



Supporting ecological land use  
management in Swaziland

# Newsletter

Dear PELUM Partners and Friends,

It is with great pleasure that we bring you the latest edition of our June newsletter where we share positive stories despite the Covid-19 pandemic that is gripping the global community.

In this edition we are proud to announce our new partnership with the Strengthening Protected Area System (SNPAS) project of the Eswatini National Trust Commission (ENTC) on tree planting activities, which we are implementing with four of our member organizations in selected parts of the country.

I hope you will be inspired by the success of our Seed project which has seen 300 farmers establishing seed multiplication fields for OPV maize and beans and are now ready for harvesting.

This edition also covers some helpful tips on the construction of a tippy tap which can be used to curb the spread of Covid 19 and a hands-free way to wash your hands and save water during the global pandemic.

Please do share the newsletter and remember to follow PELUM Swaziland on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.

Kind Regards,

***Tsakasile Dlamini***

Country coordinator for pelum Swaziland

## Farmers' indigenous seed multiplication plots a success



Following the successful distribution of OPV maize and bean seeds to farmers, the seed multiplication fields have thrived and are now ready for harvest. This project aimed to encourage the development of seed banks in communities at household level and improve food security and minimize dependency on purchasing expensive hybrid seed each year. The

project also aimed to build sustainable and solid foundations for smallholder farmers to achieve positive environmental economic and social outcome in their own communities despite worsening climate change impacts.

Seeds and seedlings were distributed to member organizations, who distributed them to the small holder farmers that they work with. They planted the seeds, which were maize and beans, seedlings were onions, beetroot, spinach, lettuce and cabbages after distribution. Unfortunately due to the shortage of rainfall and the scarcity of water in the dry parts of the country, the vegetables seedlings were not quite successful compared to the resilient maize and bean plants. Worth noting though is that through good farming techniques such as intercropping of the maize, beans and vegetables, farmers were able to see good results from the project.

In some communities, they harvested lettuce which they sold to their different community members and ate some in their homesteads which improved their nutrition and food security. The next phase of the project will involve training workshops on how the farmers can effectively select and store seed in their seed banks for use in the next planting season.



*Fig 2: Vusumnotfo maize crop: the crop is growing well and is reaching tasselling stage.*

## PELUM Eswatini partners with the SNPAS project on tree planting Activities



PELUM Eswatini has partnered with the SNPAS (Strengthening the Protected Area System of Swaziland) project of the Eswatini National Trust Commission (ENTC) to conduct a tree planting activity in selected parts of the country.

A forest is considered to be a carbon sink, if it absorbs more carbon from the atmosphere than it releases. Carbon is absorbed from the atmosphere through photosynthesis, it then becomes deposited in forest biomass (that is, trunks, branches, roots and leaves), in dead organic matter (litter and dead wood) and in soils.

The extinction of indigenous trees has become a problem in some parts of the Kingdom of Eswatini, which is why PELUM Eswatini through its member organizations to plant 3000 trees in selected communities across the country. This initiative is one of several activities under the SNPAS project which is housed at the ENTC and it shall have a strong impact on the environment, and climate change which are some of the factors that play a huge role in agriculture. This initiative will also introduce carbon sink plant in some parts of the country which are already extinct. Planting trees and conserving forests is an important step towards reducing our carbon footprint, but it won't do the job on its own.

## Hand Sanitizers and Facemasks for Essential workers in Civil Society

To support our member organizations those have been continuing to provide essential services during this pandemic, PELUM Swaziland took the initiative to distribute hand sanitizers and face masks. This was done in an effort to ensure that the staff members that are in the offices have a regular



supply of hand sanitizers to help curb the spread of covid-19.

The much needed reusable face masks for the officers that are still carrying out activities in public or having to board public transport when going to and from work. This is directly in support of the government's decision that all people should wear face masks in public except for children under the age of 2 in order to curb them transmission of the Covid-19 virus from person to person. In a bid to raise public awareness on the disease and prevention measures that the public can take, posters were distributed to selected member organizations for further distribution to the public. It also included agroecological activities that can be done during lockdown as well as natural foods and remedies to boost the immune system and alleviate cold and flu symptoms. The awareness posters were distributed in Lobamba, Hhukwini, Somntongo, Matsanjeni South, Timphisini, Ntfontjeni, Nkilonko, Lubulini, Mkhuzweni, Lamgabhi, Mhwalala and Msunduza.



### **PELUM holds Strategic Planning session for 2021 - 2026**

Following the conclusion of our previous Strategic Plan, we held a strategic planning meeting, as technical staff and the PELUM Eswatini Board to begin the process of crafting our strategic plan for the next 5 years. In this forum PELUM Eswatini discussed the future plans of the organization, which interventions are going to help us achieve our vision and mission in the coming years. The process was facilitated by an expert consultant who has been tasked with the compiling this important document for the network. One of the key activities that were done during the meeting was the SWOT analysis of PELUM Eswatini, which highlighted areas that we need to strengthen as well opportunities and threats that can hinder our progress as we work towards achieving our objectives.

The overall session proved quite enlightening and it is anticipated that the Strategic Plan will be inclusive of all intervention that will help farmers achieve improved livelihoods through the promotion of ecological land use management.

## Construction of a Tippy tap



Due to the global pandemic there are a few ways to use in controlling the spread of Covid 19, that is to follow the proper safety measures for example to wash your hands frequently ( for at least 20 seconds) or rub your hands with an alcohol based

sanitizer. Some homesteads cannot afford the sanitizers since some shops have made their prices very steep because they are in demand. This is a cost free device which can be made by recycled material at the luxury of your home.

The tippy tap is a hands free way to wash your hands that is appropriate especially for rural areas where there is no running water. It is operated by a foot lever and thus reduces the chance for bacteria transmission as the user touches only the soap. It uses only 40 milliliters of water to wash your hands compared to 500 milliliters when using a mug, additionally, the used “waste” water can go to plants or back into the water table.

While the tippy tap is a great technology, it is just that a technology. It is important to recognize that there is a difference between great technology and adoption of the technology. However, it is a great tool that can help kick start the conversation about hand washing with soap and help increase this behavior. And it does so in a fun and easy manner that is especially appealing to children. The first ‘official’ tippy tap was built in the eighties by Dr. Jim Watt in Zimbabwe using a gourd. Since then, many variations have come into existence depending on local materials and aesthetics.

Source: <https://www.tippytap.org/the-tippy-tap>