



Above and Beyond:

*ISAAA AfriCenter's
Annual Report, 2025*



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MISSION

To provide an inclusive platform that informs Africa's policies and markets on ethical and appropriate bio-innovations.

VISION

The leading biosciences' communication enabler for a food-secure and healthier Africa.

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ABOUT:

ISAAA AfriCenter is made of a robust group of scientists and science communicators who work daily towards promoting planetary health, especially by disseminating knowledge on biosciences and One Health. With a goal to ensure Africa is food secure in the future, we work with like-minded individuals and organizations to ensure that the continent benefits from cutting-edge technologies that will ensure food security, and good health, for its vast growing populations.

Over time, we have evolved into a provider of a variety of services that support life sciences and planetary health. Principally mandated with sharing knowledge on biosciences through strategic communications and outreach for informed policy and choice, we have made progress towards closing the gap between science and society. This gap has, over time, stifled the speed with which research outputs are transitioned into useful products for the people. In the African context, misinformation, aggressive activism, unfavourable policies and regulations, have seen the continent lag behind in adopting bioscience innovations

The AfriCenter fashions its activities towards achievement of African Union's Agenda 2063, with its push for achievement of inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development in the continent through ensuring Africa enjoys food security, improved health and wellbeing, environment sustainability, and climate resilient economies and communities.

It, therefore, focuses on three key thematic areas of The Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA), namely eradication of hunger, prevention/control of diseases, and communication, and it therefore puts effort in its constant pursuit of Africa's adoption of modern biotechnology tools to optimize the continent's agricultural production.

Chiefly, AfriCenter aims to contribute to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically, SDG 2 (zero hunger and enhanced food security), SDG 3 (health and wellbeing), SDG 8 (sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all), SDG 13 (climate action) and SDG 17 (global partnerships).

Some of the products and services we offer to this end, and which we have ramped up in the last one year, are:

Science Communication Training

The changing dynamics of research and ever-increasing societal demands for understanding research implications has ignited a strong need for scientists to acquire effective communication skills for engaging a wide spectrum of actors

Stakeholder Netmapping

This helps researchers and project managers understand, visualize and improve situations in which many different actors influence a desired outcome.

The Annual OFAB Kenya Media Awards

The award recognizes the critical roles played by the media in promoting constructive dialogue on modern biotechnology through responsible, professional, ethical and effective reporting. In the era of systemic post-truth and fake news, the award has stimulated a shift in credible media reporting.

The Africa Short Course on Agrobiosciences (AfSCA)

This is a regional training program hosted by ISAAA AfriCenter, focusing on emerging bioscience technologies with potential application in agricultural transformation.

Misinformation-Sensing Training

This is a structured capacity-building program designed to equip policymakers, regulators, researchers, industry leaders, media practitioners and civil society actors with practical tools to detect, analyze and respond to misinformation surrounding agricultural and health innovations.

The DrumBeat

The monthly e-newsletter brings absorbing stories on Africa's latest bioscience development and cutting-edge scientific innovations, as well as expert views and recommendations on optimizing science and technology to steer the continent forward. The newsletter has gained popularity in the region and across the globe, with over 4,000 subscribers comprising policy makers, media, development partners, scientists and academia.

Science cafes

This is a regular informal interaction session between scientists/researchers and journalists meant to foster close working relations and build capacity for improved and factual reporting.

The Africa Biennial Biosciences Communication (ABBC) symposia

This is a platform for biosciences stakeholders to constructively exchange experiences and best practices towards improving biosciences communications. The ABBC symposium aims at providing an Africa-based and African-led platform to interrogate best communication practices that will facilitate informed decision-making on bioscience innovations in the region.

Theory of Change Training

This is an ongoing process of reflection to explore change and how it happens. By using a theory of change approach, we can articulate how we expect outcomes to be achieved.

Media engagement and liaison

Through media cafes, media awards, study tours, alongside other engagements, we have brought on board a network of journalists, and editors, whose appreciation for science has improved, and who are willing to query information in the public domain to ensure accurate, factual reporting.

Project Documentation

We also develop high-impact short videos, photography and simplified communication materials, as documenting the project helps in unpacking technical science jargon into simple language that ensures end-users (the public) make meaning out of the research.



