

AKTC'S WOMEN MODULAR TRAINING INTRODUCED

By Lushomo Muchindu and Grenda Mweemba



Women farmers pose for a photo after receiving their certificates

From time immemorial, women have always played a significant role in supporting farming activities. It's no doubt that women still hold a significant percentage of the agriculture work force in most African countries including Zambia. The world bank group estimates that women farmers make up 60-80% of the agricultural labor force in Africa. However, despite their longstanding efforts in contributing to the betterment of agriculture, the evolution of the sector has not done much to appreciate their attempts as several female farmers still face challenges, hence inhibiting their full potentials. In another study conducted by Paula Chizua Ugwu (March 2019) on the topic, "Challenges Facing Women in Agriculture" it is noted that women in Africa are facing challenges that include access to land, finance, agricultural information and extension services, education as well as in gender division of labor and lack of participation in farm management among others.

To this realization, the Zambian-German Agricultural Knowledge and Training Centre (AKTC) has initiated a deliberate goal to have a women inclusion policy for all of its planned training activities. To achieve this, AKTC developed a new modular training program specifically designed for women farmers. The programme is tailor made to attend to some of the highlighted challenges and further revive the women potential needed for the thriving of the agricultural sector in Zambia and Africa at large.

The developed women modular training programme comprises of a series of trainings that are conducted over a period of five days, with training topics that complement each other. The objective of these modular trainings is to offer to the farmers a comprehensive training package with different relevant topics that are vital for the preselected group of trainees.

This year, two women modular training programmes have been planned and conducted. Embedded in these women modular programmes are two major training topics of Farm Business Simulation (FBS) Game and Vegetable Production. The Farm Business Simulation is a board-based business simulation training developed by the German Savings Bank Foundation for International Cooperation, one of AKTC's local partners. The aim of the Farm Business Simulation training is to empower emerging

agriculture entrepreneurs with good financial and business literacy skills, thus increasing their bankability, access to finance and quality of life. On the other hand, the Vegetable Production training gives a highly practical, hands-on training of crop growing and management from land preparations to harvesting and storage. Both trainings were highly practical and hands-on as the women could relate and actively participate in the learning process.

The first women's modular training was conducted on the 28th of March to 1st April 2022 and attracted fifteen women farmers. These farmers came from various locations, which included Chirundu and Mazabuka districts on the southern part of Zambia while a few from Lusaka and Central provinces, just nearby the AKTC project.

The second women's modular training was conducted on the 16th to 20th of May 2022 and attracted eighteen women farmers. As opposed to the first modular training, this training recorded several women farmers from the nearby farms within Chibombo and Chisamba district in Central province.

Both groups were trained in similar topics of Farm Business Simulation Game and Vegetable Production. The (FBS) game was facilitated by Grenda Mweemba, Amos Sakala and Isa Kalunga, the trained trainers for the training. The board based FBS training teaches Budgeting, Planning, Farm Investments, Record Keeping, Crop Selection, Risk Management etc. in a fun, simple and highly engaging manner.



Fig 1: Women farmers during the farm business simulation training.

For the Vegetable production training, Mr. Chibesa Maulo, AKTC's short term expert (STE) taught both groups in tomato, onion and cabbage growing. The training on Vegetable Production explored the whole crop production process from site selection to variety selection, land preparation, planting, crop management, harvesting and storage. The training employed a hands-on practical session where the trainees did the actual planting of the onion and cabbage in the existing AKTC vegetable demonstration garden.



Fig 2: Chibesa Maulo, AKTC's Vegetable Production STE giving guidance during the planting demonstration.



Fig 3: Genius Chabinga, AKTC's trainings coordinator guiding the farmer on plant to plant spacing.

During the training evaluation, the trainees attested to the fact that the trainings were greatly beneficial as they acquired insights that would greatly improve farming practices and business models. Notable among the many mentioned was tomato growing, record keeping, farm investments etc. At the end of the training the trainees were awarded with certificates of attendance

AKTC continues to empower women with skills to better their farming and adopt new and improved farming technologies.

AKTC 2022.

A Farmer's Friend!

Follow us

