

Agrobiodiversity as roots of resilience

2026 Photo With a Story Contest - Winners' List



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Original Photo credit: @ CIAT Georgina Smith 2016

1st Jury
Award



The Bundle That Saved Us

By Mwansa Boyd

Story from: Zambia

I am a student of crop science, yet during the year the rains failed, I could not stop hunger in my own home. The maize fields turned brown, and I felt I had failed. Then my grandmother opened an old cloth and showed me a small bundle of seeds that had survived droughts before. While the maize died, her small mixed garden stayed alive and fed us. That season taught me what resilience really means: it is diversity. Discover how my grandmother's seeds changed the way I see the future of food.

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FULL STORY



PHOTO CAPTION:

My grandmother in Muchinga province, with seeds that saved us



Credit: 2026 Agrobiodiversity Photo with A Story Contest - Author: Mwansa Boyd

2nd Jury
Award

Atharaka ('Those of Tharaka')

By Andy Pilsbury

Story from: Kenya



In Tharaka, Kenya, being "of a place" means being deeply connected to its land, seeds, animals, ancestors, and traditions. Through the revival of indigenous seeds, communal goat grazing, and the protection of Sacred Natural Sites, the people of Tharaka are reconnecting culture and ecology after generations of disruption. Elders and young people are bringing back knowledge that has long shaped how they farm, care for the land, and live together. Remembering that restoring one part of this relationship can help restore the whole.

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PHOTO CAPTIONS:

1. A young person of Tharaka, Brennie Muthoni, learns from her elder, Mutegi M'Mwaria, about the revival of customary shift grazing.
2. Seed Custodian, Salome Gatumi, stands in her field of pearl millet: an indigenous small grain that local women have begun planting again.
3. Gitongo Chabari - Young Mugwe - the spiritual leader of Tharaka. Goats are considered a symbol of purity, making them an important part of rituals to restore balance between humans, ancestors and nature.



Credit: 2026 Agrobiodiversity Photo with A Story Contest - Author: Andy Pilsbury

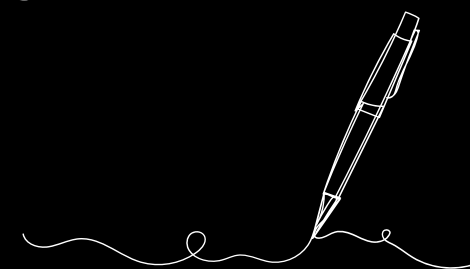
Public
Voting
Award

3rd Jury
Award

O'wasis Guayama Grande: when a community decided to plant biodiversity without poisons

By Mina Chalá Diego Fernando

Story from: Ecuador



Since 2024, nineteen Indigenous Panzaleo families from the Guayama Grande community in Cotopaxi, Ecuador, have been transforming their territory by replacing pesticides with agroecological practices. At the O'wasis Guayama Grande, farmers and researchers co-create solutions through bio-inputs, farmer field schools, and participatory biodiversity monitoring. As they recover local seeds and protect ravines, pollinators, and ancestral knowledge, women, youth, and children strengthen community resilience. This story shows that agrobiodiversity flourishes when people, nature, and science work together to restore Pachamama (Mother Earth) and produce healthy food for future generations.

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PHOTO CAPTIONS:

1. Farmers of the Guayama Grande O'wasis celebrating Inti Raymi and thanking Pachamama (Mother Earth) for their harvests.
2. Native bee (*Bombus funebris*) pollinating the flower of the edible chocho crop (*Lupinus mutabilis*) in the Guayama Grande O'wasis.
3. Mist enveloping the Guayama Grande O'wasis and its diversity of crops on a July afternoon.



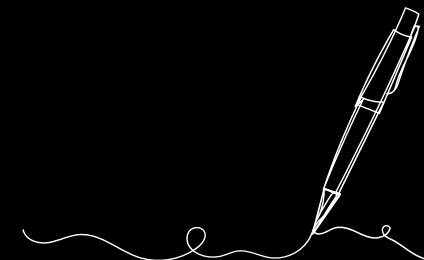
Credit: 2026 Agrobiodiversity Photo with A Story Contest - Author: Mina Chalá Diego Fernando

Jury
Honourable
mention

Sankofa

By Arpita Shah

Story from: The United Kingdom



Inspired by an Akan proverb from Ghana meaning, "It is not taboo to go back for what you forgot (or left behind)," Sankofa was made in collaboration with two growing projects 'Black Rootz' and 'Go Grow with Love'. It explores the reciprocity between generations of women growing together in North London, celebrating ancestral knowledge, community resilience, and the deep connections between land, food, and cultural heritage.