Dr. Robert Karanja, Chair, Board of Directors

ISAAA AfriCenter continues to set the standard in the efforts towards bridging the gap between science and society, and 2025 highlighted our desire to do everything possible to achieve this.

From the Africa Biennial Biosciences Communication (ABBC) symposium, which happened in Lusaka, Zambia, and which brought together 150 delegates from 21 countries, to a dozen webinars, and tens of podcasts, and services that supported advancement of One Health across the continent, we made a statement of intent, making it clear that we are not backing down from our mandate, despite the protracted challenges of misinformation and disinformation we have had to contend with.

Above all, in the year, we were central to provision of key information for stakeholders in biotech and in One Health, with knowledge products developed and disseminated, and with key meetings convened at local, national, regional and continental levels to facilitate deliberations on topics that advance science's integration into society.

Amid the turmoil of legal challenges to biotechnology, ISAAA AfriCenter continued to spread awareness, convinced that the continent's failure to adopt innovations is akin to shooting selves in the foot.

The challenges are not over. In fact, they could intensify in the future, as deliberate wars are waged on science, mainly through social media. With this in mind, we are not laying down our armament. We shall remain supportive of processes that contribute to the elimination of doubts that have made society skeptical to new, helpful scientific innovations. We shall also keep providing timely, relevant and comprehensive information that support the integration of science in society.

ISAAA remains committed to the values that will bring Africa at par with the rest of the developed world, especially in the life sciences, and remains actively involved in discussions that promote planetary health. We look forward to your continued partnership and support going forward, and to the benefit of Africa from the work we are, together, doing.



Dr. Margaret Karembu, MBS Director, ISAAA AfriCenter

In 2025, we trained our guns on misinformation and disinformation in a special way, even theming our biannual science symposium, the African Biennial Biosciences Communication (ABBC), around this.

We did so with full realization of the challenges brought forward by the rapid advancement of social media, including platforming voices that are opposed, for various reasons, to the progress of science and its contribution to society.

Granted, as we champion the cause for biotechnology in Africa, greatly convinced that it provides one of the surest shields against food insecurity in the continent, a majority of hurdles we keep experiencing come from deliberate misinformation and disinformation seeping into society, and becoming almost impossible to dislodge.

In 2025, we witnessed court battles that sought to challenge regulatory processes, further slowing down the rate of adoption of biotech products. But we did not stop. We significantly strengthened science communication on agri-biotechnology through targeted county-level misinformation sensing trainings and national media science café, we took regulators from across the continent to international fora to showcase Africa's rapidly maturing, science-based biosafety and genome editing policy frameworks, and we even developed resource materials, such as the [BiotechAfrica](#) page, an open-access continental resource that systematically curates biosafety policies, regulatory status, and biotech product pipelines across African countries.

Beyond this, we ramped up efforts in One Health, organizing efforts in stakeholder net-mapping, regional peer learning, leadership training, theory-of-change designs, decolonization dialogues, and media engagement across at least seven countries.

We capped off our year with a leading role in the development of Kenya's Research Financing and Capacity Strengthening Masterplan (2026-2036), drafted in partnership with the National Research Fund. Developed through a nationwide consultative process involving over 1,000 stakeholders, the policy-aligned Masterplan lays the foundation for sustainable and coordinated research financing in Kenya.

We appreciate your partnership throughout the year, and are hopeful for even stronger collaborations in yet another promising one. As new challenges emerge, so does our resolve to beat them strengthen, and we hope our hands hold even tighter as we charge forward in a united front, guided by our theme: Above and Beyond.

2025 at a Glance:



8+

country teams supported to develop One Health Theory of Change frameworks, strengthening accountability, project logic, and sustainability planning while advancing cross-country collaboration and strategic alignment.



120

Number of postgraduate students equipped with bioentrepreneurship skills through a specialized training course.



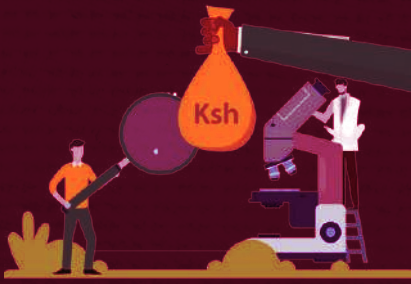
100,000+

stakeholders in agriculture, health and environment reached through webinars series organized through the Africa Science Dialogue.



