



*Maize field intercropped with pumpkins, gourds, bambara nut and carrots in Shibuyunji*

## CTDT Lauds Community Engagement

*By Diana Mapulanga*

For any program to be successful, community engagement is cardinal; thus, Community Technology Development Trust (CTDT) has been working with rural to improve community's livelihoods through various agroecological programs in its four target districts through Farmer led seed systems (FLSS).

CTDT Shibuyunji field officer, Likomeno Mulife says that the response of the communities towards CTDT programs have been overwhelming citing that the farmers were living up to the trainings they have been giving.

“The time when we were establishing the seed bank here, we had a very good response from the community, most of the unskilled labour was done by the community, even clearing of the road from the tar mark to this seed bank was done by the community,” he said.

Mr. Mulife further said that the community's participation when it came to trainings was very good adding that the average number of participants per training session would always be about 30-35 farmers.

However, the coming of the Covid -19 pandemic disrupted many of the activities that required farmers to work in groups as government had put up restrictions on public gatherings.

“Covid -19 restrictions that were imposed by the government which restricted the number of people per grouping restricted a number of farmers who were supposed to attend meetings, to attend farmer field schools and seed fairs: You could see that knowledge delivery system was not all that sufficient from a few farmers that received information, the dissemination to the community was little,” he said.



*Mr. Mulife on the left, CTDT Shibuyunji Field officer*

### Other stories in this Issue:

P.2 - Small-scale farmers call for seed policy change

P.2 - CTDT/ZAAB hold farmer exchange visit

P.3 - Probable solutions for small-scale farmers amidst covid-19

P.3 - Role of local seeds for food and nutrition security

P.4 Month of February in pictures

## Small-scale farmers call for seed policy change

By *Diana Mapulanga*

Small scale farmers have called on government to come up with deliberate laws that will support farmer led seed systems (FLLS).

Speaking during the farmer exchange visit in Shibuyunji, Lavaty Malanji a small-scale farmer from Chongwe district appealed to the government to engage small scale farmers in consultations whenever they are making decisions pertaining to their plight as stakeholders in the agricultural sector.

“When I look at the ZNFU, there is no any small-scale farmer who is a member. Whom did you consult as a ministry, the farmers in Mkushi, the commercial farmers only, the commercial farmers in Chisamba, what about the peasant farmer?” Mr. Malanji Lamented.

And Theresa Mutaka who is a small-scale farmer on the Copperbelt said it is important to preserve local seeds citing that they are strong and resistant to climate change, nutritious and can be used for medicinal purposes.

“Local Seeds need to be regenerated for the future generations to use; these hybrids are phasing every year, there is always a new variety every year; the same seeds my ancestors used are the same ones I am still using because there is no modification” Mrs. Mutaka added.

She further called on the government to revisit the Farmer Input Support Program (FISP) by having a variety of inputs to give farmers instead of seeds and fertilizer only.

“We appreciate the government on the FISP program but please consider also giving us other inputs like goats which will be able to produce manure for our fields, you can give us seed and fertilizer this year and the following year you give us goats,” she added.

Meanwhile, Deputy director in the ministry of agriculture Mr. Charles Sondashi said small scale farmers are the backbone of the food system in Zambia citing that the continued practice of preserving seeds will ensure food security.

Mr. Sondashi added that the ministry of agriculture appreciates the value of diverse traditional seeds and food that remains the school for the country's heritage and wealth of the nation.

He further called on small -scale to safeguard and celebrate the traditional Zambian food and diversity and congratulated the farmers for their dedicated activities towards the preserving of local seeds.



*Lavaty Malanji, small-scale farmer from Kasisi*



*CTDT Project manager, Juliet Nangamba*

## CTDT /ZAAB Hold a Farmer Exchange Visit

By *Diana Mapulanga*

The Community Technology Development Trust (CTDT) in its continued collaboration with the Zambia Alliance for Agroecology and Biodiversity (ZAAB) in their quest to lobby government on seed policing held a multi-stakeholder engagement and exposure meeting with farmers from different parts of the country in Shibuyunji district.

CTDT project manager, Juliet Nangamba who lead a group of farmers on the tour of Mezaland seed bank in Shibuyunji district said farmers play a significant role in contributing to the development and maintenance of resources which are now threatened with loss attributed to factors such as climate change and policies addressing crop diversity and improvement.

