



Workshop for the formation of the District Climate Change Committee in Rufunsa district



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Climate Financing For Grassroots Projects

Zambia is feeling the negative impacts of climate change which is said to be mostly affecting women, the aged and the marginalised people in rural communities who solely depend on agriculture as their source of livelihood.

The severity of the impact of climate change in these communities is now beyond question; mobilising actions to address some of these challenges cannot be overemphasised.

Zambia increased its budget allocation in the 2022 national budget for constituency development funds (CDF) from 1.6 million to 25.7 million per constituency, the significant allocation of these funds provides an important opportunity to make service delivery more responsive to public needs.

Though the funds have been decentralised through local councils, most of the projects being implemented still do not reflect the priorities of communities.

Dorothy Mwanza is a Ward Development Committee (WDC) member for Mwanduba Zone in Rufunsa district. Mrs. Mwanza shares that even though they are given the mandate as the WDC to select projects, the final selection always lies with the Constituency Development Committee (CDC).

"We sit as a community to discuss various issues affecting us, it is from these meetings that we select projects to be implemented using the CDF funds. We are not included when it reaches a stage of selecting projects to be implemented. We do not participate, for example in our community, Mwanduba village, we have a problem of water, there is no borehole, roads and bridges are in bad shape and become impassable especially during the rainy season. We just hear that they picked roads and bridges; for water there is still nothing being done. It would be better if we were consulted when prioritising projects so that the community's voice prevails," she said.

Through the Voices for Just Climate Action (VCA) project, CTDT convened a group of eighteen participants comprising of WDC's, local NGOs, youth representative, representative of the people living with disabilities and small-scale farmers.

This group then formed the District Climate Change Committee (DCCC). The committee was formed to ensure inclusiveness of grassroots voices in decision making in climate change related programs.

The committee plans to hold an indaba with the CDC, councillors and the council planning department who are the implementors of the CDF funds. The indaba is meant to advocate and lobby for the inclusion of climate adaption measures and mitigation programs that address community needs.



Dorothy Mwanza participating during the District Climate Change Committee meeting

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Promoting Local Crops At National Level for Food and Nutrition Security

The Zambia Agricultural and Commercial Show is the country's biggest event where different organisations including government departments, non-governmental organisations, small business owners across the country including the international community and farmers come to showcase their various goods and services and innovations.

CTDT participated at this year's agricultural and commercial show and scooped two awards for being first position "**Best Climate Smart Initiative**" and the second position for being "**Best women enterprise in Agriculture.**"

One of the show goers who visited the CTDT stand, Chibeza Mfuni, Deputy Director from the Zambia China Friendship Association shared on how he is very passionate about farmer managed seed systems and even disclosed that he was an advocate for local seeds.

"The most important aspect of local food is that it guarantees food

security. Food security in the sense that seed is locally available and you cannot be held at ransom by a seed supplier who is foreign or even a seed supplier who may have issues, the companies can close down and we might not have other sources to get our seed from if we depended on their seeds.

In addition, for local seed you can have food security because the farmers are in control of how much they can store and grow. This also ensures the nutritional value of the food grown as local seeds are not heavy feeders like hybrids and can easily be grown organically. We are sure that these foods are very healthy because they are not genetically modified and hence are good for our health.

If small-holder farmers have food and nutrition security, we can now move to commercialization and promotion of our local seeds for exports to earn forex. Therefore, we need to own our farmer managed seed systems and need to cultivate the habit of eating and promoting our food that has the nutritional value we can trust.

Additionally, local seed is climate resilient. Climate change is exacerbated because of the current production system. Why? because you use a lot of fertiliser which kills soil microbes, depletes and interferes with the soil structure and moisture retention. A lot of our local seed varieties are adaption are adapted to climate of our local conditions. Climate change is not so devastating on a local variety which has its own adaptability to the situation," said Mfuni.

A vision for the future for Farmers' Rights.

Earlier this year, CTDT conducted a workshop to capacitate fourteen farmers with knowledge on farmers rights. Bevis Mushimbwa is a male farmer and FFS facilitator in Shibuyunji district in Zambia who participated in the workshop. He recently participated at the Ninth Session of the Governing Body (GB9) meeting of the International Treaty for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) which was held in India.

At this meeting, Bevis presented his farmers' call to action at the side event that was hosted by CTDT Zambia. The Treaty secretariate and the Swedish Board of Agriculture on behalf of the Swedish Development Agency (SIDA) opened the side event. The event focused on how Participatory Plant Breeding (PPB) can contribute to the implementation of farmers rights.

