



AMEA WEEK:
LOCAL
NETWORKS
DAY AND
GLOBAL
ALLIANCE
CONVENING
NAIROBI 21-23 MAY 2019



AMEA WEEK

A CO-CREATION NETWORK

The Local Networks Day and Global Alliance Convening brought together over 50 people from AMEA members and selected external stakeholders. During this week, participants worked towards delivering the AMEA Framework which aims to create systems that accelerate the professionalisation of Farmer Organisations. This urgent need for change was highlighted by two comments which show the failure of previous efforts, that have at best produced islands of success.

“IN OUR COUNTRY ONLY 100 OUT OF 3000 COOPERATIVES COULD BE CONSIDERED AS PROFESSIONAL”

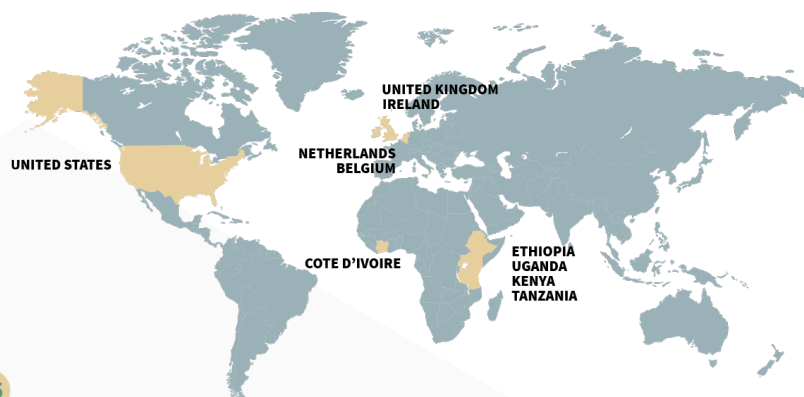
“80% OF THE COOPERATIVES IN OUR COUNTRY ARE BEGGAR ASSOCIATIONS”

The week was facilitated by Mark Blckett (AMEA’s new Global Network Director) and Zach Anderson (Converge for Impact). The processes built bridges and generated collaboration at an individual level, Working Group level and Local Network level. Participants reviewed the evolution and progress of the AMEA network and co-created the future activities of the network.

In order to assess AMEA’s evolution to a Network Organisation, Mark first presented the [Current State of AMEA](#); then Zach enabled participants to reflect using the [“Five C’s” of active networks](#):

- Clarify purpose
- Convene the right people
- Cultivate trust
- Coordinate existing activities
- Collaborate for systems impact

LOCATION *where participant is based*



ATTENDEES **56**
ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED **38**



Throughout the week, opportunities for participants to get to know each other on an individual level were created through interactive activities. AMEA aims to facilitate an active network where trust accelerates collaboration between AMEA members. Examples of interactive trust-building activities include:

- **Rapid coordination:** individuals identify needs in their own work and other participants identify where they can assist
- **True stories:** participants share personal stories of pivotal moments in their career that led them to where they are now
- **Collaborations:** the facilitators identify where AMEA members are already collaborating

The co-creation of future activities focused on collaboration between Local Networks and Working Groups which have the greatest potential to generate system impact in the countries hosting local networks. These are currently Ivory Coast, Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia and AMEA expects to expand to more countries in the next 12 months.

LOCAL NETWORKS

Local Network leads (Harrison Kaziro, Uganda; Hileena Chole, Ethiopia; Helene van der Roest, Kenya and Roger Brou, Côte d'Ivoire) [presented on the evolution of their local network](#) and outlined their successes, challenges and needs. The sessions on the Local Networks highlighted the essential role that Local Networks play in AMEA alliance. While the structure and pace of the Local Networks may differ, all create a space for AMEA members to meet, collaborate and learn within a country context. It is this space that is enabling competing organisations to find areas of collaboration which lead to synergies and greater impact.





The Local Networks day concluded with discussions between the Local Networks and Working Group leads. The key areas for further work included:

- **Collaborations** to develop country specific strategies for institutionalising and testing the IWA29 global guidelines.
- **Sharing** of Local Network strategies for positioning themselves within each Country including their strategies for involving Government and Private Sector
- **Testing tools/approaches**, including the development of an accessible pool of accredited assessors / trainers / coaches.
- **Support** for Local Network evolution. The organic approach now needs to be supported by the learning to date and guidance is required on fees and membership.

This collaboration is the way in which trust is being built however we must always be careful to monitor and address network health issues. This means finding ways for networks to overcome the significant challenges of competing objectives, supporting challenging dialogues and finding consensus. Time is also a key challenge but perhaps this is not the most important issue. If AMEA is a critical part of our organisation's work and our individual beliefs then we will prioritise time to AMEA.

WORKING GROUPS

Working Group leads (Sabrina Amburgey, Global Guidelines; Rebecca Savoie, Toolbox; Cheryl Turner, Trainers & Coaches; Hileena Chole, AgTech and Maurice Koppes, Achieving Bankability) [provided snapshot overviews](#) of their respective AMEA Working Groups as well as opportunities for participants to discuss key points within the Working Group.

