

Annual review

MOROCCAN BIODIVERSITY & LIVELIHOODS ASSOCIATION

AN OVERVIEW OF OUR
ACHIEVEMENTS AND OUR
IMPACT IN THE HIGH ATLAS.





**" 2025: A YEAR OF
CONSOLIDATION, IMPACT
AND NEW STARTS! "**



Message from MBLA's management team

It is with great pride that we present our annual report, reflecting a year 2025 dedicated to consolidating our actions and launching new programs in the High Atlas.

Our commitment was first demonstrated by the strengthening of our post-earthquake recovery program in Al Haouz. Our teams focused their efforts on sustainable reconstruction and the restoration of vital infrastructure, thereby securing the livelihoods of local communities and enhancing the resilience of degraded ecosystems.

In parallel, we reached a major milestone in the development of our rural economy support program. By placing the inclusion of women and youth at the heart of our approach, we structured new initiatives to support cooperatives and encourage green entrepreneurship. These actions aim to add value to local resources in order to build a sustainable and solidarity-based economy in the region.

The year 2025 was also marked by the development of our network of community nurseries and seed banks to better protect agrobiodiversity in the face of climate change. It is in this same province that our biocultural education program was widely deployed. Thanks to the creation of innovative educational spaces and the active involvement of schools, we continue to transmit traditional and environmental knowledge to future generations.

All of these achievements rely above all on the trust and involvement of local communities. We warmly thank our teams and partners for their constant support in building a sustainable High Atlas.

Thank you for your unwavering support, commitment, and trust.



Pr. Soufiane M'sou
Cofounder,
President - ICCA
focal point



**Pr. Rachid Ait
Babahmad**
Co-founder and
Treasurer



Dr. Abdellah Aghraz
Cofounder and Deputy
Executive Director - Head
of Human Resources

With our
deepest
gratitude,
**The MBLA
Team**

CONTACT US

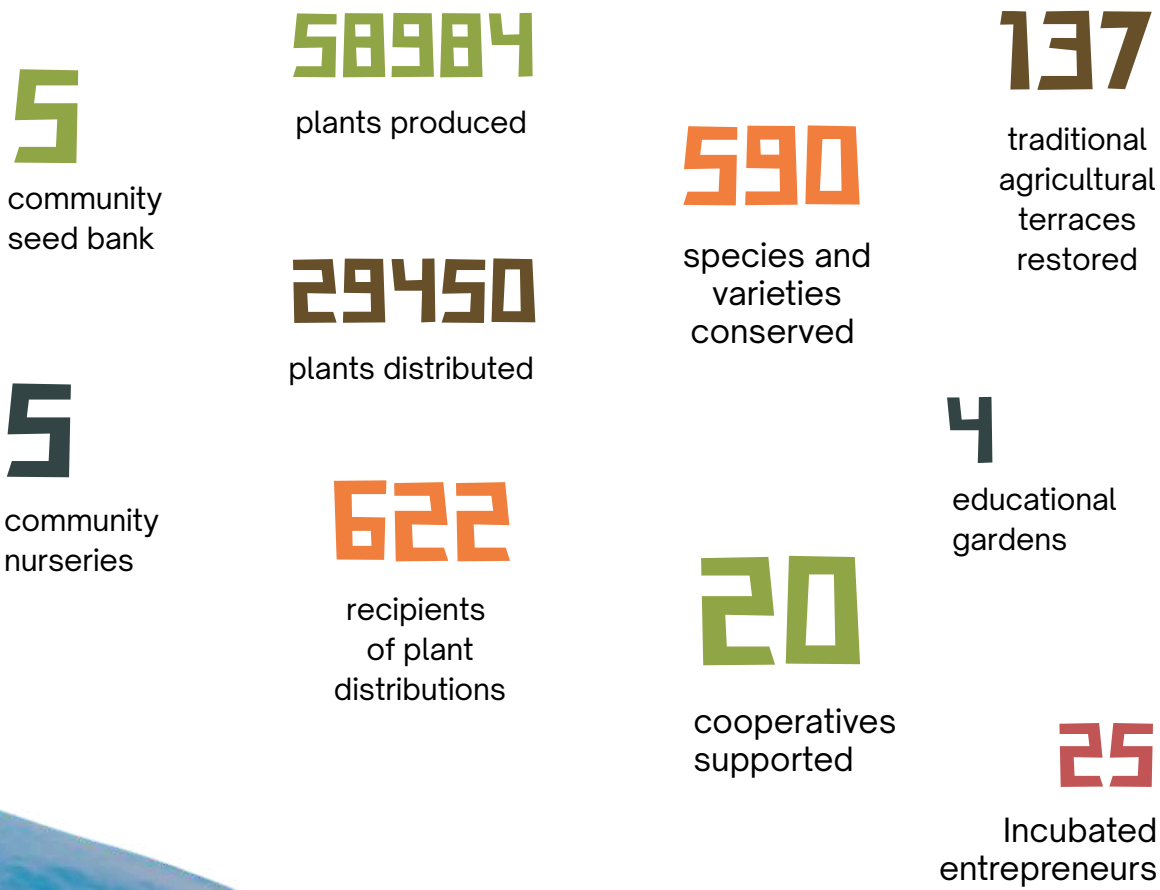
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This report presents the various activities and the results achieved by MBLA throughout 2025. Enjoy the reading!



2025 in figures

Our vision

We aspire to see **the resources of the Atlas Mountains being managed sustainably and equitably**, with healthy ecosystems on the rise and local communities' agricultural economies prospering due to their commitment to sustainable and climate-resilient practices.



