FANSER

Food and Nutrition Security, Enhanced Resilience

KNOWLEDGE MAP

PATHWAYS TO FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY: INSIGHTS AND KEY APPROACHES FROM THE FANSER PROJECT IN ZAMBIA

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CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES

2015 – 2025

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PATHWAYS TO FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY: INSIGHTS AND KEY APPROACHES FROM THE FANSER PROJECT IN ZAMBIA

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Institution: GIZ
February 2025

IMPRINT

As a federally owned enterprise, GIZ supports the German Government in achieving its objectives in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development.

Published by:
Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Registered offices
Bonn and Eschborn, Germany

Address
Evexia Office Building
Plot 1014, Church Road
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Project title:
Food and Nutrition Security, Enhanced Resilience (FANSER) project ↗
Zambia

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Photo credits:
If not specified otherwise: Jason Mulikita on behalf of GIZ

On behalf of
German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Division 123 – Food and nutrition security, fisheries
Bonn

Printing:
New Horizon Printing Press Limited, Lusaka

Lusaka, 2025

On behalf of

Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development

DEDICATION

We dedicate this knowledge map to the FANSER beneficiaries, to the dignity of the 245,000 women, children and men, who strive daily to create a better life for themselves, their families, and their communities. In spite of rural poverty and limited resources, many of them persist with determination and hope. FANSER beneficiaries showed remarkable resilience, potential and eagerness to strive for a better life, despite the challenges they face.

Addressing rural poverty, hunger and malnutrition, and supporting the beneficiaries' efforts to build a better future, remains a great challenge, an obligation and priority task for the future.

FANSER has proven over years how pathways for better nutrition and thus, better lives, can be paved – and with this knowledge map, we hope that many more can follow and create more such pathways for food and nutrition security in Zambia!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to sincerely thank everyone who contributed to the FANSER implementation and, thus, to our joint learning journey and to FANSER knowledge creation:

- the lead government partner, the National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC);
- the Provincial Administration of Eastern and Luapula Provinces; the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and at national level, as well as the Ministry of Health (MoH), the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MoCDSS), the Ministry of Water and Sanitation (MoWS), and the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MoFL) at district level in Petauke, Katete, Sinda, Kawambwa, Mwense and Mwansabombwe;
- all FANSER implementing partners such as CARE and in particular our long-term partners from Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and all their dedicated staff, who worked tirelessly in remote places and have covered many mileage of dusty dirt roads during the project implementation;
- the over 8,700 nutrition volunteers, 190 health promoters, 3,682 senior lead farmers and lead farmers, 27 Farmer Business School (FBS) facilitators and 196 private service providers (PSP), who tirelessly work for their communities;
- all stakeholders from the second 1,000 Most Critical Days Programme (MCDP II), who enriched knowledge and learning through peer exchanges in the Zambian Cooperating Partners group;
- the GIZ leadership at the level of the Agriculture and Food Security Cluster Zambia, the Zambia Country Office and GIZ Headquarters for unwavering managerial, and administrative support to the project;
- the FANSER knowledge task force, who, in a proper team effort, steered and managed the process of producing this knowledge map;
- and lastly, all our team members and FANSER staff: you have worked with dedication, enthusiasm and a remarkable work ethic.

The FANSER team was known to be an extraordinarily well-functioning team – may this last and may the "One-FANSER Spirit" of joint implementation guide all of us in our future work on food and nutrition security!

GOVERNMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS OF THE FANSER PROJECT

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FOREWORD FROM THE NATIONAL FOOD AND NUTRITION COMMISSION (NFNC)

DR. MUNTANGA KAMPENGELE MAPANI

The knowledge map 2015 – 2025 by FANSER ZAMBIA is an enormous resource that outlines simple and practical pathways that guides food and nutrition security program implementers on evidence-based community initiatives. The document is rich in the processes that ensure success in program implementation that are robust and reproducible. It clearly outlines implementation in a multisectoral approach to address all forms of malnutrition in rural settings in Zambia. The book further outlines the challenges as well as what could have been done better to achieve more. The knowledge map imbeds sustainability from inception.

The FANSER project has been working in Zambia for a decade now and their dedicated service to enhancing food security in rural areas of Zambia has been very impactful. The GIZ team closely collaborates with all government and non-government partners to ensure success of the programme. The FANSER team embraces local practices at government and community level to ensure buy in by beneficiaries.

As the lead government partner on this project, the National Food and Nutrition Commission works closely with the FANSER team and shares lessons learnt and will use this knowledge map for scaling up these interventions to other districts.

The National Food and Nutrition Commission hopes that this manual will find wide readership and application in all corners of the country and the lessons learnt will be applied to address food and nutrition security in rural settings of Zambia and beyond.

DR. MUNTANGA KAMPENGELE MAPANI
Executive Director of the National Food and Nutrition Commission

FOREWORD FROM THE GIZ FANSER MANAGEMENT TEAM

This document presents the knowledge gained during the ten years of implementing the Food and Nutrition Security, Enhanced Resilience Project (FANSER) in Zambia from 2015 to 2025.

FANSER was originally initiated and commissioned by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) as part of the Special Initiative "ONE WORLD – No Hunger" (now called "Sustainable Agri-Food Systems – A world without Hunger"). The FANSER project in Zambia was one of the country packages of the Global Programme Food and Nutrition Security, Enhanced Resilience, which was implemented in twelve partner countries in Africa and Asia.

In Zambia, FANSER was part of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) process and the 1000 Most Critical Days Programme (MCDP) I and II, and implemented the minimum intervention package of MCDP II in six districts in Eastern and Luapula Provinces. FANSER achieved measurable results in improving the nutritional situation of more than 125,000 women, 56,000 men and 64,000 children under the age of two, through context-specific and locally adapted approaches in these six districts.

With this compilation, we want to ensure the legacy of a successful project; we want to document the proven approaches to the output areas we worked in and illustrate our learnings, thus ensuring knowledge continuity for future work on food and nutrition security in the country.

Despite the proven project successes, poor rural Zambian households continue to suffer high rates of malnutrition, and massive public investment and work is needed to improve this situation. The final implementation year 2024 bears witness to that: food insecurity levels rose tremendously due to the worst drought on record. This food crisis also impacted the FANSER beneficiaries negatively, nevertheless, the endline survey showed that even in the crisis, beneficiaries showed better food and nutrition security when compared to the control groups (e.g. for the Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women (MDD-W) and in the Minimum Acceptable Diet (MAD) for children).

Future national nutrition programmes will have to address not only chronic malnutrition, but also, and more so, high levels of structural food insecurity, which tend to increase due to climate change and a largely rainfed agricultural production of non-diversified maize production and non-diversified maize consumption.

In this regard, FANSER has had remarkable experiences, achieved results and demonstrated pathways to better nutrition and all-year-round availability of nutritious food at local levels, e.g. through the promotion of the innovative water saving keyhole garden, the participatory selection of Vitamin-A rich sweet potatoes for improved dietary diversity, and the development of a social behaviour change strategy to translate knowledge into practice.

Given the fact that 82% of the Zambian population is still not able to afford a healthy diet[1], much remains to be done to transform the national agri-food system so as to ensure healthy diets for all.

[1] FAO: State of Food Insecurity (SOFI) 2024

We hope that the hereby summarised FANSER knowledge provides a lasting contribution to all interested partners, experts and stakeholders engaged in the nutrition sector both within Zambia and beyond.

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(2023–2025)

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FANSER
Food and Nutrition Security, Enhanced Resilience

FANSER IN A NUTSHELL – OUR BUSY PICTURE

ARTIST: RONALD DEKA

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABF	African Business Facility
AfDB	African Development Bank
ASPIRE	Ask, Show or Explain, Probe, Inform, Request and Examine
BMZ	German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development's
CATWGs	Communication and Advocacy Technical Working Groups
CLTS	Community Lead Total Sanitation
CRS	Catholic Relief Service
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DBC	Designing for Behaviour Change
DHS	Domestic Household Survey Zambia
DHO	District Health Office
DNCCs	District Nutrition Coordinating Committees
EED	Environmental Enteric Dysfunction
FANSER	Food and Nutrition Security, Enhanced Resilience
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FBS	Farmer Business Schools
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FUS	Follow Up Surveys
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
GTA	Gender Transformative Approach
HFIES	Household Food Insecurity Experience Survey
HP	Health Promoter
IAPRI	Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute
ICE	Information, Communication, and Education
IDDS	Individual Dietary Diversity Score
IDDS-W	Individual Dietary Diversity for Women
IDI	In-depth Interviews
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAD	Minimum Adequate Diet
MCDP	1000 Most Critical Days Programme
MCDSS	Ministry of Community Development and Social Services
MDD	Minimum Dietary Diversity

MDD-W	Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women
MFL	Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries
MMF	Minimum Meal Frequency
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
MSME	Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises
NFNC	National Food and Nutrition Commission
NFNSP	National Food and Nutrition Strategic Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NVs	Nutrition Volunteers
OFSP	Orange Fleshed Sweet Potatoes
PNCCs	Provincial Nutrition Coordinating Committees
PSP	Private Service Providers
RbM	Results-Based Monitoring
SBC	Social and Behaviour Change
SBCC	Social Behavioural Change Communication
SCCI	Seed Control and Certification Institution
SI AGER	Special initiative "Transformation of Agricultural and Food Systems"
SILC	Savings and Internal Lending Committees
SLF	Senior Lead Farmers
SOFI	The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World Report
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition
ToT	Training of Trainers
TWG	Technical Working Groups
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization
WNCC	Ward Nutrition Coordinating Committee
ZANIS	Zambia News and Information Services
ZARI	Zambia Agriculture Research Institute