170

Smallholder Farmers Empowered in Mastitis Control and Milk Quality Management



Kenya Research Financing and Capacity Strengthening Masterplan developed and validated following stakeholder consultations.

It rolls out an inclusive roadmap for investing

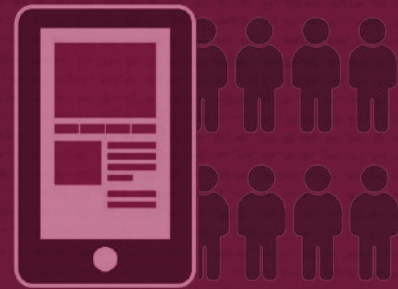
2%

of Kenya's GDP to Research and Development



250,000+

Total social media impressions on KingaKUU cassava, a newly developed disease-resistant biotech cassava awaiting commercial release in Kenya



200,000+

impressions garnered from readership and viewership of stories in the DrumBeat, our monthly e-newsletter.



211%

Percentage growth in our LinkedIn followership, from 400 to 1,246 followers.



21

The number of countries represented in the ABBC 2025, a global bioscience communication event held in Lusaka, Zambia in August 2025

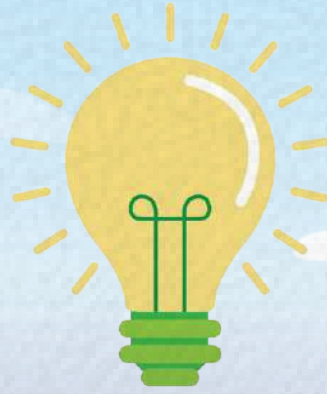
“

What you learn from a life in science is the vastness of our ignorance.”

Our Route to Success



1.



Enhancing Bio-Innovations Ecosystem:

Problem:

Bio-entrepreneurs face limited capacity to navigate the complex biotech business landscape, secure adequate funding, and comply with varying regulatory requirements in different regions. As a result, many would-be bio-innovations never reach the market.

Failure of successful commercialization of products of research and development is a huge drawback to countries, and a continent, perennially training scientists only to end up purchasing products (which could have been locally developed) from elsewhere.

Intervention:

ISAAA AfriCenter has been keen on providing bio-entrepreneurs with the necessary skills to grow their ventures, including through offering mentorship to guide and support through the transition from the lab to market. Identifying needs in the market, we took bio-entrepreneurs through trainings that equip them with the understanding of relevant ventures to ensure they work towards satisfying market needs. We have also been keen on linking bio-entrepreneurs with investors and industry leaders to upscale bio-innovations.

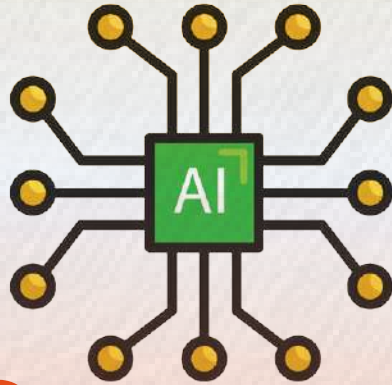
Activities, Timelines and Impact:

March 27, 2025- The ISAAA team conducted a 2-hour bioentrepreneurship session targeted at Murang'a University of Technology targeting undergraduate, master's, and PhD students. The session's objective was to inspire and equip bioscience students with an entrepreneurial mindset, encouraging them to explore opportunities in biotechnology innovation and business.



"Wisdom is like a baobab tree; no one individual can embrace it"

2.



Knowledge Translation

Problem:

Africa faces a lingering problem of limited access to bioscience information and fragmented resources. This hinders progress and delays decision-making. The digital revolution, which has seen the proliferation of social media platforms, has led to intense amplification of misinformation, making it harder for society to distinguish facts from fiction.

Emboldened, proponents of anti-science have intensified their campaigns, and pseudoscience has found a footing. This has created serious mistrust and limited Africa's ability to fully leverage bio-innovations.