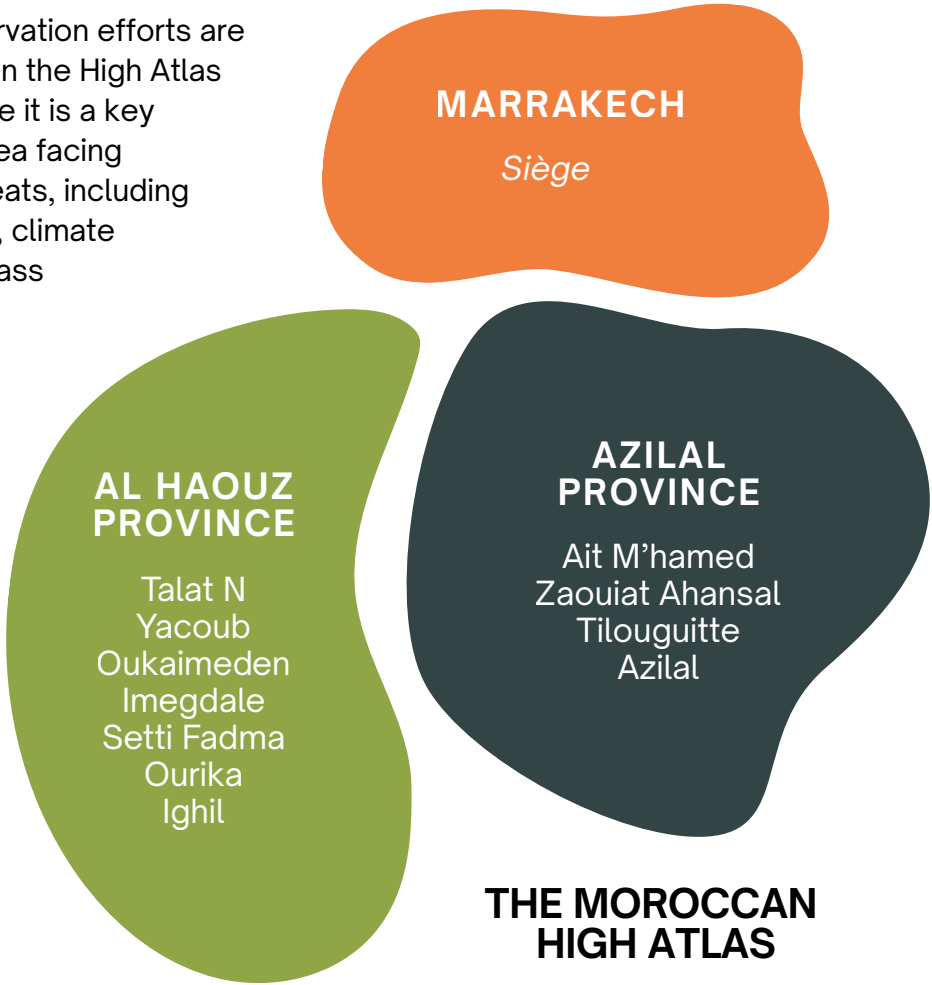
Our mission

Founded in 2014 by Moroccan environmentalists, **MBLA**, a **Marrakech-based NGO**, works collaboratively with local communities in the High Atlas Mountains to implement conservation initiatives that aim to :

- 1) Restore ecological balance,
- 2) Document and promote traditional conservation practices and
- 3) Support sustainable agriculture-based rural economies.

Sites of intervention

MBLA's conservation efforts are concentrated in the High Atlas region because it is a key biodiversity area facing increasing threats, including water scarcity, climate change and mass rural exodus.





1

APPLIED SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Through research and ecological monitoring, we generate new and enhance existing knowledge on the conservation status of threatened, endemic, and valuable species to inform future conservation measures, ensuring their efficacy.

To support our mission, the MBLA team is deliberately made up of university researchers from different disciplines and nine permanent community researchers, who are members of and based in the villages where we work. The community researchers' tasks include participating in documentation, inventory, agronomic testing, and ecological monitoring, as well as supporting the management of nurseries and seed banks.

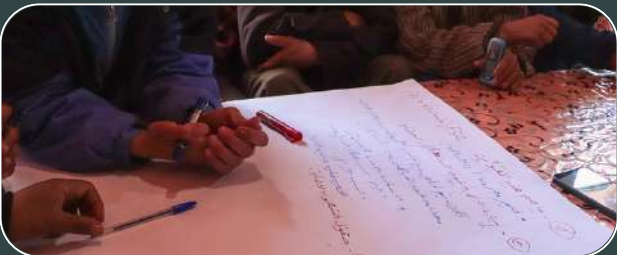
Participatory Studies

for conservation & restoration of forest ecosystems of the central High Atlas

Our research includes assessments of flora, fauna, habitats, ecosystems, and biodiversity within the Moroccan High Atlas, as well as species distribution mapping. In addition, we conduct annual ecological monitoring of community-based biodiversity management practices and study the impacts of climate change on plant populations to identify adaptation priorities. Our approach is based on the co-production of knowledge through the integration of scientific knowledge and local knowledge. This participatory approach recognizes communities as full-fledged stakeholders who possess detailed ecological knowledge and management systems tailored to local dynamics. It enables the production of relevant, legitimate, and actionable knowledge.

Assessment and Identification of Three Community Forests

Around mid-January, our team traveled to Zaouiat Ahansal to organize a gathering with community members from three zones; Ait Mhamed, Zaouiat Ahansal, and Tilouguite to initiate the inventory of forests and environmental sites in the region that require urgent intervention. Together with these communities, we identified their concerns and needs regarding tools, support, and skills to restore these sites, adopt a forest certification process, and create a sustainable economy that uplifts local communities.



Survey of Two Local Species

Over the past year, the association conducted a thorough, integrated assessment of two emblematic and vulnerable species in the Central High Atlas region (specifically within the territories of Aït M'hamed, Tilouguite, and Zaouiat Ahansal): Moroccan thyme (*Thymus satureioides* Coss.) and the dimorphic ash tree (*Fraxinus dimorpha* Coss. & Dur.). Our ecological, biological, and socio-economic research reveals that, despite the strong adaptive capacity of these species, their natural populations face worrying demographic imbalances and increased habitat fragmentation due to the combined effects of climate change, overgrazing, and commercial overexploitation. In response to these warning signs, field data scientifically demonstrate the crucial, positive impact of community-based management practices and customary systems, which successfully stimulate natural regeneration and sustainably preserve soil biological fertility. These findings will guide our future in situ and ex situ conservation actions.



Restoration Plans

In June 2025, our team spent four others productive days working closely with the 3 communities. Through a series of workshops and discussions, we conducted an in-depth assessment of the forests in both regions and explored strategies for implementing action plans aimed at forest restoration and certification. These efforts are part of our ongoing High Atlas Cultural Landscapes program, dedicated to restoring forest ecosystems, supported by Audemars Watkins.