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Introduction to the Food and Nutrition Security, Enhanced Resilience (FANSER) Project in Zambia

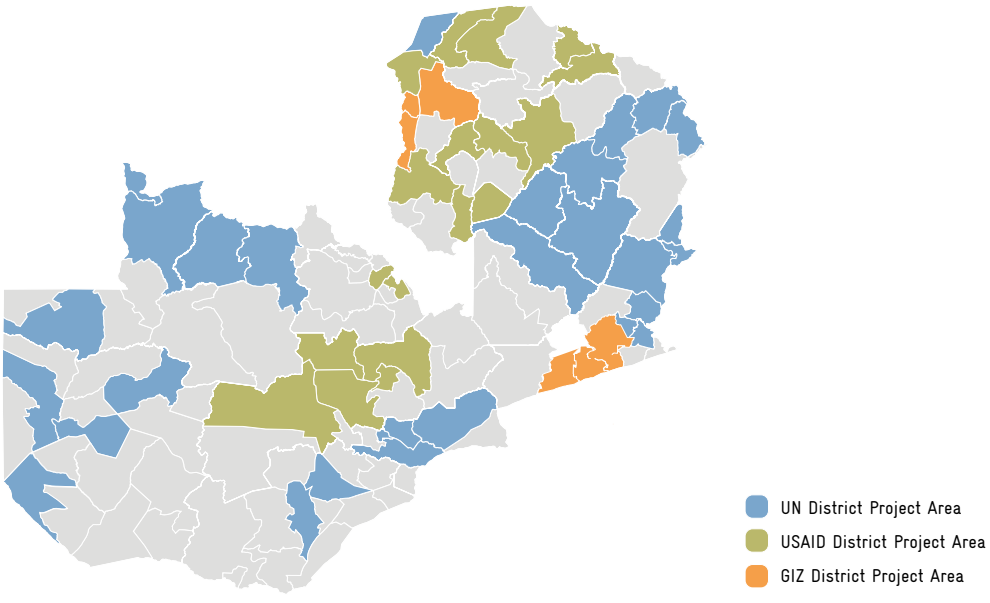
THE RECOGNITION OF FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

Nutrition is both an input into and an outcome of sustainable development. Malnutrition is not just a consequence of a lack of food, but stems from interacting processes linking health, care, education, sanitation and hygiene, access to resources, and women´s empowerment.

The global recognition of malnutrition as a critical development challenge evolved in the context of the global food crisis of 2008, which led to an estimated 97 million[2] **additional** people experiencing hunger worldwide. As a response to the crisis, the Scaling-Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement was created in 2010 to rethink existing approaches to addressing malnutrition in the international context. The SUN movement emphasised the importance of nutrition, particularly during the first one thousand days of life from pregnancy until the second birthday of a child as a period for critical long-term health outcomes. At the same time, a number of influential reports, such as the LANCET[3] series on maternal and child nutrition, provided evidence of the economic and personal costs of malnutrition.

Zambia was amongst the first countries to join the SUN movement in December 2010, with a formal commitment made by the Minister of Health. Zambia´s motivation stemmed from the extremely high (45%) rate of stunted children in the country at that time, as well as the desire to improve the health and productivity of its population.[4]

FIGURE 1: Map of Zambia showing MCDP II districts supported by different partners



[2]
https://reliefweb.int/report/world/knowing-better-responding-worse-how-mistakes-2008-led-food-crisis-today

[3]
In 2008, the British Medical journal The Lancet published a landmark series of papers which led to a seismic shift in how the world addresses maternal and child malnutrition. The 2008 Lancet Series provided the foundation of scientific evidence on the importance of the 1,000 days between pregnancy and a child´s second birthday.

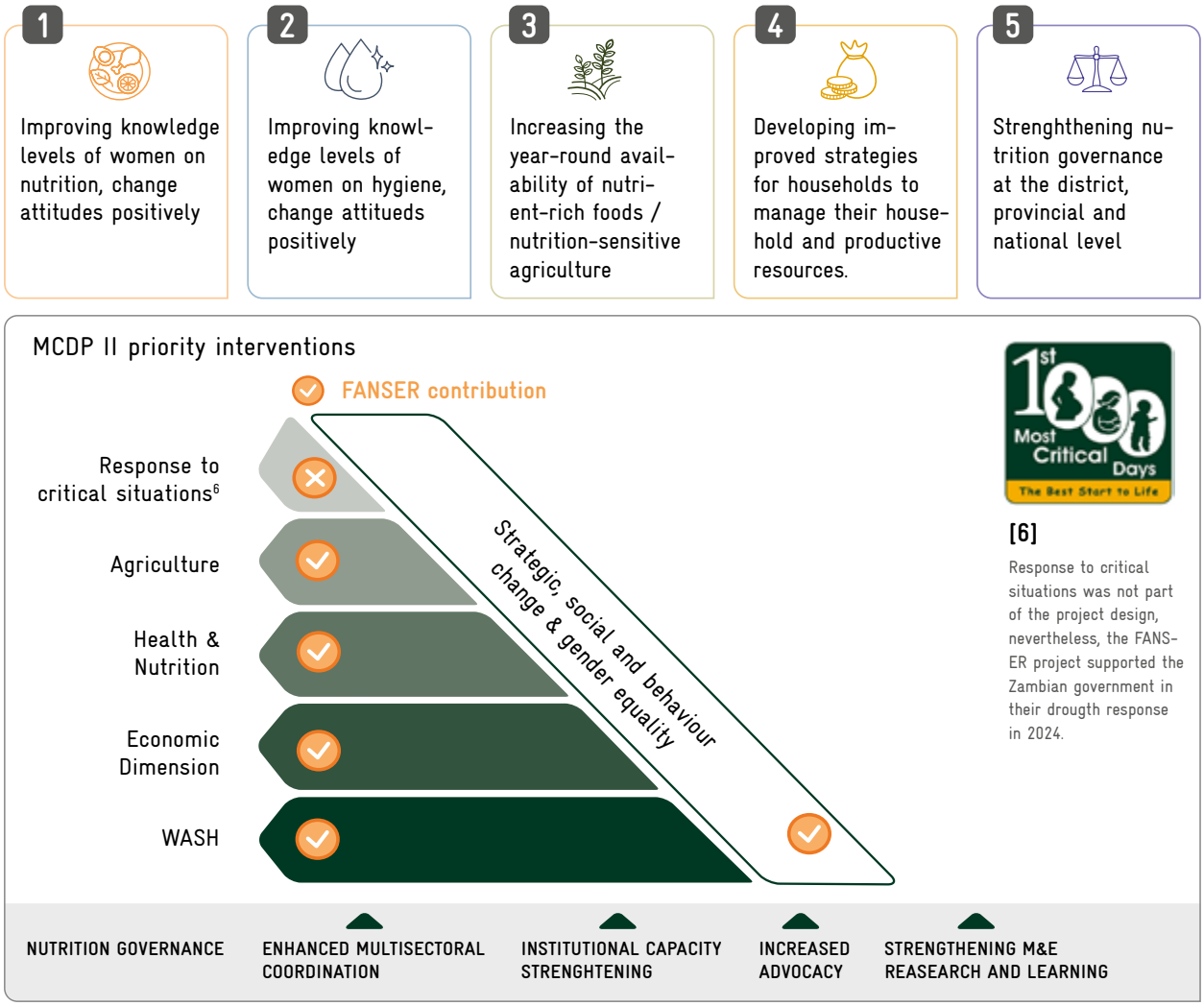
[4]
The Zambian government recognised that high rates of stunting not only compromised individual health but also posed significant economic challenges, potentially costing the country an estimated USD $775 million in lost productivity over a decade

The Zambian government prioritised eradicating hunger and malnutrition by establishing the national **First 1,000 Most Critical Days Programme (MCDP)**[5] in 2013. The MCDP programme was structured in two phases, with the first phase running from 2013 to 2015 and the second phase running from 2017 to 2021. The programme follows a multi-sectoral approach to address the different dimensions of malnutrition. The Zambian government, donors, and implementing agencies such as GIZ agreed on principles of collaboration, including a minimum service package for all beneficiaries, 90 % outreach in the targeted districts, and a geographical division of labour.

[5]

MCDP was a program launched by the Zambian government in 2013 to reduce stunting rates in children under two years by implementing multisectoral approaches to nutrition security. MCDP II, launched in 2018, built on the successes of MCDP I and aimed to scale up interventions and enhance community resilience through improved nutrition and health systems.

FIGURE 2: The FANSER fields of action are in line with the MCDPII pyramid, apart from responses to critical situations



[6]

Response to critical situations was not part of the project design, nevertheless, the FANSER project supported the Zambian government in their drougth response in 2024.

In Zambia today, the majority of the rural population still depends on subsistence agriculture, predominantly maize production, which forms the bulk of Zambians' diets and daily food intake. However, this lack of food diversity results in an insufficient micronutrient intake for the vast majority of the population, causing serious health problems, especially for pregnant and lactating women and young children.

