PELUM Uganda
Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Uganda

KHEA
Knowledge Hub for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in Eastern Africa

JOY KATABAIRE'S COMMUNITY SEED BANK

Conserving Indigenous Seeds for Agroecological Resilience



















The seed bank was created to conserve indigenous seed varieties, improve farmers' access to quality seed, and promote agroecological farming practices within the community

Building the Seed Bank

The journey began by collecting a few local seed varieties from different agricultural exhibitions organized and supported by PELUM Uganda and its partners. During these exhibitions, I purchased small quantities of indigenous seeds, sometimes as little as one kilogram, and multiplied them on my organic farm.

Through careful management and seed multiplication over several planting seasons, the small seed quantities gradually increased. For example, a kilogram of seed can produce over 50 kilograms after three seasons. This process has enabled me to build a diverse collection of indigenous crop varieties that are now available through the seed bank.

How the Seed Bank Operates

The seed bank serves farmers from different communities and regions who visit to access indigenous seed varieties. Some farmers purchase seeds for planting, while others borrow seeds through a community seed-sharing arrangement.

Under this system, a farmer who borrows one kilogram of seed returns two kilograms after harvest. This approach helps maintain seed availability while ensuring continuous multiplication and sharing of valuable indigenous varieties among community members.

Seed Selection and Quality Management

Seed quality is a critical aspect of the seed bank. After harvesting and drying, the seeds are sorted into different grades:

i. Poor-quality seeds are removed and discarded.
ii. Medium-grade seeds may be consumed at home or sold at lower prices.
iii. First-grade seeds are selected for storage and future planting because of their superior quality and germination potential.

This process ensures that farmers receive healthy, viable seeds capable of producing good harvests.

german cooperation DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT
Implemented by giz
In cooperation with Biovision Africa Trust
PELUM UGANDA
PELUM KENYA
TOAM
Rwanda Organic
SDM Professionnels de l'Agroécologie
SYMABIO

Organic Seed Production and Preservation

All seeds maintained in the seed bank are produced organically. No synthetic pesticides or chemicals are used during land preparation, crop production, or seed processing. This ensures that the seeds remain pure, healthy, and environmentally friendly.

After harvesting, the seeds are carefully dried on tarpaulins rather than directly on the ground to maintain quality and prevent contamination. The seeds are then cleaned, sorted, and graded according to quality standards.

To preserve seed quality during storage, I use locally available organic preservatives, including hot pepper powder. These natural preservatives help repel storage pests and reduce damage caused by weevils without compromising seed quality.



Indigenous Seed Varieties Conserved

Matiki	Matiki is a high-yielding bean variety known for producing abundant harvests. Farmers value it for its productivity and reliability.
Nazio Wombola	This indigenous bean variety is highly productive, tasty, marketable, and cooks quickly, making it popular among households and traders.
Saidi	Saidi is known for its exceptional yield potential. Even a small quantity can produce a significant harvest. It is also resilient and continues regenerating well under suitable conditions.
Kajenda Karara (Kasai)	Known by different names across Uganda, this variety is distinguished by its deep red colour. It is high-yielding, tasty, fast-cooking, and tolerant to varying weather conditions, including excessive rainfall and prolonged sunshine.
Kawura	Originally obtained from Hoima, Kawura is appreciated for its high yields, good taste, and quick cooking qualities.
Yellow Bean Variety	This variety produces good yields but is more sensitive to excessive rainfall and changing weather conditions.
Nambale Beans	Locally known and widely appreciated, these beans are consumed both fresh and dry. Their staggered maturity allows farmers to harvest over an extended period.
Okodat	Okodat serves both as a vegetable and spice. It is valued for its culinary uses and is traditionally believed to help alleviate joint pain.
Kayini	Kayini is a climbing bean variety that produces both edible beans and tender shoots. It performs well when provided with adequate support structures.
Mukuna	Mukuna is primarily used as a cover crop and mulch, particularly in banana plantations. It contributes to soil fertility improvement, moisture conservation, and weed suppression.
Poultry Feed Bean Variety	The seed bank also maintains a bean variety that is not commonly consumed by humans but is valuable as an ingredient in poultry feed formulations.

Impact on the Community

The community seed bank has become an important resource for farmers seeking quality indigenous seeds. It promotes seed sovereignty, reduces dependence on external seed suppliers, and preserves valuable local genetic resources.

By conserving and sharing indigenous seed varieties, the seed bank contributes to food security, biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, and the promotion of agroecological farming practices in the community.

Joy Katabaire's Reflection

"A seed bank is more than a storage facility; it is a living resource that preserves our agricultural heritage and empowers farmers to remain self-reliant. By conserving indigenous seeds and sharing them within our communities, we are safeguarding biodiversity, strengthening food security, and building resilience for future generations."

Follow us:

@KcoaKhea
Kcoa_khea
KCOA KHEA
kcoa-africa.org
Knowledge Hub for Organic Agriculture in EA
khea-africa.org

german cooperation DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT
Implemented by giz
In cooperation with Biovision Africa Trust
PELUM UGANDA
PELUM KENYA
TOAM
Rwanda Organic
ISDM
SYMABIO