

## Organic Celebration

The National Trust of Zimbabwe (NTZ) would like to congratulate the Organic Farming Academy ([organicfarmacademy.com](http://organicfarmacademy.com)) for hosting such a successful event: celebrating organic farming on EU Organic Day (23 September 2022). Europe is working towards realising its target of seeing 25% of farming land being used for organic farming by 2030 whilst looking at trends in consumer demand. The EU Organic Day also serves to raise awareness of the wide range of benefits of organic food: not only does it have health benefits for our planet (the produce is farmed in a more sustainable manner) it also has health benefits for humans as it is rich in nutrients (vitamin C, iron, magnesium and phosphorus) and grown with less exposure to nitrates and pesticide residue. On a community level it supports local farmers as well.

The occasion witnessed the official launch of the Organic Farming Academy (OFA) at the premises of Organic Africa ([www.organicafrika.biz](http://www.organicafrika.biz)) in Vainona, Harare. The German Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation through sequa gGmbH is funding a project appropriately called Organic4Zim in support of OFA with the goal of improving living conditions for people in developing countries and emerging economies. The project is implemented by the AFOS Foundation Germany. The AFOS Country representative and project Manager for Zimbabwe, Friederike Pommerehne organised the event so wonderfully.

The proceedings began under a clear blue sky when everyone gathered under shady trees by the main office to listen to Mr Barry Manandi the MC, who extended an official warm welcome to everyone. The gathering was then treated to 2 powerful songs performed beautifully by 16 members of the Zimspiration Choir, supported by their band and expertly led by MrsKundisai Mtero. The choir assembled and proudly sang in complete harmony, songs about how organic farming is the best way to go for the health of the planet and humans alike.





The MC invited the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Udo Völz on stage. The Ambassador spoke passionately about the benefits of organic farming and shared a story about his childhood when he lived on a farm and how he and his siblings watched their father move away from traditional farming to that of organic. It was the way of the future then as it still is today.

Mrs. Kundai Makoko, Deputy Director at the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water, Climate and Rural

Development was then invited to address the audience. The Director spoke about how the Ministry is promoting and sustaining a viable, appropriately mechanised agriculture sector in a changing climate.

She outlined how the Ministry formulates, reviews and implements viable agricultural policies and develops strategies to ensure food self-sufficiency and security as well as for export and helps to identify and develop effective markets and marketing systems for agricultural products. She added that the Ministry works together with SADC and other regional and international organisations in the development and implementation of resources management frameworks and the coordination and mainstream implementation of regional and International treaties, protocols, agreements and standards into Zimbabwean national laws.



The Ministry facilitates and coordinates capacity development in the areas of water, climate and weather. In order to facilitate and coordinate climate change resilience, the Ministry is supporting small scale farmers by providing them with trees and various seedlings to plant and grow.

She acknowledged the importance of organic farming and said that the Ministry is actively working towards facilitating, promoting and expanding it in Zimbabwe.

The penultimate speaker Mrs. Fortunate Nyakanda, Director ZOPPA, Chairperson IFOAM Southern Africa and a Member of IFOAM World Board spoke about both organizations and explained that ZOPPA is a national movement that brings together organic producers, promoters and processors for the development of organic Agriculture sector in Zimbabwe. They acknowledge the contribution that organic agriculture can make to the world, and their vision is to improve all agriculture in a global context.



She said that organic agriculture can be a pathway to addressing not only hunger and malnutrition but also other challenges including poverty, water use, climate change, and unsustainable production and consumption. IFOAM works with the 4 main principles of Health, Ecology, Fairness and care as the roots from which organic agriculture grows and develops. She congratulated OA for establishing the Organic Academy. Both organisations are involved in the ISO certification process and pointed out that certification is important for the export of high quality organic products.

Mr. Dominikus Collenberg, CEO Organic Africa, Member Advisory Committee Organic Farming Academy then gave his speech in which he explained that he has seen that Worldwide, the demand for certified organic products is increasing. He spoke of his school days where his classmates thought he was just a dreamer. But, now his dream has materialized and he is very happy to say, that the future of farming has arrived. He proudly explained that OA is focusing on expanding collaboration between agricultural business enterprises and certification institutions to help improve the growth of the organic market in Zimbabwe and the region.