Intervention:

ISAAA AfriCenter steered processes to develop and repackage simplified knowledge products, which have since been disseminated through our various platforms such as the Africa Science Dialogue portal, ISAAA AfriCenter Website, social media platforms, and Drumbeat Newsletter.

Activities, Timelines and Impact:

June 20, 2025- In Rwanda, AfriCenter supported the national launch of One Health Reporting Guidelines, equipping journalists with tools for accurate, ethical, and responsible OH reporting. By year's end, One Health in Africa was visibly shifting from aspiration toward institutionalized practice.



One Health Communication Guidelines in Rwanda

In the second half of the year, in central Kenya, ISAAA AfriCenter translated digital innovation into tangible farmer impact through the Goats Offering AMR/AMU Teaching (GOAT) mobile application. Farmers who have been struggling with mastitis were finally presented with an easy, digital way to monitor, and get help for, their animals.

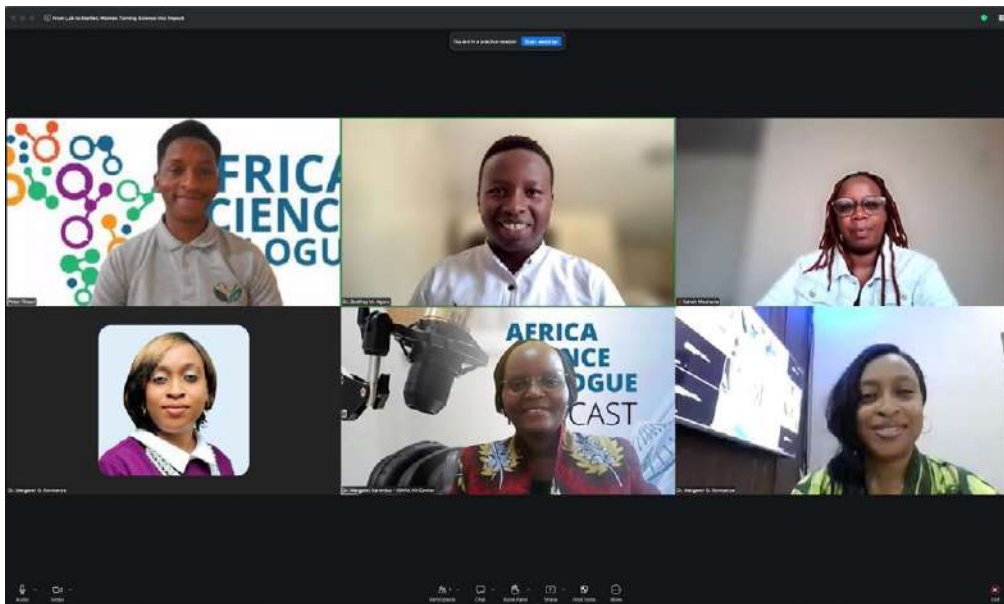


"Science makes people reach selflessly for truth and objectivity."

Every month this year through the Drumbeat, ISAAA AfriCenter reached over 4,000 global subscribers, translating research and policy developments into accessible, evidence-based insights.



The Africa Science Dialogue podcast and webinar series, which surpassed 100,000 listeners and viewers. Social media engagement also surged, with more than 190,000 impressions recorded across platforms – demonstrating a rapidly expanding public appetite for credible African science narratives.



*"Science is a way of life.
Science is a perspective."*

3.



Science Communication and Diplomacy

Problem:

For years, scientific work has failed to make an impact in society because of the inability of actors in the scientific community to engage non-technical audiences effectively, making advocacy for an enabling environment and uptake of bio-innovations difficult.

At work, many of them are actively trying to make things happen but operating in siloed approaches, especially in One Health where systems thinking and transdisciplinary collaboration are key to successful execution.

Intervention:

ISAAA AfriCenter has organized a number of trainings to equip Africa's experts with critical skills to effectively engage non-technical audiences and participate in global negotiations. We continue to offer communication and policy advocacy support services.

Activities, Timelines and Impact:

Throughout the year, across Africa, AfriCenter strengthened One Health leadership and governance through stakeholder net-mapping, regional peer learning, leadership training, theory-of-change design, decolonization dialogues, and media engagement. Monthly cross-country webinars provided a platform for comparing national governance pathways and institutionalization models.



