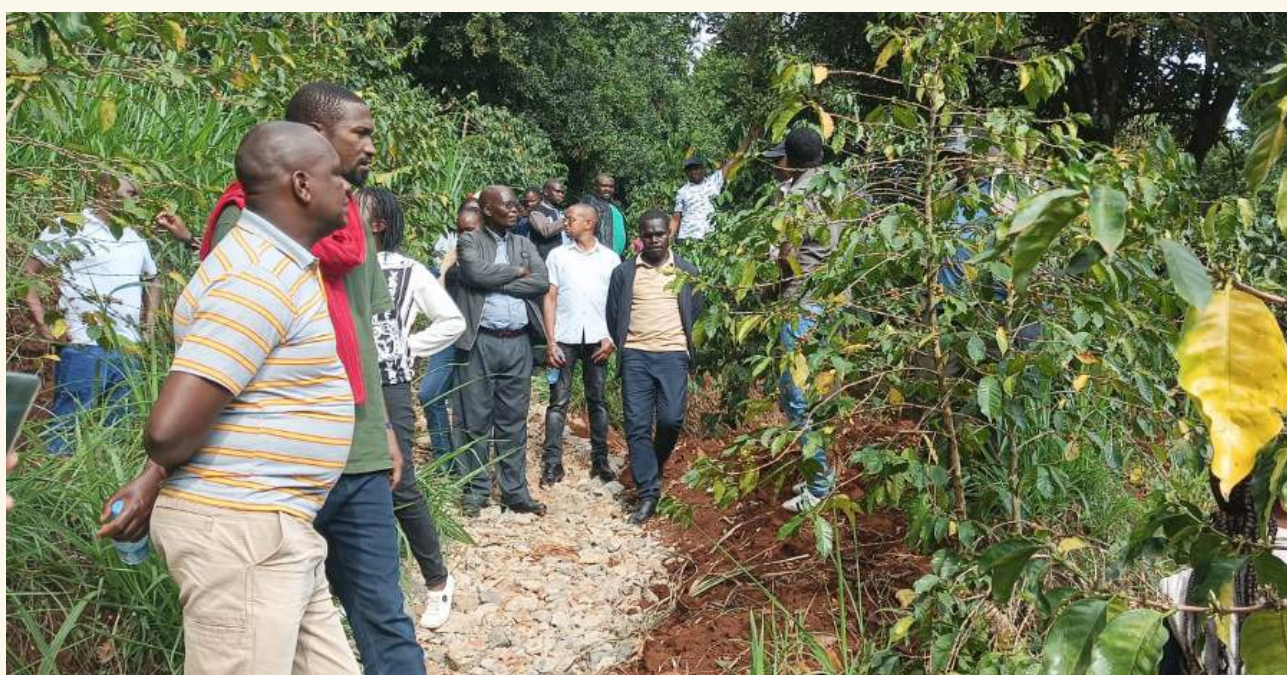
The guide was developed by PELUM Kenya in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development and ISFAA.



Experiential learning visits for county government officials to Murang'a County

The experiential learning and exchange visit for Transzoia, Nakuru, Baringo, and Laikipia County policymakers to Murang'a County provided practical insights into the implementation of agroecology through strong political leadership, coordinated institutions, and partnerships. Key lessons included the importance of access to organic inputs (as seen at the Organic Agriculture Centre of Kenya), strengthening value chains such as dairy and

coffee through cooperatives and infrastructure, and promoting farmer-led agroecological practices at the household level. The visit highlighted how Murang'a's structured approach has translated policy into action, offering a model for Counties. These learnings informed subsequent policy discussions in these counties, which had already initiated similar processes in their respective counties



Multi Stakeholders Platforms

PELUM Kenya continues to coordinate Busia Climate Smart Agriculture MSP and Vihiga Agriculture MSP.



The MSP provided a platform for vast stakeholders to engage in the formulation of the agroecology policies.



Additionally, PELUM Kenya engaged CASSCOM in the 2 counties on agroecological principles and practices

Enhancing Youth and Women engagement in Policy Processes

PELUM Kenya, in collaboration with the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, organized Youth, Women, and Smallholder Farmers' Policy Engagement Forums in Vihiga County and in Busia County.

The forums sought to address the persistent gap whereby youth, women, and smallholder farmers despite being central to Kenya's agricultural and rural economy remain underrepresented in policy and decision-making processes that directly affect their livelihoods.

PELUM Kenya strengthened the capacity and engagement of youth, women, and smallholder farmers in public policy processes at both county and national levels. The sessions enhanced participants understanding of key policy frameworks, identified existing entry points for engagement, and supported the development of practical strategies to promote inclusive participation.

Additionally, the forums strengthened networks among grassroots actors and resulted in the joint development of an Action Plan aimed at advancing inclusive and meaningful participation of youth, women, and smallholder farmers in policy and governance spaces.



Seeds of Gold

FAO Highlights Kenya's agroecology adoption as solution to unpredictable weather and food insecurity

BY SAMMY WAWERU

Climate change is real, and its impacts are already being felt particularly in Africa, which bears the brunt of these challenges.

Prolonged droughts, destructive floods, erratic and unpredictable rainfall, and the rise of invasive pests are just some of the devastating effects of the climate crisis.

These shocks demand urgent, innovative responses in how food is produced.

Kenya, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, is one of the countries in the Horn of Africa hardest hit by climate change.

As weather patterns become more unpredictable, Kenyan farmers are left with little choice but to adopt more sustainable farming practices.

One such approach is agroecology, which is increasingly being seen as a viable path to building resilience in the agricultural sector.

Agroecology is a holistic approach to farming that applies ecological, biodiversity-conserving, and social principles to the design and management of food and agricultural systems.

Farmers like Charles Macharia, based in Kirinyaga County, are already reaping the benefits of this sustainable model.

Macharia began transitioning to agroecological practices in 2014. "Initially, I practiced conventional agriculture," he says, adding, "But I deliberately changed how I grow food by abandoning the use of synthetic fertilisers and farm chemicals."

His shift was motivated by concerns about the harmful residues and toxins in conventionally grown food, which he believes contribute to poverty through the rise of lifestyle-related diseases and costly hospital bills.

While conventional agriculture can generate short-term profits, Macharia notes that yields often decline rapidly.

He now grows crops organically, using biofertilisers such as compost manure and biochar.

He has also adopted drought-resistant seeds and cultivates indigenous and traditional crops.

Macharia is not alone. The Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Association, through its Kenya chapter, has been promoting agroecology by training farmers on organic and regenerative agriculture.

The organization encourages farmers to replace synthetic inputs with bio-based alternatives like bokashi, compost, and biopesticides.

Farmers are also taught to integrate livestock — such as chickens, goats, and cows into their farming systems. The natural integration helps cycle nutrients, suppress weeds, and control pests, strengthening the farm's ecological balance.

They are further encouraged to practice intercropping, use kitchen and vertical gardens, and plant leafy vegetables and climbing crops for year-round food availability.

Through agroforestry and tree intercropping, PELUM promotes the planting of indigenous species like moringa, pawpaw, avocado, and Grevillea, which help restore degraded land, create microclimates, and support biodiversity.

Water conservation is also emphasized. Farmers are trained in watershed restoration, planting cover crops such as indigenous grasses, and using water harvesting techniques like pans and tanks. These methods help retain soil moisture, prevent erosion, and increase productivity, particularly in drought-prone regions.

Now, more than a decade after he began his agroecological journey, Macharia is fully committed to the entire chain of sustainable practices.

He grows black beans (commonly known as njahi), coloured maize, traditional coloured bananas, groundnuts, pumpkins, and African leafy vegetables.

He is also actively involved in community seed saving efforts, preserving disappearing traditional varieties and promoting biodiversity.

Macharia grows indigenous plants such as neem tree (mwarubaini), wild sunflower (Tithonia), Mexican marigold, and pepper to make natural fertilisers and biopesticides.

He also uses seed balls — seeds coated with charcoal dust, which children can also help disperse by playing with them. Over time, these seed balls sprout into trees, aiding natural reforestation.

"Most Kenyan soils are 'sick' due to prolonged misuse of agrochemicals, which have destroyed beneficial microbes," Macharia says, adding that agroecology heals the soil.

After 11 years of applying these methods, he says his yields have significantly improved. "Maize production on one acre has risen from under 15 bags to over 18 bags. Beans have increased from 3 bags to at least 8. Pumpkin yields have jumped from 8 tonnes to 20

I deliberately changed how I grow food by abandoning the use of synthetic fertilisers and farm chemicals

Charles Macharia, farmer



Charles Macharia of Slow Food Kenya, based in Kirinyaga, at the exhibition tent during the second National Agroecology Summit at the Kenya School of Monetary Studies, along Thika Road, Nairobi, on July 11, 2025. WILFRED NYANGARESII/NATION

How agroecology is powering resilient farming in Kenya

tonnes per acre."

He estimates that his production costs have dropped by over 60 per cent.

Similar stories are emerging across Kenya's Eastern region, particularly in arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs), where farmers like Joseph Kyalo, Raphael Mbuvi, and Ronald Nzioka are embracing agroecology with the support of development partners such as PELUM Kenya and local county governments.

In Kitui, Kyalo grows indigenous vegetables like managu and terere, as well as root tubers like cassava and sweet potatoes.

He also grows watermelon and tomatoes. Since adopting organic farming embedded with biodiversity conservation, his production has increased.

Kyalo cultivates drought-resistant crops such as millet, sorghum, pumpkins, pawpaw, cowpeas, and maize.

"I have farmed for 15 years, and after switching to agroecology, my cassava now weighs up to 10 kilos, double the weight under conven-

tional practices," he says.

Chemical-based farming gives high yields at first, but it depletes soil nutrients over time.

Kyalo works with the Kitui Development Centre to promote sustainable practices.

On the other hand, Mbuvi, a Machakos County-based farmer, grows maize, beans, njahi, vegetables, herbs, and spices.

He has adopted contour farming, dug trenches, farm ponds, and zai pits to conserve water.

As a result, his maize yield on half an acre has increased from two to six 90-kg bags, while beans have improved from 1 to 4 bags.

"Contour farming works well in sloped areas," he notes.

Nzioka, also from Machakos, uses traditional herbs like aloe vera, mwarubaini, and Sodom apple to make biopesticides.

His practices are echoed in Laikipia County, where 29-year-old Magdaline Tayiana cultivates passion fruits, kale, spinach, spring onions, and pumpkins.

She advocates for natural pest control methods and is a member

of the Naitabaya Women's Group.

"Healthy eating translates to a healthy generation and lower healthcare costs," says Tayiana.

Founded in 2010, the Naitabaya Women's Group encourages pastoralist communities to embrace agroecological methods while integrating livestock farming.

With 31 members, the group is also involved in making compost, bokashi, and biostimulants. They rear cows, goats, sheep, and poultry, and engage in beekeeping, soap-making, and beadwork, all while educating members about their land rights.

Tayiana also serves as an officer with the Institute for Peace Development & Monitoring and Evaluation (IPSD) Kenya in Laikipia.

PELUM Kenya works with member organizations such as Kitui Development Centre, IPSIA, Community Rehabilitation & Environmental Protection Program (CREPP), Maendeleo Endelevu Action Program (MEAP), Anglican Development Service (ADS) in Western Kenya, Institute of Participatory Development, Slow

Food, Permaculture Centre, and Organic Agriculture Centre Kenya (OACK), among others. Most of these are NGOs or community-based organizations.

Supporting development partners include GIZ Kenya, CI-FOREFRAF, Alliance for Bioversity and CIAT, Biovision Foundation, and Biovision Africa Trust.

"Climate change is really affecting farmers. Agroecological practices help them adapt to harsh weather conditions. These are sustainable methods," says Rosinah Mhinya, Country Coordinator for PELUM Kenya.

Annually, PELUM organizes the National Agroecology Symposium, which brings together stakeholders from both the public and private sectors to sensitize farmers on sustainable farming.

This year marked the second edition of the event, held in Nairobi from July 10 to 11.

Themed "Scaling Up Agroecology Initiatives for Soil Health, Climate Resilience, Economic Stability, and Sustainable Healthy Food Systems", the forum brought together more than 400 participants from civil society, government, and private sector organizations.

During the event, activists and stakeholders called on national and county governments to allocate more funds to sustainable agriculture, warning that underfunding continues to derail efforts to address food insecurity and hunger.

