

KASISI AGRICULTURAL TRAINING CENTRE NEWSLETTER



JANUARY-AUGUST 2024 IN THIS ISSUE

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From 12th to 13th April 2024, KATC celebrated its Golden Jubilee under the theme "Caring for our common home and improving livelihoods" with a series of special events that brought together staff, traditional leadership, Government leaders, students, partners, the local community, and the church.

The highlight of the celebrations was the graduation of the inaugural Agroecology diploma program, tree planted in memory of Brother Paul Desmarais, S.J., the founder of KATC and also the launch of the Jubilee Book, a document that serves as a dedication to our founder Brother Paul and all those who have contributed to the centre's success over the past five decades.

Community Engagement and Festivities

The Golden Jubilee celebrations were not limited to academic achievements but also included a series of community-focused events that brought residents from surrounding areas. The local community joined in the food festivities, showcasing traditional dance performances, stand exhibitions, and demo plots visitations and also interacting with experts in the field.

KATC AT 50

As KATC reflects on 50 years of its work with small scale farmers, it underscores the impact it has had on the lives of countless individuals and communities. By promoting sustainable agriculture, empowering farmers with knowledge and skills, and fostering community engagement, the center has established itself as a beacon of agricultural excellence in the region.

Looking Ahead

KATC embarks on the next chapter of its journey, it remains dedicated to its mission of empowering rural communities to improve their livelihoods and facilitate holistic and gender balanced rural development through training, extension, research, market development, lobbying, advocacy and appropriate technologies in sustainable organic agriculture. The celebrations were a fitting tribute to the center's rich history and promising future.

KATC PRODUCES ITS FIRST 'ORGANIC' GRADUATES

Kasisi Agricultural Training Centre (KATC) celebrated its Golden Jubilee in style with a colorful inaugural graduation ceremony for Diploma students in Agroecology.

The diploma program sponsored by Bread for the World (Brot für die Welt) saw a total of 40 graduating students conferred with a diploma in Agroecology under the University of Zambia (UNZA)

Minister of Agriculture Reuben Mtolo Phiri, represented by the director of the Ministry of Agriculture Dr Chizumba Shepande appealed to other stakeholders to emulate KATC in accelerating the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices

He said the training will now expose students to modern and sustainable approaches to enhance food security, especially for small-scale farmers who are most affected by the effects of climate change.

He added that KATC in partnership with the Ministry has implemented programs and ensured the distribution of camp extension Officers, training institutes and farmers' training centres across the country.

Mr Mtolo said his Ministry is delighted that the training courses offered by the institution are anchored on the three pillars of sustainable organic agriculture of environmental friendliness, social justice and economic viability.

"I am pleased to learn that the center's courses are not only available to Zambians but also to our brothers and sisters in the neighboring countries," he said.

He encouraged the graduates to claim their rightful space within the sector and make a worthwhile impact that will benefit the industry now and the generations to come.