Chronic malnutrition often results in irreversible physical and cognitive damage and impairs children's growth and development. Zambia continues to have one of the highest malnutrition rates in Africa and the world; currently, 73% of people experience severe or moderate food insecurity, a sharp increase from 52% in 2015 (SOFI 2023). In recent years, the percentage of Zambians unable to afford a healthy diet rose from about 78% in 2017 to 82% in 2022 (SOFI 2024).

Recent data from April to September 2024 show that 42% of Zambians are under stress regarding food security (IPC Phase 2), 28% face high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3) and 84,000 people are facing emergency levels (IPC Phase 4), while only 30% are considered to be food secure (IPC 2024).[6]

32% of children below 5 years of age in Zambia are stunted as a result of chronic malnutrition (DHS 2024), which means that their age/height ratio is below normal levels.

High levels of stunting in early life – particularly in the first 1,000 days from conception until the age of two – hold adverse functional consequences. Some of those consequences include poor cognition and educational performance, low incomes, lost productivity and, when accompanied by excessive weight gain later in childhood, an increased risk of nutrition-related chronic, non-communicable diseases in adult life.

A decade into SUN implementation and the SDGs, the global fight against food and nutrition insecurity has yielded mixed results: good progress until 2017, stagnation until 2020, and since then, a reversing trend. Recent global and local developments have put an additional burden on the poor and food insecure: the COVID-19 pandemic, which worsened the economic situation of many households; the Russian war against Ukraine, which led to rising food, energy, and fertiliser prices; and the increasingly negative effects of climate change (e.g. changes in the start and duration of the rainy season and increased occurrence of extreme weather events like flooding or droughts); all of which are likely to lead to reduced yields and thus to food insecurity.

> "Stunted children today mean stunted economies tomorrow.
>
> Dr. Akinwumi A. Adesina (Director AfDB)

The severe drought in southern Africa in the El Nino year 2024 further increased Zambia´s food insecurity, with a total of 6.6 million people who are in urgent need of food assistance due to massive crop failures. Almost half of maize planted was completely destroyed and 82% of Zambia´s livestock is threatened by drought (Republic of Zambia 2024).

THE FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY, ENHANCED RESILIENCE (FANSER) PROJECT

The Food and Nutrition, Enhanced Resilience (FANSER) project has been working from 2015 until 2025 to improve the nutritional situation of people living in food-insecure households in selected districts of Eastern and Luapula provinces. The project targeted women of reproductive age and children under the age of two years. Women are more likely to be affected by hunger and all forms of malnutrition while at the same time, they are playing a crucial role in improving food and nutrition security.

Since 2015, FANSER has been implemented in two districts of Eastern Province (Katete and Petauke). In 2020, the project expanded to Mwense and Kawambwa in Luapula Province, and in 2022 further extended to Sinda (Eastern Province) and Mwansambomwe (Luapula Province). **At 36.3%, the levels of stunting in Eastern Province are lower than the alarming 45.3% in Luapula Province, but still disturbingly high and above the already critical national average.** Over 50% of infants in the districts in Eastern Province and 27% in Luapula Province suffer from diarrhoea, indicating a poor sanitation and hygiene environment (GIZ FUS 2022).

[6]

Phase 1 – none: People are able to meet their basic food and other needs without major changes to their daily lives.
Phase 2 – stressed: People are eating minimally adequate diets but must make significant changes to their lifestyles to support other non-food needs.
Phase 3 – crisis: Some households are not consuming enough food and have high levels of malnutrition, while others are adopting irreversible coping strategies – such as selling assets that support their livelihoods – to support a limited diet.
Phase 4 – emergency: People are facing extreme food shortages, acute malnutrition and disease levels are excessively high, and the risk of hunger-related death is rapidly increasing.
Phase 5 – catastrophe: Even when using all of their coping strategies, people have almost no food and cannot support their basic needs. Starvation, death and destitution are apparent.

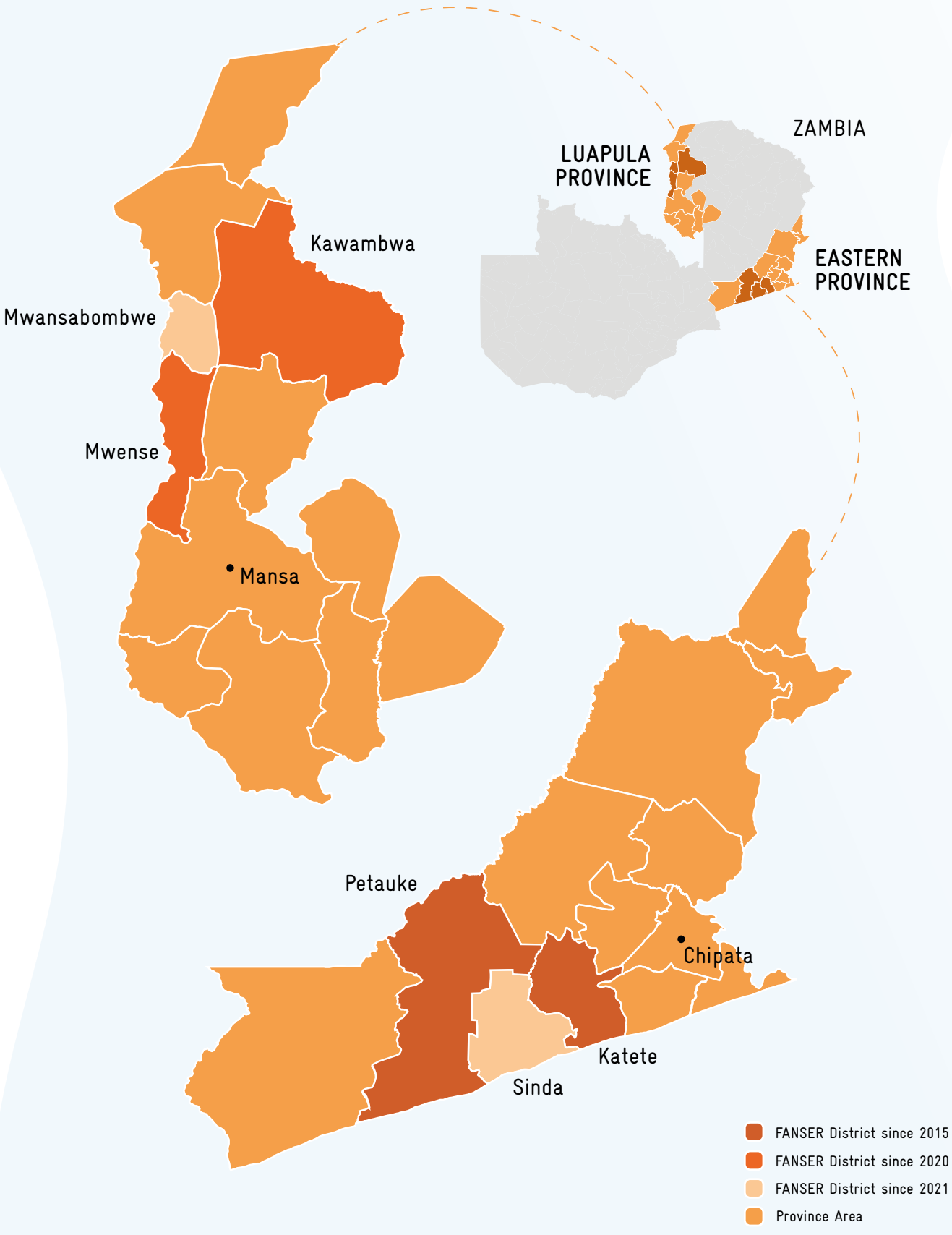
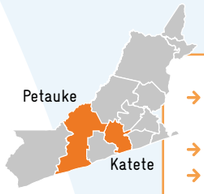


FIGURE 3: FANSER districts in Eastern and Luapula provinces including start year of implementation

TIMELINE
2015 – 2025

2014
- Appraisal mission of the FANSER project

2015


- **February**: Start of the FANSER project in Katete and Petauke (Eastern Province)
- Start of the Care Group Model in Petauke
- Establishment of **District Nutrition Coordinating Committees (DNCCs)** in Petauke

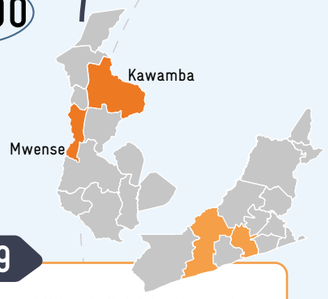
TARGET GROUP
17,250 WOMEN
CHILDERN under 2 years 13,500

2016
- Establishment of DNCCs in Katete district
- Establishment of Ward Nutrition Coordinating Committees (WNCCs) in Petauke district
- Start of Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato (OFSP) promotion

2017
- Establishment of WNCCs in Katete district
- Start of promoting keyhole gardens in Petauke district

2018
TARGET GROUP
27,500 WOMEN
CHILDERN under 2 years 20,000

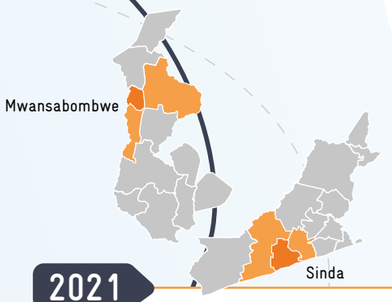
- Start of Care Group Model in Katete
- Establishment of SILC groups for increased access to credits
- Establishment of gender trainings for nutrition sensitive joint household planning and decision making
- Additional output indicator focussing on WASH