"In Kenya's national budget, the agriculture sector typically receives about 3 per cent, compared to a global average of 5 per cent. Of that, only 1.5 per cent supports sustainable practices," Rosinah noted.

She added, "If we want to address hunger, we must increase financing for agroecology."

Agriculture civil society groups are advocating that more than 50 per cent of attention and resources be directed to agriculture, and this would allow agroecology to receive a meaningful share of funding.

Globally, agriculture is responsible for about 25 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions.

"To reverse the trend, sustainable methods must be adopted. Agriculture is Kenya's economic backbone, and agroecology should be at the center of development," Rosinah emphasized.

The push for increased investment in sustainable farming comes a few months after the launch of Kenya's National Agroecology Strategy for Food System Transformation (NAS-FST) 2024–2033.

The strategy launched at the end of last year, was developed in collaboration with various stakeholders, and it aims to overhaul the country's food systems by tackling soil health, climate shocks, and inefficiencies along the value chain.

Activists are also urging counties to pass agroecology policies. So far, only Murang'a, West Pokot, and Vilhaga have done so, despite agriculture being a devolved function.

swaweru@ke.nationmedia.com

1. Seed of Gold 1st November
2. Youth, women and small holder farmers urged to participate in policy process
3. Involve youth, women and farmers in policy process
4. <https://youtu.be/w062wVPTG6U?si=3fPPN6DOogRhuyq91>
5. Counties urged to adopt eco friendly practices

In 2025 PELUM Kenya contribution to policies at the National Level

• The amendment of the Seed and Plant Varieties (Amendment) Bill, 2025
• National Agroforestry Strategy 2023-2032
• The Seed bill 2025
• The seeds and Plant Varieties (conservation, access and benefit-sharing of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture) regulations, 2024

PELUM Kenya at the Devolution Conference 2025

PELUM Kenya in collaboration with Murang’a County, ISFAA, Biovision Africa Trust, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development organized side event during the Devolution Conference 2025, under the theme Accelerating agroecology adoption through devolution; advancing inclusive prosperity and people centred development: The event brought together key stakeholders to explore the role of devolved governance in advancing agroecology.

The session:

- Explored the critical role of devolution in accelerating the adoption and scaling of agroecological practices across counties.
- Highlighted practical strategies for strengthening sustainable, resilient, and locally adapted agricultural systems, drawing on experiences from Murang’a County.
- Emphasized how devolved governance structures can foster inclusive, community-driven solutions that promote equity, environmental sustainability, and food sovereignty.

Key Learnings

- Devolution platforms present untapped opportunities for high-level policy engagement and advocacy on agroecology.
- Strengthened collaboration and knowledge-sharing among counties and stakeholders are essential for scaling successful agroecological initiatives.



ACCELERATING AGROECOLOGY ADOPTION THROUGH DEVOLUTION:
ADVANCING INCLUSIVE PROSPERITY AND PEOPLE-CENTERED DEVELOPMENT

ROOTED IN JUSTICE

Agroecology as a Catalyst for Transforming Kenya's
Food Systems and Securing Human Dignity

14th

August 2025

11:00 AM
To
01:00 PM

Venue : Tent 5

Keynote Speakers :



Executive Director
Biovision Africa Trust

Deputy Director,
Policy Unit, AMULI

Youth Farmer Representative,
Murang'a County

Head Of Programme
PELUM Kenya

Director Linkages and
Devolutions, Murang'a
County Government

ISFAA Coordinator

Organized By :
Murang'a County in collaboration with PELUM Kenya and ISFAA



Group photo from side event during the Devolution Conference 2025, under the theme Accelerating agroecology adoption through devolution; advancing inclusive prosperity and people centred development.

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Agroecology Policy formulation initiated by Pelum Kenya in 2025

PELUM Kenya in collaboration with other partners initiated AE policies in the following counties:

- Transzoia County
- Turkana County
- Laikipia County



The 2nd National Agroecology Symposium

The second Agroecology Symposium was held at the Kenya School of Monetary Studies in Nairobi from 10th–11th July 2025. The event was convened by PELUM Kenya in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, alongside key partners including ISFAA, GIZ AgSys, WRI, Alliance Bioversity CIAT, CIFOR-ICRAF, SNV, Hivos, Biovision Africa Trust, Hand in Hand Eastern Africa, Act for Change Trust, Agroecology Fund, World Animal Protection, APHRC, BIBA Kenya, ActionAid International, and Fastenaktion Biovision Foundation.

The symposium brought together a diverse range of stakeholders, including farmers, private sector actors, media representatives, PELUM member organizations, development partners, and both county and national government officials. Convened under the theme **“Scaling up Agroecology Initiatives for Soil Health, Climate Resilience, Economic Stability, and Sustainable Healthy Food Systems,”** the two-day event attracted 484 delegates.

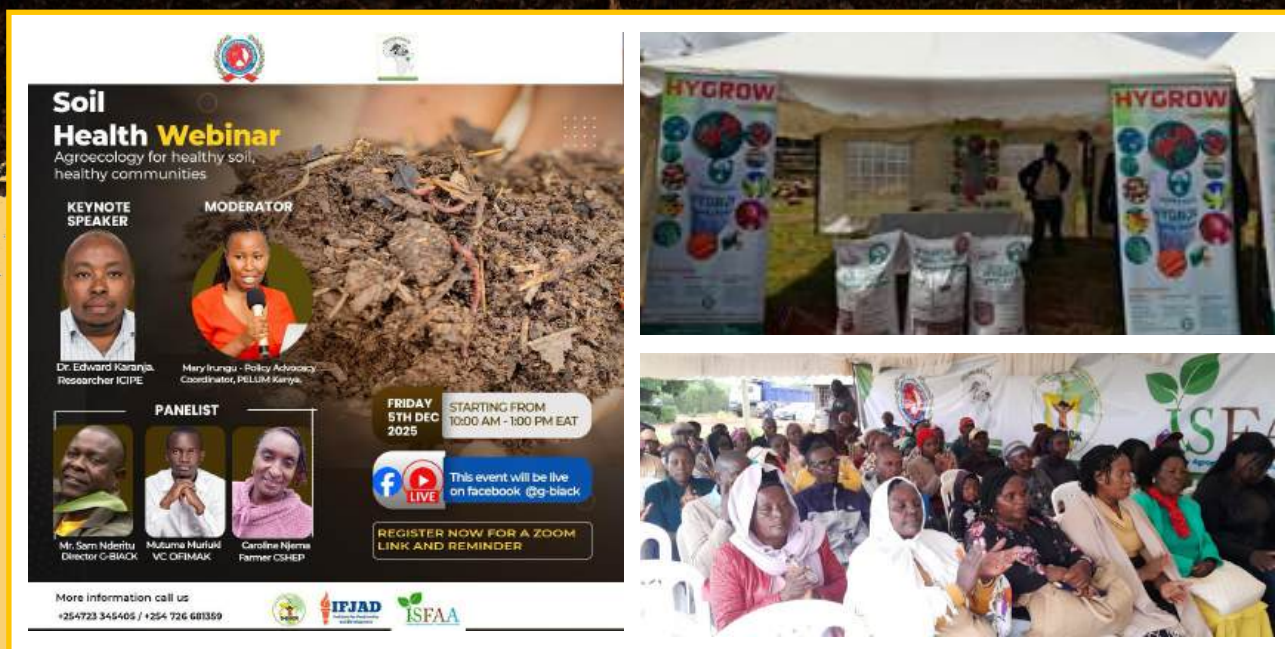
Participants engaged in dynamic knowledge exchange through four plenary sessions, four panel discussions, eight side events, and four parallel sessions. In addition, 48 exhibitors showcased a wide range of agroecological technologies, innovations, and models, fostering learning, collaboration, and uptake of best practices.

The symposium reinforced the central role of agroecology in transforming Kenya’s agricultural and food systems. It catalyzed meaningful dialogue and collective action towards a more sustainable, resilient, and healthy food system through inclusive multi-stakeholder engagement, knowledge sharing, and strengthened strategic partnerships.

Furthermore, the event provided a key platform for disseminating the National Agroecology Strategy for Food System Transformation (2024–2033), as well as guidelines to support counties in domesticating and implementing the strategy.



WORLD SOIL DAY 2025



Soil Health Awareness and Promotion of Agroecological Inputs

PELUM Kenya implemented a series of knowledge-sharing and market-linkage activities to promote sustainable soil health management and increase awareness of agroecological alternatives to synthetic fertilizers.

- **Showcasing of Organic Alternatives:** Over 10 micro-enterprises participated in exhibitions, showcasing a diverse range of organic and bio-based soil inputs. This initiative highlighted locally available, affordable, and environmentally friendly alternatives to conventional fertilizers, strengthening linkages between producers and farmers.
- **Webinar on Agroecology:** On 5th December 2025, PELUM Kenya hosted a webinar titled **"Agroecology for Healthy Soils and Healthy Communities."** The session brought together 114 participants (48 men, 66 women, 33 youth). It featured the presentation of research findings comparing the impacts of organic and conventional agriculture on soil health from ICIPE. A panel discussion followed, involving a

farmer, an agroecology practitioner, and a bio-input supplier, who shared practical experiences and actionable insights on sustainable soil management.

- **Radio Awareness on Soil Health:** A radio program was conducted to further disseminate knowledge on soil health, reaching a broader audience and enhancing public awareness on the benefits of agroecological practices.
- **Exhibition in Collaboration with Kiambu County:** On 7th December 2025, an exhibition was organized in collaboration with Kiambu County, attracting over 309 farmers (198 men, 111 women, 67 youth). The event demonstrated the availability, affordability, and effectiveness of bio-inputs, thereby increasing farmer awareness and accessibility to sustainable agricultural solutions.

These activities collectively contributed to strengthening farmers' knowledge, improving access to agroecological inputs, and promoting the adoption of sustainable soil management practices within local farming communities.

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL ADVOCACY FORUMS

PELUM Kenya in the 10th Agroforestry Symposium in Musoma, Tanzania

PELUM Kenya was represented by Mary Irungu at the 10th Annual Agroforestry Symposium (hosted by Vi Agroforestry) in Musoma, Tanzania. Over the past days, participants engaged with various media platforms,

including a radio show on Tetemo FM, a media briefing, and online media dialogue, broadcasted live on NTV Kenya (online platform), Mwananchi TV, and NTV Uganda

Photo Speak



National Consultative Meeting on Agroecology for Climate Action – Nairobi (August 28, 2025)



PELUM Kenya in collaboration with RESCOPE Kenya and BIBA Kenya convened a National Consultative Meeting in Nairobi to advance agroecology as a climate action pathway, bringing together 30 stakeholders including farmers, civil society actors, researchers, policymakers, and academia. The forum discussed the urgent role of agroecology in addressing climate change, food insecurity, and declining agricultural productivity. Participants emphasized scaling agroecological practices, aligning climate finance with agroecology, and strengthening integration into national frameworks such as the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and county-level policies.

Key highlights included a presentation on Kenya's efforts to mainstream agroecology within Vision 2030, the NDCs, and the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP), alongside regional perspectives from the African Group of Negotiators (AGN), stressing Africa's shift from negotiations to tangible grassroots implementation. Civil society organizations (CSOs) underscored their role in advocacy, community mobilization, and bridging policy-practice gaps while highlighting the need for credible data, coordination, and sustainable financing.

Makueni Extension staff training

The training on agroecology for 34 Makueni County extension staff, held from 19th–20th August 2025 at the Drylands Natural Resource Centre, successfully strengthened participants' technical and practical capacity to promote sustainable, climate-resilient agriculture. Organized by PELUM Kenya with partners, the workshop combined theory and hands-on learning on key areas including agroecology principles, soil health management, organic farming, integrated pest management, seed systems, and organic certification and marketing. Participants explored critical agricultural challenges such as soil degradation, biodiversity loss, and overreliance on chemical inputs, while



gaining practical skills in preparing bio-inputs like compost, bokashi, bio-stimulants, and natural pesticides. The training also emphasized the role of extension officers as Trainers of Trainers and frontline implementers of the upcoming Makueni Agroecology Policy, equipping them to scale agroecological practices, strengthen local food systems, and support farmer adoption through knowledge transfer and community engagement.