Symposium

First edition : Collaborative Pathways for Biodiversity Conservation

The international symposium on biodiversity, held on February 17, 2025, brought together experts, academics, and diplomatic representatives from Morocco and Canada to strengthen scientific research and global partnerships for environmental conservation. Featuring key institutional presentations—notably from Cadi Ayyad University, the University of Guelph, and the Canadian Embassy—the day centered on two strategic panels focused on international cooperation and scientific approaches. The afternoon featured a hands-on training session on policy advocacy and media relations led by Dr. Faisal Moola, before concluding with an open discussion that helped outline future prospects and research collaborations.



Field Visits



Visit to the Oukaimeden Community Seed Bank



Visit to the Oukaimeden Community Nursery



Presentations and Discussion



Visit to the Oukaimeden Community Nursery

Symposium - Second edition

Agrobiodiversity, Legume breeding and community resilience

Last October, Marrakech hosted the second edition of the Symposium dedicated to agrobiodiversity and community resilience. Organized with the Faculty of Sciences Semlalia (Cadi Ayyad University), this event provided an opportunity to share the major progress of the project "Organic legume breeding for establishing seed diversity and use for small-scale farming", an Ibero-Moroccan cooperation conducted alongside Lebende Samen, INRA, ICARDA and MBLA.

Event Schedule

The first day, open to the public, highlighted the scientific work and poignant testimonies of the local communities of Imegdale, followed by a visit to the regional seed bank (Herbier MARK) and a roundtable discussion on the challenges of seed conservation. The following day was dedicated to an immersive field experience exploring MBLA's flagship programs. Participants toured an iconic route that included the Dar Taliba Educational Garden in Ourika, the Agdal, and the Oukaïmeden community nursery, concluding at the Transhumance Eco-Museum. These two days of sharing and mutual learning not only provided an opportunity to compare scientific approaches with the ancestral knowledge of the High Atlas, but also strengthened our collaboration with our trusted partners to jointly develop sustainable and impactful solutions that benefit the land and its resources.





CONSERVATION & RESTORATION

Our approach to conserving and restoring biodiversity and agrobiodiversity in the High Atlas is based on in-situ and ex-situ conservation strategies. Through the management of Community Seed Banks, we ensure the genetic safeguard of over 500 local varieties, acting as true shields against climate change. This preservation dynamic is reinforced by Seed Fairs, which are spaces for exchange and knowledge sharing, as well as by Farmer Field Schools that provide tailored technical training.

Also, our community nurseries concretize this approach by producing endemic plants for distribution to local communities and ecosystem restoration. Finally, we support local water management infrastructures to further ensure the sustainability of our actions in these vulnerable areas. Through these various programs, we are sustainably strengthening food sovereignty and biological diversity in the High Atlas region.



Community Seed Banks

CBSs provide an important safeguard for the resilience of local communities by preserving genetic material that can be used in the future to adapt to climate change and mitigate its impacts. They also promote seed diversification through trade and seed exchanges, providing the necessary material to experiment with variety selection for climate-resilient seeds.

A total of 590 species and varieties, stored and preserved in the four seed banks.

NEW SEED BANK IN TILOUGUITE, AZILAL



IMEGDALE



328 in total, including 170 in agriculture

AIT M'HAMED



148 in total, including 80 varieties of cultivated plants

OUKAIMEDEN



56 in total, including 46 varieties of cultivated plants

TILOUGUITE



59 in total, including about 10 agricultural varieties

Community Nurseries

Community nurseries aim to produce seedlings that are then distributed to local communities or used for restoration and reintroduction efforts involving threatened, beneficial, and endemic species in the wild and on community lands.

NEW COMMUNITY NURSERY IN TILOUGUITE, AZILAL



More than 40 species and varieties, and a total of 58,984 plants produced across the five community nurseries.

OUR 2025 IMPACT IN NUMBERS

75 342 Seeds lauched 84% Success rate

58 984 Successful plants

40 655 Aromatic and medicinal plants

9975 Planted trees

8354 Forest trees



Zaouiat Ahansal 9945

Ait M'hamed 12527

Tilouguite 15749

Imegdale 7200

Oukaimeden 10137

Seed Fairs of High Atlas : Two news editions

4TH EDITION OURIKA, AL HAOUZ - MAY

The seed fair hosted in Ourika (Setti Fadma) was a resounding success and a powerful reminder of just how vital these initiatives are, both for conservation and for uniting communities.

Over 40 farmers and 100 attendees from across the mountain regions came together with a shared purpose: to exchange seed conservation knowledge, learn from one another, and gain insights from our agronomy expert, Dr. Omar Saadani Hassani, on preserving local seed varieties and strengthening traditional conservation techniques.



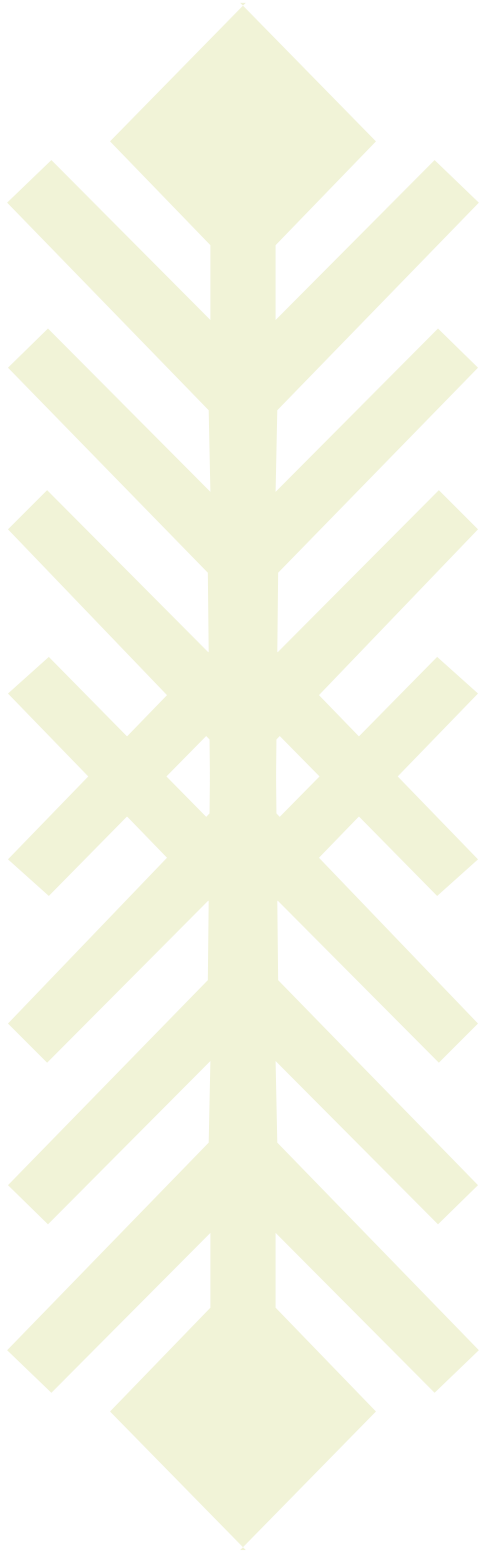
Awards were given to those who displayed the most local seeds as a gesture to encourage seed conservation and discussions took place on establishing a regional network of seed producers, an initiative we hope will continue growing beyond the fair

