



# **EXPERIENCES, BEST PRACTICES, AND LESSONS LEARNED PROMOTING AND PROTECTING FARMERS' RIGHTS - Examples of Zambia -**

Presented by Graybill Munkombwe, Zambia Agriculture Research Institute (ZARI)

On behalf of Frances Davies, Zambia Alliance for Agroecology and Biodiversity, and Juliet Nangamba, Community Technology Development Trust – Zambia



**ZAAB**  
Zambia Alliance For Agroecology & Biodiversity

**SKI**   
Seed and Knowledge Initiative



## 1. SEED BANKS: Community-based agrobiodiversity-management

- Community seed banks established to secure the diversity of germplasm in the community.
- Community seed banks for increased access to seed by farmers.
- Seed banks as seed distribution points and aggregation for seed sales of farmer varieties.

## 2. FARMER SEED & FOOD FAIRS

- Farmer-led seed sharing, marketing and knowledge exchange

- Promote public visibility and awareness of farmers seed practices, neglected crops, cultural associations and link to household nutrition
- Provide space for farmers to engage and lobby government policymakers
- Require strong organisation and benefit from government support.
- Local seed fairs hosted at community seed banks provide infrastructure and technical information sharing to visiting farmers on seed propagation, selection and saving.
- At a national scale, seed fairs raise public attention to support demands for recognition of farmers rights



KATC facilitates agrobiodiversity fairs to share plant genetic resource learning and lobby for scaling up FMSS.



### 3. PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

- **Participatory variety enhancement:** Improving or restoring existing farmer varieties. Farmers select the best plants that present desired traits in a population of interest and multiply them out. Farmers have registered 20% increases in yield through this methodology for a local variety of maize.
- **Participatory variety selection:** increasing diversity of farmers varieties, wide range of choices over which varieties adapted to suit farmers environment, selected and then multiplied out. Farmers make the decisions according to agreed and preferred needs.
- **Participatory variety development:** creating new farmer varieties. e.g. crossing different material to make new material, working closely with research institutions. CTDT and the farmers have created 5 new stable lines of sorghum



# PPB through farmer field schools, capacity building and dissemination of materials at community scale



Capacity building of facilitators includes community diagnostics (Diversity wheels, crops and varieties), timeline analysis, setting breeding objectives, selection, evaluation and dissemination

## 4. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR FARMERS RIGHTS PRACTICE

- The Zambia Agriculture Research Institute (ZARI) supports community seed banks, seed fairs and PPB initiatives as a way to address Farmers Rights.
- The recent adoption of the new National Plant Genetic Resources Strategy for Zambia, offers an important mechanisms for securing Farmers Rights, however is currently unfunded and so remains a dormant document.

### Incoherent policy results in clear blocks to farmers rights, including:

- Only seed of a registered variety on the National Variety Registration list can be sold or distributed. Variety registration standards are based on UPOV, and the principle of DUS thereby excluding farmers varieties.
- Seed of farmers' varieties is not considered to be seed but grain (and uncertifiable given DUS requirements)
- Seed of farmers' varieties is absent from the formal seed market, even though it contributes more to local crop production than commercial seed
- The current Plant Breeders Rights Act does recognize farmers' privileges. This allows a farmer to save and exchange limited quantities only of protected seeds for non-commercial use. Concerns over recent proposal to amend the PBR Act to align to UPOV91 standards has raised significant outcry by farmers and CSOs.

# Moving forward

- Farmers variety registration; exploring mechanism on how to deal with governance of farmer varieties and their ownership; farmer consultation conducted for implementation of farmer variety registration, proposed frame work developed, work is on going.
- Continue strengthening collaborations with government institutions for institutionalization of PPB approaches.
- Capacity building for stakeholders to fully understand farmers rights to fill knowledge gaps.

Contact: The Secretariat, ZAAB  
[network@zambianagroecology.org](mailto:network@zambianagroecology.org)  
Lusaka, Zambia

Contact: CTDT: [info@ctdtzambia.com](mailto:info@ctdtzambia.com)  
Visit: [www.ctdtzambia.com](http://www.ctdtzambia.com)

## OUR SEEDS. OUR RIGHTS. OUR LIVES.

### - Campaign to secure Farmers' Rights in Southern African

- Build bottom-up advocacy through farmer to farmer learning, exchange and practice; foster functional linkages with government, the IT focal point, and the objectives of the new NPGR Strategy.
- Lobby against the amendment of Zambia's PBR Act to allow to membership to UPOV.
- Promote practices and experiences of farmers rights work already happening on the ground, which provides entry points for immediate action and support by multiple partners.