Project Closure - Aberdares Watershed Management Project

The Aberdares Watershed Management Project implemented collaboratively by PELUM Kenya, RODI Kenya, ICE, OACK, COSDEP and SACDEP Kenya successfully ended after achieving significant progress in enhancing environmental governance and developing policy frameworks for sustainable natural resource management in the Aberdares watershed. The project aimed to strengthen the capacities of county governments and stakeholders, fostering collaboration among various groups to advance critical environmental policy initiatives that enhance ecosystem resilience against climate change and degradation.

One of the project's key accomplishments was its support in finalizing four essential environmental

policy frameworks in Nyeri, Nyandarua, Muranga and Kiambu Counties. These frameworks concentrated on the conservation of wetlands and riparian areas, the management of invasive and alien species, natural resource management, and agroecology.

Moreover, the initiative significantly increased community involvement and advocacy, raising awareness about wetlands conservation and promoting sustainable environmental practices. It also played a vital role in developing a Joint Conservation Action Plan for the Mariira and Gitomboya communities, which further strengthened local participation in environmental governance.



Left, Nyandarua CECM Mr. Samuel Mugo addresses members of the County Assembly Committee (CAC) during a two-day sensitization meeting held on 17th-18th July 2025 at Abroshia Hotel, Naivasha. Right, Muranga MSP members during the policy sensitization

PHOTO SPEAK GAW





CLIMATE ACTION

The Goal of PELUM Kenya's interventions on Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) in this planning period is to enhance the resilience of smallholder farmers and pastoralists to the effects of climate change and natural disasters. PELUM Kenya will continue creating awareness about Climate Change and its effects in general and partnership building the communities' resilience.

PELUM Kenya will endeavour to engage the communities through the member organizations on the following vital interventions; Natural Resource Management, Disaster preparedness, Climate governance, soil and water conservation, sustainable water management, including water governance, watershed management, and rehabilitation, Diversification of Agro enterprises and Issues affecting pastoralists.



PELUM Kenya is strengthening the resilience of smallholder farmers and pastoralists, empowering communities to manage natural resources, prepare for disasters, govern their climate future, and diversify their livelihoods in the face of climate change.

Community baraza meeting in Bomet

On 25th June 2025, PELUM Kenya, supported a vibrant community baraza at AGC Chepalungu in Bomet County. The forum brought together the Community Forest Association (CFA), local community members, and TENWEK Community Health and Development staff to deliberate on environmental conservation, livelihood improvement, and pressing local challenges. Key achievements included updates on tree-planting campaigns, WASH initiatives, and income-generating projects such as beekeeping and nurseries, alongside strengthened school

partnerships for environmental education. The baraza fostered youth engagement in conservation and resource mobilization, with resolutions to draft concept notes and scale training opportunities. The impact was clear: stronger collaboration, actionable plans for sustainable livelihoods, and renewed community ownership of conservation efforts. This activity not only reinforced grassroots resilience but also laid a solid foundation for future interventions in environmental sustainability and community development.

Food forest establishment in Bomet

TENWEK Community, in partnership with PELUM Kenya, successfully established two food forests in Bomet and Narok Counties as part of its climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts. By equipping model farmers with resources, seedlings, and water pans for year-round irrigation, the initiative demonstrated how integrated agroforestry systems can enhance food security, household nutrition, and income diversification while restoring ecosystems. Fruit trees such as apple, avocado, and orange,

alongside assorted vegetables, were introduced to diversify diets and strengthen livelihoods. The food forests are expected to deliver multiple benefits including improved soil fertility, biodiversity restoration, carbon sequestration, and resilience against climate variability. This grassroots action stands out as a living demonstration of climate-smart agriculture, showcasing how community-driven solutions can simultaneously address environmental conservation and rural development.

WRUA engagement meeting in Narok-GSAILI

The engagement workshop held on 29th May 2025 at Zebu Hotel, Narok, convened by PELUM Kenya under the PENELI IV project (funded by SSNC), brought together diverse stakeholders including Paran Women Group, the Narok County Forester, and representatives from Ewaso Nyiro WRUAs. Rather than focusing solely on challenges, the meeting emphasized collaborative dialogue and co-creation of solutions for water governance. Participants highlighted pressing issues such as pollution of rivers, soil erosion, weak WRUA cohesion, political interference, and climate change impacts, while also acknowledging opportunities for stronger

partnerships. The discussions generated practical action points: community outreach through WRUA trainers, structured government engagement, catchment restoration with indigenous trees, integration of conservation with livelihoods, and resource mobilization for WRUA sustainability. Importantly, the meeting underscored the need for youth inclusion and organizational strengthening to enhance WRUA effectiveness. By weaving together community voices, government perspectives, and civil society input, the workshop laid a foundation for inclusive, climate-resilient, and sustainable water resource management in Narok County.

Stakeholders engagement meeting in Kilifi – GSAILI

In Kilifi County, the IPD-K Stakeholder Forum held on 28th November 2025 at Comfy Dhows Hotel brought together 21 participants from government, CSOs, and community groups to deliberate on pressing environmental challenges. Discussions centered on pollution of the Sabaki River and Indian Ocean, shrinking forest cover, and the impacts of extractive industries. The forum achieved a concrete outcome:

a joint commitment to rehabilitate mangroves along the Kilifi coastline by planting 2,000 seedlings in December 2025. This action signaled strong collaboration among stakeholders and reinforced the importance of multi-actor advocacy, civic participation, and climate justice in safeguarding ecosystems.

Radio talks

On 21st and 25th August 2025, PELUM Kenya partnered with Ripple Effect Kenya for a radio talk show on Sasa Radio to raise awareness about transitioning into agroecological farming amidst climate change. The discussion, led by Titus Sagala (Ripple Effect Kenya) and Isaac Ogutu (PELUM Kenya), highlighted agroecology as a low-input, sustainable solution to address soil degradation, food insecurity, and rising production costs. Key practices promoted included crop rotation, composting, agroforestry, and water conservation, all aimed at restoring soil fertility and reducing reliance on chemical inputs. The guests critiqued GMOs as a symptom of

conventional farming failures, advocating instead for organic approaches that safeguard health and the environment. Despite a power outage on 21st August that necessitated a repeat session on 25th August, the program successfully educated listeners on practical, climate-smart techniques and emphasized the role of community networks and supportive policies in scaling agroecology. The impact was evident in the strengthened public awareness and farmer empowerment, positioning agroecology as a viable pathway for resilient and sustainable food systems in Kenya.

Technical water conservation training

On 12th June 2025, PELUM Kenya facilitated a technical water conservation and management training at a farmer field school in Jilore–Malindi, building on earlier theoretical sessions held in 2024. The training, attended by partners including ADS Pwani, IPD Kulamu Sana, and Kwetu Kenya, focused on equipping participants with hands-on skills in low-cost, high-impact water conservation techniques suited to semi-arid Kilifi County. Practical demonstrations covered zai pits, water pans, mandala beds, mulching, and keyhole gardens, each showcasing how farmers can improve soil moisture, rehabilitate degraded land, and sustain crop production under erratic rainfall. Participants appreciated innovations

such as mandala beds for intensive vegetable production and keyhole gardens for accessible kitchen gardening, while also noting challenges like maintenance requirements and vulnerability to pests or erosion. The training emphasized integrating these practices into broader water governance frameworks and cascading knowledge to grassroots farmer groups. An action plan was agreed, including PELUM Kenya's support for a dam liner for the host farm's water pan and partner commitments to disseminate knowledge widely. The impact of this training lies in strengthening community resilience, climate-smart agriculture, and sustainable water resource management in Kilifi County.



MARKET DEVELOPMENT

PELUM Kenya's Agro-Enterprise and Market Development component plays a pivotal role in empowering smallholder farmers and promoting Agroecological practices across the region. Farmers are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to turn their agricultural activities into thriving businesses. By fostering entrepreneurship and innovation, PELUM Kenya supports farmers in diversifying their income streams and accessing lucrative markets for their produce.

The Agro-Enterprise and Market Development component at PELUM Kenya focuses on building the capacity of farmers in value addition, post-harvest handling, and market linkages. By providing training and technical assistance, farmers are better equipped to meet market demands, improve the quality of their products, and negotiate fair prices for their produce. Additionally, PELUM Kenya facilitates market access for smallholder farmers, connecting them with buyers, retailers, and other stakeholders in the agricultural value chain.

Through this component, PELUM Kenya not only empowers farmers economically but also contributes to the growth and sustainability of the agricultural sector. By promoting Agro-enterprise development and market linkages, PELUM Kenya is driving positive change in rural communities and fostering a more resilient and inclusive agricultural economy.



Strengthening Organic Futures: Insights from the Biofach and KCOA Networking Meeting

The Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture (KCOA) Project, under GIZ, together with PENELLI IV, proudly supported the participation of Kenyan delegates at the Biofach and KCOA Networking Meeting held from 11th to 13th February 2025 in Nuremberg, Germany. Sebastian Wambugu, the PELUM Kenya Board Treasurer, and Moraa Ratemo, Programme Officer, Knowledge Hub

and Communications, represented Kenya and actively contributed to critical discussions shaping the future of organic agriculture. Additionally, Sylvia Kuria, an advocate for organic retail in Kenya, participated with the support of GIZ, sharing invaluable insights into the country's organic retail landscape.



Photos during the Biofach Trade Fair and KCOA Networking meetings

Looking Ahead

With vibrant exchanges, renewed partnerships, and clear strategic pillars, the Biofach and KCOA Networking Meeting in Nuremberg set a strong foundation for the future of organic agriculture in Africa. Thanks to the committed efforts of individuals like Sebastian Wambugu, Moraa Ratemo, and Sylvia Kuria, and the support of GIZ and PENELLI IV, the momentum towards a greener, more sustainable future continues to build.

Growing change through Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) Certification

PELUM Kenya staff and Member Organizations (RODI Kenya and Tenwek Hospital Community Health & Development (TENWEK)) participated in a dynamic PGS (Participatory Guarantee Systems) training at Sagana Gateway, facilitated by Patricia Flores (IFOAM) and Sylvia Kuria. The training included an inspiring visit to the Kaki Seed Bank, where we witnessed a powerful ripple effect –

farmers have already established one additional seed bank, with two more underway. A major highlight was the awarding of Certificates from IFOAM to PELUM Kenya staff, certifying them as Trainers of Trainers (ToT) for PGS. This milestone will significantly strengthen the PELUM Kenya Network's efforts to expand organic certification and community empowerment.



Group photo for the Kenya delegates who participated in the PGS Training by IFOAM and BROT. Organization represented were PELUM Kenya, BIBA Kenya, RODI Kenya and Tenwek Hospital Community Health & Development (TENWEK)

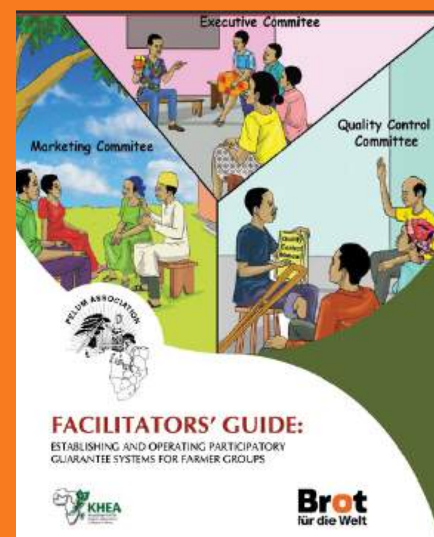


Group photo of the participants in the PGS Training as we visited Kaki PGS Group (in Kahio, Kirinyaga County) supported by Slowfood Kenya.

PGS Resources



How PGS Works



Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) facilitator's guide

National Multi-stakeholder Meeting on Intra East Africa Community (EAC) trade on Agroecology Produce



Group photo of the delegates in the National Multi-Stakeholder meeting on Intra East Africa Community (EAC) Trade on Agroecology Produce on 27th August 2025 at Vicmark Hotel, Nakuru.



Group photo of the delegates during the field visit to Njoro Earth Market to meet Agroecology Traders as part of the National Multi-Stakeholder meeting on Intra East Africa Community (EAC) Trade on Agroecology Produce on 26th August 2025.

In August 2025, PELUM Kenya, in partnership with the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA), convened a two-day National Multi-Stakeholder Follow-Up Meeting and Field Learning Exchange in Nakuru County under the theme **“My Food is African: Scaling Agroecological Trade and Livelihoods in East Africa.”** The event brought together farmers, policymakers, youth and women-led enterprises, traders, researchers, certification bodies,

and civil society organizations to strengthen dialogue and action on cross-border agroecological trade within the East African Community (EAC).