Our hope is to see more young people join us at such events in the future. These gatherings are a chance to discover incredible agroecological practices, from seed to harvest, that help sustain life and livelihoods in the Atlas Mountains



5TH EDITION SETTI FADMA, AL HAOUZ – JULY

Alongside the Biocultural Carrefour of High Atlas, organized by MBLA, we celebrated the 5th edition of our Seed Fair. It was a highlight of the event that brought together **more than 40 farmers of the region — including 5 women** — to exchange seeds and share knowledge. Together, we reaffirmed the crucial role of local seeds—a true living heritage—for our culture and food security. This event helped forge valuable connections between producers and researchers, united in the pursuit of preserving our climate resilience and food sovereignty.



To encourage and reward the region's farmers for their seed-saving efforts, symbolic prizes were awarded to three winners selected for bringing the greatest number of local varieties from the High Atlas.



Agroecology Market

1ST EDITION

SETTI FADMA,
AL HAOUZ – JULY

Our first Agroecology Market, held on May 15, was a special event we chose to organize in the mountains at “Le Pouvoir des Plantes” farm in Tnin Ourika, bringing it closer to farmers and rural entrepreneurs in the region.

The goal of this market was to foster meaningful connections and establish a strong network among farmers, shepherds, local cooperatives, and ecotourism stakeholders, laying the groundwork for a local, inclusive, and sustainable economy.



Attendees and guests were invited to take part in a series of workshops on product quality, networking, the importance of building a hub of agro-pastoralists, rural producers, and tourism stakeholders, as well as sharing success stories of some of the attending cooperatives.

Distribution of local plants

The distribution of plants took place over a three-month period, from February to April, according to a schedule tailored to the specific climatic and geographic conditions of the targeted mountainous areas.

It began in February in the communities of Aït M'hamed and Tilouguit, continued in March in Imegdâl, and concluded in April in Oukaïmeden and Zaouiât Ahansal.

This timing took into account the harsh climatic conditions in these regions, characterized by low temperatures and frequent snowfall, in order to ensure better plant establishment and optimize the chances of success for the planting operations.

A total of 29,450 seedlings were distributed to 622 beneficiaries from 65 villages, reflecting the scale of this initiative and its impact at the local level.

This initiative is part of a broader effort to promote sustainable agriculture, protect the environment, and combat the effects of climate change, while supporting local communities in preserving their natural heritage and improving their living conditions.



OUR 2025 IMPACT IN NUMBERS

AIT M'HAMED
7500 plants
105 beneficiaries
27 villages

ZAOUÏAT AHANSAL
6200 plants
129 beneficiaries
8 villages

TILOUGUITE
2500 plants
72 beneficiaries
25 villages

OUKAIMEDEN
5900 plants
158 beneficiaries
10 villages



List of the distributed species :

- **Verveine** : *Aloysia citriodora palau*
- **Origan** : *Origanum compactum bentham*
- **Marjolaine** : *Origanum majorana L.*
- **Mint** : *Mentha gattefossei Maire*
- **Mint** : *Mentha suaveolens*
- **Sauge** : *Salvia officinalis L.*
- **Thym** : *Thymus saturejoides Coss.*
- **Armoise** : *Artemisia arborescents (Vaill.) L., Artemisia herba-alba*
- **Géranium** : *Pelargonium graveolens (Thunb). L'Her*

- **Lavande** : *Lanvadula angustifolia Mill., Lavandula dantata L.*
- **Rosemary** : *Rosmarinus officinalis L.*
- **List of the distributed Fruit trees and forest trees**
- **Almond** : *Prunus dulcis(Mill.)*
- **Walnut** : *Juglans regia L.*
- **Carob** : *Ceratonia siliqua L.*
- **Fig** : *ficus carica*
- **Ash tree** : *Fraxinus dimorpha Coss. &Durieu*
- **Holm oak** : *Quercus ilex L*

Farmer-Field-Schools

Farmer Field Schools (FFS) deliver specialized, hands-on training in agroecological practices, driving the adoption of sustainable farming methods and alleviating pressure on fragile ecosystems. Each intervention begins with focus group discussions involving local farmers, followed by an on-site environmental assessment to map the unique characteristics, strengths, and vulnerabilities of each location. Leveraging these insights, we develop tailored, site-specific training curricula designed to maximize local impact.

SOIL MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIC FERTILIZATION TECHNIQUES

LEYEHNAN, AL HAOUZ- JANUARY

In January, we held a workshop in Leyehnan (Ijoukak) as part of our Farmers Field Program, facilitated for farmers and their families by our Agroecology Program Manager, Dr. Omar SAADANI, to improve their knowledge and skills in agroecological practices for healthier crops. The workshop, held in the village of Lehnayen in the Ijoukak commune, brought together **38 participants, including 16 women**. Attendees learned about soil management and organic fertilization techniques tailored to their specific eco-social and environmental conditions and constraints.



