

ISAN

MAGAZINE

FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

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Food & Seed
Festival Edition



About ISAN Magazine

ISAN Magazine was born in 2021 out of the Knowledge Hub for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in Southern Africa, a project funded by BMZ and operationalised by GIZ and African NGOs through five knowledge hubs making up the Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in Africa. The aim is to support the emergence of a strong regional

network, to capacitate multipliers of farming knowledge and to fill knowledge gaps that hinder the uptake of organic agroecology.

ISAN magazine actively works to continue strengthening networks, keeping practitioners and consumers informed and advocating for organic agroecology.

ISAN Magazine is dedicated to building a strong network of informed civil society actors and organisations across the southern African region to advocate for organic agriculture and agroecology as a framework for regional food and farming systems.

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Editor's Note

Celebrating Tradition, Seed, And Food –A Journey Into Our Heritage



In this special edition, we showcase the Good Seed and Food Festivals that took place in Zimbabwe and Zambia in September and October 2024. These festivals are celebrations of culture and places to share food, seed and knowledge. Join us in appreciating the vital role that they play in keeping our food and farming heritage alive and in highlighting the important role that indigenous seed can play in ensuring a sustainable food system for all.

Organically yours
Fortunate Nyakanda

This edition is proudly sponsored by:





Pumpkin seeds Credit: Macpherson Photographers

About The Festivals

These annual food seed festivals serve several purposes, besides allowing us to enjoy great food, entertainment and company!

- They are great **spaces for knowledge exchange** between farmers who bring their traditional seeds and food to display. This knowledge is also shared with consumers who attend the festival.
- They **raise awareness of the need to preserve our heritage and agri'culture'** that points the way towards sustainable food and farming systems.
- They **highlight the environmental and nutritional benefits of traditional foods** and the need to support smallholder farmers. They unite a diverse range of stakeholders to foster widespread support and momentum for agroecology in these countries.
- They **showcase climate-resilient agricultural practices**. They provide market access and sales opportunities.



“

The Zambian traditional seed and food festival gives an opportunity to farmers and policy makers to interact and discuss issues affecting farmers and the agriculture sector. – **Muketoi Wamunyima, Country Coordinator-PELUM Zambia**

Different indigenous seeds on showcase Credit: PELUM-Zambia

Zambian Traditional Seed & Food Festival

Theme: Building a healthy, resilient food and seed system



Community Technology Development Trust farmers showing off their seeds at the festival. Photo by CTD

Date: 11–12 October 2024

Location: Mundawanga
Botanical Gardens, Lusaka

More info: [Email us](#)

The Zambia Traditional Seed and Food Festival is an annual platform for the exchange of new knowledge and ideas, as well as the exchange of farmer- saved seeds. The two-day event exposes thousands of consumers to indigenous foods, local entertainment and the work of inspiring nongovernmental organisations across the country. It is a celebration of culture and food heritage that showcases the value of local food systems.

Day 1 brought strategic stakeholders together for a farmer dialogue.

Day 2 was open to the general public to enjoy the displays of traditional seed and food and local entertainment.

The Seed



A display of a variety of local seeds at the festival Credit: PELUM-Zambia

The multitude of local seeds on display reveal the diversity – of food, knowledge and nutrition – available in local food systems. It is these tiny yet mighty seeds that define our culture, shape our landscapes and sustain our communities. Each table is covered with jars, baskets and glass bottles, a testimony of a cultural

heritage passed on from generation to generation. Seeds in every shape, colour and texture lay side by side including legumes, cereal, fruits, grains, vegetables and many other crops. These seeds reflect years of resilience and adaptation, showcasing the wisdom of the farmers who have cultivated them for centuries.



Sorghum displayed at the festival Credit: PELUM-Zambia



Mary Sakala shows off her display of seeds Credit: PELUM-Zambia



Sandra Ntambale arranging her display at the festival: Photo by Community Technology Development Trust

The Food

The mouthwatering traditional foods often form the highlight of the festival with everyone eager to take a bite of the diverse traditional foods and drinks. With every dish, specially prepared for local tastes, stories are shared, stories of resilience, and the deep bond

between people and the land celebrated. These foods, like the seeds and the traditional music represent centuries of traditions passed down through generations, using locally grown ingredients, and recipes that reflect the unique African cultures.