Mrs. Nangamba added that the fact that farmers were involved in the process is a great testimony that is of value and that farmers attach great importance for conservation and use of local crops diversity. “We are gathered here because we think it is the evident that farmers are the ones driving the process with the seed bank that is right behind us,” she said.

And ZAAB coordinator, Frances Davies said there is need for government to come up with laws that are supportive of local seeds, small-scale farmers knowledge and the entire seed system in the country.

“As long as we have knowledge, there is no need for the foreign multi-national seed companies to exist, government is making laws that are unfavorable for the small-scale farmers,” she said.

She added that the acknowledgment of farmers rights meant that farmers would have a right to save, share and sell their seeds. Frances further said that the Zambian government is committed to making certification laws that make it impossible for small-scale farmers to call their seeds as “seed” but instead they call it grain.

# Probable solutions for small-scale farmers amidst Covid-19

By Mike Ngulube, Rufunsa District

The African continent is quite endowed with local food plants that are often neglected and underutilized. Good utilization coupled with seed multiplication where possible of such local food plants has potential to adapt and mitigate small-scale farmers from the effects of the Corona virus.

Zambia recorded its first cases in march 2020 and has continued recording more cases which have now spread to almost all parts of the country. The spread of the virus necessitated several governments including Zambia to adopt measures aimed at curbing the virus.

Travel restrictions imposed by governments on the society as one of the measures to scale down the spread of the Corona virus outbreak has put a strain on small-scale farmers and visible now is knowledge and experience sharing coupled with seed exchange which has steadfastly dwindled.

This is weakening crop diversity in most of the rural communities of Zambia.

**“Access to seed is a serious social security need for agriculture to thrive , this in turn improves food and nutrition security at household as well as community levels”**

## Role of Local Seeds for Seed and Nutrition Security

By Diana Mapulanga

For any country to develop, there is need to have its people in perfect health condition, as they say “Health is wealth”; for this to be realised, there is need for promotion of local crop varieties which have stood the test of time and are easily adaptable to climate change to ensure seed security.

Seed security can be looked at as a situation where farmers are certain, year after year, to obtain on time the quality and quantity of seed necessary to fulfil their production plans, and it has two important attributes namely the availability of and access to quality seed.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) seeds are the primary basis for human sustenance. The aim of household seed security is to help improve and strengthen the household food production capacity thus enabling farmers to retain seed of their preferred local varieties.

Seeds are the repository of the genetic potential of crop species and



**Household seed bank has potential to adapt small-scale farmers amidst Covid-19**

Arising from this; it is clear that majority of small-scale farmers have already started succumbing to hunger across the globe with the rural poor being the hardest hit; resulting into threatened human survival. The situation is worse for the aged and differently abled small-scale farmers living within rural communities whose voices are barely heard.

Access to seed is a serious social security need for agriculture to thrive thereby improving food and nutrition security at household as well as community levels. Thus, the idea of Community seed banks becomes a valuable source of seed during the pandemic; Community Seed banks can greatly help small-scale farmers to mitigate and adapt from the ravaging effects of global problems such as the Corona virus and other related issues around the world.

Strengthening seed security at household level can have far flung benefits for small-scale farmers on short, medium and long-term basis. Based on our field experience, it is evident that small-scale farmers with a strong background on household seed security seem to have control and are less vulnerable to negative supply shocks.

their varieties resulting from the continuous improvement and selection over time.

CTDT strives to work with selected rural communities of Zambia in the promotion of local crop varieties in not only preserving the dwindling local seeds but also improving nutrition in these communities.

Local seeds offer a readily available source of nutrition in rural communities that are not only grappling with the changing climatic conditions but also the increased economic volatility as well as the covid-19 pandemic which has worsened the situation.

Crop improvement and delivery of high-quality seeds and planting materials of selection varieties to growers is necessary for ensuring improved crop production and meeting growing environmental challenges.

Food security therefore is dependent on the seed security in the farming communities.

# February in Pictures



*Training of the youth in tree planting-  
Rufunsa*



*Preservation of local vegetables through sun drying*



*Gender mainstreaming workshop-  
Rufunsa*



*Monitoring of fields- Chirundu*



*Youth awareness meeting -Shibuyunji*



*Monitoring of fields - Chikankata*