Following the official speeches and another heartfelt song by the Zimspiration Choir the audience was invited to look around the exhibition stands. Several organizations working in the organic sector were show casing their products and services including Fairtrade Support Network Zimbabwe. They know that the crop yields are greatly improved by using organic methods and financially rewarding thanks to premium market opportunities for organic and fair trade quality products.



They are a member organization representing Fairtrade certified producers in Africa and the Middle East. Fairtrade is the world's largest and most recognized ethical certification system and having a Fairtrade certificate has many advantages: enables farmers and workers in developing countries to be empowered to access markets, achieve better prices and working conditions, while also contributing to sustainability of the environment. Shoppers can recognize products that meet the Fairtrade Standards by the FAIRTRADE Mark.

Dairibord Zimbabwe were promoting their new drink that has just been launched for the summer months called 'Cascade dairy', a fruit mix made with baobab pulp obtained from the seeds which dry naturally on the tree.

Baobab is rich in dietary fibre and good for the immune system.



### *The digital solution*

Here the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Udo Völz is standing with the Vice Chair of the NTZ Mrs S Waterworth next to the Organic4Zim banner. The aim of Organics4Zim is to support smallholder farmers and wild plant collectors in Zimbabwe by offering practice-oriented qualification programmes leading to external certification of organic products for the export market. The academy offers certification trainings that enable participants from marginalized population groups to achieve sustainable income generation while at the same time using natural resources sustainably.

A lovely display of Baobab fruit, termed 'The African super fruit' that has earned its place in the super food category, were on

The SAP Rural Sourcing Management solution was presented at their stand. Their digital traceability system manages sustainability data better through digitally recorded information on producers, their farms, and their communities and ensures compliance with food safety requirements for the export market at every level of the value chain. It provides full transparency into the source of raw materials.





display at the B' Ayoba (([www.bayoba.biz](http://www.bayoba.biz)) stand.

B' Ayoba is a leading producer of baobab products, ethically and sustainably harvested in the wild under strictly monitored conditions. From seedlings in the soil to powder in a packet, their supply chain is fully traceable. Their products include health beneficial baobab powder which can be used in smoothies, beverages, chocolates, breakfast cereals, ice creams and health bars and red baobab tea with its high anti-oxidant properties and a distinctive light tangy citrus flavour. It is made from the internal funicles (fibres) of the baobab fruit and has a

golden red colour when infused in hot water.

KaZa ([kazanaturaloils.com](http://kazanaturaloils.com)) a leading specialist producer of selected natural African plant products were showcasing their products. KaZa ensure sustainability and fairness in practices along their value chain. Founded in 2016, the brand boasts many successes in its young life. They work with rural producer communities throughout Southern Africa to supply high-quality organic oils, extracts and plant products to the global cosmetics and ingredients market.



Adjacent to the Kaza stand was the La Rochelle Country House and Spa stand ([www.larochellecentre.com](http://www.larochellecentre.com)) a National Trust property ([www.ntoz.org](http://www.ntoz.org)) comprising of 226 acres, the French style tower and house, with Welsh slate roof tiles, was built by Sir Stephen and Lady Virginia Courtauld in 1951 as a retirement home, and donated to the National Trust in 1972. Their foresight enables visitors to stay in a boutique hotel, within the



Courtauld's home, walk the pathways designed and created by Sir Stephen and his team of gardeners, and relax for a while in a haven of peace and beauty. La Rochelle has long been recognised as one of the most celebrated botanical gardens in Zimbabwe as well as an icon of the Art Deco movement. There are also 12 acres of experimental herbs being grown by OA who also train small scale famers (mainly women) in organic farming. Together, with out-growers, they export a range of herbal teas such as Calendula, Melissa, Peppermint and Stinging Nettle for export to Europe.

*Vice Chair NTZ, Angela Hama reservations and Kevin Martin, Operations Manager of La Rochelle Hotel and Spa*

National Foods Zimbabwe displayed their range of products, among those porridge enriched with baobab and they even prepared food for people to taste!

National Foods currently develops a range of healthy food for the local market as demand has increased throughout the past years.

The event was a big success and a real life celebration of organic products. The NTZ wishes the new academy every success and is working to promoting the many global benefits of organic farming and products.