Overall, the Working Groups identified a need to work more closely with other Working Groups and the Local Networks. Through a series of small group co-creation processes the Working Group plans have been revised, with some significant strategic changes. Key observations and priorities for the Working Groups for the next 12 months are:

Global Guidelines

- The IWA 29 has been published, is currently being translated into French and has been adopted by two National Standards Bodies (The Netherlands and Sierra Leone)
- The Working Group will develop a strategy and materials to support Local Networks to promote and use IWA29. They will also look for opportunities in other countries and members are encouraged to integrate IWA29 into their next round of proposals.
- The Working Group will develop a communication plan to reach out to strategic organisations which could influence positively the roll out of IWA29. The list includes donors, UN agencies and Governments.
- The Working Group will collect feedback and case studies in order to demonstrate the impact of using IWA29. This process is likely to be joined up with other learning processes such as those related to use of AMEA tools.

Toolbox

- The immediate priority was identified as the internal marketing of the AMEA tools. The Working Group will focus on finalising the AMEA guide by the end of June 2019. It was proposed that members should look for opportunities to test AMEA tools and integrate them into new project design where possible.
- The Working Group will update the mapping of the use of AMEA tools and establish a system of collecting feedback from members on their experience with the tools.
- The Working Group also committed to develop a limited library of other tools which are recommended by AMEA members. These are not intended to be accredited.

Trainers and coaches

- This Working Group will work more closely with the Toolbox Working Group given the links between assessment tools/training materials and trainers/coaches. Increased collaboration with the Local Networks will also be key going forward
- The AMEA Hub has not proved to be useful for those looking to procure services. This is partly due to the current market dynamics where demand for high quality trainers / coaches significantly exceeds demand. It was agreed to adopt a simpler approach whilst supply is developed, and therefore the trainer database will be moved on to an AMEA LinkedIn group.

Ag-Tech

- This Working Group is aiming to produce a consumer guide for AMEA members on innovative digital ag-tech by December 2019.

Achieving Bankability

- This Working Group will focus on understanding the mismatch between the expectations of lenders and AMEA members' capacity building interventions
- There is also a need to understand how AMEA accredited tools (and other tools) can create a bridge between cooperatives and lenders, including finding ways to address the collateral constraint. This Working Group will therefore work more closely with the Toolbox Working Group and Local Networks.

Following the Working Group sessions, participants volunteered to assist with various tasks listed by the Working Group leads. The full list of commitments and volunteers can be found in the respective Working Group Slack channels.



CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Beyond discussions on the Local Networks and Working Groups, the group also discussed [relevant issues which impact the AMEA network](#). Topics included:

- **Deepening current member engagement:** participants discussed how to create more awareness of AMEA within their own organizations. Improved internal communication, including up-to-date information materials, is needed. The Local Networks will also play a key role in bringing more people from member organizations into the AMEA network. It was agreed that members will take away their own plans for deepening engagement and call on support as needed from the AMEA Global Coordination Office. 1 to 1 dialogues between members and GCO will also be set up to explore opportunities.
- **Network growth:** so far it has been difficult to engage the private sector and financial institutions in the AMEA network. The focus going forward will be on the Local Networks as membership is more likely to grow from here, rather than at the global level. It was agreed that we will review membership policy in order to accelerate growth at Local Network level.
- **Network to network opportunities:** there is a clear benefit to engage with other networks that are aligned with the AMEA objectives, have a certain level of maturity and reputation and are willing/active partners. It was agreed to use the proposed criteria to analyse potential network partners and identify more specific opportunities for collaboration with current partners (CSAF, ICA, ANDE).
- **Fundraising:** areas for fundraising include Working Groups, Local Networks, piloting AMEA tools and engaging farmer organizations in AMEA events. Several potential funders were listed as potential partners
- **Measuring AMEA's impact:** There are a variety of areas where outcomes/impact could be measured. These include: 1. AMEA's benefits for members over time; 2. The impact of Local Networks; and 3. The level of professionalism of farmer organizations. The use of tools such as Social Network Analysis will continue to be piloted to generate quantitative and qualitative information to inform members on AMEA's progress. The Toolkit Working group will propose a way forward after further consultation.



ENHANCING COMMUNICATION AND THE NEXT AMEA CONVENING

During the final session of the Global Convening, participants piloted Slack as a communication platform for network activity. Participants were onboarded and began establishing relevant channels in Slack for AMEA activities. If you have any questions regarding Slack or would like to invite a colleague to the AMEA Slack platform, please contact [Filipe Di Matteo](#).

The Board meeting on the following day led to the formation of a Core Group. This will replace most of the Board's strategic functions. It includes the Network Director, Working Group leads, Local Network leads and the AMEA Chairperson. This Core Group aims to enhance communication across the Network and ensure a network driven approach. The Core Group will hold regular telcons. It was also agreed that regular face to face dialogue is essential for our network health and confirmed that the next Convening will be held in Washington DC in the first week of December 2019.

We all hope to see you again in December 2019 to take forward our agenda for Advancing Professionalism in Farmer Organisations!

RESOURCES

Please [see here](#) for the full list of resources referenced in this summary.