Theory of Change workshops strengthened accountability frameworks for seven country teams, ensuring that One Health initiatives are driven by measurable outcomes, systems thinking, and sustainability logic.



In August, during the Africa Biennial Biosciences Communication (ABBC 2025), decolonization leadership training challenged structural barriers while amplifying indigenous knowledge systems within health governance.



“Science knows no country, because knowledge belongs to humanity, and is the torch which illuminates the world.”

4.



Policy and Regulatory Clarity

Problem:

African sciences, and especially the biosciences market, suffer from the lack of clarity on policy and regulatory requirements. Potential investors often struggle with the complexities of navigating the stage-gate processes throughout the product development cycle. The absence of clear, easily accessible information creates a barrier to entry, deterring investment and slowing innovation.

As modern biotechnology products are increasingly commercialized and bio-manufacturing advances, intellectual property and stewardship emerge as significant concerns.

These challenges can contribute to growing mistrust in bio-innovations, especially among early-career professionals who are keen to pursue bio-entrepreneurship.

Intervention:

ISAAA AfriCenter set out to provide intelligence on policy and regulatory frameworks governing bioscience R&D and commercialization across Africa, and to provide market intelligence to facilitate the successful translation of bioscience products into market-ready solutions. It also ensured that experts participated in for a where policy and regulatory frameworks were interrogated, with an aim of improving to catch up with the developed world.

Activities, Timelines and Impact:

ISAAA AfriCenter facilitated the implementation of the UKAid-RISA Fund supported project:

Development of a Masterplan for Research Financing and Capacity Strengthening- RISA Award No.2025-06 with NRF as Co-Implementer

Project Implementation period: January 2025-December 2025

Strategic Objectives:

- National R&D Masterplan: Develop a comprehensive 10-year roadmap with sustainable financing mechanisms
- Capacity & Equity: Enhance R&D capacity and ensure equitable access to funding opportunities
- Inclusivity: Promote active participation of marginalized groups (youth, women, PWDs)
- Linkages & Collaboration: Improve stakeholder linkages and facilitate multi-stakeholder collaboration

Thematic Focus Areas:

- Sustainable financing- Long-term funding models
- Infrastructure- Modern labs & equipment
- Digital systems- Interoperable data platforms
- Human capital- Skills & researcher training
- Industry linkages- Commercialization pathways
- Policy harmonization- Aligned regulations



"Somewhere, something incredible is waiting to be known."

Objectives & Thematic Focus

10-Year Roadmap

Strategic Objectives

- 01 National R&D Masterplan**
 Develop a comprehensive 10-year roadmap with sustainable financing mechanisms.
- 02 Capacity & Equity**
 Enhance R&D capacity and ensure equitable access to funding opportunities.
- 03 Inclusivity**
 Promote active participation of marginalized groups (youth, women, PWDs).
- 04 Linkages & Collaboration**
 Improve stakeholder linkages and facilitate multi-stakeholder collaboration.

Thematic Focus Areas

Key Pillars

Sustainable Financing Long-term funding models	Infrastructure Modern labs & equipment
Digital Systems Interoperable data platforms	Human Capital Skills & researcher training
Industry Linkages Commercialization pathways	Policy Harmonization Aligned regulations

APPROACHES: Stakeholder Mapping, Inclusive Engagement, Evidence-Led

Research Financing Masterplan (2024–2025)

