



## Food Exchange Day for Swayimane small-scale farmers

The uMngeni Resilience Project (URP) recently held a farmer food exchange day with farmers from Swayimane and parts of north KwaZulu-Natal (Pongola, KwaNgwanase and Tshaneni). The purpose of the day was for farmers to exchange knowledge on the utilisation of minor grain legumes such as cowpea (imbuba) and bambara groundnut (izindlubu), which form part of the crop diversification efforts of the URP in Swayimane. The two crops are being promoted as part of climate change adaptation because they are extremely drought and heat-stress tolerant as well as being nutrient dense. This forms part of the University of KwaZulu-Natal's (UKZN) nutrition sensitive climate-smart interventions in the project.

As part of the process of re-introducing legumes, UKZN scientists observed that farmers in Swayimane had lost knowledge related to cultivation and utilisation of these traditional crops. Only a few older people could still remember a time when the two crops used to be grown in the fields and also consumed. This lack of knowledge has resulted in farmers becoming reluctant to plant the two crops in their gardens. It was decided that instead of UKZN scientists trying to educate Swayimane farmers on planting the crops, it may be better to invite other small-scale farmers who utilise these crops to come and share their knowledge. UKZN, in partnership with Biowatch South Africa, has been working with farmers from northern KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) who grows and consume cowpea and bambara groundnut.



The day started with the visiting farmers from northern KZN sharing their knowledge of the crops, in terms of how to grow them and the benefits of growing these crops as opposed to other conventional major legumes. Thereafter, the Swayimane farmers took their northern KZN counterparts on a tour of their own fields to showcase what they were growing and their intercropped fields, which include maize and cowpea. While this was happening, another group of farmers was busy cooking delicacies using local traditional crops for their ingredients. These included taro (amadumbe), cowpea, bambara groundnut, groundnut and green mealies, among others. After the farmers' field tour, they came back and had lunch that had been prepared using their home-grown local ingredients. Farmers from Swayimane were excited to participate and receive knowledge from other small-scale farmers, as well as being excited that they were able to share their own knowledge on growing crops.

The day ended with Swayimane farmers committing to a follow-up visit to northern KZN during the summer when farmers there would be growing these crops in the field. The exercise was particularly useful as it allowed farmers to learn from each other and share knowledge in a friendly setting.

Please email Mpfunzeni Tshindane ([M.Tshindane@sanbi.org.za](mailto:M.Tshindane@sanbi.org.za)) to join the NIE mailing list to receive future URP and SGF project updates