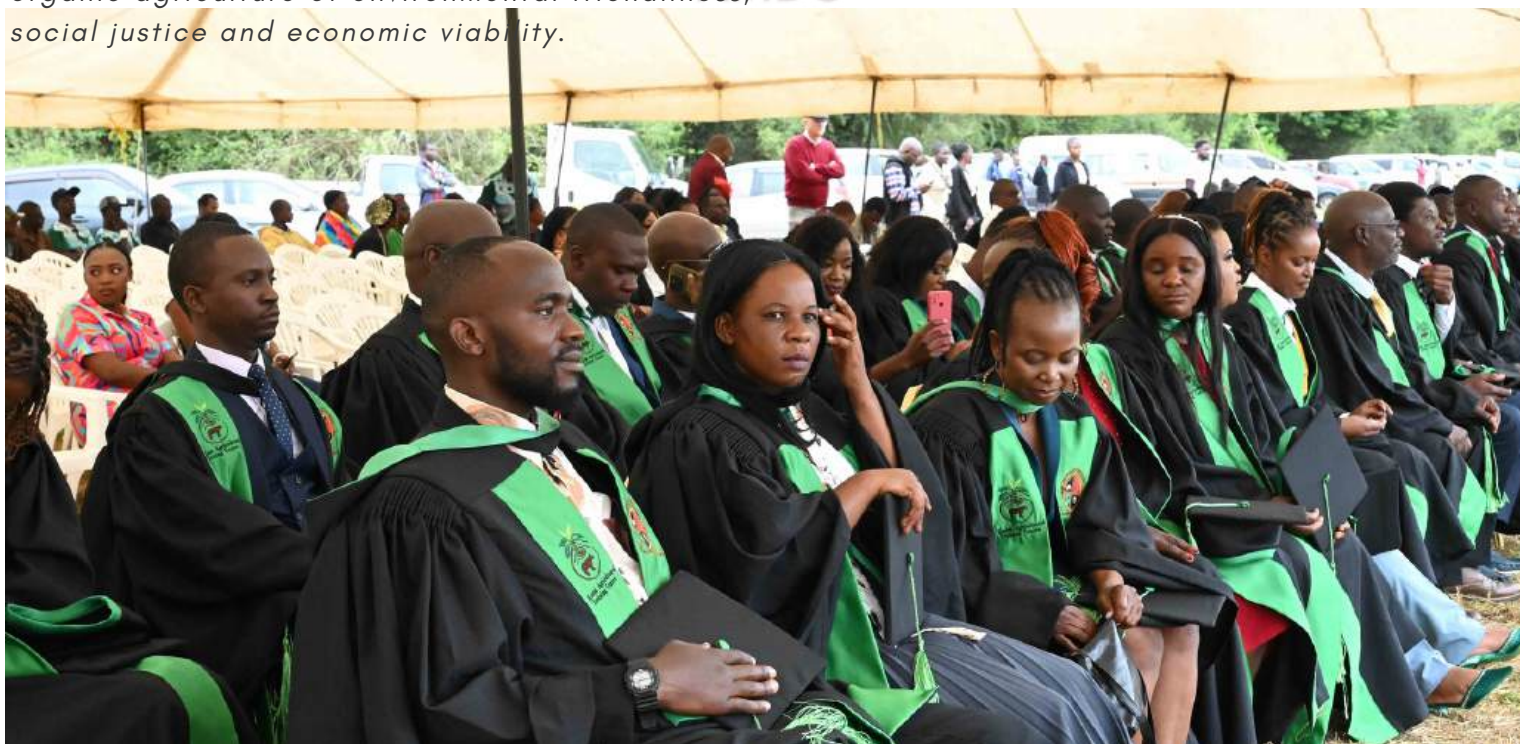
Representing the UNZA Vice Chancellor Prof. Mundia Muya through UNZA Deputy Vice Prof. Chancellor Boniface Namangala said the university is ever ready to support KATC to greater heights of academic excellence.

The Principal of the KATC Fr Claus Recktenwald said it is delightful that KATC has ventured into formal education promoting sustainable organic agriculture and environmental friendliness in the country.

Fr Claus challenged the graduates to take the word of organic farming to the community and the rest of the world.

He also paid tribute to the late visionary of Agroecology and organic farming in Zambia Brother Paul Desmarais.

"We cannot celebrate this day without remembering brother Paul who dedicated 46 years to improve the livelihood of small-scale farmers in Zambia.



Graduating students conferred with a first-ever diploma in Agroecology under the University of Zambia

AGROECOLOGY CENTRE FOR LEARNING AND PRACTICE, INCEPTION MEETING



Agroecology Centre for Learning and Practice, inception meeting, group photo in Monze

On 24th May 2024, Chief Hamaundu of the Tonga-speaking people in Pemba District, Southern Province, expressed his delight over Kasisi Agricultural Training Centre's initiative to establish an Agroecology Centre in Kasikili within his chiefdom.

Speaking at the inception meeting for the Agroecology Centre for Learning and Practice held at Relax Lodge in Monze yesterday, Chief Hamaundu said this development, under the Sustainable Organic Agriculture (SOA) Support Programme funded by the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF), will help his people abandon farming practices that destroy soil fertility. The Chief also offered additional land for the construction of the training centre.

