

ACTIVITY REPORT

Urban Futures Training in Sustainable Farming Practices

14th – 15th May 2025

Loctaguna Organics Farm



1. Introduction

The Urban Futures Project hosted a two-day intensive training on sustainable farming practices at Loctaguna Organics Farm from 14th to 15th May 2025. The training brought together youth from the Urban Futures project and partner facilitators to promote innovative, climate-smart farming methods that can be implemented in small spaces within urban and peri-urban settings. Central to the training were themes of value addition, food waste reduction, and sustainable resource management, all critical pillars in transforming food systems and enhancing youth livelihoods.

2. Day 1 Summary: Smart & Profitable Farming in Small Spaces

The first day focused on equipping participants with practical and profitable farming techniques suitable for limited land spaces. The session began with welcome remarks by Juliet Sakala, a representative from Global Network Solutions, as well as opening remarks and presentation of training objectives by the Loctaguna trainers, Kanangwa and Patson, followed by a series of hands-on and demonstration-based activities.

Key Highlights:

- **“Any Time Money” Farming Techniques:**

Participants were introduced to farming methods that allow for year-round income generation through quick-turnover crops such as leafy greens and herbs. These methods provide a strong entry point for youth into agribusiness with minimal capital.



- **Quick-Growing Crops for Profit:**

A live demonstration highlighted fast-maturing crops ideal for urban settings. Emphasis was placed on planning harvest cycles to reduce waste and ensure a continuous market supply.

- **A-Grade Gardening Using Bio-Stimulants:**

Training included the use of organic bio-stimulants to boost plant health and increase yield, enabling higher productivity per square meter and adding value through quality and volume.

- **Integrating Natural Farming Techniques: Bio Amendments for Soil and Plant Health**

A practical highlight of the training on day 1 was the demonstration and preparation of bio amendments, GJ (Growth Jivamrit) – For Soil Enrichment, DJ (Dravya Jivamrit) – For Crop Nutrition, BJ (Beej Jivamrit) – For Seed Treatment, all natural inputs that improve soil health, stimulate plant growth, and reduce the need for chemical fertilizers. These amendments are cost-effective and can be made using locally available materials, making them ideal for smallholder and youth farmers operating in low-resource settings.



Reflections:

The day ended with an interactive Q&A session where youth discussed challenges in small-scale urban farming and the need for access to markets and inputs to support value-added production.

3. Day 2 Summary: Composting, Recycling, and Sustainable Water Use

The second day emphasized circular economy principles and environmentally conscious farming practices, focusing on composting and water conservation.

Key Highlights:

- **Composting Techniques (Thermophilic & Vermicomposting):**

Trainers demonstrated how to convert organic waste into rich compost using low-cost, scalable methods. This session reinforced the importance of managing food waste at the household and garden level to enhance soil fertility and reduce landfill pressure.



- **Grey Water Harvesting:**

Participants learned how to collect and reuse grey water safely in urban agriculture. A hands-on demonstration showed how to set up a basic grey water system, providing an accessible solution for water-scarce environments.

- **Youth Group Work & Action Planning:**

Youth were tasked with developing realistic urban garden models that integrate composting, water recycling, and value addition strategies, such as producing organic



dried vegetables and herbal teas. Presentations showcased creative, localized solutions for food security and environmental sustainability.

4. Recommendations & Conclusion

The training successfully enhanced youth knowledge and skills in sustainable farming practices, with a strong emphasis on:

- **Value addition:** through higher yields, quality production, and exploring processing opportunities (e.g., drying, packaging). Participants gained insight into how small-scale farming can go beyond basic cultivation to generate higher economic returns. Techniques such as the use of bio-stimulants were highlighted for their ability to boost crop quality and yield, which translates to better pricing in local markets.
- **Food waste reduction:** via composting and efficient harvest planning. Composting was introduced as a central solution to managing household and garden organic waste. Youth learned to apply both thermophilic and vermicomposting methods to turn food scraps into high-value fertilizer. Efficient harvest planning was also emphasized—training participants to match planting cycles with market needs to minimize spoilage and surplus waste. These practices not only cut down on food loss but also feed back into the productivity of the soil, supporting a circular model of farming.
- **Sustainable farming:** including soil restoration, responsible water use, and recycling. Youth were equipped with tools and knowledge on sustainable soil management, including organic enrichment methods and crop rotation for long-term productivity. Practical sessions on grey water harvesting and recycling showcased low-cost, eco-friendly systems that make optimal use of limited water resources.

Participants expressed enthusiasm to implement learned techniques in their communities and requested continued mentorship, access to start-up kits, and linkage to markets to expand their efforts.

The Urban Futures Project remains committed to nurturing a generation of environmentally conscious, innovative youth leading the transformation of Zambia's food systems.