Meal samp mixed with fried groundnut powder



Vimbombo/Beef Trotters



Assorted traditional foods displayed at the festival Credit: PELUM-Zambia

The Atmosphere



Zanimuone youth dance troupe entertaining guests at the festival Credit: PELUM-Zambia

Our seed and food festivals are never without our traditional dance troupes to light the atmosphere of the festival by bringing rhymes and dances that underscore the spirit of Ubuntu ('I am, because you are'). The dances, like the local seeds, carry the stories, cultures, and energy passed down through

generations, honouring the cycles of nature that sustain us all. The music, the movements, and the costumes reflect the unique heritage and cultural richness of our community, just as our seeds reflect the diversity of our soils and fields. We dance and sing to celebrate life.



Kids dance to songs by Mozegeta at the festival Credit: PELUM-Zambia



Guitarist Pontiano Kaiche entertaining the guests



Vokapo dance troupe entertaining guests with a dance Credit: PELUM-Zambia

Zimbabwe Good Food & Seed Festival

Theme: Promoting agroecology, food sovereignty and climate justice through traditional food



Beautiful display of farmer seeds. Credit: Macpherson Photographers

Date: 13–14 Sep 2024

Location: Harare Botanical Gardens, Harare, Zimbabwe

More info: [Email us.](#)

The Zimbabwe Good Food and Seed Festival has become a cornerstone event in the country's quest for a sustainable food system. Held annually, the festival brings together farmers, consumers, youths and policymakers to celebrate the rich culinary heritage of Zimbabwe. The primary aim is to highlight the nutritional and environmental benefits of traditional foods, supporting smallholder farmers and food producers. For the first time, fellow farmers from Malawi, South Africa and Zambia joined the event.

Day 1 was a networking day for food system stakeholders.

Day 2 opened to the public to showcase the incredible array of seed and food products produced by smallholder farmers, processors and marketers.

“

Agroecology is key to sustainable agriculture and food systems and the festival has helped me learn about new crop varieties and connect with other farmers. – **Zimbabwe farmer participating in Zimbabwe Seed and Food Festival**



Seed and Knowledge Initiative celebration in song

Macpherson Photographers



Naturally grown vegetable display



Value-added products from organic ingredients



Farmer educating consumers on farmer variety seeds

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The Seed



The Zimbabwe Good Seed and Food Festival showcased an astonishing array of seeds, highlighting the country's rich agricultural heritage and the importance of preserving biodiversity. Featuring traditional and heirloom seeds, the festival celebrated Africa's incredible seed diversity, with drought-tolerant crops

and medicinal herbs on display. Local farmers shared their expertise, emphasising the significance of seed preservation for food sovereignty and environmental resilience. The event served as a powerful reminder to promote agroecology, urging consumers to support local farmers and food production.



Mutangatsapi, a red-seeded finger millet



Farmer-to-farmer knowledge exchange



Organic honey on sale



Mushroom growing stall

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The Food

Cooking demonstrations stole the show, showcasing the diversity and richness of traditional Zimbabwean cuisine. Farmers from Mudzi and Tsholotsho districts took centre stage, preparing nutritious and innovative dishes using indigenous ingredients. Maureen Vere, a cowpea farmer from Marondera wowed the crowd with her creative vegan cowpea-based products, including her cowpea patties, sausages and mince.

Her recipes highlighted the versatility of cowpeas, a crop she proudly cultivates and innovatively cooks with. International delegates from Malawi, Togo, and Tunisia shared their own culinary expertise, highlighting the versatility of local ingredients. Celebrity chef Tafadzwa Anifasi facilitated lively discussions around food preparation, alternative cooking methods, and substitute ingredients.



Different foods prepared at the cooking demonstrations Credit: Macpherson Photographers



Traditional flatbreads



“ This is something very special for the farmers. Farmers are seeing other displays similar to theirs, and see that these seeds are valued as we value them.