He thanked Kasisi Agricultural Training Centre (KATC) Director Fr. Claus Recktenwald for choosing his chiefdom and assured that his subjects are ready to support the initiative.

Speaking at the same event Fr. Claus stated that organic agriculture combines traditional farming methods with modern science to efficiently address climate change. He explained that Sustainable Organic Agriculture (SOA) allows farmers to produce their own organic fertilizers, which do not harm the soil, compared to the use of chemical fertilizers.

And Pemba District Commissioner Obey Habeenzu also spoke at the event, emphasizing the importance of supporting the project, he noted that the project is promoting the use of indigenous seeds that historically required no chemical fertilizers to achieve good yields.



Friends with Kasisi from Germany and KATC Empowerment students during the Jubilee Celebration

FRIENDS WITH KASISI

By Stefan Seherr

The sign "KATC organic oat cookies" attracted a number of visitors during the Jubilee celebration, the German student group "Friends with Kasisi" tirelessly baked the small delicacy in hundreds to sell them as part of their contribution to the 50th anniversary of the institution.

It was the Friends' second year of visiting the country. The aim of the visit in Zambia is to exchange ideas and stories, to get to know and also to discover the similarities of culture at thousands of kilometers apart- not just within the realm of agroecology.

The cooperation has grown to be a valuable interaction on both sides and worked together in promoting organic agriculture and the reduction of plastic pollution by developing a recycling system.

The friends also helped setup up technology that livestreamed the event and took care of over 100 children that were part of the celebration!



Friends with Kasisi

This year and through a lot of effort, the Friends have raised enough funds to offer two of the first graduates of the Agroecology Diploma Program to attain valuable skills and knowledge in Germany.

The graduates are currently attending a number of internships in Germany that will help in promoting the cause in both countries. We hope, the cooperation between the Friends and the KATC will continue to grow and the friendship that have developed will last for a long time.

For now, we congratulate KATC on its 50 years of successfully spreading organic agricultural in Zambia and surrounding countries. we are looking forward to our next visit in 2025!



From left to right , KATC Director Fr Claus Recktenwald , Vice Provincial , socius, Fr. Virgilio Costa S.J, KATC Dean of students Br. Elphas Ndlovu and KATC Programs Manager Fr Dondo Bena .Benoit.sj, during the Graduation

ENROLL FOR THE DIPLOMA IN AGROECOLOGY, JANUARY 2025 INTAKE !

PROGRAM GOALS

The program aims at preparing students that are creative and innovative designers of food production systems that are highly productive, ecologically friendly, resilient and therefore sustainable as well as adapting and mitigating to climate change.

They are able to deal with the numerous challenges faced by in today's food production systems

Study content of Diploma Program Specifically, the program will aim to impact learners with the following:

- *To understand the structures and functions of complex Agroecology systems*
- *To build knowledge in farming and food systems that provide food security and sovereignty*
- *To educate visionist for future food production systems that have strong values and good skills*
- *To link practice to theory*
- *To develop individual and group skills through cooperation with farmers, professionals, and consumers*



Ministry of Agricultural and UNZA officials at the 2024 graduation

SOME COURSES OFFERED

- ***Introduction to Agroecology***
- ***Fundamentals of Soil Science***
- ***Agroecological Livestock Production***
- ***Soil Fertility Management***
- ***Permaculture design in Agroecology***
- ***Fruit Tree Production and Management***
- ***Plant Protection in Agroecology***
- ***Agroforestry and Beekeeping***
- ***Farm Management***
- ***Agroecological Plant Breeding***
- ***Seed Technology in Agroecology***
- ***Community Based Extension***
- ***Production Quality and Food Processing***
- ***Farm Mechanization and Rural Structures***
- ***Agroecology Vegetable Production***

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Activation of the Soil and Water conservation poster and the Continuation of the Monitoring and Evaluation held on 27th March 2024 in Chipata

MULTIPLIER SUPPORT PROGRAM ,ACTIVATE KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS, HOLDS FIELD DAYS

KATC deploys the KHSA Multiplier Support Program (MSP) in Zambia. MSP focuses on three government owned farming institutes and farmer training centers in the Eastern Province (Chadiza, Katete, Chipata, and Lundazi). These are places where technocrats and farmers obtain knowledge and mentorship.