2019


- Two additional districts: Kawambwa and Mwense (Luapula Province)
- Nutrition card games and radio broadcasts are launched
- Start of implementation of the Lead Farmer Model

TARGET GROUP
72,000 WOMEN
CHILDERN under 2 years 52,000
AND ADDITIONAL MEN

2020
- M&E online database is commissioned



2021
- Two additional districts: Sinda (Eastern) and Mwansabombwe (Luapula)
- Start of implementation of Farmer Business Schools
- Production of let me tell you series

TARGET GROUP
110,000 WOMEN
CHILDERN under 2 years 64,000
33,000 MEN

2022
- Start of the village chicken approach
- Trainings on cowpea seed multiplication
- Start of developing the sustainability strategy
- Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato tasting approach is implemented

2023
- First sustainability workshops in the regions
- Start of papaya promotion
- Training on gender transformative approaches for intermediaries of the saving groups

2024
- Big sustainability summit in February in the capital
- Implementation of 74 Appreciation Roadshows in both districts
- Support in the drought respone of the Zambian government

2025
- FANSER knowledge map
- National closing workshops
- Regional closing workshops
- End of FANSER in March
- Start of the follow-on project FANSER+

KNOWLEDGE MAP

In close collaboration with the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and governmental as well as non-governmental institutions, the FANSER project aimed to improve the nutritional situation for women of reproductive age and young children through the following five fields of action:

- **Improving Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices in Nutrition**
- **Improving Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices in Hygiene**
- **Increasing the Year-Round Availability of High-Nutritional-Value Food**
- **Enhancing Access to Food and Addressing Economic Dimensions of Malnutrition**
- **Strengthening Nutrition Governance at at district, provincial and national level**

Through this overarching multi-sectoral approach, the FANSER project stimulated positive change at household level. While poor adoption of new practices is often attributed to a lack of knowledge, individual attitudes towards new practices is also a very important contributing factor. New practices need to be positively reinforced by social behaviour change techniques, which entails identifying and addressing both barriers and enablers for certain behaviours. In addition, SBCC (social and behaviour change communication) ensured that messaging was positive and nutrition-sensitive, and was delivered through appropriate channels like videos and card games.

Political Framework

The FANSER project forms part of the global programme **Food and Nutrition Security, Enhanced Resilience** ↗ which was initiated by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) under the German Special Initiative Transformation of Agri-Food Systems (SI AGER). GIZ was commissioned to implement the global Food and Nutrition Security, Enhanced Resilience programme in twelve countries in Asia and Africa.

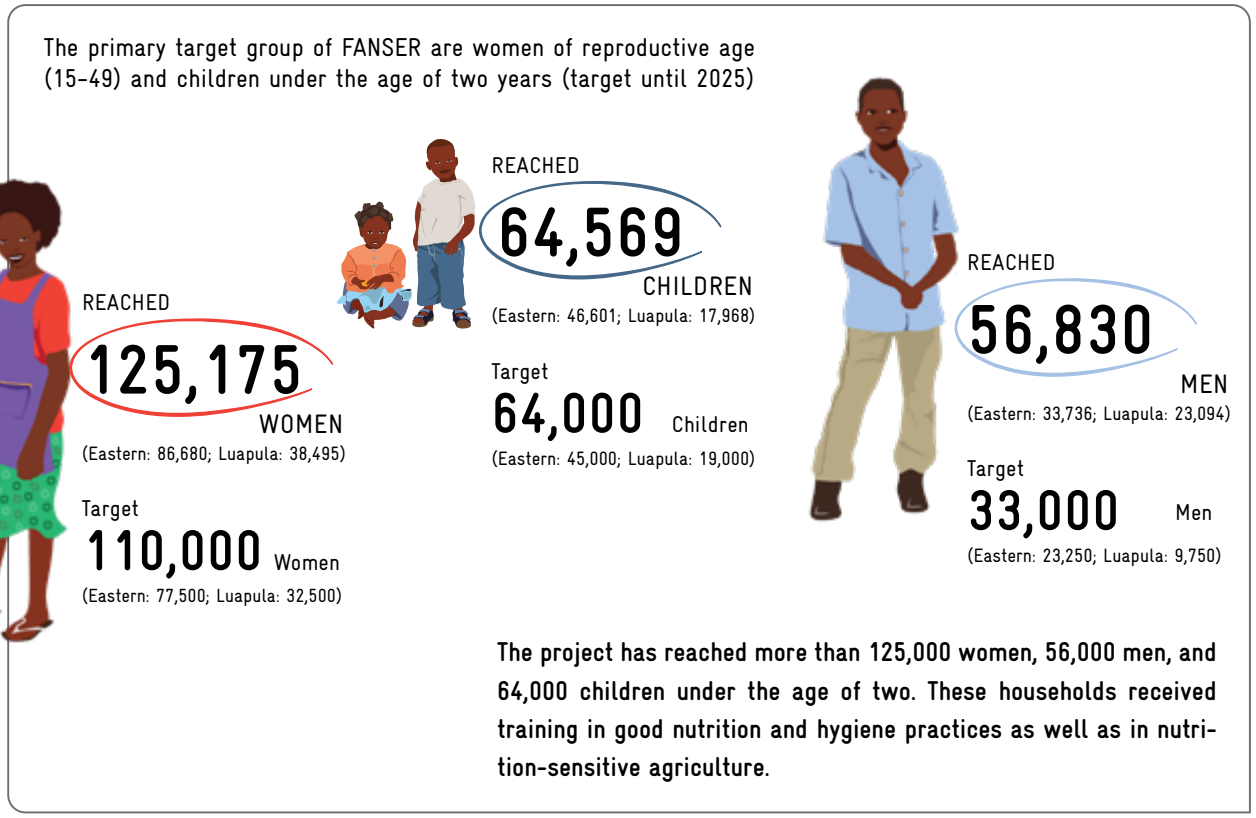
The FANSER project worked in close collaboration with Zambian government institutions and aligned itself to existing national programmes. The official government partner was the **National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC)** ↗, being the lead agency of the Zambian government mandated to coordinate and conceptualise nutrition interventions and programmes.

FANSER´S RESULTS-BASED MONITORING SYSTEM AND RESULTS ACHIEVED

The FANSER project developed a complex and rigorous monitoring system, which was designed to track progress and deliver data for efficient project steering. It entailed setting up a digital beneficiary and activity database as well as producing yearly output assessments to capture progress at output level. At outcome level, the monitoring framework included a nutrition baseline, Follow Up Surveys every two years, and an endline survey. The FANSER baseline took place in 2015,[7] three Follow Up Surveys were implemented in 2018, 2020 and 2022, and the endline survey was conducted in 2024. An independent consulting company was engaged to implement these surveys according to international standards for all twelve country packages of the Global Programme, and also to provide individual cross-country analyses.

[7]
This was done in Katete and Petauke, Eastern Province, where the project implementation started.

FIGURE 4: Numbers of beneficiaries reached by FANSER as well as respective target numbers



The results include

- Through the innovative Care Group model, the project trained women and men in nutrition and hygiene. 99% of the women and 97% of the men confirmed an increase in knowledge as a result of the Care Group model lessons.

- The government agriculture extension services were strengthened by supporting the Lead Farmer model, under which more than 3,500 lead farmers were trained through FANSER. More than 77,000 women and men received training and were supported, in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, in the production, processing and storage of legumes (beans and cowpeas), vitamin A-rich orange maize, and vegetable seeds or orange flesh sweet potato vines.

- Innovative gardening concepts, including keyhole gardens and the use of treadle pumps have been successfully promoted.