PREVENTIVE PRACTICES AND NATURAL TREATMENTS

TALAT N YACOU, AL HAOUZ - FEBRUARY

To wrap up our busy schedule for January, we organized a workshop in the Talat N'Acoub commune as part of our Farmer Field School program. The workshop focused on plant health, preventive practices, and natural treatments using locally available resources, was facilitated by Dr. Omar SAADANI HASSANI. **A total of 45 community members, including 30 women** from the villages of Oukoune and Elmechadil, participated in the workshop. They learned about sustainable agricultural practices and ways to improve crop yields without relying on chemical pesticides. The participants actively engaged in discussions and hands-on activities, demonstrating a strong interest in applying these new techniques to their own farms.

**PEST MANAGEMENT
AND PLANT HEALTH**
LEYEHNAN, AL HAOUZ - APRIL

As part of our ongoing Farmer Field School (FFS) training program in the High Atlas, a hands-on session on Pest Management and Plant Health was held on April 30, in the village of Lehnanyen, Ijoukak. Led by our Agroecology Trainer and Program Lead, with the support of our field coordinator Fadma AIT ILIGH and a team member of Corps Africa, the session focused on preventive and curative practices adapted to the region's specific environmental and socioeconomic conditions. With **15 participants, including 10 women**, the training emphasized natural and low-cost pest control techniques. Participants learned to prepare and apply various biopesticides and insect traps using locally available resources, such as alfalfa and nettle manure, along with other plant-based mixtures.



**COMPOSTING,
BIOFERTILIZERS,
AND BIOPESTICIDES**
AGHBALOU, AL HAOUZ - JULY

A session was held in July in Setti Fadma in conjunction with the Haut Atlas Biocultural Forum. The workshops brought together nearly 50 farmers, including 5 women, as well as many enthusiastic visitors. Over the course of two days, the focus was on technical self-sufficiency through six thematic workshops: Mastering vermicomposting, windrow composting, and the production of biofertilizers; and Preparing biopesticides and techniques for trapping pests and insects.

**SOIL MANAGEMENT
AND BIOFERTILIZERS**
IGHIL, AL HAOUZ - OCTOBER

In October 2025, a new session was held in Ighil, also focused on soil management and biofertilizers. This event marked an important milestone in our efforts toward inclusion: of the 30 community members in attendance, 20 were women. Their active participation underscores the central role women play in the agricultural transition and the transmission of knowledge within the province.





EARTHQUAKE RELIEF ACTION

Restoration of traditional agricultural terraces

In the aftermath of the devastating Al Haouz earthquake, hundreds of traditional agricultural terraces were destroyed across the High Atlas region. These terraces, built over generations, play a vital role in preserving soil, retaining water, and supporting local food production. Their collapse has severely impacted the livelihoods of agro-pastoral communities who depend on them for subsistence farming. The rehabilitation of these terraces is therefore crucial for restoring food security and ensuring economic resilience in affected areas. This photo essay documents both the damage and the collective efforts toward ecological and cultural restoration.

The cultural practice of mutual aid, known locally as Tiwizi, played a vital role in the initial clearing of agricultural terraces, helping to remove rubble, large rocks, and debris left by the earthquake. The rehabilitation itself was carried out using traditional methods, respecting the ancestral knowledge and building techniques specific to the region. Tiwizi was also mobilized during the transportation of construction materials (stones and tools) using mules and donkeys across difficult terrain.

In 2025, 137 additional agricultural terraces were rehabilitated in the disaster area, bringing the total number of rehabilitated terraces to 172 since the activity began, benefiting 105 households in 13 villages in the Al Haouz area.



EARTHQUAKE RELIEF ACTION

Restoration of water infrastructures

Following the earthquake, numerous traditional irrigation infrastructures, including saguias, water basins, and other water management structures, also suffered severe damage or destruction. These losses have significantly disrupted local agricultural activities and the livelihoods dependent on them. In response to this urgent situation, MBLA mobilized its resources and expertise to support the repair and reconstruction of these critical systems. This intervention aims to restore water access, safeguard agricultural productivity, and strengthen community resilience in the affected areas.

The rehabilitation of hydraulic structures damaged by the earthquake continued in 2025. In the village of Tanezzat, in the commune of Talat N'yacoob, 42 meters of *seguías* (irrigation canals) were fully rehabilitated to provide water for the agricultural terraces of 28 families.

A segua (or saghia) is a traditional open-air or semi-underground irrigation channel used to carry water to fields, gardens, and oases





3

LOCAL ECONOMY

At the heart of the Moroccan Biodiversity and Livelihoods Association (MBLA)'s mission, the Local Economy Support component places economic empowerment and inclusion at the center of sustainable development for communities in the High Atlas. Convinced that strengthening a local, solidarity-based economy is the cornerstone of strong and resilient communities, the association implements targeted initiatives to structure and sustain rural incomes.

Historically committed to supporting small-scale producers organized into cooperatives, MBLA has recently expanded its scope to support the next generation: young people of both genders seeking employment and aspiring entrepreneurs.



High Atlas Food Market

to support local cooperatives

The High Atlas Food Market (HAFM) is a strategic commercial platform connecting rural cooperatives in the High Atlas to consumers and businesses in Marrakech. This key event enables local groups to sell their food, cosmetics, and artisanal products directly, while promoting production methods that respect biodiversity. Beyond sales, the HAFM offers a vibrant program—including tastings, workshops, and discussion groups—to raise awareness among urban residents about healthy eating and encourage them to choose high-quality, natural products.

11TH EDITION

AGHBALOU, SETTI FADMA – JULY

The 11th edition of the High Atlas Food Market highlighted the incredible vitality of local cooperatives. Held during the Bio-Cultural Fair, the event welcomed 14 cooperatives, most of which are led by women and young people from areas affected by the earthquake. The 400 visitors were able not only to enjoy local delicacies (amlou, jams, oils, etc.) and discover natural cosmetics and traditional crafts, but above all, to provide tangible support for these initiatives, which are vital for the reconstruction and economic self-sufficiency of the region, which was severely impacted by the earthquake.

10TH EDITION

TENNIS CLUB, MARRAKECH

MBLA participated in the solidarity market held at the Tennis Club. This participation enabled the mobilization of six cooperatives that we support across our various projects. Thanks to this event, several cooperatives were able to meet potential clients and showcase their products to a specific niche market. The market also resulted in concrete sales, thereby strengthening market access for these local initiatives and enhancing the visibility of their know-how.