They also employ general workers who oversee farmer field schools and demonstration plots. For two years KATC has been working with 40 multipliers from the centres through in-depth training, particularly on sustainable organic agriculture, natural pest and disease management and facilitation skills - to assist multipliers in more effectively transmitting knowledge to other centres.

In April 2024, the Multiplier Support Program Field Days were held in all four centres and attracted 474 farmers.

The Field Days showcased and evaluated the successful implementation of the Agroecology practices in each particular MSP demo plots. It was also an excellent opportunity for farmers to witness firsthand the benefits and outcomes of adopting sustainable organic agriculture techniques.

The project also includes a monitoring evaluation component, wherein all multipliers are assessed for the efficacy of agroecological interventions implemented at an individual level .



Project Multiplier Evelyn Daka a government camp extension officer in Chadiza teaching how to make Biofertilizer

Several Knowledge products (KPs) were tested with multipliers - the content of these was drawn from needs assessments conducted with the multiplier in 2022. These KPs included the KATC Sustainable Organic Agriculture Handbook, which is a reference tool for concepts and practices and a series of posters on bokashi, compost making, compost and plant teas , biofertilizers and organic pesticides.

The input from participants - gathered through discussions and comments saw the launch of the Step-by-Step Posters in February 2024. These Posters were given to all 40 multipliers to be used as teaching aids to the farmers.



Astrida and Gabriel , KATC Empowerment students at BIOHOF, Vogelbacher farm in Germany

DIPLOMA EMPOWERMENT STUDENTS, MAKE IT TO GERMANY

KATC recently provided a life-changing opportunity for its students (Gabriel and Astrida) by organizing a two-month exchange visit to Germany as part of an empowerment program. The initiative aimed to expose participants to innovative farming practices, sustainable agriculture techniques, and diverse agricultural systems while fostering cross-cultural learning and collaboration.

Learning on Different Farms in Germany

During their stay in Germany, the students have the unique opportunity to immerse themselves in the day-to-day operations of various farms across the country. The students are gaining firsthand experience in agroecological principles and practices, emphasizing the importance of biodiversity, soil health, and ecological sustainability in farming.

Cross-Cultural Exchange and Collaboration

The exchange program not only provides students with practical skills and knowledge but also encouraged cultural exchange and mutual learning between them and their German hosts. By engaging with local farmers, agricultural experts, and community members, the students are able to broaden their perspectives and exchange ideas,

"Learning from German farmers and experiencing diverse agricultural systems firsthand has been a transformative experience for me. I am grateful for the opportunity to be part of this exchange program." Gabriel Tembo , Empowerment student

My experience in Germany is truly eye-opening. I've gained invaluable knowledge about sustainable farming practices that I can't wait to implement back home." Astrida Miselo, Empowerment Student



SKI-BIO FERTILIZER WORKSHOP

On the 23rd of February 2024, KATC hosted a Farmer's Bio Fertilizers Rights Workshop at M'kango Cresta Golfview in Lusaka Zambia . The meeting hosted its partners and the Seed and Knowledge Initiative Farmers. The meeting saw the participants engage in sharing insights and discussing experiences of using BioFertilizer.

The meeting had speakers from Zambia Alliance for Agroecology and Biodiversity, Zambia Bureau of Standard, Zambia Agriculture Research Institute, an agriculture institute with the mandate to conduct research and analysis and the University of Zambia, who are presenting and engaging with farmers at different levels on biofertilizers and other related issues.

Each of these institutions elaborated in their presentation on how they intend to support small-scale farmers in Zambia to make and use biofertilizers in their field in order enhance crop production and build healthy soil.



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Promoting Sustainable Organic Agriculture



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