Originally commissioned by The Gaia Foundation and Photo Fringe as part of We Feed The UK, a major storytelling campaign pairing photographers with nature-friendly farmers to raise awareness of grassroots solutions to the climate, biodiversity, and social justice.

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Credit: 2026 Agrobiodiversity Photo with A Story Contest - Author: Arpita Shah

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

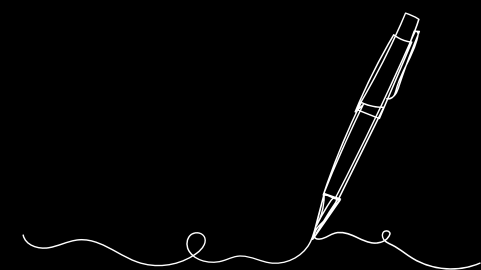
1. Sandra Salazar D'Eca, "For us melanin-rich people in the diaspora who perhaps are missing that connection with the motherland, growing food and working with soil are ways that we can pass on ancestral information: we can communicate our traditions, our cultural approaches, our cultural methods, and knowledge about nutrition. When it comes to food justice, seed sovereignty, or agroecology, community is the power that will move us forward. Through community, we can continue to pass on this information to the next generation...."
2. Pamela Shor, co-founder of Black Rootz, the UK's first multigenerational Black-led growing project
3. Paulette Henry, co-founder of Black Rootz, the UK's first multigenerational Black-led growing project.

Jury
Honourable
mention

The cosmopolitan cultivation

By Sudip Maiti

Story from: India



A look at the resilient agrobiodiversity practices in the city of Kolkata, a metropolis on the frontline of climate change.

"In the outskirts of Kolkata, India, a landscape once used for dumping waste has become a thriving agricultural system of vegetable fields, rice paddies, fishponds, wetlands, and villages."

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PHOTO CAPTIONS:

1. A farmer walks in an intercropped field of cabbage, chilli and marigold. Chilli acts as a natural deterrent to the pests while marigold attracts beneficial insects such as hoverflies and ladybugs.
2. A farmer checks on cauliflower and pumpkin plants produced using treated municipal waste in the Dhapa fields. Urban agriculture can prevent significant greenhouse gas emissions from transporting the produce and creates a green space to reduce pollution.
3. A fisherman fishes in the wetland near Kolkata. Wetlands water management system, such as precision irrigation and rainwater harvesting, can reduce the demand on freshwater resources, benefiting both agriculture and pisciculture.

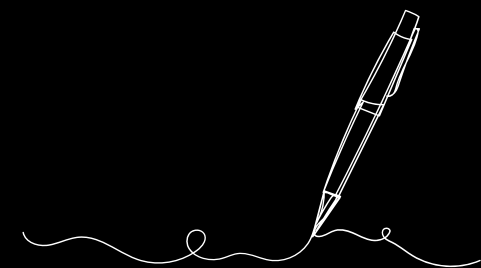


Credit: 2026 Agrobiodiversity Photo with A Story Contest - Author: Sudip Maiti

Roots take many forms

By Khristine Kaye Maguddayao

Story from: The Philippines



In the uplands of Negros Occidental, the roots of resilience take many forms. Where rice is difficult to grow, farmers turn to diverse crops, carrying generations of knowledge about how each can become food. These crops are rooted in the landscape, but their stories are rooted in people: in memory, practice, adaptation, and knowledge passed between generations. This story asks us to see agrobiodiversity not simply as the diversity of crops, but as the living relationships that allow people to endure change.

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PHOTO CAPTIONS:

1. Women peel Bisol, a local variety of taro, preparing it to be filled with tender young coconut and cooked into a traditional snack.
2. A farmer opens a sack of flour made from Kayos, an indigenous root crop that he stored months earlier, preserving the harvest through a practice passed down through generations.
3. A farmer scrapes the ground Kayos flour from a wooden lusong (mortar) onto a bilao (shallow woven tray), where it will be sifted by hand.



Credit: 2026 Agrobiodiversity Photo with A Story Contest - Author: Khristine Kaye Maguddayao



Public
Voting
Merit

The red bucket

By Massaad Abdeni Barbara
Story from: Lebanon

In the Shouf mountains of Lebanon, two Druze women were returning from the fields with what they had gathered from the land. When they noticed the photographer's camera, they responded not with reproach, but by pouring the fruit from their red bucket into the car. Their gesture revealed agrobiodiversity as lived knowledge: the ability to read the land, gather what it offers, and share it. In a time of crisis, such knowledge becomes a living root of resilience.



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PHOTO CAPTION:

In the Shouf, two Druze women returned from the fields. When they noticed my camera, they answered not with reproach, but with fruit.



Credit: 2026 Agrobiodiversity Photo with A Story Contest - Author: Massaad Abdeni Barbara