13 Months

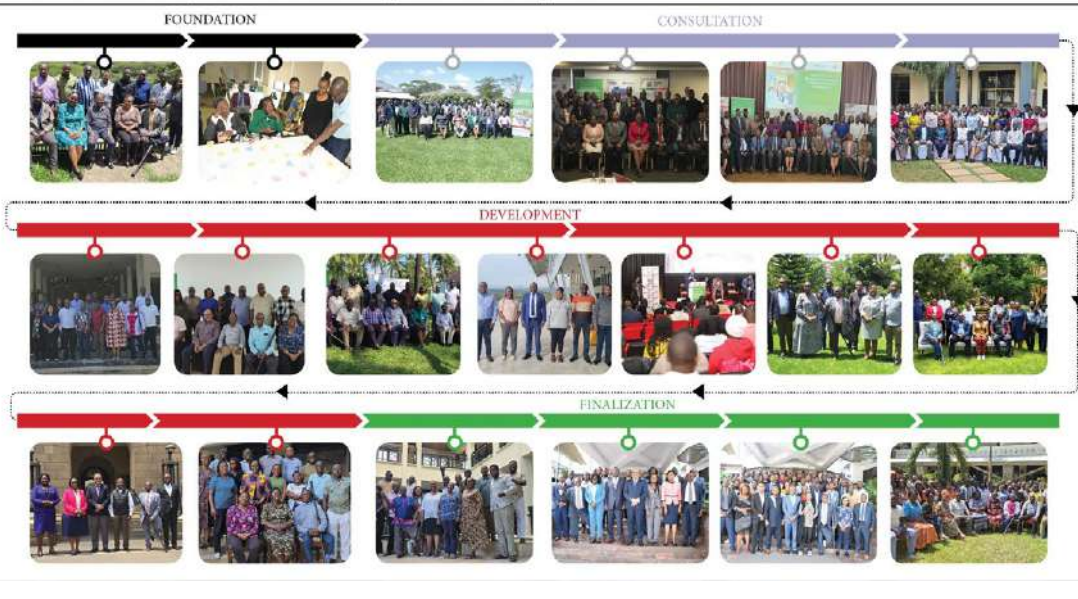
Duration: Nov 2024 - Dec 2025



Outcome
Validated Research Financing and Capacity Strengthening Masterplan

Builds upon the regulatory framework established by the 2024 R&D Policy.

Process Map of the Masterplan Development



Under the leadership of AfriCenter and partners, Africa's regulatory leadership took center stage at the 17th International Society for Biosafety Research (17-ISBR) and the 6th International Workshop on Regulatory Approaches for Agricultural Applications of Animal Biotechnologies (6-IWRAAAB) in Ghent, Belgium.



5.



Convening Multi-Stakeholder Platforms

Problem:

Stakeholders have often failed to collaborate enough, having not found sufficient opportunities to do so. This has led to fragmented and disjointed efforts in advancing bio-innovations across Africa. It leads to a weakening of the collective ability to address shared challenges and fully leverage synergies for greater impact.

Intervention:

Throughout the year, ISAAA AfriCenter provided platforms for enhancing multi-stakeholder participation and collaborations, through which we sought to promote breaking silos and co-creating solutions.

Activities, Timelines and Impact:

Regular targeted county-level misinformation sensing trainings and national media science café ensured that county leaders, university faculty, early-career professionals, journalists, and editors were equipped to promote accurate, evidence-based conversations.



On June 3, at the Kenya National Theater, A National Dialogue on GM Foods and Planetary Health, the Government of Kenya reaffirmed its commitment to advancing biotech crops as part of the national food security strategy.



"Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic."

End August, The ABBC 2025 was held in Lusaka, Zambia, emerged as one of AfriCenter's most consequential convenings. With 150 participants from 21 countries – including researchers, regulators, policymakers, farmers, communicators, private sector actors, and early-career scientists – ABBC 2025 resulted in a continental declaration committing stakeholders to institutionalize science communication as a core function of governance. The symposium positioned misinformation and disinformation not as a peripheral challenge, but as a development risk requiring coordinated continental response.



In December, regulators, feed millers, traders, and partners convened to address constraints in GM food and feed trade, strengthening regulatory clarity and catalyzing co-created, industry-led solutions.



“There is a single light of science, and to brighten it anywhere is to brighten it everywhere.”

