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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Horticulture Training to Small-scale farmers in Rundu, Kongola and Katima Mulilo

**23-30 September 2021, RUNDU** | The Namibian Organic Association (NOA) and the Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF) recently conducted a horticulture training to various small-scale farmers and farmer-trainers through one of the in-country activities for the Knowledge Hub for Organic Agriculture in Southern Africa (KH SA) project that aims to promote the adoption and scaling-up of organic agriculture in Namibia.

Two incredible Namibian facilitators Mr. Erastus Ndungu from Lima Farms in Katima, a commercial organic vegetable producer, agroforestry specialist and facilitator, as well as Mrs. Wiebke Volkmann, from Earth Wise Enterprise, an accredited holistic management trainer, long term community facilitator and passionate organic gardener, over the 3 workshops managed to train over 79 small-scale farmers around Rundu, Kongola and Katima Mulilo.

Mareike Aufderheide-Voigts, Namibian Project Manager, who holds a degree in B.Sc Organic Agriculture and M.Sc. Sustainable International Agriculture from the University of Kassel, Witzenhausen, Germany, shared that the participants stressed, that the training has given them valuable insights to improve their own production as well as sharing these benefits with others.

The KCOA project is strengthening networks along different organic value chains and this especially includes communal farmers, who produce under severe resource constraints. Under traditional farming practices yields are often low and risks for failures big. Organic agriculture principles aim at making farming more resilient, diverse and healthy. It is a low-input system relying on natural principles and locally available resources.

Participants indicated that the training was very informative and insightful. One particular participant stated: "I now know that the soil is not just dirt, it is living and if we look after the soil we can produce well." And another participant shared: "I have made compost before, but the way I learned it today makes it much easier and practical. I will go home and make my compost this way".

The (KH SA) is a collaborative country-led partnership funded by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. It is one of five Knowledge Hubs for Organic Agriculture, under the Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture in Africa programme, pursuing the goal of disseminating knowledge and shaping a network on national, regional and continental levels.

This activity aimed to increase nutrition security in the target areas, grow the number of organic farmers and volume of organic food produced in Namibia and as stated by NOAs Chairperson, Mr. Eckhart Foertsch, "Organic agriculture is an inclusive approach to certified and non-certified organic agriculture production systems such as conservation agriculture; regenerative, biodynamic, biological and ecological farming; permaculture, agro-ecology and agroforestry systems, as well as climate smart and climate resilient production systems."

The next steps, to ensure sustainability of the knowledge gained during the workshop, are to support participants to build their own compost heaps and therefore enable them to produce a high quality soil improver. This is crucial on the sandy soils in the target area. The farmers will be supported by local NNF staff. To reduce the labour and water demands some farmers opted for creating a sheltered area in their kraals, where a continuous composting process of manure and dry organic matter can happen throughout the year. The KCOA project is aiming at training the same group of participants on organic principles in rain fed crop production in the month of November.

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## Notes to editor:

Photographs File Number: HPT1

Photograph 1:

Caption: Erastus Ndungu introducing 28 participants to a practical session on organic crop care in Katima Mulilo

Photograph 2:

Caption: Building a compost heap from locally available resources on the banks of the Kwando river – practical, hands-on experience for participants from the Mudumu Landscape

Photograph 3:

Caption: Preparing Manure for enhancing fertilization of sandy soils in the Zambezi region. The participants of the horticulture trainings learned how to make compost from locally available resources to sustainably improve their soil fertility and thereby their vegetable production

## About

The **Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF)** is a registered non-governmental organisation founded in 1987. It is a charitable and funding institution with an independent board of trustees. The foundation initiates, supports and promotes activities that conserve the environment, protect biodiversity and foster the sustainable and ethical use of natural resources. [www.nnf.org.na](http://www.nnf.org.na)

The **Namibian Organic Association (NOA)** is the representative body for the organic agriculture sector in Namibia working with all industry stakeholders and government to develop a localised, sustainable organic agriculture sector. NOA promotes access to safe, healthy, nutritious food free from harmful chemicals, which is produced in a way that respects animal welfare which supports and regenerates Namibia's fragile eco-system. NOA advocates for the combination of traditional, innovative, and scientific organic agriculture practices to improve on-farm productivity and increase resilience against climate change. [www.noa.org.na](http://www.noa.org.na)