The engagement highlighted the growing importance of agroecology in addressing food security, climate resilience, healthy food systems, and sustainable livelihoods. Participants explored the opportunities

and barriers affecting agroecological trade, including certification costs, customs procedures, infrastructure gaps, market access challenges, and limited consumer awareness. The discussions also reinforced the need for stronger regional policies and harmonized trade systems that recognize agroecological products within the EAC.

A major highlight of the event was the field learning exchange visit to Bee My Partner Farm in Njoro, led by youth agripreneur Robert Mwangi. The farm demonstrated practical agroecological innovations such as bokashi composting, azolla production, beekeeping, multistorey kitchen gardens, black soldier fly rearing, and integrated crop-livestock systems. Participants witnessed how circular farming systems can improve soil fertility, reduce waste, create employment opportunities, and strengthen climate resilience while generating income for youth and women.

The delegation also visited the Slow Food Kenya Earth Market in Njoro, where agroecological farmers directly market organic produce to consumers. The market showcased the growing demand for healthy and sustainably produced food while exposing the persistent challenges facing agroecological traders, including poor infrastructure, pricing competition from conventional products, and difficulties in distinguishing organic produce in the market.

During the national multi-stakeholder dialogue, representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, KEBS, KRA, KOAN, county governments, and farmer

organizations emphasized the critical role of agroecology in Kenya's agricultural future. The State Department of Agriculture reaffirmed government commitment to implementing the National Agroecology Strategy and integrating agroecology into trade and policy frameworks. Stakeholders also developed recommendations aimed at reducing non-tariff barriers, strengthening certification systems, supporting women and youth enterprises, improving infrastructure, and enhancing access to financing for agroecological businesses.

To amplify awareness beyond the workshop, PELUM Kenya further hosted a one-hour Nation FM radio talk show on cross-border agroecological trade, reaching wider audiences with key messages on healthy food systems, consumer responsibility, youth engagement, and the importance of supportive policies for agroecology.

Through this initiative, PELUM Kenya and AFSA strengthened collaboration among stakeholders, elevated the voices of agroecological farmers and traders, and advanced practical recommendations for scaling inclusive, climate-resilient, and farmer-centered trade systems in East Africa. The 2025 engagement reaffirmed that agroecology is not only a farming approach but also a pathway toward sustainable livelihoods, food sovereignty, and regional economic transformation.



Representatives from KEBS, KOAN, the Ministry of County Trade, farmer groups, and county officials during the high-level panel discussion session, deliberating on opportunities and challenges in promoting agroecology trade.



Ms. Rachael Atyang, PELUM Kenya Board Member and TRANSCOM Chair, giving opening remarks during the meeting.



Photo from the Nation FM Radio Show

Strengthening Awareness and Capacity for Agroecological Crossborder Trade

Building on the momentum of the 2025 National Multi-Stakeholder Meeting in Nakuru, PELUM Kenya further expanded its efforts to strengthen agroecological trade systems through targeted awareness creation, media engagement, and stakeholder sensitization across the East African Community (EAC). In partnership with government institutions, cross-border

trader associations, civil society organizations, and regulatory agencies, PELUM Kenya organized a series of engagements aimed at equipping farmers, traders, women, and youth with practical knowledge on certification, standards, customs procedures, and market access for agroecological products.



Group photo during the Cross-border Workshop on trade frameworks and practices, held on 28th November 2025 at Farview Hotel, Busia

One of the key milestones was the Round Table Talk on Cross-Border Trade Frameworks and Practices held in Busia County in November 2025. The forum convened county governments, farmer groups, Trade Information Desk Officers (TIDOs), trader associations, and development partners to discuss opportunities and barriers affecting agroecological trade within the EAC. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of harmonized trade policies, improved market infrastructure, simplified customs systems, and stronger collaboration among regional actors to unlock the potential of agroecological products in regional markets.



Mr. Michael Maloba – Department of Trade & Cooperatives, and Mr. Joshua Achiya Akwara – County Chief Officer, Trade & Cooperatives giving presentation on department of Trade and Cooperatives during the workshop

The discussions highlighted the growing role of agroecology in promoting healthy food systems, improving soil fertility, reducing dependence on synthetic inputs, and enhancing climate resilience. Participants also identified critical gaps affecting small-scale traders, including limited awareness of the Simplified Trade Regime (STR), costly certification systems, inconsistent



The initiatives strengthened collaboration among institutions, empowered smallholder farmers and traders with practical knowledge, and advanced collective action towards creating more resilient and farmer-centered food systems across East Africa.

standards, and poor access to market information. Through the engagement, stakeholders committed to supporting farmers through policy development, capacity building, aggregation centers, and improved market linkages.

To further strengthen knowledge and compliance, PELUM Kenya organized a two-day Online Sensitization Workshop on Cross-Border Trade for Agroecology Traders and Farmers in January 2026, bringing together over 436 participants from Kenya and neighboring countries. The workshop featured presentations from key institutions including KOAN, KEBS, ARSO, AFA, PCPB, KRA Customs, and Trade Information Desk Officers. The sessions provided practical guidance on organic certification, product traceability, standards compliance, customs procedures, licensing requirements, and sustainable

trade systems for agroecological products. The workshop also amplified the voices of youth and women traders actively participating in cross-border trade. Practical experiences shared by traders from Kenya and Uganda demonstrated the opportunities available within regional markets while exposing ongoing challenges such as fluctuating exchange rates, border delays, inadequate infrastructure, and inconsistent regulatory systems. The engagement reinforced the importance of trader networks, cooperatives, digital market information systems, and structured support mechanisms in enabling inclusive and profitable agroecological trade.

Additionally, PELUM Kenya engaged a media consultant to support awareness campaigns using audiovisual,

print, radio, and digital media platforms to stimulate conversations around agroecology and increase consumer demand for agroecological products. These media interventions amplified farmers' experiences, promoted healthy food systems, and strengthened public understanding of the benefits of agroecological production and cross-border trade.

Through these engagements, PELUM Kenya continued to position agroecology as a driver of food sovereignty, sustainable livelihoods, climate resilience, and inclusive regional trade. The initiatives strengthened collaboration among institutions, empowered smallholder farmers and traders with practical knowledge, and advanced collective action towards creating more resilient and farmer-centered food systems across East Africa.

Support 2 initiatives on value addition of livestock products for pastoralist communities in ASAL areas

The Small-Scale Honey Processing Support initiative for King'utheni Bee Keepers in Ngulu Sub-location, Kibwezi West, has been successfully implemented. The group, comprising 25 members (18M, 7F including 5Y and 1PWD) is part of the Nature Positive Food Systems (Nature+) project supported by UDO with funding from Global Affairs Canada through CFGB and MCC. Following prior training on modern beekeeping and collective marketing, the group received 16 Langstroth hives through a 50% cost-share contribution (KES 40,000 from the community) and additional harvesting and processing equipment supported by PELUM, including a centrifuge honey extractor and honey press.

With an existing base of 210 log hives and 12 improvised Langstroth hives, and having previously harvested 82 kg of honey, the new equipment and technical support have strengthened productivity, improved honey quality, enhanced income opportunities, and reinforced sustainable, climate-resilient beekeeping practices while strengthening the local honey value chain.

The Agency for Cross-Border Pastoralists Development (APaD), in collaboration with PELUM Kenya, implemented a fodder production and capacity-building initiative in Turkana County to strengthen the resilience of the Napas Kareman Community Group in ASAL areas. The project rehabilitated a 5-acre fodder farm, provided essential tools including a milling machine, and delivered training on pasture establishment, management, harvesting, conservation, and value addition, with a focus on drought-resistant grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*). As a result, the group harvested 50 bales of hay and 6 kg of seeds, generated Ksh 10,000 from sales, and improved feed access for over 600 livestock, enhancing animal health, productivity, and income stability. While the intervention demonstrated strong potential for climate resilience and commercialization, challenges such as erratic rainfall, water scarcity, weak fencing, and limited storage infrastructure highlight the need for investment in water systems, secure fencing, storage facilities, and advanced market-oriented training to sustain and scale the impact.

Building capacity of extension staffs and farmer leaders from PELUM Kenya Members on value addition and and Agro -processing



In November 2025, PELUM Kenya hosted a two-day Value Addition for Select Value Chains Capacity Building Workshop at Baraka Agriculture College in Molo, Nakuru County, bringing together extension staff and farmer leaders from member organizations and partner institutions. The workshop convened 46 participants, with strong representation from both women and men, to strengthen practical skills in agro-processing, food preservation, and value addition as pathways to improved incomes, reduced post-harvest losses, and expanded market opportunities for smallholder farmers.

The training focused on practical, hands-on learning across key agroecological value chains, including vegetables, herbs and spices, roots and tubers, dairy products, and honey processing. Participants explored innovative techniques such as solar drying, jam making, flour fortification, preparation of crisps and mandazi from root crops, milk processing into yoghurt, mala, milkshakes, and ice cream, as well as honey extraction and beeswax processing. Sessions also emphasized food safety, hygiene standards, quality testing, packaging, and labelling to strengthen product competitiveness and market readiness.

A major highlight of the workshop was the practical demonstrations that allowed participants to directly

engage with processing technologies and value addition methods. Through interactive sessions, extension officers and farmer leaders gained confidence in transforming raw agricultural produce into marketable products with longer shelf life and higher commercial value. The training also showcased the potential of agroecological value addition in creating employment opportunities for women and youth while strengthening local food systems

Pre- and post-training evaluations revealed significant improvement in participants' knowledge and technical skills, particularly in dairy processing, honey value addition, packaging, and quality assurance. Participants developed action plans to cascade the acquired skills to grassroots farming communities, ensuring wider adoption of value addition practices within their respective regions.

The workshop reinforced PELUM Kenya's commitment to building resilient agroecological enterprises by equipping extension workers and farmer leaders with practical knowledge that supports sustainable livelihoods, market access, and increased profitability for smallholder farmers across Kenya.

Photo Gallery



Empowering Women and Youth Through Agroecology, Savings, and Entrepreneurship in Kiambu County

In July 2025, PELUM Kenya, in collaboration with Girl Child Network, empowered women and youth in Thika Section 9, Kiambu County, through a two-day training focused on community savings, agribusiness, and entrepreneurship. The training brought together 35 participants, the majority of them youth and women, to strengthen their capacity in forming Community Saving and Loaning Associations (COSALO/VSLA) while building

sustainable livelihood opportunities through rabbit farming. Participants gained practical skills in rabbit production, breeding, feeding, disease management, marketing, and value addition, alongside financial literacy training covering budgeting, savings, loan management, and small business development.

The initiative also created opportunities for participants to access startup support through

rabbit distribution and construction of rabbit structures, while linking farmer groups to reliable microfinance institutions at the zonal level. In addition, the programme promoted the visibility of ecological farming solutions through exhibitions showcasing ecological pest and disease

management inputs, as well as commercially packaged agroecological products. The engagement strengthened community resilience, promoted youth and women inclusion in agribusiness, and enhanced access to financing and sustainable market opportunities.



Photo 1 Rabbit crew training on rabbit keeping and photo structure constructed by rabbit crew for Girl Child Network (Women and Youth with Focus Group)

The Solidary Fund for Development (SOFDEV) Income Generating Activities initiative was successfully implemented to strengthen the financial sustainability of Kathama (Kitui County) and Kauma (Machakos County) SOFDEV institutions under INADES Formation Kenya, reaching 30 members (18F, 12M).

The intervention supported climate-resilient seed enterprises and tree seedlings for resale in Kathama, targeting the October November December (OND) planting season to generate income and promote environmental conservation, while Kauma benefited from two egg incubators and a three-in-one printer to create new revenue streams through chick hatching and printing services, while reducing operational costs. With financial support from PELUM Kenya, co-investment from SOFDEV institutions, and continued technical guidance from INADES Formation Kenya, the activity enhanced income diversification, improved gender-inclusive economic participation, reduced operational strain, and strengthened the long-term resilience of community-owned financial institutions in ASAL areas.

Facilitated 4 fora in each zone to discuss market linkages and emerging opportunities at the zonal level

In August 2025, PELUM Kenya organized a two-day Market Linkages Forum and exposure visit in Kajiado and Makueni Counties, bringing together 35 participants (20M, 15F, including 20 youth). The forum provided a platform for farmers, partners, and stakeholders to connect, exchange market information, and identify business opportunities within the agroecology value chain.