– Method Gundidza, EarthLore Programme Manager at EarthLore



Traditional Zimbabwean dishes



Cowpea Farmer Turned Chef: Maureen Vere's Innovative Recipes



Cowpea Patties/Dishes from the international delegates

All images are credited to: Macpherson Photographers

The Atmosphere

The Zimbabwe Food Festival was not just about food; it was a vibrant celebration of culture, music and community. The entertainment lineup was diverse and exciting, catering for all age groups. Local theatre groups performed engaging drama acts and festival goers got moving with Zumba sessions, a fun and energetic way to stay healthy.

This interactive activity encouraged attendees to prioritize wellness and self-care. Young music sensation Gemma Griffins delivered an electrifying performance captivating crowds of enthusiastic fans. Her presence helped attract a younger audience to the festival, who then learned about the significance of saving traditional seeds for a better harvest in the face of climate change.



Gemma Griffins rocks the stage at the Zimbabwe Food Festival



Gemma Griffins on stage

All images are credited to: Macpherson Photographers



Tahle We Dzinza on stage



Zumba session in full swing



Crowd enjoying performances



Live music, good vibes; Mbeu performing

All images are credited to: Macpherson Photographers

Recipe Corner

Some local food recipes to try out and impress your friends!

Chikanda/Wild Orchid

Ingredients:

- 1/2 teaspoon Soda
- Groundnut powder (500 grams)
- Chikanda powder (500 grams)

Preparation:

- Warm 1.7 litres of water
- Mix 500 grams of Chikanda powder and 500 grams of groundnut powder together
- Add to water while stirring
- Add salt to taste
- Add soda
- Continue stirring until the Chikanda stops sticking on the stirring stick
- Let it cool and then it is ready to slice and eat.



Chikanda/Wild Orchid Credit: PELUM-Zambia

Ifisashi

Ingredients:

- 1 bunch cassava leaves
- 1 cup raw ground peanut powder
- 1 tomato, chopped
- 1/4 teaspoon soda
- Salt to taste
- Water

Preparation:

- Wash the cassava leaves thoroughly, removing all unwanted particles
- In a medium pot, add the leaves and ¾ cup of water
- Add the chopped tomatoes and the peanut powder
- Add 1/4 teaspoon of soda and some salt
- Stir to combine everything
- Bring the mixture to a boil for at least 5 minutes and then stir from time to time, adding a little bit of water if needed.
- Continue doing this for at least 30 minutes then reduce the heat to low and let it simmer for about 15 minutes or until the vegetables and the groundnuts are well cooked

For more amazing local recipes and cooking demonstration videos, click [here](#) and [here](#).

“The festival is a platform for movement building of all players in agroecology. It is instrumental in the creation of linkages between farmer managed seeds systems and food production systems, and for farmer-to-farmer learning, seeds exchanges and policy advocacy.”

Mutinta Nketani, Coordinator, Zambia Alliance for Agroecology and Biodiversity.

“I am among the farmers who are bringing back Africa’s forgotten foods. Cherry tomatoes and gooseberries are really among Africa’s forest crops.

We picked and ate them on the way to the river, collecting firewood but now, you can hardly find them. We had different varieties of vegetables that are like weed with no intervention from the farmer but have been pushed out by exotic crops. At the festival, we learn about seed restoration and embracing traditional systems as they are better suited to our climate and environment.”

Amina Chiwocha, a farmer from Chingwaru village, Zimbabwe

“The Zambian traditional seed and food festival raises public awareness about sustainable production, marketing, and consumption through the lens of agroecology with much emphasis on the use of indigenous seed and traditional food.”

Getrude Siame: Programme Specialist- Livelihoods and Climate Change, Caritas Zambia

“The festival celebrates farmers’ knowledge and raise public awareness about the contribution that traditional seed and foods and their management systems make towards community cohesion, national food and nutrition security, and long-term public health and well-being.”

Vladimir Chilinya, Country Coordinator, FIAN Zambia

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