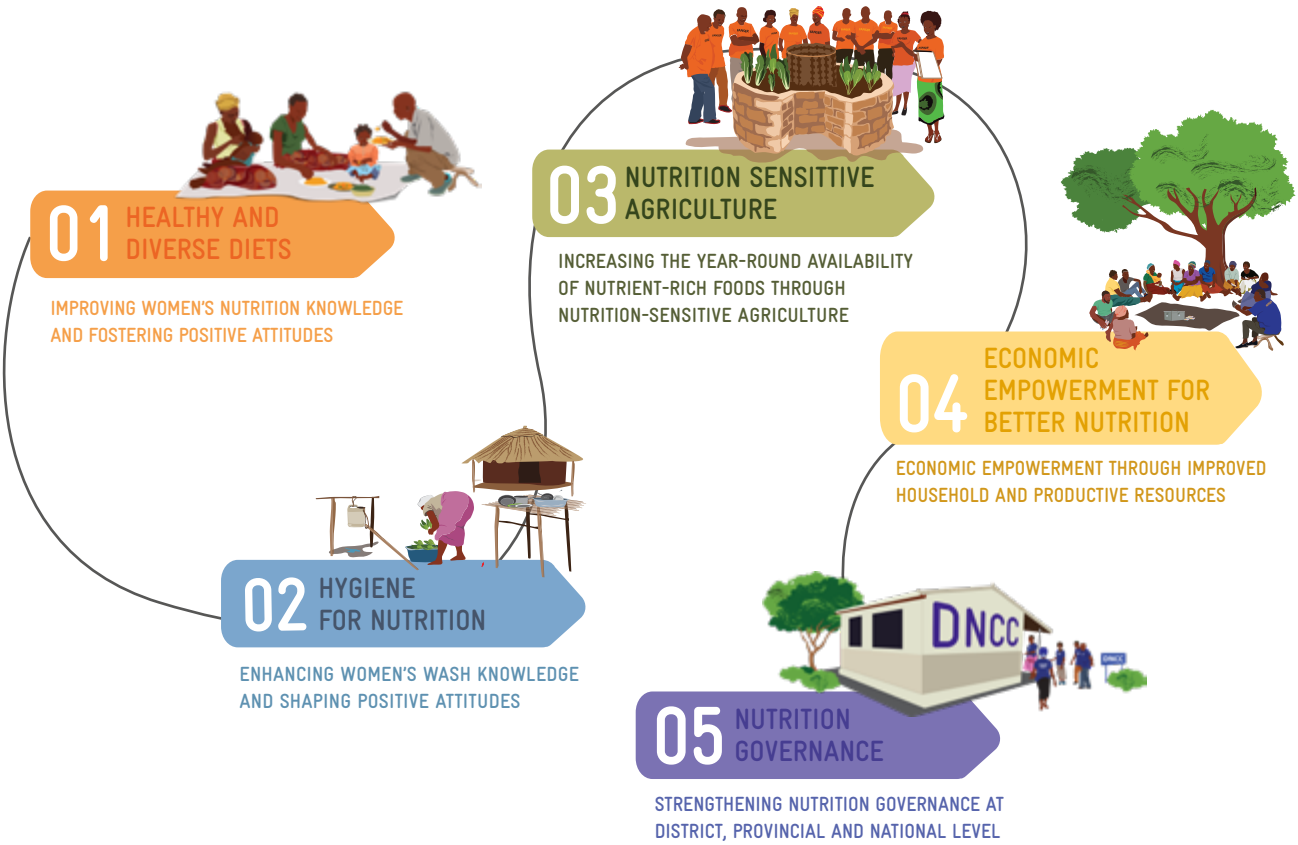
- More than **44,000 households** have been supported to engage in Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC), and **16,500 women and men** have been supported through the innovative Farmers Business School approach (FBS).

- Under the guidance of NFNC, District Nutrition Coordinating Committees (DNCCs) have been formed in the six FANSER districts as well as 64 Ward Nutrition Coordinating Committees (WNCCs). These decentralised nutrition governance structures were supported to improve the coordination of food and nutrition security programming and implementation, e.g. through the development of annual multi-sector plans.

NAVIGATING THROUGH THE KNOWLEDGE MAP

This document presents the knowledge and lessons learnt that have been acquired and compiled over ten years of project implementation. It is organised according to the five fields of action. It serves as the legacy of FANSER, to which all project staff have contributed.

FIGURE 5: Visualization of the chapters in this knowledge map which is aligned with FANSER´s fields of action



A visualized overview of all content, the actual "knowledge map", can be found on page 25, which can be used to navigate through the entire document. The various knowledge products within the document are interlinked and can be accessed by clicking on the corresponding title. Each document addresses a specific topic within the respective field of action and provides detailed information on activities and approaches used, lessons learned, challenges, etc. There is a field at the bottom of each page that can be clicked to return to the overview page of the knowledge map.

Some of the knowledge products also contain links to additional information material and external websites, such as partner Websites (NFNC, CRS)[8]. Other links lead to GIZ-managed websites such as the YouTube and LinkedIn channels of GIZ Zambia, the global programme website and the GIZ publication database, where numerous FANSER documents, such as training materials, studies, and more can be found in addition to the knowledge map.

The document is structured in such a way that it can be used and read as a complete, coherent product, or individual selected documents of interest can be read separately. If background information is required to understand the individual knowledge products, the related pages within the overall document are linked accordingly.

[8]

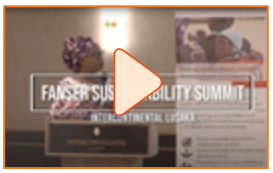
While FANSER's legacy is partly hosted on these websites, neither GIZ nor the FANSER project team can guarantee the continued functionality of the links or take responsibility for the content. However, we hope they will remain accessible and valuable.

IMPRESSIONS FROM FANSER´S FIELDS OF ACTION ON NUTRITION, HYGIENE AND NUTRITION SENSITIVE AGRICULTURE

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & MATERIAL

FANSER
MINI DOCUMENTARY

2022 (4:44 min)
English
Developed by: GIZ FANSER



SUSTAINABILITY
SUMMIT VIDEO

2024 (9:19 min)
English
Developed by: GIZ FANSER

FUS CORE MESSAGES

2024 (6 pages)
English
Developed by: GIZ FANSER

FANSER KNOWLEDGE MAP

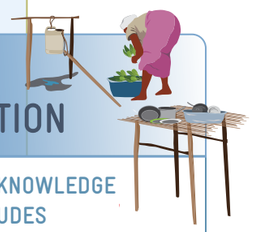
FANSER
Food and Nutrition Security, Enhanced Resilience

01 HEALTHY AND DIVERSE DIETS

IMPROVING WOMEN'S NUTRITION KNOWLEDGE AND FOSTERING POSITIVE ATTITUDES

- The Care Group Model: How to bring nutrition and hygiene knowledge to thousands of households in rural Zambia
- Steps to behaviour change: Understanding enablers and barriers to improve nutrition and hygiene practices

02 HYGIENE FOR NUTRITION



ENHANCING WOMEN'S WASH KNOWLEDGE AND SHAPING POSITIVE ATTITUDES

- Hygiene and sanitation in rural Zambia: What worked, what didn't and why it matters

03 NUTRITION-SENSITIVE AGIRCULTURE

INCREASING THE YEAR-ROUND AVAILABILITY OF NUTRIENT-RICH FOODS THROUGH NUTRITION-SENSITIVE AGRICULTURE

- The Lead Farmer Model: Enhancing knowledge transfer and the adoption of improved agricultural practices among smallholder farmers
- Tasting events for better nutrition: Promoting orange fleshed sweet potatoes
- Meeting protein demands: How cowpea seed multi-plication supports smallholder farmers and nutrition
- Keyhole Gardens: A water saving innovation for vegetable production right at the doorstep
- Promoting papaya: A practical approach to vitamin A rich diets
- Boosting iron intake and income generation with Mbereshi beans: Learnings from implementation

04 ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT FOR BETTER NUTRITION

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT THROUGH IMPROVED HOUSEHOLD AND PRODUCTIVE RESOURCES

- Empowering rural households: How savings and lending groups improve nutrition and resilience
- The Farmer Business School: Equipping women and farmers with essential business skills
- Improving nutrition and income: How FANSER promoted improved chicken breeds for economic empowerment

05 NUTRITION GOVERNANCE

STRENGTHENING NUTRITION GOVERNANCE AT DISTRICT, PROVINCIAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL

- Exploring Zambia's nutrition governance: Policy, practices, and lessons from FANSER
- Practical steps to strengthen nutrition governance at district and ward levels
- Building capacity in nutrition governance: A guide to hosting learning events

06 CROSS-CUTTING APPROACHES FOR NUTRITION

ENSURING INCLUSIVE, IMPACTFUL, AND LASTING CHANGE ACROSS ALL FIELDS

SUSTAINABILITY OF NUTRITION ACTIVTIES

- Circus in Action: Creative ways of community engagement for sustainable impacts
- Graduating beneficiaries: FANSER's approach to measure and secure knowledge for lasting impact

GENDER EQUALITY

- Empowering women for better nutrition: The Gender Transformative Approach in FANSER

MONITORING & EVALUATION OF NUTRITION INTERVENTIONS

- Utilizing FANSER's food and nutrition security data for strategic development and resilience
- Improving project monitoring: Lessons from FANSER's result-based system

SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR CHANGE COMMUNICATION FOR NUTRITION

- Transforming nutrition and WASH behaviors through creative communication: Insights from the FANSER project

07 CONCLUSION

REFLECTIONS FROM THE FANSER TEAM: KEY INSIGHTS AND LESSONS LEARNT

WHY DO WE NEED MULTISECTORAL APPROACHES TO IMPROVE NUTRITION AND FOOD SECURITY?