The activity featured a seed fair at C-SHEP Kiserian, where farmers showcased indigenous seeds, organic products, and value-added innovations, creating direct linkages between producers and potential buyers while enhancing product visibility. This was followed by a learning visit to Charity

Ndivo Farm in Kilome, where participants observed practical applications in community seed banking, value addition, and on-farm innovations with clear market potential.

The forum strengthened farmer-to-farmer learning, networking, and market-oriented production, while promoting conservation and commercialization of indigenous seeds. It also highlighted opportunities in value addition, organic product markets, and low-cost storage technologies.

Key outcomes included improved knowledge on market systems and value addition, strengthened farmer networks and partnerships, and increased awareness of market opportunities for agroecological products. However, challenges such as limited structured market linkages, inadequate storage facilities, and climate variability were noted, underscoring the need for continued investment in market systems development and resilience-building initiatives.

Facilitated zonal Coordinators to attend market activities in the zones

Shibuye community members and health workers, in collaboration with the Kakamega County Agriculture Department and other partners including PELUM Kenya, organised for the 4th Governor's Farmers Day held at Bukura Agricultural Training College (ATC). With over 500 participants in attendance, the event created a direct engagement platform between farmers and county leadership to discuss sector challenges and influence agricultural policy, which falls under county government mandate. Farmers signed a declaration with the Governor outlining key constraints, including limited market access, weak infrastructure, climate change impacts, pests and diseases, inadequate farm inputs, limited technology, and shortage of extension staff.

The Governor reaffirmed commitments to support farmers through climate-smart agriculture training, improved access to fish feeds and soft loans via cooperatives, recruitment of extension officers, enhanced transport infrastructure, and strengthened market linkages locally and internationally. The county also pledged to boost value chains in livestock, poultry, apiculture, and crop enterprises to create youth employment and increase farmer incomes. Farmers further prioritized improved land access, investment in agro-processing technology, stronger cooperatives, inclusive decision-making, and enhanced resilience to climate-related risks.

Expanding Market Opportunities for Agroecological Farmers in Kiambu County

In September 2025, PELUM Kenya supported the establishment and official launch of the Githunguri Organic Farmers Market in Kiambu County, creating a new platform to connect agroecological farmers directly with consumers seeking safe, healthy, and sustainably produced food. The initiative brought together organic farmers, local consumers, government representatives, private sector actors, and media stakeholders in a collective effort to strengthen local agroecological markets and improve livelihoods for smallholder farmers.

The market was established to enhance market access for farmers practicing organic and agroecological farming under PELUM Kenya member organizations. During the launch, more than 40 participants, including women and youth, attended the event, demonstrating growing interest in sustainable food systems and community-driven market solutions. The market currently operates from a temporary roadside shop while awaiting completion of the main county market space, serving as an important entry point for farmers to access structured markets.



COSDEP Director Mr Kinyanjui and a Media at the ORGANIC Outlet at Githunguri during the market Launch.

Farmers showcased a wide range of fresh organic produce, herbs, value-added products, bio-inputs, and biopesticides, highlighting the diversity and potential of agroecological enterprises. Through the initiative, PELUM Kenya provided branding support, market equipment, licensing assistance, and media engagement, while COSDEP mobilized farmers and coordinated stakeholder participation to ensure successful implementation.

The launch reflected increasing recognition of agroecology as both a sustainable farming approach and a viable economic opportunity. Strong collaboration from county government officials, private sector partners, and media houses further reinforced the importance of strengthening farmer-consumer linkages and supporting local food systems that prioritize environmental sustainability, healthy diets, and resilient livelihoods.

The Githunguri Organic Farmers Market now stands as a growing hub for agroecological trade and awareness

creation in Kiambu County, providing farmers with a reliable market outlet while encouraging more consumers to embrace organic and sustainably produced food.

Exchange Visit

On 24th April 2025, CMAD organized an exchange visit to Ranenville Organic Farm in Ranen, bringing together 27 participants including farmers, youth in agribusiness, extension staff, and ACEP representatives. The visit offered hands-on exposure to organic and integrated farming practices, ranging from composting and natural pest control to crop rotation, azolla production for poultry feed, aquaculture, and agroforestry. Participants gained practical insights into low-cost innovations like azolla for poultry productivity and fish farming as a sustainable enterprise, while appreciating the synergies of integrated systems in boosting farm resilience. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with farmers inspired to replicate practices such as community demonstration units for azolla and fish farming. Recommendations included follow-up training, mentorship, and provision of starter kits to encourage adoption. The activity strengthened networks, enhanced farmer capacity, and reinforced the organisation's mission of promoting sustainable livelihoods and climate-resilient agriculture.

Exchange visit to a seed bank

The exchange visit to the Seed Savers Network seed bank in Musanda, Kakamega County on 19th September 2025 was a transformative learning experience for 28 farmers from TRANSCOM-Busia. The visit immersed participants in practical seed-saving techniques from hermetic bag and solar dryer storage to germination testing that ensure up to 95% seed viability for 2-3 years. Farmers also gained insights into establishing affordable community seed banks, navigating Kenya's Seed Act, and piloting innovative models such as mobile seed banks to overcome logistical challenges in Busia. The highlight was a hands-on seed multiplication demonstration and seed exchange, where beans, maize, and vegetable seeds were donated to the Busia team. Achievements included strengthened farmer-to-farmer knowledge sharing, renewed enthusiasm for seed sovereignty, and concrete plans to pilot home-based seed banks.

The impact of this visit lies in its contribution to food security, biodiversity preservation, and agroecological resilience, positioning Busia farmers as champions of community-led seed systems.

Feed formulation

Fodder and soil health - Baringo

The fodder formulation and soil health training in Eldume focused on strengthening farmers' knowledge of pasture management, feed preservation, and agroecological practices to improve livestock productivity and resilience. Farmers discussed the importance of pasture in boosting milk yields, animal health, and overall production, while exploring alternative feeds such as maize stovers, prosopis pods, Boma Rhodes grass, rice straw, and silage. Practical demonstrations highlighted silage preparation using molasses, banana stalks, or sweet potato vines, alongside group presentations on crop rotation and intercropping for soil health. The training also addressed water needs for traditional and improved cattle breeds, emphasizing sustainable resource use in semi-arid conditions. Key outcomes included enhanced farmer awareness of feed diversification, improved strategies for dry-season fodder preservation, and strengthened capacity in agroecological soil practices—all contributing to climate-resilient livestock systems and sustainable livelihoods.

Fermented chicken feed - Luanda

A youth group in Luanda was trained on making fermented feed for poultry. The aim was to reduce overreliance on external feeds and adopt a more sustainable, locally controlled, and cost-effective feeding system. Fermented poultry feed is prepared by following standard feed formulation ratios: 70% carbohydrates, 25% proteins, and 5% vitamins and minerals. For a 50kg batch, which can feed 10 birds under a semi-intensive system for one month, 35kg consists of dry ingredients, including 24.5kg carbohydrates, 8.75kg proteins, and 1.75kg vitamins and minerals. The remaining 15kg is made up of green and wet materials, such as 13kg of additional protein sources like desmodium, fodder trees, Napier grass, and banana stems, plus 2kg of vitamin- and mineral-rich materials such as kales, spinach, amaranth, blackjack, MacDonald eye, and fruits. A mixture of 1

litre of molasses in 10 litres of water is then added to support fermentation.

The preparation process involves collecting all materials, grinding the grains to the right size depending on the age of the birds, and chopping the greens into small pieces. The dry ingredients are first spread on a mixing surface, followed by minerals and chopped green materials. These are mixed thoroughly while adding the molasses solution to activate microbes and begin fermentation. The mixture is then packed tightly into a container to remove air, sealed with an airtight lid, and left to ferment for 14 days before it is ready for poultry consumption.

PELUM Kenya and LPC Advance Climate Action and Biodiversity Conservation in Lekiji Village

PELUM Kenya and LPC, through support from Visibilize 4 Climate Action under APHRC, launched a biodiversity and bee farming initiative in Lekiji Village, to strengthen environmental conservation, climate resilience, and sustainable community livelihoods. The initiative seeks to empower local communities through climate-smart solutions that integrate biodiversity restoration, agroforestry, and modern beekeeping practices.

The project focuses on establishing a two-acre biodiversity and bee farming centre that will serve as a community learning and demonstration hub. The centre will include a bee harvesting and processing room, a pollinator research station, training spaces, and demonstration areas for sustainable environmental practices. Farmers and youth groups are also being supported with different types of modern beehives, including Langstroth, top bar, and log hives, to improve honey production while enhancing pollination and ecosystem health.

To promote environmental restoration, the initiative is supporting the planting of indigenous and bee-friendly trees and the establishment of a tree nursery capable of producing thousands of seedlings annually. The project aims to improve soil health, increase tree cover, strengthen biodiversity, and contribute to climate adaptation efforts within the community.

Beyond conservation, the programme is creating livelihood opportunities through sustainable honey production, environmental education, and community engagement. By linking climate action with economic

empowerment, the initiative is helping position biodiversity conservation as both an environmental and socio-economic solution for communities in Likuy Village and beyond.



Aerial photos of the Demonstration Farm established at Lekiji in Laikipia North that was established by Laikipia Permaculture Centre (LPC). The demo farm demonstrates drylands Agroecological practices.

Empowering Smallholder Farmers Through Organic Agriculture Trainings Across Kenya

PELUM Kenya, with the support of the KCOA Project, conducted six (6) farmer-level trainings by Multipliers on Organic Agriculture. The trainings reached 223 farmers, with 78% being women. The focus of farmer-level training under the KCOA project is to impart knowledge of sustainable organic agriculture to smallholder farmers. To fully engage farmers, the training takes the form of five-day sessions that are participatory and practical. Principles of organic agriculture such as Health, Ecology, Fairness and Care, soil health management (composting, Bokashi preparation, crop rotation), and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) using botanical solutions like ash brew, use of tithonia and Apichi, are all covered. Also, value chain development is emphasized, covering seed systems, post-harvest handling, value addition, and market access.

As community ownership is fostered, groups begin to dedicate time to session organization and training material management. Training goals are centered on practical, low-cost methods that use local materials. To help reinforce use, follow-up support, peer learning groups, and forums on platforms like WhatsApp are suggested. In summary, the training particularly empowers women and

youth, enabling them to adopt agroecological practices, improve community productivity and food security, and enhance environmental sustainability. A core component is the introduction of Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS, a community-based organic certification model that emphasizes trust and transparency. Each farmer actively participates in the training through demonstrations, group discussions, role plays, and feedback sessions, enabling them to understand and apply what they have learned. Learning is enhanced, particularly for women and older participants, through the use of local language and context-based examples.



Group photo of community member in Meru county during a hands on training on agroecological principles and practices through the KCOA-KHEA project.



Training on Agroecology by CIFORD Kenya Multiplier as part of the KCOA Project



CIFORD Kenya engaging in a group discussion during the Agroecology training supported by KCOA Project.



Community Members in Tharaka nithi County Gaining hands on training on various agroecological practices and principles applicable in dryland areas.



Farmers' practical session on how to make liquid manure from cow dung



Farmer's group gaining hands on training practical training on agroecological practices



A multiplier training a farmers group in Meru county



Pelum Kenya, upper Eastern zonal coordinator Mr. Benson Isohe introducing Pelum Kenya activities, and the importance of agroecology to the farmers.



Farmers gaining hands on experience on practical agroecology

Strengthening Organic Certification Through PGS Training for Farmers in Masinga, Machakos County

The Sokama Farmers Training, held from July 21–25, 2025, in Masinga, Machakos County, was organized by PELUM Kenya under the KCOA project. The training aimed to build the capacity of Sokama Self-Help Group members on organic agriculture, particularly the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS).

Thirty-three farmers (82.5% attendance) participated (21 females and 12 males), with sessions covering organic farming principles, soil health, integrated pest management, PGS structure, and organic product marketing. Training methods included hands-on demonstrations, group discussions, and practicals such as composting and bio-pesticide preparation.

Farmers actively engaged in sessions, showed readiness to implement new practices, and began developing key PGS documents. Suggestions included allowing more time for field-based activities. Future improvements proposed include ongoing follow-up via WhatsApp or peer support groups.

