

YOUTHS FOR URBAN FUTURES

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Compiled and designed by Nancy Mwape | Articles & Newsletter

UPDATE ON THE URBAN FUTURES PROJECT

The Urban Futures (UF) project is a transformative initiative being implemented by CUTS International Lusaka, Global Network Solution, and Hivos, in partnership with the Botnar Foundation. The project aims to foster inclusive, climate-resilient, and youth-centered urban food systems. In Zambia, the project is being implemented in Chongwe, where young people are empowered to lead in developing sustainable solutions in agriculture, urban governance, and local economic development.

Since its launch in November 2023, the project has made remarkable progress. In 2025, youth continue to lead the way toward more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable urban food systems.

A major milestone this year was the induction of the UF Youth Champions Committee, which set the tone for a season of transformation. These dynamic young leaders have actively participated in governance processes submitting national budget proposals and advocating for gender-responsive policies within food systems.

A key highlight has been the revitalization of the UF Agriconnect Innovation Hub now a vibrant centre for knowledge exchange and collaboration. From hosting global development partners such as GIZ to showcasing youth-led agribusinesses, the Hub symbolizes a new era of youth-driven innovation.

In addition, youth-led startups have received crucial support in branding, marketing, and financial mentorship, enabling them to access funding through cooperatives and as individuals. But the impact goes beyond entrepreneurship. Young people in Chongwe are also embracing climate-smart agriculture, adopting organic farming practices, installing solar-powered and drip irrigation systems, and creatively blending traditional and modern culinary practices.

To increase outreach, the project has successfully deployed bulk SMS campaigns, reaching thousands with important messages on sustainable farming, food waste management, nutrition, and health.

Youth from Chongwe have also gained national recognition, appearing on TV platforms and participating in policy dialogues further cementing their role as changemakers in Zambia's food systems transformation.

In Chongwe, youth are not just participating they are shaping the future. As a project, we remain a proud and committed partner in this journey, dedicated to amplifying their voices and impact every step of the way.

Message from the UF Project Manager Chileleko Hamukali



IMPACT STORY

WISEMAN REDEFINING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN AGRICULTURE



Above is Wiseman Daka

By Juliet Makwama

Wiseman Daka, a youth from Chikwela village in Chongwe, is redefining youth participation in agriculture through the Urban Futures (UF) project. Once viewed farming as a burdensome duty, Wiseman has transformed into a passionate agropreneur and public health student, championing sustainable food production and climate-smart practices.

Born into a farming family in Eastern Province, Wiseman grew up helping with farm work, which he initially saw as a punishment. That changed after relocating to Chongwe and, later in 2024, when a teammate from his basketball club introduced him to the UF project. Intrigued by the project's focus on sustainable agriculture and food systems, he joined and soon attended a training at Kasisi Agriculture Training Centre.

"At the training, I learned how to manage soil and make organic fertilizer from agricultural waste. We used to burn waste before, but now I use it to make compost that enriches the soil," Wiseman said.

Wiseman has since embraced sustainable farming cultivating vegetables, rearing animals, and applying organic methods that improve yields and reduce environmental harm. His dedication has boosted his family's food security and enabled him to pay 50 percent of his university tuition fees.

"The training didn't just teach farming, it changed my mindset and instilled discipline," he said.

Wiseman now leads farm operations and advises his family on better farming practices. His mother, Ida Daka, calls him reliable and committed, noting how he promotes composting over burning waste.

Wiseman's story is a clear example of how knowledge, opportunity, and mindset change can empower youth to lead in sustainable development proving that with the right support, young people can shape resilient, climate-smart food systems.

MY JOURNEY AS A FLORIST-JENNIFER MUMBA

As a young florist (Jennifer Mumba), empowered by the Urban Futures (UF) initiative, flowers represent more than beauty, they're vital to food security, biodiversity, and ecosystem health.

my journey into floristry began through UF training sessions in organic farming, entrepreneurship, and financial management. These hands-on experiences helped me turn a personal passion into a growing business.

A key milestone was the June 26, 2025 exhibition, where I showcased 49 flowers. Though I sold only seven and earned K345, the experience affirmed my progress and highlighted my business potential, with a full sale valued at K2,415.

The fact that I made some cash, even with limited sales, was incredibly motivating.

The event also opened networking opportunities, with visitors showing interest in my sustainable growing methods. I used the platform to educate attendees on how flowers support pollinators and contribute to sustainable agriculture.

Reflecting on my journey, I credit UF for transforming my life.

With each flower, I'm not just creating beauty, I'm supporting sustainability and building a future rooted in environmental responsibility.



Jennifer (right) with M&E officer Mwaba at the show.

WOMEN AT THE HEART OF FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

By Jennifer Mumba

Women play a crucial and multifaceted role in transforming food systems, extending far beyond traditional agricultural roles. As caregivers and homemakers, they shape food habits, promote nutrition, manage waste, and pass on traditional food knowledge to future generations.

In many communities, women are the primary food preparers and are key in fostering healthy eating practices. Increasingly, they are also stepping into entrepreneurship, launching sustainable farms and food-based businesses that stimulate local economies and improve food access.

Projects like UF have seen women take on specialised roles within the food system, using their expertise to drive innovation, sustainability, and community impact. By collaborating and sharing knowledge, these women are addressing food system challenges and promoting lasting change.

Their contributions span sustainable practices, cultural preservation, food innovation, and economic development. From farming and processing to marketing and sales, women bring unique skills and perspectives that enhance food security and build resilient communities.

Empowering women with resources, training, and support is vital to creating a more equitable, sustainable, and healthy food system for all. As their involvement continues to grow, so too will their impact in shaping the future of food.

