



Understanding the gender context of communities through the Gender Journey Tool Training

By; Juliet Nangamba

Community Technology Development Trust (CTDT) has a focus on gender to ensure that decision-making lies in both hands of men and women thus ensuring that both genders have equal opportunities in all our programme's activities. The COVID-19 pandemic retrogressed these efforts as there was limited contact with the target communities during some periods of project implementation.

The Gender Journey Module (GJM), aimed at understanding the gender context and developing gender action plans in relation to the identified gender challenges has been rolled out in four farmer field schools (FFS) in the districts of Chirundu and Chikankata in Zambia...to **page 2**



Raising the Farmers Voices on Advocacy Issues

A farmer's rights workshop was held to capacitate small-holder farmers on the different issues affecting the realisation of farmers rights. It is important that farmers are able to speak for themselves to save indigenous seeds.

For so many years, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have been advocating for the farmers, this has been faced with so much criticism from policy makers who say that the NGO's stance on many advocacy issues are not representative of what the farmers actually want.

Sikich Siyanga is a 64-year-old farmer from Shibuyunji who participated in the workshop. He says that the initiative of involving the farmers to actively participate and not be common spectators in issues that affect them is a timely move to be appreciated.

"The workshop has opened up our minds on so many issues pertaining to the realisation of farmer's rights, we didn't know most of these issues until today. What you have told us is in the right direction; it is time we stand up with one strong voice as farmers to push for what we are rightfully entitled to.

My fellow farmers, let's stand up with one voice and save our indigenous seeds! from generation to generation we have trusted our local seeds because even with little rains, our crops still survive and we are assured of having a good harvest which ensures our food and nutrition security. With the experience that we have, the improved seeds have not been able to withstand the prevailing climatic conditions," He said.

Inside this Issue:

- Community Seed Bank Elates Ms. Chako
- Seed Production and Marketing Helping in Addressing Seed Accessibility- Aliness Kalamo

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Finet Ngandu after checking on her beans field for seed production in Chikankata

Looking from the outside, one would have thought that there was significant progress towards achieving gender equality in these communities, yet the social, structural and cultural norms are still a stumbling block towards this progress. Here are some of the experiences that participants shared during the GJM sessions.

'My name is Finet Ngandu from Hamuwele FFS. I am a woman youth seed producer and I am very happy to be part of the seed production pillar. As a young woman, I do not own land, yet seed production offers me means in which I can earn an income within the community rather than idling. Children who are women within the family cannot inherit land. Most land is inherited by children who are men, thus the land for many generations has been controlled by men.' She said

'The topic around gender is very important,' said Mr Dimbangandu who is the facilitator of Hamuwele FFS. 'The women are very excited about the seed production activities but because they do not own land it becomes very difficult for them to expand the size of land that they are cultivating for this purpose. Next season they will want to expand the area under cultivation but they will need to go back to their husbands to ask for permission to increase the area they can cultivate to produce seed. This creates a challenge to those whose husbands may not agree to give more land,' he said.

Access to land is one of the main challenges that women continue to face, hindering food security, access to seed and income. In many communities, land is a major resource that one must possess in order to sustain themselves in terms of food and nutrition security. During GJM sessions, it was however clear that in the target communities' women do not own land nor do they inherit it yet they provide and contribute significant labour in the agriculture production at household and national level.

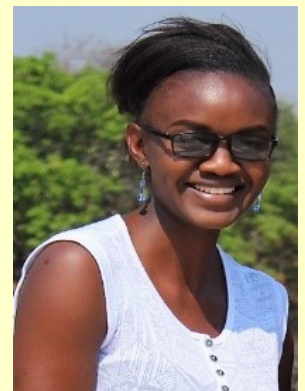
Despite these challenges attributed to gender inequality in the form of limited access to land by women, we remain very hopeful that we can achieve our gender goals if we continue to put the women and girls at the centre of our planning at community level, programme level and national level. We must therefore continue building the capacity of communities for them to understand why it is important to ensure that gender challenges are addressed in order to achieve the gender goals.

Community Seed Bank Elates Ms. Chako

By; Mike Ngulube

Rufunsa District Council Public Relations officer Ms. Rachel Chako has expressed happiness at Community Technology Development Trust work in the area; stressing that with now a fully functional Community Seed Bank, issues surrounding food and nutrition security could be better addressed.

Ms. Chako who accessed some groundnuts seed during 2021/2022 farming season, says she is happy the seed she collected from Rufunsa Community Seed Bank performed beyond expectations.



Sharing her experiences of 2021/2022 farming season, Ms. Chako now boasts of having some good experience and intends to scale up farming activity with a focus on seed multiplication of groundnuts at her farm. "Despite the changing weather conditions, we witnessed in Rufunsa, I think it was amazing to see how groundnuts seed adapted to the local environment performed, giving very good germination percentage coupled with big pod size now".



Ms. Chako who is also a smallholder farmer advised her fellow small-scale farmers and the working class to consider farming as another source of income and visit Rufunsa Community Seed Bank which is within Paul Chembe Village in Chimusanya to access quality local seeds of their choice at no fee and also contribute positively to the well-being of the economy.

Seed Production and Marketing Helping in Addressing Seed Accessibility- Ainess Kalamo

By; Diana Mapulanga



CTDT is implementing a pilot project on Seed production and marketing in Chikankata and Shibuyunji districts. The Farmer Seed Enterprise (FSE) being implemented in the Sowing Diversity equals Harvesting Security (SD=HS) project is aimed at addressing issues related to seed accessibility, increase household's incomes and ultimately improve the food and nutrition security in these rural communities.

Ainess Kalamo is a woman small-holder farmer in Shibuyunji district now a seed grower. "We have been facing challenges accessing seed because of the high prices on the market. CTDT taught us about seed production and later supplied us with seed; with this the issues of seed accessibility will reduce especially in the coming seasons because we have it in our hands and currently multiplying it," She said.

"We face a lot of challenges in accessing seed because even in the government's farmer input support program (FISP), the inputs are delivered late, at times forcing us to plant late; we are always faced with fear because of the uncertainties in the current climatic. We are optimistic that with this program, we will be planting in good time because the seed is in our hands," she added.

Eugene Mutempa also a seed grower from Chikankata district says he has learnt a lot of things from time the project started. "There are a lot of things we have learnt,

from learning about how to plant the crop as well as general crop management. In the past, we would just plant anyhow, but from when we learnt, we have now known how to properly manage our crops to produce good quality seed."

Charles Jere from Shimonde FFS in Shibuyunji also a seed grower is elated to be part of the project. "Am happy with this project, most especially that our local seed like go by-red has been added for multiplication. The challenge we face is accessibility of our local seed because most it has been lost and the little that has remained is in the hands of a few farmers; we like our local seeds because it is adapted to our local environment and we have grown it for many generations."



"We are happy to be participating in seed production, but what we really want in the future is to have our local seeds registered so that we might be able to produce at a large scale and be able to compete on the market with improved varieties," Charles Jere