12TH EDITION

TERRE D'EVEIL, MARRAKECH – NOVEMBER

For its 12th edition, the High Atlas Food Market set up shop at a new iconic venue: Terre d'Eveil. This serene setting provided the ideal space to discover the treasures of a dozen cooperatives from the High Atlas. Amid colorful stalls and lively conversations, visitors were able to explore a unique selection of local products. More than just a market, the HAFM has established itself as a concrete show of support for local communities in the High Atlas and for natural, locally produced goods.





Anbdou Program

This program was specifically designed to support and revitalize rural entrepreneurship and local cooperatives affected by the 2023 earthquake in the Al Haouz region

Awareness Caravan

As part of ANBDOU Program's mission to promote rural entrepreneurship and support local communities, we organized an Entrepreneurship Caravan in Douar Alla'noumzri. This marked our first interaction with the community, made possible through the support of Corps Africa volunteers who facilitated the logistics of the workshop.

The event brought together 26 participants, including 21 women and 5 youth members, who were given a platform to express and exchange ideas about their personal and economic aspirations while utilizing the Ikigai concept to identify their strengths, passions, and opportunities for sustainable business development. A second key topic addressed during the caravan was a deep dive into Law 112-12, which outlines the legal framework for cooperatives in Morocco, helping local entrepreneurs formalize their activities and access new opportunities for growth.



Bootcamps

As part of our ANBDOU program focused on supporting small entrepreneurs affected by the earthquake in the Al Haouz region, we recently organized a networking bootcamp in collaboration with @iecd_maroc at the Culinary Arts Museum. This one-day event provided an opportunity for the selected small project holders to connect with our guests, who represented various organizations, including NGOs, private entities, and governmental institutions such as GIZ, CAEDEL, HAF, ADA, ANAPEC, FLDF, CRI, and ODCO. Events of this kind are crucial for the rural entrepreneurs we support, as they provide a platform to build meaningful connections, exchange ideas, and explore potential collaborations, while also offering access to valuable resources, mentorship, and insights from industry experts to help overcome challenges and scale their businesses effectively.



Mentoring program

Mentoring constituted a core component of the ANBDU program, ensuring continuous and personalized support to entrepreneurs beyond collective training activities. Each beneficiary received tailored mentoring sessions provided by experienced coaches and experts in entrepreneurship, finance, and market development. These sessions aimed to address specific challenges faced by project holders, support decision-making processes, and guide them in structuring and scaling their activities.

Throughout the program, mentoring covered several key aspects, including refinement of business plans and value propositions, financial planning and cost management, market access and commercialization strategies and personal development and leadership skills.

A total of 24 entrepreneurs benefited from mentoring, with an average of 4 sessions per participant, ensuring regular follow-up and progress tracking.

This individualized approach significantly contributed to improving the viability and sustainability of the supported projects. The strong relationships established between mentors and mentees also created a supportive ecosystem that extends beyond the duration of the program.



ANBDU Club

ANBDU Club is a cooperative created for the support of the local entrepreneurship. With the ANBDU program, we were inspired by the strong relationships participants have cultivated and their determination to preserve these connections. Their eagerness to continue collaborating, networking, and sharing knowledge and ideas has been a highlight of the program and has led to the establishment of the Anbdou Club.

Celebrating its launch in February, the club seeks to structure the collaborative efforts of its member cooperatives and entrepreneurs, driving growth and increasing visibility for their businesses.

Follow their journey and discover the inspiring stories of Al Haouz entrepreneurs on [@anbdou_alhaouz_officielle](#) !



Objectives:

- To maintain and reinforce the network of entrepreneurs and cooperatives created during the ANBDU program, ensuring continuity beyond the project lifecycle.
- To facilitate collaboration and partnerships among members in order to develop joint initiatives and access new market opportunities.
- To strengthen the capacities of members through continuous learning, peer-to-peer exchange, and access to mentoring and expertise.
- To promote and increase the visibility of local products, services, and initiatives from Al Haouz at regional and national levels.
- To support the economic empowerment of women and youth by creating an inclusive and supportive entrepreneurial community.
- To contribute to the sustainable development of the region by encouraging innovative, resilient, and locally rooted business models.

Hackathon

As part of the ANBDU program aimed at supporting small entrepreneurs affected by the earthquake in the Al Haouz province, a final competition was organized to identify and reward the most promising and impactful business initiatives developed throughout the program. The selection process was based on criteria such as innovation, feasibility, social and economic impact, and potential for sustainability and scalability. At the end of this process, three outstanding projects were awarded, reflecting the diversity of entrepreneurial solutions emerging from the region, ranging from agri-food valorization and service-based cooperatives to digital innovation in short supply chains. The following section presents the winning initiatives through concise technical fiches, highlighting their key features and expected impact.



After eight months of intense training sessions focused on strengthening a multitude of skills for rural entrepreneurs taking part in the ANBDU program, the initiative culminated in a celebratory Hackaton event. Participants put their newfound skills and confidence to the test by presenting their project ideas to our jury during Pitch Day, competing for financial aid to either kickstart their ventures or elevate existing ones. The program came to an end in mid-May with a final pitch event, where participants competed for financial awards to help launch or grow their projects.

TROIS LAUREATS

SPROUTED BARLEY COOPERATIVE

This agricultural cooperative, based in Al Haouz province, specializes in the production and processing of sprouted barley, a highly nutritious product rooted in local traditions. The cooperative produces dried sprouted barley, sprouted barley flour, and other derivative nutritional mixes, targeting the growing market for healthy and natural food products. Its innovative approach lies in the valorization of a locally available but underutilized crop, transforming it into value-added products with strong market potential. The initiative generates income for rural women, contributes to local food security, and promotes sustainable agricultural practices adapted to the post-earthquake context.

SERVICE COOPERATIVE

This service-oriented cooperative, established with the support of MBLA in a rural area of Al Haouz, provides a range of locally needed services while fostering economic inclusion for youth and women. Its activities include administrative support services, logistical assistance for local events and initiatives, and proximity services such as cleaning and organization. The cooperative stands out by structuring previously informal services into a formal, organized, and scalable model based on collective entrepreneurship. It contributes to job creation, improves access to essential services in underserved areas, and strengthens the local ecosystem through an inclusive and community-driven approach.