Overall, the training was well-received, with strong participation, positive feedback, and a call for additional training in food safety and value addition. Community involvement was a key factor in its success.



Left: Sylvia Mutheu taking participating farmers through a theory session Right: Practical session on making Bokashi

Through the support of KOAN, PELUM Kenya was able to facilitate the assessment and certification charges of three (3) farmer groups, thus 80 farms certified. Two

groups are new; Mukameni in Machakos and Kachogo in Ahero and 3000 Nooya is the group certified in 2021 that had changes in membership by new members joining.

Name of Farmer Group	Common Value Chain	Numbers	PELUM Kenya Support
Kochogo Central Organic Farmers in Ahero	Cassava, Vegetables Others - Bananas, Potatoes, Tomatoes, fruits etc.	28 farmers (12 males, 16 females with 12 being youth and 1 PLWD)	PGS Training Value addition training IPM Training PGS Certification
Mukameni Organic Farmers Group in Mukameni, Machakos County	Sweet potatoes, cassava, maize, beans, poultry	31 farmers (21 females and 10 males with 10 being youth)	PGS Training Sun drying structure PGS Certification
3000 Nooya Group	Poultry, Vegetables, Herbs, Pumpkins	21 farmers	PGS Training Exposure visit PGS certification



Photos showing the three (3) PGS Certificates issued to the three (3) farmer groups

From Pesticides to Possibilities: Hannah Mberere's Agroecology Awakening in Mungu Village in Githiga

Hannah Mberere once believed that farming success came bottled—in the form of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. Like many conventional farmers in Githiga, she tackled every challenge with chemicals, unaware that an entirely different, more sustainable path existed. That changed in 2021, when Zipporah Kuria (multiplier from EIPMA, Kenya), during a village-based advisors' meeting in Githiga, introduced local farmers to the concept of Agroecology. Accompanied by the EIPMA team, Zipporah's visit was a turning point not just for the community—but especially for Hannah.

Curious and committed, Hannah mobilized fellow farmers to attend the Agroecology training sessions. There, she was introduced to Integrated Pest Management (IPM), soil health restoration techniques, agroforestry, and how to create her own organic fertilizers and pest control solutions. What began as a spark quickly grew into a passion.

Today, Hannah is a lead farmer in Githiga, proudly passing on her Agroecology knowledge to others. She trains fellow farmers on making organic inputs, practices regenerative farming, and has embraced a nutritious, chemical-free diet. Her journey doesn't end there—Hannah's farm now supplies fresh produce to

organizations like Tawi, boosting her income while nourishing communities. From conventional to conscious, Hannah's transformation is proof that when farmers are empowered with knowledge, sustainable futures bloom.





WOMEN AND YOUTH IN AGROECOLOGY

Empowering Youth and Women: PELUM Kenya's Agroecology Forums Spark Change Social Governance and Accountability

On 7th August 2025, PELUM Kenya, under the PENELI IV project (funded by SSNC), facilitated a training for women and youth TOTs at BAC, Molo to strengthen their capacity in county finance and budget processes. The session combined group discussions on farmer challenges with sensitization on the distinct roles of county and national governments in agriculture, covering areas such as crop husbandry, disease control, soil and water management, and market access. Participants were guided through the budget cycle, from formulation, approval, implementation, to audit and monitoring, anchored in CIDPs and ADPs, with emphasis on public participation and accountability. Practical tools like the Gunduainfo app were introduced to help communities track projects and engage in budget forums.

The training highlighted the importance of advocacy, farmer representation, and vigilance in monitoring county budgets, ensuring that agroecology investments are prioritized. Recommendations called for more sensitization and capacity building so that farmers' voices are effectively integrated into county planning and resource allocation.



Practical tools like the Gunduainfo app were introduced to help communities track projects and engage in budget forums. The training highlighted the importance of advocacy, farmer representation, and vigilance in monitoring county budgets, ensuring that agroecology investments are prioritized.

From Zimbabwe to Kenya: Youth Exchange Inspiring Prosperity Through Agribusiness

The Promoting Sustainable Agriculture and Marketing through Youth Involvement (PSAMY) project showcased the transformative power of youth led knowledge exchange in strengthening livelihoods and building resilient farming communities. Five young professionals from the Farmers Association of Community Self Help Investment Groups Trust (FACHIG Trust) in Zimbabwe were hosted by five Participatory Ecological Land Use Management Kenya (PELUM Kenya) Member Organizations namely Youth Action for Rural Development (YARD), Rural Initiatives Development Programme (RIDEP), Bio Gardening Innovations (BIOGI), Utooni Development Organization (UDO), and Tenwek Hospital Community Health and Development Programme. During their placement, the participants worked closely with farmer groups, sharing practical knowledge on agricultural marketing, value addition, collective marketing, financial literacy, record keeping, contract farming, and enterprise development. Through more than 205 training forums, they successfully reached 15 farmer groups comprising 340 smallholder farmers, empowering them with the

skills and confidence needed to view farming as a profitable business rather than a subsistence activity.

The impact of this exchange was evident in the remarkable transformation of farmer groups that embraced the approaches introduced by the Zimbabwean participants. Farmers who previously marketed their produce individually began organizing themselves into stronger groups, aggregating produce, negotiating better prices, and maintaining accurate business records. As a result, participating households experienced an average income increase of 16% 2025, the highest growth recorded during the project period. Beyond the economic gains, the initiative inspired a new generation of farmers and young people to embrace agriculture as a pathway to sustainable livelihoods. The exchange fostered lasting partnerships, strengthened market linkages, and demonstrated how cross country learning can unlock opportunities for rural communities, contributing to food security, economic resilience, and inclusive development.



PSAMY participants conducting a farmer training session, equipping smallholder farmers with practical skills in agroecology, agricultural marketing, value addition, and collective marketing to strengthen livelihoods and build resilient farming communities.

Empowering the Next Generation of Agroecology Champions

PELUM Kenya continued to strengthen youth and women leadership in agroecology by creating opportunities for meaningful participation in national and county level agricultural forums. While the annual target was to facilitate 10 youth and women to engage in agroecology related platforms, the programme surpassed this goal by reaching 101 young people through a series of strategic capacity building, exhibition, and networking opportunities. These engagements enhanced participants' knowledge, visibility, and access to markets while positioning them as key actors in promoting sustainable food systems and climate resilient agriculture.

Through targeted support, 16 youth participated in Samaki Insurance Training, gaining critical knowledge on agricultural risk management and insurance for

aquaculture enterprises. Six youth showcased their agroecological innovations at the Bungoma County Agricultural Show, while another five exhibited products and connected with potential buyers and partners during the Sokoni Agribusiness Show. Additionally, four youth engaged with successful local entrepreneurs during the Rumuruti Farmers Agro Entrepreneurs Day, and twelve youth participated in the Makueni Agricultural Trade Fair where they exhibited products and exchanged experiences with diverse stakeholders. These platforms provided practical exposure, strengthened entrepreneurial skills, expanded market linkages, and increased the confidence of young agripreneurs. As a result, participating youth enhanced their business networks, improved their understanding of sustainable agribusiness opportunities, and emerged as stronger advocates for agroecology within their communities.



Youths participating in Bungoma Agricultural Show



Youths Participating in Samaki Insurance Training in Kisumu Convened by GA Insurance Company



Youth Voices Driving Agroecology and Sustainable Development

As part of its commitment to strengthening youth and women leadership in agroecology, PELUM Kenya organized a zonal learning, sharing, and networking forum to commemorate International Youth Day 2025 under the global theme, **“Local Youth Actions for the Sustainable Development Goals and Beyond.”** Held in Machakos County from 12–13 August 2025, the forum brought together 476 young people (256 male and 220 female), including youth entrepreneurs, mentors, policymakers, government representatives, and development partners, creating a vibrant platform for dialogue, innovation, and collaboration.

The forum provided a unique opportunity for participants to exchange experiences, showcase agroecological

innovations, and engage in policy discussions aimed at advancing youth and women participation in sustainable food systems.

Through interactive learning sessions, participants gained practical knowledge on agroecological entrepreneurship, enterprise formalization, access to finance, and leadership in agricultural governance. The engagement strengthened youth visibility within the agroecology movement, expanded networking opportunities, and empowered participants with the skills and confidence needed to drive sustainable agricultural transformation and contribute meaningfully to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.



International Youth Day 2025



Youth Engagement in Sustainable Agriculture & Agromarkets

YALTA 2025: Empowering Youth in Agroecology and Agribusiness Across Kenya

The year 2025 marked a transformational milestone for the Youth in Agroecology & Business Learning Track Africa (YALTA) programme, with the official zonal-level launch of the project bringing together young agripreneurs and seasoned practitioners from across Kenya. The launch, held during the Zonal Training on Agro-Business and Market Systems, was the defining moment when 137 mentees, 55 female and 82 male, were formally paired with 31 mentors across their respective zones, igniting structured mentorship relationships that would drive enterprise growth throughout the year. Following this landmark event, mentees and

mentors engaged in at least four monthly mentorship sessions focused on enterprise development, market readiness, and financial management, with a total of 168 participants actively taking part in these engagements. To deepen practical learning, PELUM Kenya supported 21 mentors to conduct on-site field visits to their mentees' enterprises, enabling tailored technical guidance and a clearer understanding of the value chains in which youth are operating. These visits proved instrumental in accelerating the adoption of improved practices in crop production, value addition, and market engagement.

Beyond mentorship, YALTA 2025 significantly broadened the capacity and market exposure of youth through targeted digital and in-person learning opportunities. A series of three online webinars, covering branding and packaging, youth agribusiness strategy, and funding opportunities, reached 102 participants (61 female and 41 male), equipping young agripreneurs with practical skills to scale, diversify, and finance their enterprises. Twelve youth (8 female and 4 male) also participated in policy engagement and food systems innovation forums, where they engaged in county and national-level agricultural policy dialogues and forged new

buyer and supplier linkages. As a direct result of these combined interventions, mentees developed viable agro-business plans, strengthened their financial management practices, and reported increased income from their enterprises. The 2025 implementation has demonstrated that when structured mentorship, hands-on field support, and multi-platform learning are combined, young people are not only capable of building sustainable agroecological enterprises, they are becoming active voices in transforming Kenya's food systems.



Group photo during the YALTA Project Launch and Zonal Training on Agroecology Market Systems



YALTA Zonal training on agroecology Market system

Empowering Women in Agroecology: The AWOLA Initiative



The African Women Leaders in Agroecology (AWOLA) Initiative has emerged as a gender transformative force for women & marginalized groups in agroecology through cultivating seasoned women leaders who are leading, influencing & reshaping Africa's agroecological landscape through mentorship, agroecological innovation, agroecological entrepreneurship, policy advocacy, knowledge development and dissemination. The impact of AWOLA has been achieved through structured mentor & mentee monthly mentorship sessions, access to strategic leadership forums, support for agroecological business incubation, and providing professional development courses to support mentees advance in their careers, and build capacity to meaningfully participate in decision-making spaces. AWOLA has created a comprehensive ecosystem for leadership development that extends far beyond traditional mentorship models.

This holistic approach has catalysed measurable impact across multiple dimensions: career advancement, agroecological transitions, research excellence, policy advocacy influence and agroecological enterprise scaling across Uganda, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe. AWOLA has demonstrated that intentional investment in women's leadership development yields powerful ripple effects throughout families, organizations, communities, nations, and the continent. The programme's success mantra recognizes that building women's leadership capacity in agroecology requires not only technical knowledge transfer but also role modelling, confidence-building, value system development, support network development, and creating pathways for women in agroecology to occupy and increase participation decision-making spaces where they can drive the systemic transformation of

Africa's food systems to address food crisis, climate change challenges, governance, legislation and enable equal benefit sharing of economic resources between men, women, youths, boys and girls. AWOLA Cohort 3 has diverse women from corporate, humanitarian, seasoned rural farmers, and agro-entrepreneurs.

Further, AWOLA mentees have strategically positioned themselves in leading agricultural boards, territorial markets, media, climate change mitigation committees, and farmer organizations. Thus, AWOLA succeeds in the leadership philosophy, where women's leadership is cultivated, not assumed, and the mentors are deliberate in supporting mentees to achieve their leadership goals. The program has provided women mentees with a platform to grow skills, build confidence, and expand networks. This has been made possible through events such as inception meetings, national conferences, and agroecology symposiums.