Links to Important Publications

AfriCenter Annual Report, 2024



One Health Communication Guidelines for Rwanda



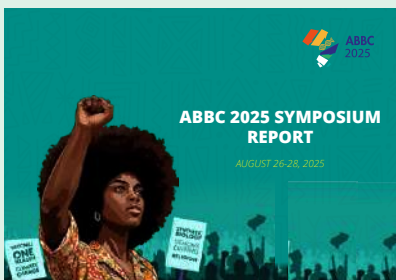
The Spirit of Asilomar: lessons for the next era of biotechnology governance



ABBC 2025 Declaration

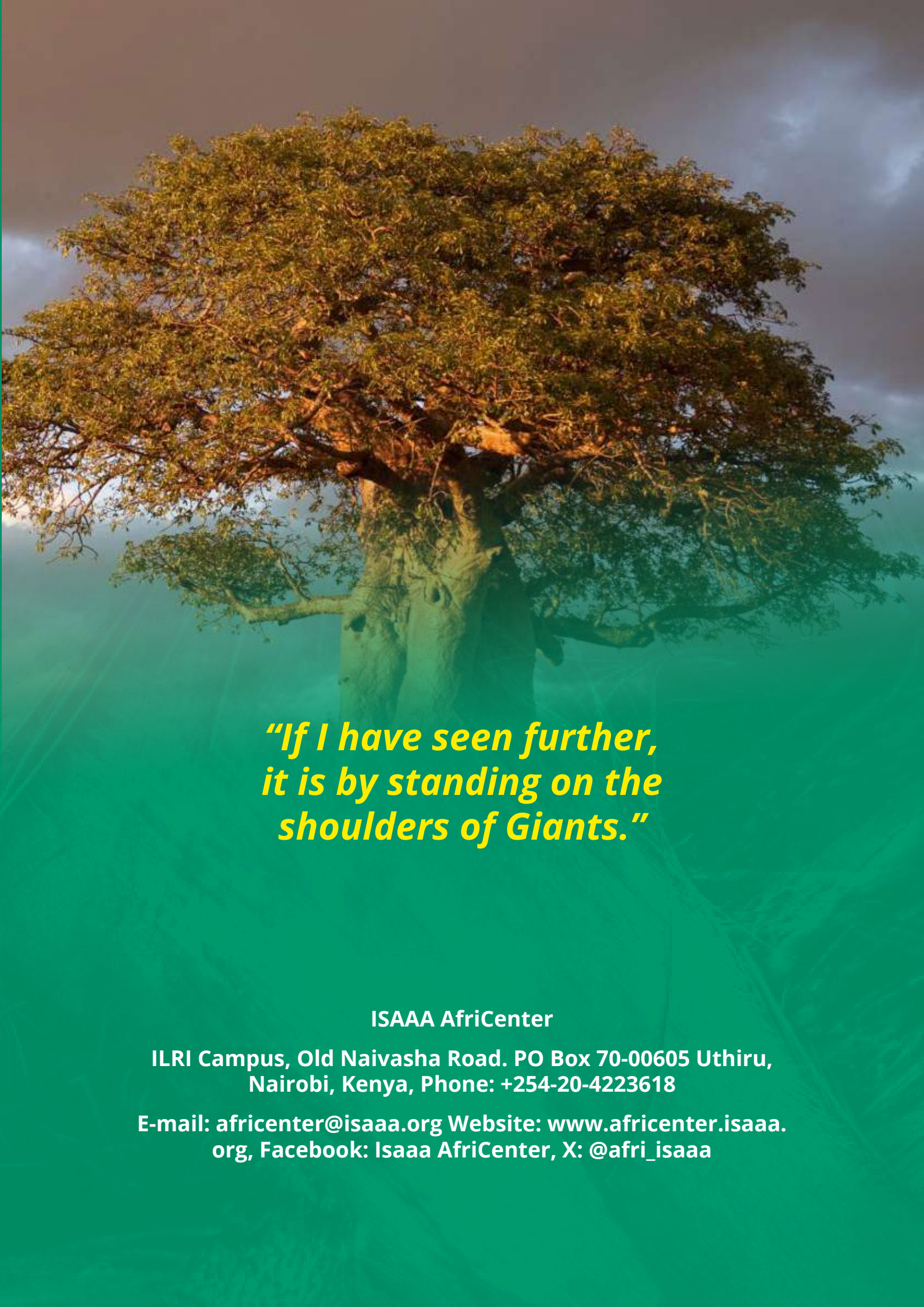


ABBC 2025 Report



2025 Annual Letter





***“If I have seen further,
it is by standing on the
shoulders of Giants.”***

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