UF YOUTHS SPARK INNOVATION, HEALTHY LIVING AT CHONGWE SHOW

By Muyasani Moonga

The Chongwe 2025 Agricultural Show, held on June 26, brought together farmers, cooperatives, youth innovators, and key stakeholders to showcase sustainable agricultural practices and promote youth-led entrepreneurship. As a lead-up to the Zambia Agricultural and Commercial Show in Lusaka, the event focused on climate-smart agriculture, local innovation, and knowledge sharing.

A major highlight was the participation of Urban Futures (UF) Youth Champions, who exhibited eco-friendly and organic products ranging from fresh herbs and vegetables to natural skincare and health drinks. Their hibiscus and ginger juice was especially popular for its health benefits and sustainable sourcing.

The Urban Futures project supports youth-driven solutions to climate resilience, sustainable food systems, and local economic growth. At the show, the young participants not only displayed products but also shared personal stories linking their innovations to climate action, healthy lifestyles, and youth empowerment.

Key exhibits included:

- Organic fertilizers and vegetable seedlings
- Natural skincare products (scrubs, oils, lotions)
- Processed local foods (cassava and sorghum meal, tomato jam, hibiscus juice, ginger with honey)
- Fresh herbs (spring onion, mint, rape)

The event attracted local authorities, NGOs, agro-dealers, and farmers who engaged in discussions on sustainability, value addition, and entrepreneurship. Inspired by peers, one youth shared:

"Seeing finished products made me want to move from just learning about sustainability to acting on it. I now plan to produce my own healthy drinks."

Looking ahead, Urban Futures aims to build on this momentum through product development training, mentorship, and more community events to empower young innovators.



UF youths @
2025
Chongwe
agriculture
show.

MY YOUTHFUL JOURNEY TO FINANCIAL FREEDOM

By Beauty Nachilima

I had the privilege of attending a transformative financial literacy training of trainers workshop at Southern Sun Hotel Ridgeway, organized by Junior Achievement Zambia in partnership with the Prudence Foundation's #ChaChing program from 16th to 18th June 2025.

The experience served as a wake-up call for many of us. The training focused on four core financial principles: **Earn, Save, Spend,** and **Donate**. Through interactive sessions, we explored practical skills such as goal setting, budgeting, distinguishing between wants and needs, and understanding the value of giving not just money, but also time, skills, and resources.

On June 27, I had the opportunity to pass on this knowledge to my fellow youths belonging to the group of backyard farmers at the UF Chongwe office hub. These determined youths are using small plots of land to generate income and provide for their families. Together, we discussed financial goal-setting, spending habits, and the importance of disciplined money management.

A key takeaway from the session was that a hardworking youth needs a financially disciplined mind to achieve their goals. By sowing seeds of financial wisdom, we can help cultivate smart money habits.



Beauty

KUNDA FOSTERING A CULTURE OF SAFETY, SUPPORT



Kunda

By Kunda Malama.

Creating a safe environment goes beyond responding to problems—it's about building a daily culture of respect, openness, and psychological safety. As the Wellness Lead of the Urban Futures Youth Champions Committee (UF YCC), I've come to appreciate the importance of ensuring that young people feel free to speak up, seek help, and be themselves without fear or judgment.

After attending a recent safeguarding training, I reflected on how closely the principles align with my role. Safeguarding is fundamentally about making people feel safe, respected, and supported—values at the heart of why I do this work.

The training enhanced my ability to recognize signs that someone may be at risk, whether through shifts in behavior, subtle cues, or silence. I now feel more confident and equipped to respond thoughtfully and responsibly when concerns arise.

A key takeaway was understanding how to act in sensitive situations. I learned practical steps for addressing concerns and now know I don't have to navigate these challenges alone. The training empowered me to reach out to the right people, instead of relying on guesswork or assumptions.

This experience also expanded my view of wellness, it's not just about mental health, but also about dignity, boundaries, and protection.

GIZ EXPLORE YOUTH AGRICULTURAL INNOVATIONS@THE HUB



By Wisdom Banda

A delegation from the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) visited the Urban Futures AgriConnect Hub in Chongwe on June 18, 2025, to engage with youth-led agricultural initiatives and explore potential areas for collaboration in sustainable farming.

The visit began with a guided tour by Urban Futures Cooperative Chairperson, Mr. Malambo Mainza, who highlighted the hub's focus on youth empowerment and sustainable agricultural practices. The delegation explored various sections of the hub, including the flower garden led by Caroline Kasanga, and the onion and lettuce fields managed by Mr. Mwila Mwape.

A key highlight was the integrated farming approach, including a tour of fish ponds where Wisdom Banda explained the hub's sustainable aquaculture practices.

In the call center, Charles and Bupe demonstrated how youth manage customer service and community outreach, impressing the visitors with their professionalism.

The visit concluded with a product exhibition and sales session featuring youth-made goods such as processed foods and natural skincare products. Several items were purchased, with the delegation praising the quality and innovation.

The GIZ team expressed appreciation for the warm hospitality and commended the hub's impact on youth livelihoods. They affirmed interest in future collaboration, recognizing the AgriConnect Hub as a promising model for community-driven, sustainable agriculture.

HIGHLIGHT OF SECOND QUARTER ACTIVITIES



Youths learning how to prepare liquid fertilizer



Youths preparing bokashi



Youths pose with Prince Nkomesha in blue jacket during the inter-generational learning workshop



Youths participate in the Plant Breeders' Rights Bill currently under consultation



Youths Committee Council Orientation Meeting



Chongwe Multi stakeholder Platform



UF Youth Champions Committee induction



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