Bevis reflects that farmers rights are in recognition of the contribution that farmers have made and continue to make to maintain crop genetic diversity as a basis for food production and agriculture across the world.

"Our national governments are responsible for ensuring the implementation of Article 9 of the Treaty on Farmers' Rights. In order

to realize these rights, we are appealing to the government not to leave small holder farmers out of the decision-making processes on seed policies. We regret to note that farmers' rights are not fully implemented because of the current seed laws and seed business for commercial varieties that do not allow farmers to sell their farmer seed," Bevis said.



Bevis making his presentation during the GB9



Left: Chieftainess Mpanshya leading the senior headmen and women in putting the harvest into the grainery during the Chiwela Kumushi Traditional Ceremony in Rufunsa district, **Right:** Chieftainess' Representative, Charles Chibulo speaking during the preparatory meeting for the ceremony.

Local Traditional Seed as an Important Aspect of Preserving Culture

Zambia is composed of 72 tribes that celebrate different traditional ceremonies annually. With Covid-19 restrictions having been lifted, a number of traditional ceremonies have been conducted after going into recession for two consecutive years.

Having to work towards promotion and conservation of agrobiodiversity and indigenous knowledge systems, CTDI participated at this year's Chiwela Kumushi Traditional ceremony of the Soli speaking people of Chieftainess Mpanshya of Rufunsa district at the invitation of her Royal Highness.

The traditional ceremony is an annual thanks giving ceremony celebrating coming back to the village from the fields after harvesting. During the ceremony, the village subjects led by Chieftainess Mpanshya bring together their harvest to be kept safe in the graineries; and in all this, traditional seeds become of great importance.

Chieftainess Mpanshya representative, Charles Chibulo commended CTDI's work on reviving the local crop varieties which he feared are being endangered due to the growing number of hybrid seeds on the market.

"The work supporting the conservation of local seed and indigenous knowledge compliments the ceremony, getting back to the roots, reminding us of our roots, to get back to our traditional seed. In a way I would say that you are now supporting our traditional ceremony. At the ceremony we show people who we really are and what we eat. Our indigenous seed are not only important for our ceremony but also important in adapting to climate change a challenge that seems will not easily leave us anytime soon. It will take a lot of time for us to reverse the effects but it requires all of us to put in the best," Chibulo said.

*"Seed is the very essence of our culture."
Charles Chibulo*

Femmy Soneka, a farmer in Chikankata district also shared how indigenous seeds are important in preserving local tradition during the Seed and Food Concert which was held in Chikankata.

"It's our cultural food which we should not lose, we may plant these other crops for food security purposes but our indigenous seed should be preserved for our cultural heritage and for our children to know in the future that they were all these crops.

Our local seed are very important especially because of the nutritional value they offer. We should be encouraging people everywhere to plant local seed for nutrition. We can't have cases of malnutrition in Zambia if we plant local seed; children are malnourished because of not concentrating on our cultural food. Let's should go back to our foods and preserve them for our own health," Femmy said.



Women celebrating the harvest through traditional songs and dances



Farmers gathered during the training on seed handling and storage at the community seed bank in Chikankata district.

Preservation of Local Seed Using Locally Available Materials

Good quality seed is one that is free from pests, disease and one that gives farmers optimum germination when planted. When seed reaches physiological maturity and is harvested it begins to deteriorate and the final deterioration being loss of germinability.

Seed handling and storage aims at reducing the rate of deterioration. Seeds are living organisms and hence should always be handled with care to prevent any damage to the seed. CTDT has over the years been training farmers across its four target districts on seed handling and storage.

During the training in Chikankata, farmers shared various seed handling techniques using locally sourced materials for preservation of seed until next use.

Use of matchbox in the container



"It is one of the old methods generally used by women for storage of food grains. Matchboxes are put in layers of tight containers of about 8 -12 matchsticks kept at the middle, bottom and top of the container. The match sticks have strong repellent properties that helps to avoid the infestation of

seeds," Lecy Mudenda.

Egg shell or baking powder

"Pound the egg shells till they become powder, the other alternative for egg shells is baking powder which can be used in its original form. Put 15 table spoons in one gallon (5kg) of the seed then mix it uniformly with the grains and store the grain bag in a cool and dry place," Lilian Mazambani.



Preservation of cowpea seeds by putting them in ash

It is also believed that the egg shell / baking powder has a repellent and antifeedant property and also prevents multiplication of insects when the seed is infested.



Lilian Mazambani sharing her experiences of seed handling and storage using locally available materials with her fellow farmers during the training