The program is building women leadership pathways & investing in long-term leadership pipelines for women in agroecology to promote gender equality principles and achieve the mandate of SDG 5. Further, the program has made significant milestones in supporting women to influence agroecology policies, lead agro-based enterprises, and assume strategic and managerial roles within institutions, government, and regional bodies. This is evidenced through the success stories of women who participated in various forums, including the National Agroecology Conference, the Sustainability Festival, and the National Youth on Climate Change in Lilongwe, Malawi, where they showcased their skills and dialogue contributions during discussions and panels as keynote speakers, panelists, moderators, and rapporteurs.

Exploring Gender Transformative Approaches in the AWOLA

The COADY Institute conducted a study examining the Gender Transformative Approaches (GTA) embedded in AWOLA. The research involved structured interviews with AWOLA mentees and mentors drawn from the three cohorts from Kenya. The study assessed how AWOLA's mentorship model, capacity-building activities, and network engagement are shifting social norms, building women's agency, and advancing gender-transformative change within agroecology and organic agriculture in Africa. Mentees described transformative shifts

in confidence and agency: **women who had never imagined sitting at policy tables now participate in national forums and advocate for women farmers in their counties.** Mentors equally reported being transformed by the experience, noting that mentoring deepened their own understanding of resilience and innovation among women in agroecology. Agroenterprise mentees documented growth from subsistence-level farming to supplying multiple markets, crediting AWOLA with providing both skills and confidence.

Quarterly Motivational sharing

The monthly webinars marked a key milestone in strengthening women's leadership capacity in organic agriculture and agroecology by creating a consistent, mentee-driven learning, networking, knowledge sharing & inspiration platform. Facilitated by mentors and external experts, the webinars built critical leadership competencies in communication, personal branding, financial management, policy engagement, technology integration, and purpose-driven leadership, and essential skills for effective influence in food systems. By empowering mentors to lead country-level sessions and positioning mentees as agenda-setters, the activity strengthened confidence, peer learning, and thought leadership, while fostering partnerships and resource mobilization.

The following were the webinar topics per month;

- August 2025: Financial wellness for women: Saving for retirement: This webinar was inspired by gender empowerment principles, which include financial empowerment, which increases women's agency to make decisions, access equal benefits, and control resource
- October 2025: African Future of Work: How to cope with Artificial Intelligence: This webinar was timely and prepared participants to adapt, leverage, and thrive in AI-transformed workplaces and learn new

Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies within the agroecology and organic agriculture sector. They gained a deep understanding of the new emerging technologies in food systems and mapped out relevant AI skills to prepare for career resilience & jobs of the future.

SAVING FOR RETIREMENT

About This Webinar

This webinar will shed light on how to save for your retirement as early as now. The webinar is organized by the African Women Leaders in Agroecology (AWOLA) Initiative

27th June 2025

11:00am - 13:00pm (EAT)
9:00am - 11:00am (WAT)
10:00am - 12:00 noon (CAT)

MONICA KAPIRIRI
Development Facilitator,
mentor and coach

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AWOLA Partners

Both ENDS

- November 2025: Bridges, Not Barriers: Building Networks that Build Your Business. This webinar aimed to advance dialogue for building a strong leadership network for women in the agroecology & organic agriculture space. Participants gained strategies to build and leverage professional networks that drive business development, partnerships, and sustainable growth within and outside their work.
- In celebration of World Food Day 2024, AWOLA Nigeria hosted a webinar themed **'Hand in Hand for Better Foods and a Better Future!'** This event aligned with the global World Food Day theme **'Right to foods for a better life and a better future,'** emphasizing the importance of diversity, nutrition, affordability, and safety in our food systems. The webinar brought together women leaders in agroecology to discuss collaborative approaches to achieving food security and nutrition for all. Through the **'Hand in Hand'** concept, participants explored how women-led agroecological initiatives can contribute to sustainable food systems, ensuring

that diverse, nutritious, and safe foods are available from farms to tables across Nigeria and beyond. This event demonstrated AWOLA's commitment to women's leadership in addressing food security challenges while promoting sustainable agricultural practices that benefit both people and the planet.

The webinars facilitated meaningful professional connections for the mentees and mentors. Further, there were meaningful relationships and supportive community networks that extended beyond the program and created ongoing collaboration opportunities across the African agroecology sector. In addition, the webinars enabled successful leaders to share their journeys and challenges to inspire the leadership path for the mentees. It emerged that mentees learning from relatable role models and engaging with experts helped them recognize their own potential, develop their voice, agency, and build the capacity needed to take up leadership positions and advocate for women and youth inclusion, agroecological practices/ favourable policies.

2025 AWOLA and Agroecological Entrepreneurship Exchange Learning and Expo and 1st Champions Awards



The forum held in Kenya in December 2025 convened women across agroecology practice, enterprise, research, and policy spaces, alongside farmers, governments, development partners, policymakers,

and organizations from twelve (12) African countries. The forum strengthened collective efforts to create an enabling environment for sustainable and socially equitable biodiversity use and management by women.

The expo key messages highlighted the crucial role of women leadership mentorship in building capacities to influence policies, participate in leadership at all levels, steward biodiversity conservation, lead agroecological enterprises development, and drive inclusive food system transformation in their communities and country.

The various leaders present reinforced commitments to enhance equity and inclusivity in control, access to, use of, and benefit sharing from biodiversity, natural resources such as land, among women, men, youth, and marginalized communities. The women agropreneurs across the 12 countries showcased different agroecological enterprises, innovation, business acumen and leadership. There was a call to action to the government and policymakers to engage women in sustained investment in leadership development, mentorship pathways, and institutional support to strengthen resilient gender-responsive agroecological solutions & agroecological enterprises in Africa.

The expo hosted the 1st AWOLA champions awards to recognize and amplify women leaders' voices in agroecology. The awards generated significant impact by elevating the visibility, credibility, and influence of women leading transformative agroecological initiatives across the continent. Further, they validated women's impact in leadership from grassroots, national and global platforms, and strengthened the confidence and legitimacy of the en (10) awardees to confidently engage decision-makers, take up leadership

roles, and inspired wider adoption of agroecological practices, access to land and engagement in biodiversity conservation. They also reinforced women's central role in agrifood systems and the role of women leaders in advancing equitable, resilient, and sustainable food systems in Africa. Two (2) AWOLA Kenya champions were nominated and won awards as follows:

- **Africa Woman Champion in Agroecology awarded** to Ms. Stellamaris Mulae (AWOLA Cohort 2 Mentor) due to her exceptional leadership & commitment to advance agroecology, policy advocacy, agroecological entrepreneurship, strengthened community resilience, and championed women's leadership & agency.
- **Community Agroecology, Mentorship & Leadership** awarded to Ms. Esther Kiruthi (AWOLA Cohort 1 Mentee & Founder of CSHEP), in honor of her leadership in agroecology transformation, climate change justice restoration, and mentoring others within the agroecology movement.



Annual Steering Committee Meeting

4th Annual Steering Committee meeting held on 1st December 2025 to review program performance, assess progress against strategic objectives, and provide oversight on the implementation of the initiative. The Committee examined updates on mentorship delivery, leadership outcomes, partnerships, and resource utilization, and identified key challenges and opportunities for strengthening impact. Strategic

guidance was provided to enhance governance, improve mentorship effectiveness, and accelerate results across countries. The meeting concluded with agreed priorities, actionable recommendations, and clear next steps to strengthen program delivery and advance women's leadership and influence in agroecology and food systems.

Success Stories from AWOLA Initiative

AWOLA Cohort 2 (Kenya, Uganda & Zimbabwe) compiled AWOLA stories of change under the theme 'Catalyst', a theme adopted by AWOLA Cohort 2 inspired by the experience they gained from the AWOLA leadership mentorship program from April 2024 to April 2025. These stories are compiled together in the AWOLA Stories of Change Booklet developed by PELUM Kenya in partnership with PELUM Zimbabwe and PELUM Uganda.

The "Catalysts" is a unique leadership success story of AWOLA mentees across the five (5) countries and its impact on women's leadership in agroecology on the African continent. The women are the heartbeat of food production, family nutrition, farmer seed managed systems, and custodians of enriching knowledge of agroecology. This is evidence that women are leading in agroecology and AWOLA is catalyzing their leadership capacities to amplify their voices and support women to lead and meaningfully participate in agroecology and food systems. The following were key messages from mentees;

- "What began as a mentorship became a long-life friendship and the birth of a product farmers can trust" Ms. Ann Katushabe, Mentee from Uganda
- "Agroecology is not just about farming, it's about empowering women to take control of their food systems and future" Beauty Musemwa, Mentee from Zimbabwe
- "Our mentorship journey taught us many lessons, but our key takeaway was crisis as an opportunity to improve or gain knowledge" Leah Mwaura, Mentee

Women's voices amplified from the household to policy and decision-making platforms: The Initiative has documented a clear, multi-level leadership trajectory that represents one of the programme's most compelling achievements. Women who at project inception had never imagined engaging formal policy processes are now presenting at national forums and advocating for women farmers. The mentees and mentors are actively engaging in land use and land sale decisions, proving a direct shift in household power dynamics. The male allies have also affirmed and promoted women's

leadership transformation, which signals a social norm shift at the household and community level. Further, women have meaningfully participated and contributed to public participation forums, for instance, for the Kiambu Agroecology and CASCOT Bills 2025/2026, directly shaping county legislation. In Makueni county, women representatives are active members of the Makueni agroecology Core Implementation Team and participated in the Joint Partners' Workplan, ensuring women farmers & gender priorities are institutionalised in county agroecology governance.

AWOLA New Partnership with next generation Global

To train the mentees and mentors on courageous Leadership principles - where they examine who leads in agroecology and how they are leading. The Goal is to redress current power imbalances in food systems by fostering a courageous kind of leadership that aligns with the 8 principles outlined in our Manifesto. Because many solutions exist, but the courageous leadership to implement them is lacking. Because we want to transform how we lead and who leads. Because we believe in the power of women and diverse collectives to imagine new systems.

Capacity Enhancement for women Change Agents through 4Rs (Rural resilience, Rights, representation & Resources) WE4R Project

The Capacity Enhancement project has recruited 108 women change agents, rural, professional, and youth, alongside 5 male allies, operating across 13 counties. The program focused on four pillars (Training, Mentorship, Advocacy, and Exchange Learning) to strengthen women change agents with land rights knowledge, community paralegalism skills, matrimonial property laws, land dispute resolution, and agroecology practice directly linking land access to livelihoods and food security. A landmark achievement of this phase was the change agents' active role in shaping the **Bungoma County Land Use Management Act** and the **Siaya Widows**

Protection Bill, placing women at the center of legislative processes. The mentorship program has been pivotal, with women demonstrating measurable gains in confidence, self-advocacy, and community leadership in land issues. The mentees & mentors experienced notable challenges, which include: entrenched social norms, women change agents’ safety risks, virtual connectivity gaps, and high costs of land succession processes.

The program will deepen skills in dispute resolution, practical land ownership, and personal safety, building a resilient women’s land rights movement across Kenya. The capacity enhancement model for this phase was delivered through two integrated streams: structured multi-day training forums held across seven county clusters, and a structured mentorship program binding the Rights, Representation, and Resources (3Rs) pillars together through sustained one-on-one and peer learning.

Community Paralegalism TOT Training on Legal aspects of agriculture, land & food on 13th- 18th November 2025 at Monarch Hotel, Nairobi



3 Mentees & one Mentor were trained as TOTs with practical knowledge on key legal issues affecting communities, including land rights, matrimonial property rights, succession and inheritance laws, marriage laws, and legal frameworks that influence agriculture and food systems in Kenya.



Siaya court visits the Environment and Land Court (ELC) Registry

Mentor Grace Ogango & 5 her mentees visited various Siaya court registries to enhance their understanding of court processes and services, including the Mediation Court Annex, where we learned that mediation is an

affordable, confidential, and time-efficient method of resolving disputes, provided both parties agree to, and the Environment and Land Court (ELC) Registry, which handles matters relating to property ownership.

Policy Statements and Recommendations

During the Conference on African Land Policy (CLP) in Addis Ababa, PELUM Kenya and its partner delegates presented recommendations to strengthen community-based approaches to women's land rights, with particular emphasis on the change-agent model as a scalable, cost-effective mechanism for sustained community-level legal literacy.