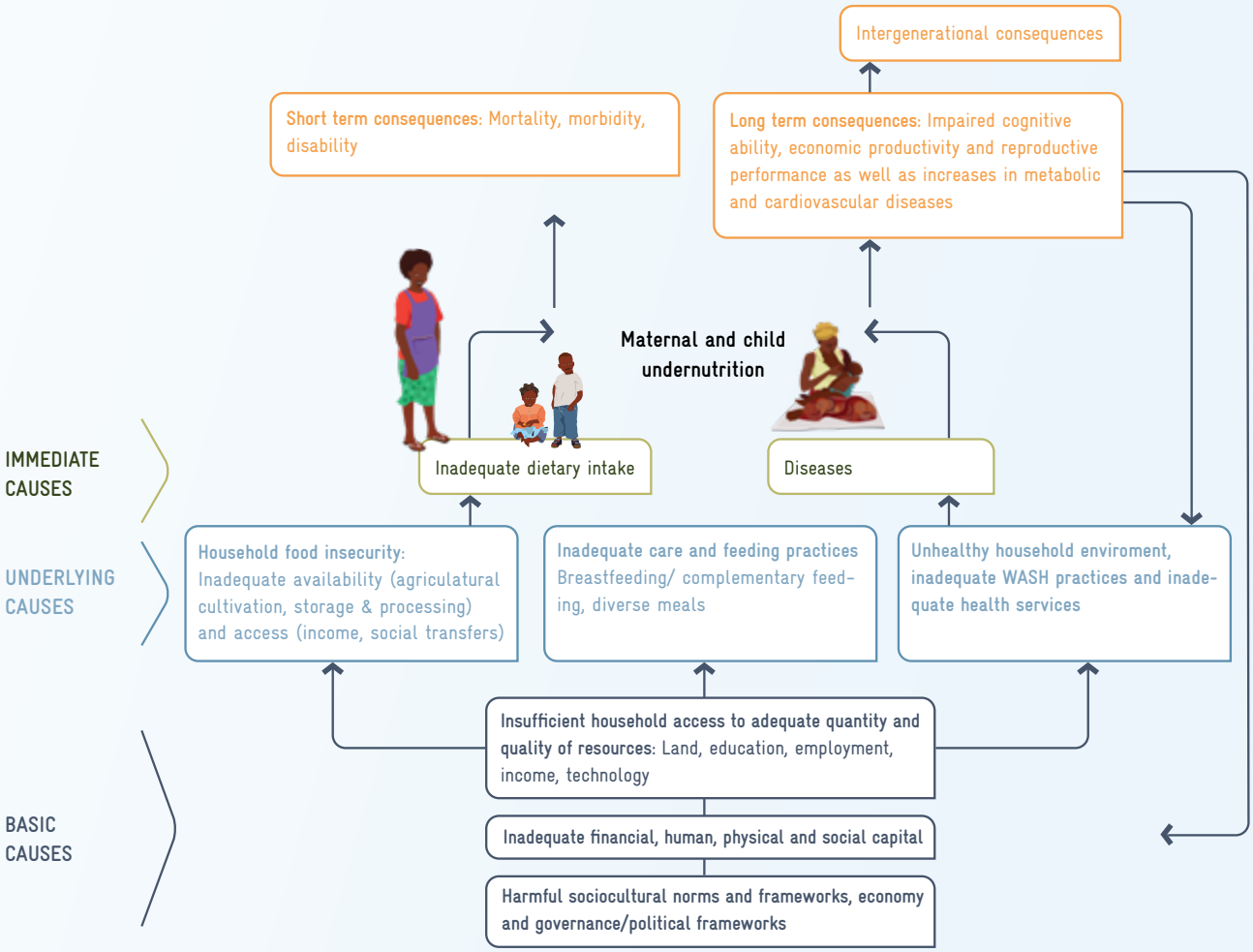
Food insecurity and malnutrition require a multisectoral approach to effectively address their complex and interrelated causes. This principle is reflected in established frameworks such as the **UNICEF Conceptual Framework** (see figure 6), which highlights the need to address both direct and underlying causes of malnutrition through coordinated efforts across sectors. Similarly, Zambia's First 1000 Most Critical Days Programme Phase II (MCDP II) adopts this multisectoral approach to combat stunting as a form of malnutrition, integrating interventions across health, agriculture, WASH, education, and other relevant sectors.

Aligned with this overarching strategy, FANSER also implemented a multisectoral approach, tailored to the local context. The project focused on five interlinked fields of action designed to address the complex causes of food insecurity and malnutrition in Zambia. These thematic areas work together by addressing both the direct causes of malnutrition and the underlying factors, and include nutrition-sensitiv[9] measures as well as nutrition-specific[10] interventions. The interplay creates a basis for long-term food security and resilience.

[9] Nutrition-sensitive interventions tackle underlying causes of malnutrition, such as improving access to clean water or supporting sustainable agriculture.

[10] Nutrition-specific interventions address immediate causes of malnutrition, such as providing vitamin supplements or promoting breastfeeding

FIGURE 6: Causes of malnutrition based on the UNICEF conceptual framework



Improving nutrition knowledge and practices: A lack of knowledge about diverse nutrition often leads to unbalanced, nutrient-poor diets, especially in low-income households. Targeted training courses enable households to acquire knowledge about healthy and diverse diets, exclusive breastfeeding of infants during the first six months, proper nutrition for children under two years of age and healthy nutrition for pregnant or breastfeeding women, thereby enabling them to plan nutritious meals and improve children's nutrition.

Enhancing Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) knowledge and practices: Diseases such as diarrhoea, often caused by inadequate hygiene or unclean drinking water, exacerbate malnutrition, as nutrients cannot be absorbed. Improved knowledge and adoption of WASH practices, such as handwashing with soap, water treatment, sanitation and food hygiene, reduce disease-related nutritional losses, and thus contribute to food and nutrition security.

Increasing nutrition-sensitive agriculture: A sufficient and diverse diet is not possible without availability of and year-round access to nutritious food. In Zambia, maize cultivation, which contributes little to nutritious diets, is dominant. Diversifying agricultural production with vegetables, fruit or pulses promotes nutrient diversity, enables access to important micronutrients, and also increases resilience to (climatic) risks and crises. Adequate post-harvest management practices, which include storage, conservation and processing, improve year-round availability of nutritious foods in households.

Economic empowerment: Poverty is one of the main causes of food and nutrition insecurity, as it leaves many households without access to nutritious food. Improved management of household resources and fostering of income-generating activities, e.g. through participation in savings groups, agricultural value creation or the commercialisation of surpluses, enable sustainable investments in nutrition and health.

Strengthening nutrition governance: The integration of food and nutrition security into political strategies and budgets, the coordination thereof, and implementation across various sectors often present challenges. Well-managed nutrition governance approaches are essential to set a formal basis for multisectoral collaboration and to strengthen cooperation between government stakeholders at different levels (national, provincial, district, ward) and from various sectors and communities, to enable the prioritisation of food security and nutrition on the agenda at national and sub-national level.

Fostering gender equality and initiating social behaviour change: Many factors, such as traditional practices, economic status and social norms, strongly influence nutrition and hygiene, and knowledge alone often does not lead directly to behavioural change. Strategies for behaviour change address underlying issues in order to specifically deal with enablers and barriers. Gender equality plays a crucial role in this context, as unequal power dynamics within households and communities often limit women's ability to make decisions regarding nutrition, agriculture and hygiene.

CHAPTER 01

HEALTHY AND DIVERSE DIETS

Improving women's nutrition knowledge and fostering positive attitudes

In the ten years of its implementation, the FANSER project worked towards improving the nutritional situation of vulnerable people, especially women of reproductive age and children below two years of age, in selected districts of Eastern and Luapula Provinces. The nutrition interventions started in Petauke and Katete districts, Eastern Province, in 2015/16, and formed the core of the project. In 2020, the project expanded to Kawambwa and Mwense districts in Luapula Province. The last expansion took place in 2021, with two new districts added; Mwansabombwe in Luapula Province and Sinda in Eastern Province (see also map on page 21). The implementation of nutrition interventions took place in close collaboration with the Zambian government, particularly with the National Food and Nutrition Commission, as well as the district structures of the Ministry of Health, and FANSER's implementing partner, the Catholic Relief Services. Moreover, under the Scaling-Up Nutrition (SUN) umbrella, the project cooperated and coordinated with other implementing agencies and donors in Zambia.

This chapter centres on the measures that were implemented as part of the FANSER project to promote better knowledge about a balanced diet and to positively influence attitudes and practices relating to nutrition. The backbone of the nutrition (as well as **Water and Sanitation Hygiene WASH** ↗) interventions was the so-called Care Group Model. It was a cascade approach that relied on community-based volunteers and allowed for wide outreach, also in deep rural areas. These volunteers played a key role in disseminating knowledge and supporting changes in nutritional practices at household level. Through regular training and direct support, these intermediaries were empowered to reach their communities with targeted and sustainable knowledge.

The second key approach presented in this section is Social Behaviour Change – a set of processes, approaches, tools and strategies to promote positive and measurable change in people's behaviours. This approach focused on identifying underlying enablers and barriers, and aimed to understand the social, cultural and psychological factors that influence the behaviour of individuals and communities, rather than relying solely on information transfer. By analysing these factors, tailored strategies can be developed that specifically address both positive and negative influences.

On the following pages, you will be introduced to background information on malnutrition, the strategy and implementation of the Care Group Model, Social Behaviour Change, and other interesting activities, such as cooking demonstrations. You will learn about the results and impacts achieved by the FANSER project, the challenges that had to be overcome, as well as important lessons learnt and recommendations that stem from the ten-year long implementation experience.

The Care Group Model: How to bring nutrition and hygiene knowledge to thousands of households in rural Zambia

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Patrick Kolala
Advisor for Food and Nutrition Security, Luapula Province

SUMMARY

Chronic malnutrition remains a significant challenge in Zambia, with 32% of children under five being stunted due to inadequate nutrition. Recognising the critical importance of the first 1,000 days of a child's life, and as part of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) process and the 1000 Most Critical Days Programme (MCDP), the FANSER project implemented the Care Group Model to combat malnutrition and improve hygiene and sanitation practices across intervention areas. This innovative, community-based approach focused on empowering local volunteers to deliver lessons on maternal and child nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) to households.

Through a cascading training system, FANSER reached over 125,000 women of reproductive age, and significantly improved health and nutrition outcomes. Surveys revealed increased dietary diversity, better hygiene practices, and reductions in diarrhoeal diseases in beneficiary households, compared to control groups. Cooking demonstrations and targeted messaging further enhanced households' adoption of nutritious, locally available diets and essential hygiene behaviours.