EGG AWARENESS AND SALES PLATFORM

This entrepreneurial project is a digital platform combining awareness-raising and commercial activities in the poultry sector, focusing on the sale of eggs through short supply chains. Based between Al Haouz and Marrakech, the platform offers egg sales while educating consumers on quality standards, traceability, nutrition, and good farming practices. The innovation of the project lies in integrating e-commerce with educational content, creating a more informed and responsible consumption pattern. It supports small-scale producers by improving their market access, enhances transparency in the value chain, and contributes to increasing incomes while raising consumer awareness.



New project

BIODIV' INCUBATOR

CO-DEVELOPED BY MBLA AND
IECD MOROCCO AND SUPPORTED
BY THE FONDATION DE FRANCE



Launch of
BIODIV'INCUBATOR:
A New Milestone for
Sustainable
Entrepreneurship in
the High Atlas
of Al Haouz

The result of close collaboration between MBLA and IECD Morocco, with the invaluable support of the Fondation de France, this project aims to support sustainable entrepreneurship in the villages of the Al Haouz province affected by the earthquake. By drawing on the region's traditional know-how and natural resources, BIODIV' INCUBATEUR encourages the creation of environmentally friendly businesses while helping to rebuild a stronger and more sustainable economic foundation.

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

To contribute to the economic recovery and sustainable development of communities in the High Atlas by promoting the creation and long-term viability of green and sustainable businesses.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES



Fostering a spirit of sustainable and green entrepreneurship



Bringing promising ideas to life



Promote and Strengthen Local Sustainable Entrepreneurship

VISION

To make the High Atlas a model of a sustainable local economy based on biodiversity, green innovation, and inclusive entrepreneurship.

EXPECTED RESULTS



100 young women and men were educated about green and sustainable entrepreneurship.



40 entrepreneurs were supported in launching their green and sustainable businesses.



40 entrepreneurs and cooperatives have received **support in developing and marketing their products and services.**

Launch Ceremony MARRAKECH – OCTOBER

In October 2025, Marrakech hosted the launch ceremony for our new project, **BIODIV'INCUBATEUR**. The ceremony brought together about **40 experts, including representatives from NGOs, institutions, academia, and local communities.**

Together, we laid the groundwork for a shared strategy to address the region's challenges and promote the exchange of experiences to benefit local communities and the rural economy.

[CLICK HERE TO SEE THE RECAP.](#)

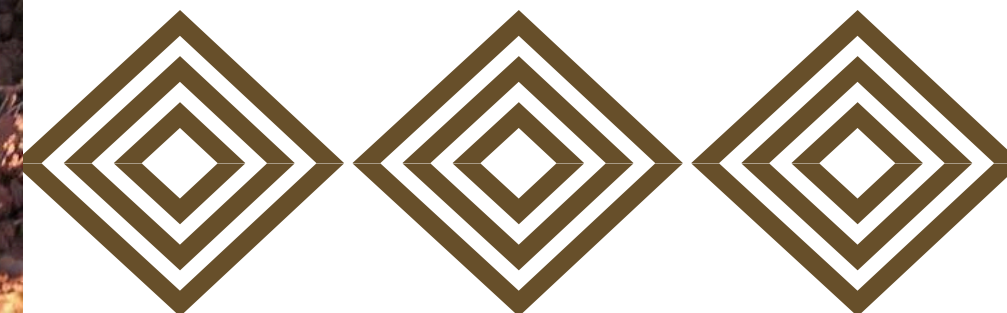




4. Bio-cultural Education

The High Atlas Environmental Education Program was designed and implemented across local schools with the following core objectives:

- Raising awareness among students about the critical role of biodiversity within agroecological systems.
- Enhancing knowledge of endemic plant species and traditional seed-saving techniques.
- Deepening understanding of plant life cycles and plant propagation methods.
- Promoting the use of natural biofertilizers and encouraging eco-friendly alternatives to chemical inputs.
- Introducing small-scale agroecology principles and their practical application within the school environment.
- Building awareness regarding waste pollution and environmental stewardship.



Expanding Our Program in Azilal

This year was highlighted by the launch of our environmental education program in the municipalities of Zaouiat Ahansal and Tilouguite. Through this initiative, several concrete actions were implemented to raise awareness among students regarding local biodiversity and natural resource conservation practices. Schoolchildren from both areas benefited from immersive educational field trips.

In Zaouiat Ahansal, they discovered the community nursery and the specific biological diversity of their immediate environment. Meanwhile, students from Tilouguite, accompanied by their teachers, explored their own local nursery to study plant species adapted to regional ecological conditions. These visits aimed to foster ecological awareness among the youth regarding the natural wealth of their respective regions, while equipping them with the tools to understand the critical challenges of biodiversity conservation.



PLANTING WORKSHOPS

At schools in Zaouiat Ahansal and Tilouguite, planting workshops were organized. During these workshops, the students themselves planted the seedlings from the community nurseries at their schools, with the support of school staff.



CLEANUP INITIATIVE

A cleanup initiative has been incorporated into the environmental education program. Since waste pollution is a common problem in Morocco and in the villages of the High Atlas, it is essential to raise students' awareness of this issue. To teach them how to protect the environment and keep it clean, the children at the Zaouiat Ahansal school participated in a cleanup at their respective schools.

High School of Ait M'hamed, Azilal

As part of the environmental education program led by the MBLA since 2022, a fruitful collaboration has been established with Aït M'hamed High School, the Azilal Provincial Directorate of National Education, and the municipality of Aït M'hamed, actively involving students and teachers in activities focused on raising awareness, tree planting, promoting natural heritage, and community engagement.

In February and March 2025, the students took part in a **national competition focused on forest restoration**. They produced an awareness-raising video showcasing the steps of their fieldwork (watch the video), an illustrated article describing local issues and their contribution, and a symbolic photograph of their collective commitment.

[CLICK HERE TO SEE THE VIDEO](#)



CELEBRATION CEREMONY in the presence of the winning students



This initiative led to the school receiving, that same year, the **National Award for School Solidarity**, presented by the Ministry of National Education, Preschool Education, and Sports, in partnership with the Mohammed VI Foundation for the Protection of the Environment. This national recognition reflects the exemplary commitment of all stakeholders: the MBLA team, the students, the staff of Aït M'hamed High School, and the Azilal Provincial Directorate.