The Bungoma and Siaya legislative contributions represent direct policy uptake. However, structured tracking of these outcomes is not yet in place and is recommended as a priority for the next phase.

During the Conference on African Land Policy (CLP) in Addis Ababa, PELUM Kenya and its partner delegates presented recommendations to strengthen community-based approaches to women's land rights, with particular emphasis on the change-agent model as a scalable, cost-effective mechanism for sustained community-level legal literacy.

- **The land rights gap for rural women, female youth, and professional women:** grounding training in lived realities and documented injustices
- **Self-care for women change agents:** a structured session recognizing that advocates in high-risk land dispute contexts need emotional regulation tools and personal safety plans.
- **Key barriers women face in accessing land:** including inheritance exclusion, polygamy-

driven dispossession, title deed theft, and discriminatory customary practices

- **Alternative ways of owning and accessing land:** including leasing, gifting, purchase, inheritance, and community-based ownership; legal procedures for each pathway
- **Understanding land disputes: types, causes, and dynamics:** equipping mentors to triage cases and refer appropriately
- **Introduction to community para legalism for land rights:** enabling mentors to support peers without replacing legal professionals
- **Alternative land dispute resolution and referral pathways:** mediation, alternative dispute resolution (ADR), local administration channels, courts, and legal aid
- **Personal safety for land rights advocates:** responding to the documented reality that several change agents have faced threats and intimidation
- **Haki Ardhi Toolkit (Kakamega and Siaya Counties):** documenting and reporting land-based violence
- **Land Rights Mock Trial:** a practical exercise reinforcing procedural understanding in a realistic court simulation
- **Practical Pathways to Land Ownership:** applied session walking through the documentation process for buying, leasing, inheriting, and registering land

Story 3: From Fear to Community Leader: A Female Youth in Kakamega



Before: Faith Celine Ateka (Kakamega, Female Youth) had difficulty getting opportunities to participate in community land rights discussions.

After: Through training and the mentorship relationship with Doreen Magotsi, Faith now confidently speaks about women accessing land rights and has gained confidence to speak about these issues publicly. She trained other youth and women, shared her learning broadly, and is planning further community outreach.



I have been able to gain confidence, and also to acquire knowledge on land issues that has made me empower fellow youths and women. Faith Celine Ateka, Kakamega (Female Youth)

Story 2: From Learner to Broadcaster A Professional Woman in Nairobi



Before: Ms Grace Maina had professional media skills but had not applied them to land rights advocacy.

After: Grace produced a radio programme focused on succession law using a real case study from Migori County, empowering a public audience with practical knowledge about women's land protections. She also interviewed women with land issues and connected them to resource persons – creating a live radio forum where women, policy makers, and administrators could interact on land challenges.



I have been empowered with practical knowledge to do targeted advocacy for women and land rights. Grace Wawira, Nairobi (Professional Woman)

Story 1: From Silence to Legislation A Change Agent in Siaya



Before: Lillian Ouma (Siaya, Rural Woman) had not engaged publicly with land rights issues and was uncertain about her own inheritance rights.

After: Following mentorship and training, Lillian is actively claiming her inheritance from her father's estate and has attended the Siaya Widows Protection Bill advocacy sessions. She reports: she can now confidently attend public barazas and air her views in the sessions.



Learnt that secure land ownership is important for ownership and empowerment especially for women and rural communities.
Lillian Ouma, Siaya



2ND EAST AFRICA AGROECOLOGY SYMPOSIUM

**Youth & women Side event on secure land Tenure
& zero tolerant to toxic pesticides**



The Institutional Capacity Strengthening for Gender Mainstreaming: The project has trained MOs to integrate gender equality in programming and governance. Staff and partners were trained on gender-responsive budgeting, leadership, and inclusion strategies. As a result, several MOs adopted gender policies and inclusive representation quotas, ensuring that women and youth are better represented in boards and management committees.

- The adoption of the TOT Cascade Model with Gender and Youth Balance has ensured women and youth training and leadership capacity enhanced to train others and to have a voice in decision-making platforms in their communities and have confidence in engaging the duty bearers.
- The inclusion matrix for Representation, Decision-making, Participation, Welfare, policy & programming across all PELUM Kenya Programming & networking has enabled members and PELUM Kenya staff to set a threshold for promoting inclusion

and creating an enabling environment for youth, women, and PDWS to meaningfully participate. Further, the PELUM Member organizations have incorporated gender & youth inclusion into their policies, programming & management. This has ensured that youth, women & PDWS issues are prioritized when planning, implementing & reporting on projects and organizational strategic plans.

- Positive Shifts in Household Gender Dynamics: Through gender-awareness and family dialogue sessions, the programme facilitated discussions on shared responsibilities and decision-making at the household level. A modest but positive trend toward shared domestic and production roles was observed, especially among younger families. Men increasingly supported childcare and livestock care, enabling women to participate more in training and group activities.

Women & Youth at the policy table

On 30th and 31st October 2025, nine (9) youth and women from Busia & Vihiga counties were supported to participate in an advocacy forum with duty bearers on enhancing the role of public participation in enhancing engagement of youth and women smallholder farmers in the policy and legislation process. The youth and women were trained on key entry points, strategic timelines to engage, and how to consolidate their views/ prayers/ petitions to ensure they are well captured, presented, and they follow up to ensure they have been incorporated. The youth, women, and duty bearers closed the meeting with a strong quote from youth leaders in Kenya: **“Nothing for us without us.”** This was a call for inclusion and meaningful engagement of youth and women in policy processes.

Peer to peer learning model for Women in Agroecological entrepreneurship

Women agropreneurs Peer to peer Mentorship from experienced agroecological entrepreneurs has enhanced the delivery and adoption of new high-income marketing strategies by emerging women leaders selected from PELUM Kenya Network for the training.

This engagement has enabled women to position themselves strategically in value chains, have an impact during trade fairs and expos where they exhibit their products, get new customers, and be elected to business decision-making bodies, and track how much business they can do during Expos and trade fairs hosted at the Zonal and national levels.

Download the leadership Manifesto



PELUM Kenya's presence in the media

Agroecology can save Kenya's food systems

Kenya is at a crossroads. Our food systems are under immense strain, driven by a convergence of climate-induced shocks, land degradation, biodiversity loss, and persistent rural poverty. According to the 2024 Food and Nutrition Security Assessment, 2.15 million Kenyans in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) require food assistance—a figure projected to rise to 2.8 million by mid-2025 if systemic interventions are not urgently adopted.

These alarming trends compel us to reaffirm the transformative power of agroecology, a people-centred, knowledge-rich, and ecologically grounded approach to food production and land management. Agroecology restores dignity to smallholder farmers, rebuilds the health of our soils and ecosystems, and promotes food sovereignty while strengthening local economies.

Those of us in the movement have witnessed firsthand how farmer-led agroecological innovations can regenerate degraded soils, enhance biodiversity, and build climate resilience. Our member organisations, working across Kenya's diverse ecological zones, promote practices such as cover cropping, mixed farming, seed saving, composting, and agroforestry—techniques deeply rooted in local knowledge and cultural traditions.

One of the foundational pillars of agroecology is soil health. Unsustainable ag-

The agroecological transition cannot be achieved by farmers alone



Rosinah Mbenya |
Agriculture



ricultural practices, including heavy use of synthetic inputs and monocropping, have left our soils depleted and vulnerable. But when farmers adopt regenerative practices—like crop rotation, organic soil amendments, and intercropping—the results are transformational. Such approaches have led to increased yields, better water retention, and improved food security even in the face of unpredictable climate patterns.

Agroecology also offers practical solutions to the rising costs of agricultural inputs. By reducing dependency on expensive and environmentally harmful chemicals, farmers can lower production costs while improving the quality and nutritional value of their harvests.

Economic vulnerability remains a key challenge for rural households. Agroecological farming, with its emphasis on diversified livelihoods, provides multiple income streams—through mixed cropping, livestock integration, and val-

ue addition. Through our training programmes and farmer field schools, communities can build economic resilience while maintaining ecological integrity.

Crucially, agroecology is not a one-size-fits-all solution imposed from above. It is co-created with farmers, drawing on their lived experiences and indigenous knowledge systems.

Without long-term land rights, however, smallholder farmers are less likely to invest in regenerative practices. There is, therefore, need for land reforms that guarantee equitable access to and control over land, especially for historically marginalised communities. Addressing tenure insecurity is not just a legal or an economic issue—it is a prerequisite for ecological transformation and food sovereignty.

The agroecological transition cannot be achieved by farmers alone. It requires coordinated action across government, civil society, academia, and the private sector. We urge policymakers to integrate agroecology into national development and climate resilience strategies. Investments in research, infrastructure, extension services, and market access must prioritise farmer-led innovations and indigenous knowledge systems.

We also need increased public and private funding to support agroecological enterprises. This includes access to credit, insurance, and targeted subsidies that incentivise sustainable practices. Agroecology practitioners have piloted innovative finance models—from commu-

nity seed banks to cooperative marketing schemes—that can be scaled with the right support. At the regional level, there is an urgent need for knowledge exchange and policy harmonisation across African countries.

As we navigate the overlapping crises of food insecurity, environmental degradation, and economic instability, agroecology offers a viable, inclusive, and scalable solution. And the time to act is now. The scaling up of agroecology needs all hands on deck—policymakers, development partners, and the private sector. The upcoming National Agroecology Symposium in Nairobi (July 10–11) presents a key moment for bold commitments, including on the implementation of the National Agroecology Strategy for Food System Transformation, 2024–2033.

This strategy aims to make Kenya's food system more inclusive and enabling, supporting the sustainable livelihoods for all stakeholders, including smallholder farmers, by providing opportunities for economic growth and social equity. It also promotes environmentally sustainable practices that conserve natural resources, reduce pollution, and protect biodiversity and a resilient food system that can withstand climate change, economic shocks, and other challenges.

Ms Mbenya is the Country Coordinator, Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Kenya

Send your opinion article to: dnopinon@ke.nationmedia.com or write to The Editor, Daily Nation, P. O. Box 49010, Nairobi 00100.

SUMMARY OF THE AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1 Statement of Income and expenditures as at 31st December 2025

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2025

	2025	2024
Income	KES	KES
Grants received	287,749,084	196,181,195
PELUM - Kenya income	2,760,661	3,170,726
Total Income	290,509,745	199,351,921
Expenditure		
Indirect project costs	17,826,504	9,657,839
PELUM - Kenya administration costs	6,092,741	3,679,738
Direct project expenditure	228,469,583	191,648,070
Total Expenditure	252,388,828	204,985,647
(Deficit)/surplus for the year	38,120,917	(5,633,726)

2 Statement of Financial Position as at 31st December 2025

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2025

	2025	2024
Fund Balances	KES	KES
General funds	6,209,806	4,593,968
Capital fund	21,285,025	23,143,603
	27,494,831	27,737,571
Represented By		
Non-current assets		
Property and equipment	21,285,025	23,143,603
Current assets		
Accounts receivable	7,283,001	12,169,077
Cash and bank	84,185,031	35,507,236
	91,468,032	47,676,314
Current liabilities		
Deferred revenue grants	74,368,858	36,005,232
Accounts payable	10,889,367	7,077,114
	85,258,226	43,082,346
Net current assets	6,209,806	4,593,968
Net assets	27,494,831	27,737,571

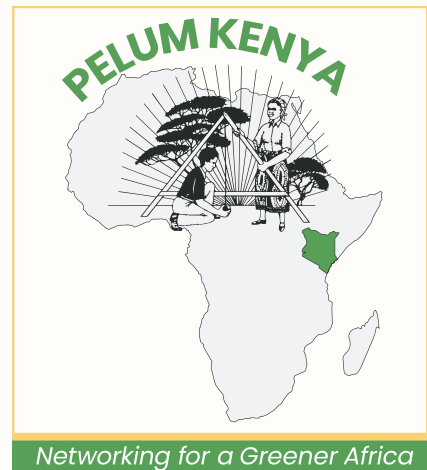
3 PELUM Kenya Expenditure

Expenditure	2025	Percentage	2024	Percentage
Indirect project costs	17,826,504	7%	9,657,839	5%
Pelum Kenya Administration Costs	6,092,741	2%	3,679,738	2%
Direct Project Expenditure	228,469,583	91%	191,648,070	93%
Total	252,388,828		204,985,647	

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