Key success factors included integrating gender-sensitive approaches, mobilising community trust, and equipping volunteers with the tools and training to address literacy challenges. Sustainability was prioritised through collaboration with the Zambian Ministry of Health, transitioning project responsibilities to local health facilities in the final project phase.

This document provides a comprehensive overview of the Care Group Model's design, implementation and outcomes, while highlighting lessons learned and recommendations for scaling and sustaining nutrition-sensitive interventions. Additionally, it offers actionable insights into leveraging community-driven models to achieve transformative health and nutrition impacts while ensuring long-lasting sustainability.

BACKGROUND

Malnutrition among children under the age of five is high in Zambia. According to the Zambia Demographic Health Survey 2024, 32% of children are stunted, which means they are too short for their age as a result of chronic malnutrition. FANSER supported the Zambian government in its efforts to reduce stunting among children under the age of two and was one of the lead implementers of the Zambia First 1,000 Most Critical Days Program (MCDPII). The first 1,000 days, starting from conception until a child's second birthday, are critical to prevent and address chronic malnutrition. This is especially important given that chronic malnutrition not only affects a child's physical and cognitive development but impacts negatively on family life and community development. Moreover, these negative effects are irreversible if not addressed during that critical timeframe of the first 1,000 days.

Good nutrition in children largely depends on whether pregnant and lactating mothers and their children are adequately nourished and in good health, as only a healthy body is able to absorb the nutrients contained in food. It is critical that mothers and children have a diverse diet, and that their families have access to nutritious foods. Safe drinking water, adequate hygiene practices and sanitation infrastructure are also necessary to maintaining good health.

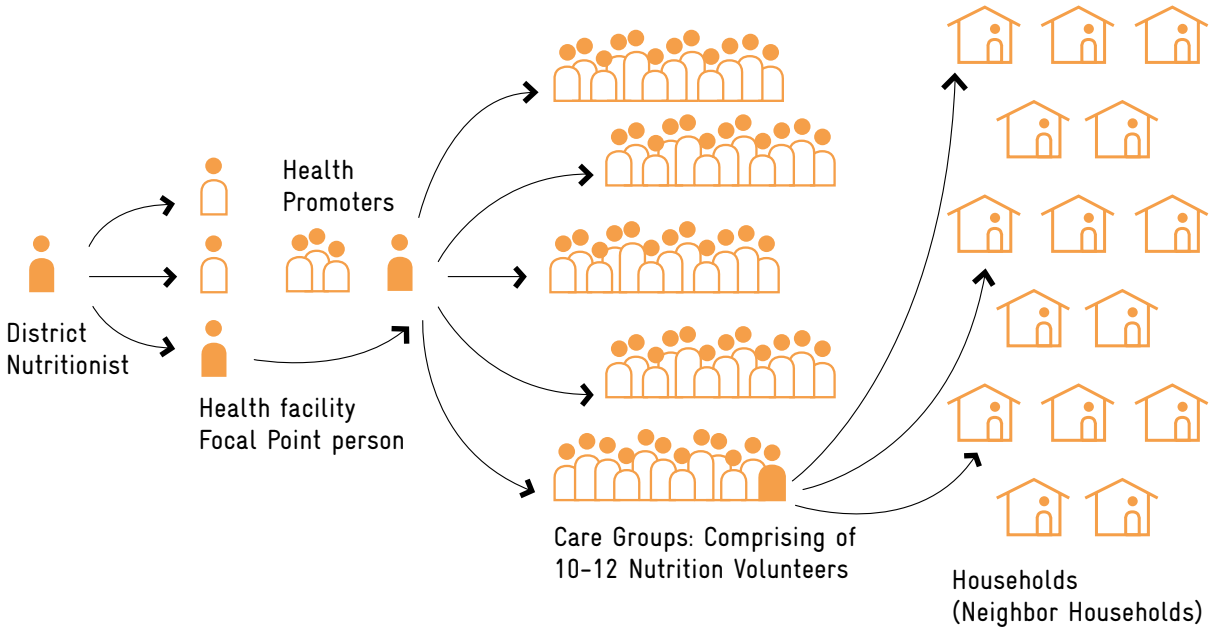
STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

90% of targeted households where reached through the Care Group Model where trusted community 'Nutrition Volunteers' delivered nutrition and WASH lessons to households on a monthly basis. Volunteers underwent comprehensive training and used the **ASPIRE approach (Ask; Show and Explain; Probe; Inform; Request; Examine)** to foster behaviour change.

The FANSER project used the Care Group Model to reach out to the targeted households with women of reproductive age and children under the age of two. The Care Group Model is a community-based approach to support behaviour change in nutrition and WASH practices. Nutrition volunteers provided monthly lessons on Maternal, Adolescent, Infant and Young Child Nutrition (MAIYCN) and WASH to the targeted household members. The Care Group Model is a cascade model, driven by nutrition officers from the Ministry of Health who train rural health facility staff in nutrition and hygiene practices on a monthly basis. In turn, the health facility staff deliver monthly training to a group of community volunteers called Health Promoters (HPs). The HPs further cascade monthly nutrition and hygiene lessons to another group of community volunteers known as Nutrition Volunteers (NVs).

Care Groups are groups of 10-12 NVs who meet monthly with an assigned Health Promoter for training and supervision. Each volunteer is responsible for visiting between 8 and 12 households in her or his neighbourhood every month, delivering the nutrition or WASH lesson of the month, and facilitating and negotiating behaviour change at household level. This model allows for extensive coverage and reach of targeted households. To date, FANSER has established **more than 8,700 NVs under the Care Group Model, reaching more than 125,000 women of reproductive age**. Furthermore, through this cascade model, the project was able to cover 90% of targeted households with services under the Care Group Model.

FIGURE 7: Care Group Model



CARE GROUPS WERE SET UP AS FOLLOWS

1. Introduction of the project to the **headperson** of the village.
2. Identification and registration of the **target households** with women of reproductive age and children under the age of two.
3. Selection of **Nutrition Volunteers** by the beneficiaries. Volunteers had to be trusted community members, able to read and write in the local language. Their task was to deliver lessons to 8–12 households every month, following a predefined lesson schedule. In addition to information delivery, they were responsible for triggering and negotiating behaviour change, using the ASPIRE approach. This approach follows a defined process in each lesson: Ask, Show or Explain, Probe, Inform, Request and Examine the results (ASPIRE). The NVs encouraged household members to start implementing small, doable actions.
4. Recruitment of the second level of volunteers, the **Health Promoters**, through interviews and written tests, following pre-defined criteria for this position. They were responsible for around five groups of Nutrition Volunteers – the so-called **Care Groups**. Each Care Group was comprised of 10–12 NVs. The Health Promoters' task was to deliver a monthly lesson on a specific topic to the Care Group members and compile reports from the Nutrition Volunteers.

Once recruited, the Nutrition Volunteers and Health Promoters received tailored induction training on the Care Group methodology, the content of the nutrition and WASH lessons, the ASPIRE approach, and their specific tasks related to lesson delivery and reporting. Every volunteer was given a bicycle, lesson booklets, reporting templates and Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials in the local language, and, in appreciation of their volunteer work, a T-shirt to create unity and belonging. In addition, Health Promoters received a small monthly coordination fee to acknowledge their coordination work.

In the project period, **around 8,700 Nutrition Volunteers in the six FANSER districts were trained and delivered monthly lessons on good maternal and child nutrition**, including good hygiene and sanitation topics. The beneficiary households received at least two cycles of the nine core lessons to ensure that every household had received every lesson at least once.

THE 9 CORE LESSONS

LESSON 1
Smart, Healthy and Strong

LESSON 2
Best Start to Life: Why Good Nutrition Matters

LESSON 3
Healthy Diet for Pregnant and Breastfeeding (Lactating) Women

LESSON 4
Better Breastfeeding

LESSON 5
Feeding a child 6-23 months

LESSON 6
Handwashing

LESSON 7
Sanitation

LESSON 8
Water Handling, Treatment and Storage

LESSON 9
Food Hygiene

Monthly lessons on nutrition held by Health Promoters

KNOWLEDGE MAP

COOKING, FOOD PROCESSING AND PRESERVATION DEMONSTRATION SESSIONS

Building on the monthly nutrition lessons, the project conducted **routine cooking and food processing and preservation demonstrations**. The cooking demonstrations aimed to empower beneficiaries to prepare nutrient dense and locally available foods and improve dietary diversity for women, children, and men. Participatory cooking demonstrations are a unique and effective way to teach nutritional concepts and basic cooking skills in a community setting, and advance healthy feeding practices in communities. The facilitators of these sessions also demonstrated active feeding for children under the age of two who were on complementary foods, and spread relevant nutrition, WASH, gender, and other messages. Participants were expected to adopt the cooking, feeding and other practices and pass them on to other households. Community-based cooking demonstrations were usually facilitated by health facility staff and field supervisors together with the community volunteers (Nutrition Volunteers, Sanitation Promoters and Health Promoters). The project, together with key stakeholders and ministries that were usually involved in the cooking demonstrations, developed a **Cooking Demonstration Guide** ↗, which was reviewed and validated at national level. The guide contains information on how to prepare and conduct effective cooking demonstrations in rural communities.