A NEW EDUCATIONAL GARDEN

- The inspiring story behind the project:
- It was the high school students who first came up with the idea for this garden and proposed its creation.
 - To bring their project to life in 2025, MBLA secured financial support from its prestigious UNDP Equator Prize (won in 2024 for its work in the High Atlas).
 - Thanks to this collaboration between MBLA, the high school, and the municipality, the garden was created and has become a key component of our biocultural education program.

GARDEN PLAN





5. Promotion of biocultural heritage

Designed as genuine exchange platforms open to the general public, these events bring together local communities, civil society, researchers, and institutional actors. They offer a unique framework to debate the challenges surrounding the recognition and preservation of bio-cultural heritage, as well as community-based conservation. Combining scientific rigor with cultural celebration—through conferences, participatory workshops, field visits, exhibitions, and traditional artistic expressions—these intensive days serve as major advocacy platforms to promote and strengthen support for the communities who act as custodians of these Territories of Life.

Biocultural Carrefour of High Atlas

FIRST EDITION
AGHBALOU, AL HAOUZ
JULY

On July 27 and 28, 2025, the vibrant village of Aghbalou, located in the rural commune of Setti Fadma (Al Haouz province), hosted the inaugural edition of the Biocultural Carrefour of the High Atlas. Organized by MBLA, this landmark event brought together local farmers, rural cooperatives, researchers, and visitors to honor the region's rich agrobiodiversity and cultural heritage. Set in a area deeply impacted by the 2023 earthquake, the gathering served as a powerful symbol of community resilience, sustainable land management, and local empowerment.



SEED FAIR



HIGH ATLAS FOOD MARKET



AGROECOLOGY WORKSHOPS

African General Assembly of Territories of Life (AGATE 2025)

A MAJOR MILESTONE FOR COMMUNITY CONSERVATION

From April 7 to 11, 2025, the scenic town of Azilal in Morocco’s Atlas Mountains brought together key champions of community-led conservation for the 4th African General Assembly of Territories of Life (AGATE 2025). Co-organized by the ICCA Consortium Secretariat, the Africa Collegial Group, and the North Africa Coordination through the Moroccan Biodiversity and Livelihoods Association (MBLA) alongside local group Aska pour la Femme et l’Enfant, the gathering brought together around 50 to 60 participants from 18 African nations. Regional coordinators, advisors, country focal points, and global team members all came together to strengthen the movement dedicated to protecting territories of life across the continent.



The event kicked off with deep dives into shared values and key concepts like self-determination, community resilience, and bio-cultural heritage. Through lively interactive sessions, discussions, and group workshops, attendees gained a better understanding of the Consortium's ongoing Organizational Change Process (OCP) and membership pathways. It was also a historic moment to warmly celebrate the full integration of the North Africa region into the broader network.

True to the spirit of the movement, the gathering went beyond classroom discussions to connect directly with local communities. On the final day, participants visited the rural municipality of Aït M'hamed to meet the inspiring women of the Aska cooperative.



They also explored impactful field initiatives firsthand, including a community seed bank, a biochar production unit, a community nursery, and an educational garden, showing how local leadership translates into impactful environmental action. These infrastructure are supported by MBLA.

A major outcome of AGATE 2025 was the collective creation of a roadmap and strategic action plan for the entire African mega-region. Participants worked closely to align their efforts around four main priorities: self-determination and self-strengthening, legal and social recognition, sustainable partnerships, and organizational culture. This shared vision will boost internal cohesion across all sub-regions while amplifying African voices on the global stage.

In summary, AGATE 2025 was a vibrant highlight of our year, blending strategy, learning, and genuine camaraderie. By bridging local field experiences with regional governance, the assembly reinvigorated our collective commitment and laid out a clear path forward to support Indigenous peoples and local communities as guardians of their territories of life.



MEET OUR TEAM

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Ferdaousse El Idrissi
Deputy Director of administration and finance

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Reporting and grant Manager



Fadma Ait Ilich
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Tilouguitte



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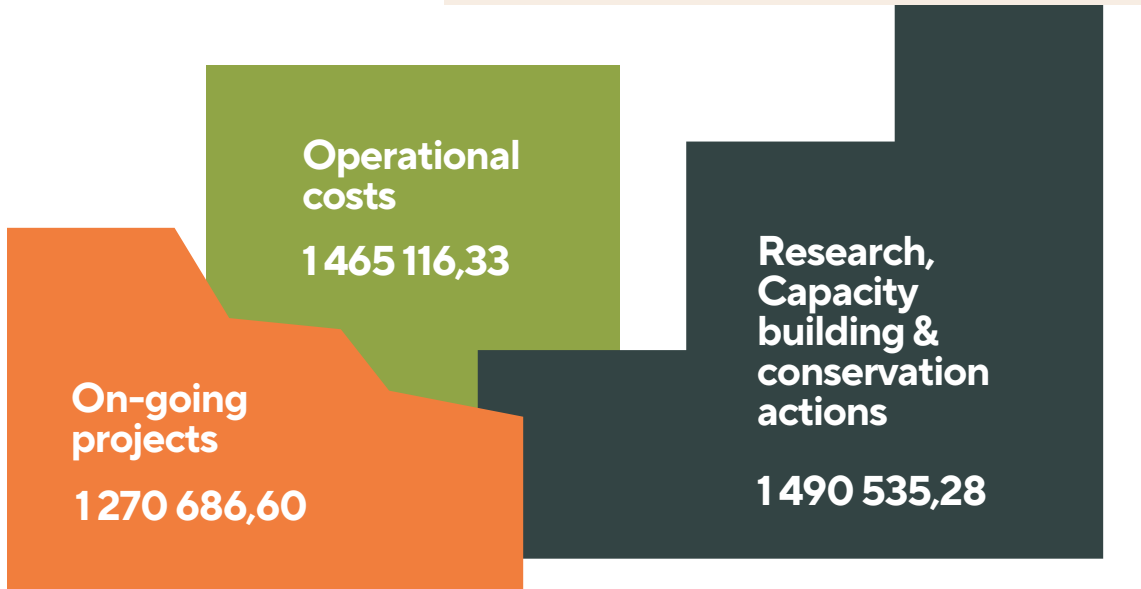


Pr. Rachid Ait Babahmad

Co-Founders and technical advisors



OUR FINANCIAL SUMMARY



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

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