



*Cowpea Multiplication Site in Chirundu District*

## Chirundu Youths Celebrate Youth Day

As the whole world commemorated youth day on the 12<sup>th</sup> of March, youths in Chirundu district joined the rest of the world in commemorating their day to highlight the many achievements and many more other challenges that they face as youth farmers in the country.

The celebrations were coupled with highlighting messages on agroecological practices and the importance of local seeds through singing of traditional songs, poems, dances, sketches and speeches from government officials.

During the celebrations, Paula Siabusu a youth facilitator challenged her fellow youth to take up the center stage and learn on how to preserve the local seeds citing that youths usually tend not to take up their space when it comes to this.

“This project is good, as youths, we are learning a lot in our farmer field schools. So am asking that us youths lets join this organisation in numbers; through this organisation, I have been able to learn on how to make seed,” She said.

Paula further advised her fellow youths not to plant only one crop but instead have a variety of crops for food security in case one crop doesn't survive because of the climatic conditions at a given time.

And agricultural Supervisor in Lisitu block, Wiseman Mulenga said government alone cannot achieve seed and food security through the promotion of diversification in agriculture minus the efforts of cooperating partners.

“Today as we gather to commemorate youth day, we celebrate our youths in farming with the view to disseminate information on agricultural technologies,” he added.

During the same event, Agriculture Assistant for Lisitu bridge camp, Geoffrey Namakando said that in the view of climate change, youths should take up the leading role and always be prepared for farming seasons even before the onset the rains.

“Let's be prepared all the times. thinking maybe there we will



*Youths dancing during youth day celebrations in Chirundu district*

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## Importance of Value Addition and Cooking Demos for Nutrition

Value addition is one of the most important components of nutrition security; Value addition entails taking a raw material and changing its form to produce a high-quality product. Value addition in food results in nutrient rich products when done properly. Thus, the benefits of value-added foods include providing better nutrition to children and mothers.

Communities that embrace low cost food processing and preservation methods not only improve on nutrition but also prevents food losses and therefore improve resilience in food and nutrition security.

For women farmers in Shibuyunji district, value addition entails preparing their daily local food products in different forms for their families not only to enjoy but also to get the nutritional benefits of these foods.

Miriam Kabunda who is a facilitator for nutrition farmer field schools and a mother in Shibuyunji district of central province says using locally available materials for value addition of the food products has immensely helped herself and her entire family to improve on their nutrition.



*Weeding of the cowpea plot in Shibuyunji*

“Sometimes when you cook cowpea, children usually tend to shy away from it because of the same method of cooking which does not add any other value to it.

So, if you start adding value to it and cooking it in a different way, for example today you cook it a form of sausage, the other day you cook it in sample and add other things like groundnuts, you will find children will develop an appetite to eat these foods they would normally not eat,” she said.



*Sorghum field on bokashi treatment in Shibuyunji district*

## Benefits of Agroecology

Zambia in the 2020/2021 farming season received a fair share of the rains with most parts of the country recording normal to above normal rainfall; this elated most people who are in the agricultural sector.

However, for some farmers in Shibuyunji district of Central province who are into sorghum growing, this became a disaster as the crop was observed not to fair so well in above normal rainfall patterns.

Sorghum thrives in areas of moisture deficit, high ambient and soil temperatures and where other crops would normally fail.

Mercy Shibleki who is a small-scale farmer in Shibuyunji shares her experience with this year's farming season and encourages her fellow farmers especially women who are

the custodians of families to take climatic change issues more seriously and embrace agroecological practices.

“This year, we have been hit badly especially on sorghum, it looks like sorghum does not do well with abundant rain,” She said.

But for Noel Chalimbwa who is also a farmer in Shibuyunji district, it's a different case; his sorghum performed well even with the presence of abundant rain.

Mr. Chalimbwa shares that his agroecological farming practices have helped him produce a good crop of sorghum even amidst heavy rainfall which was received in their district citing the use of bokashi on his farm plot.

“We planted our sorghum using bokashi which we learnt from Kasisi when we went for training organised by CTDT in partnership with SKI,” He added.



*Sorghum field not on bokashi treatment in Shibuyunji district*

# The Use of Cover Crops in Farming Communities

Cover crops are plants used primarily to slow erosion, improve soil health, enhance water availability, smother weeds, help control pests and diseases, increase biodiversity and can bring a host of other benefits to farmer as well as their farmland.

Noel Chalimbwa who has a variety of cover crops at his farm shares how he uses them and the many benefits they have brought to him and his family.

“I have a variety of cover crops on my farm from the velvet beans, pigeon pea and tephrosia commonly known as buuba in our local language.

The velvet beans is used as a cover crop to protect the crops from termites which might destroy them in case they fall off; its also used to enhance the fertility of the soil thereby increasing the land's life span; the velvet beans is also used to suppress the presence of weeds in the field,” he said

Chalimbwa added another crop they use is the pigeon pea which is normally used to prevent soil erosion; the crop not only serves as a cover crop but is also serves as a good source of nutrition for crops.

“From the pigeon pea seed, we are able to make sausage; the bean is removed and then pounded and put into hot water to make the sausage which is a rich source of protein,” he said.

During drought seasons, intercropping with pigeon pea helps in retention of moisture to the soil for crops to grow healthy.

Another cover crop Mr. Chalimbwa uses is tephrosia “buuba” whose leaves are used to spray farm animals especially cattle against ticks; the leaves are pounded and then soaked in water mixed with other traditional herbs to spray the farm animals in place of pesticides bought from the vets.



*White Sorghum intercropped with pigeon pea*

## NUTRITION CORNER

*Shared by; Mulife Likomeno*

### SWEET POTATO BISCUITS

#### INGREDIENTS

Mashed sweet potato	170g	or ¾ cup pressed
Milk	½ cup	
Melted butter	4 table spoons	
Wheat flour	140g	or 1 and one third of a cup
Sugar [omit if to used with meat]	2 table spoons	
Salt	½ tea spoon	
Baking powder	2tea spoon	

#### METHOD

- Mix mashed potato, milk and melted butter and beat well
- Sift and stir in the remaining ingredients
- Turn onto a floured board, kneed lightly and roll out to ½ inch thickness
- Cut into rounds, place on greased baking sheet, and bake in a hot oven or homemade stove for 15 – 20 minutes
- serve as a tea biscuit or omit sugar and use as a garnish for stews etc.



#### NUTRITIONAL VALUE

- Protein
- Fats and oils
- Carbohydrates(Energy)

**SOURCE. PAM/SHAPES ,FOOD PROCESSING UTILIZATION AND STORAGE.**

# March in Pictures



*Youth awareness through sports and music - Chirundu district*



*Workshop on farmers rights held in Lusaka*



*Field visit to Chikankata district*



*Gender training- Chikankata district*



*Training on food preservation of local food plants -Shibuyunji district*



*Cooking demonstrations held at a clinic targeting mothers with under-5 children- Rufunsa district*