

## Integrating indigenous forest seeds in sustainable development

By Peter Makwanya, **March 26,**  
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When people talk about forest nurseries or seedlings, what quickly comes into the minds of many are exotic seeds and trees, with little consideration for indigenous ones.

The role played by indigenous seeds as tools for forest regeneration is often looked down upon. The critical issue in this regard is a holistic change of people's perceptions of what they think of seed, fruit and foodstuffs. When we talk of fruit, people are quick to identify exotic fruit.

If correctly nurtured or tendered, indigenous tree-seedlings can offer the same value as exotic ones, improving the people's livelihoods, as well as

regenerating the environment. When the indigenous seeds are fully grown, they can also provide food, timber, shade and medicinal properties. The aim of this discussion is not only about face-lifting the destroyed forest outlooks and landscapes, but also to assist rural people to do business and successfully market their forest products to old and new markets. This will help restore lost vast tracts of land and enable the local communities to conserve forests, store and keep inventories of seeds obtained in their localities. These people are not only doing this to appease the relevant authorities, the government or other stakeholders, but they would indirectly be mitigating against the effects of climate change.

A wide range of forest seeds also need to be tested for their seasonal growth and germination potential, so that they can even be traded to a variety of clients and stakeholders.

Managing forest seed appropriately would improve the local people's perspectives and world views, so that they treat forests with respect, integrity and honour. The other idea is to adapt these seeds to wide and relevant geographical settings and situations. Outposts of poverty, underdevelopment and remote human settlements are often marginalised, usually characterised by their vulnerabilities, poor levels of education and poverty.

In this regard, possible value chains can also be fostered, nurtured and designed through interactive and participatory approaches. Also, these communities need

not conduct business anyhow but sustainably and comprehensive training is needed based their training needs. Sources of funding also need to be secured so that these programmes keep on growing. By so doing, petty conflicts fuelled by jealousy and envy would be avoided or managed. The shortage of land as a vital resource may be another catalyst. This discussion is not advocating to discard exotic seed but to use them with indigenous to create variety or hybrids. In order to promote sustainable environmental management practices, local communities need to be conscious of simple environmental conservation habits to increase biodiversity as well as being conscious of the type of fertilizer used, especially those of an organic nature, which do not have chemicals that can destroy the environment or

the soil composition. Whatever the steps taken, climate change mitigation and adaptation should be the main concern.

Another critical component is the way these programmes should be communicated; they should not be downplayed, since communication is a key attribute. Communication should include reporting styles and record keeping. If the tendering of the local forest seeds is done in a

holistic manner, then the environmental landscapes can be transformed into sustainable and versatile ways, which are key to climate action requirements. In this regard, the business environment should be complemented by the appropriate forest and human centred management practices.

Source:

<https://www.newsday.co.zw/2018/03/integrating-indigenous-forest-seeds-in-sustainable-development/>