COLLABORATION WITH THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND TRANSITION OF THE CARE GROUP MODEL

In the first eight years of the project, the NGO Catholic Relief Services (CRS) implemented the Care Group Model, informally collaborating with the Ministry of Health (MoH). At the beginning of 2023, **two years before the end of the FANSER project, the Care Group Model transitioned to the MoH in order to safeguard the sustainability of the intervention**. All the health facilities in the project area selected Nutrition Focal Persons who were trained in the Care Group methodology. The **Nutrition Focal Persons** were responsible for overseeing the Care Group implementation, which included monthly lessons for the Health Promoters; monitoring, supervision and mentoring of the volunteers; and reporting on lesson delivery through the reporting system of the Ministry of Health. In total, CRS trained 105 Nutrition Focal Persons from the health facilities in the six intervention districts in the Care Group methodology and mentored them for about eighteen months. After the transition phase, the trained Nutrition Focal Persons confirmed that they were able to implement the model with minimum support.

LOCALLY AVAILABLE NUTRITIOUS FOOD PROMOTED BY THE FANSER PROJECT

NUTRITION COUSELING AT A HEALTH FACILITY

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS DURING A LESSON DELIVERY FROM THE HEALTH FACILITY STAFF

WASHING HANDS USING A TIPPY TAP

KNOWLEDGE MAP

RESULTS AND IMPACT

- The Care Group Model is an impactful approach to prevent malnutrition and improve nutrition and health among women and children.
- The model has allowed FANSER to reach a high number of beneficiary households with nutrition and hygiene messages.
- Surveys have indicated significant improvements in maternal and child nutrition, sanitation practices and health outcomes, compared to control groups.

During the project period, more than 125,000 women of reproductive age and 56,000 men were trained in nutrition and WASH topics through the Care Group Model.

Results of several surveys have shown that the Care Group Model interventions were effective in improving nutrition and health outcomes. They contributed to improved maternal and child nutrition as well as to improved sanitation and hygiene behaviours. **Results show that beneficiary households performed better throughout all measured indicators than households in the control group without project interventions.**

According to the latest Output Assessment, conducted by FANSER (CRS and GIZ) in 2023:

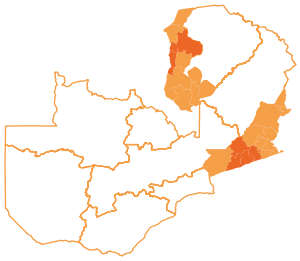
- Over 95% of the project beneficiaries (women and men) acquired good knowledge in maternal and child nutrition, hygiene and sanitation through Care Group lessons.
- Furthermore, 53% of the beneficiary households now have a functional pit latrine that meet the minimum standards (latrine with lid + cleanable surface). The number of households with functional tippy taps with water and soap increased from 24% in the previous assessment in 2022, to 38%.

According to the Follow Up Survey conducted by FANSER in 2022:

- The dietary diversity of the beneficiary women in the intervention areas increased and was significantly higher than in the control groups without any interventions: 67% of the beneficiary women in Eastern Province and 53% in Luapula consumed the Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women (MDD-W) (control group: 45% Eastern and 42% Luapula).
- The percentage of children under two years receiving the Minimum Acceptable Diet (MAD) increased to 64% in Eastern Province and 33% in Luapula Province (Control Group: 45% in Eastern and 28% in Luapula Provinces).

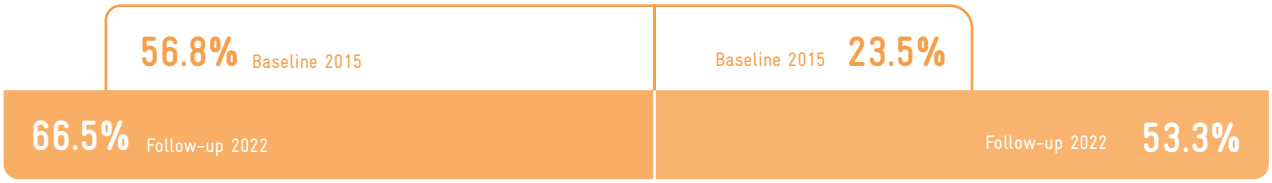
The incidence of diarrhoea in beneficiary children showed a decline from 62% in 2015 to 49% in 2022 in Eastern Province, and a substantial decline from 52% in 2020 to 27% in 2022 in Luapula Province.

INTERVENTION DISTRICTS
EASTERN PROVINCE

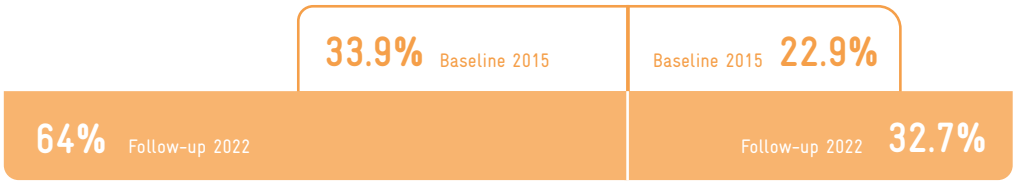


INTERVENTION DISTRICTS
LUAPULA PROVINCE

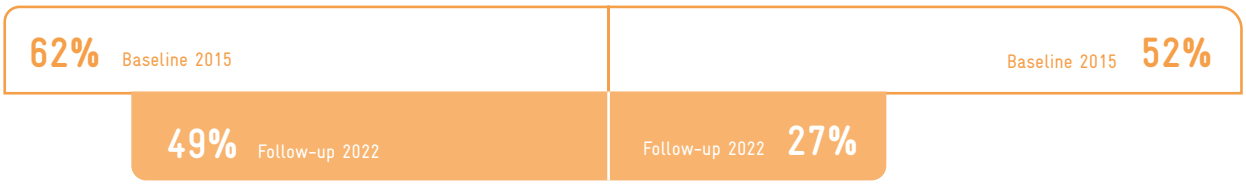
MINIMUM DIETARY DIVERSITY FOR WOMEN (MDD-W)



MINIMUM ACCEPTABLE DIET (MAD)



PREVALENCE OF DIARRHOEA AMONG CHILDREN UNDER 2 YEARS



SOURCE: Survey conducted by FANSER in 2022

Health facilities confirmed, based on their data, that the implementation of the Care Group Model significantly reduced cases of malnutrition among children as well as cases of diarrhoea in their catchment areas.

This is due to the reach and intensity of the Care Group interventions but can also be attributed to the methodologies used to teach rural communities, where education and literacy levels are generally quite low.

LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After almost ten years of implementation of the Care Group Model, we are able to draw the following conclusions and recommendations:

The Care Group methodology is a cost-effective approach to reach a large number of beneficiaries and create sustainable positive change in nutrition and WASH behaviours.

To achieve better nutrition, consider the following:

1. **Target the whole household, especially men, to increase effectiveness**. Gender plays a critical role in behaviour change with regard to nutrition and WASH. Men in particular are crucial players when it comes to investment in WASH infrastructure or nutrition-related behaviours, such as the production of nutrient-rich foods. It is important to invite husbands to be part of the lessons, and to include gender topics in all messages. This has significantly contributed to changed attitudes, practices and joint decision-making in households, as well as men's involvement in household chores and child care (Gender Impact Study 2023).

2. At household level, the convergence of services from different sectors like nutrition, agriculture, social protection and WASH is important to achieve desired nutrition outcomes. Agricultural services (production and post-harvest management practices) should increase year-round availability of nutritious foods, and savings groups should be established to improve management of household resources. Survey results (Follow Up Survey 2022) show that the increased availability of nutritious foods through nutrition-sensitive agriculture interventions contributed to more diverse consumption patterns and improved nutrition. Female members of savings groups consumed more diverse diets and were more food secure.

To ensure the quality of Care Group implementation, consider the following:

1. **Invest in appropriate training materials.** Care Group Volunteers need training materials in local languages to be able to effectively deliver the content of the lessons to households. This is critical in the Zambian context, especially in rural areas. In addition, training should include the methodology of lesson delivery for easy use and accurate teaching of the content in the training materials.

2. **Use adequate tools for supervision, counselling and monitoring** of the work of the volunteers. It is crucial that households receive high quality lessons to enable them to practice the promoted behaviours. Volunteers should be enabled to deliver content and use the ASPIRE approach effectively.

3. **Keep volunteers motivated:** Frequent monitoring visits and mentoring make volunteers feel appreciated and keep them motivated. Providing bicycles supports their work, while T-shirts and bags serve as incentives and foster a sense of unity.. The provision of coordination fees to Health Promoters can be questioned, as the MoH will not be able to provide this incentive in future. Nevertheless, it has been a useful tool for the project to reach the high target numbers and receive the necessary data for project monitoring and reporting on time.

4. From the onset of the Care Group implementation, **create and implement a strategy for the graduation process of beneficiary households who have received at least two cycles of the core lessons** and have acquired a critical level of knowledge and practice. This is important to enable the uptake of new beneficiary households without overloading volunteers. Results from a **graduation pilot** ↗ show that the uptake of intended behaviours is quicker when beneficiaries

know that their performance will be at some point be assessed to measure knowledge and adoption of practices, and to evaluate if they are ready for graduation.

5 **Consider addressing adolescent girls and their parents with specific messages.** The Care Group Model targets women of reproductive age and children under the age of two. Women are considered to be in their reproductive age from 15-49 years. However, adolescents (10-19 years) have specific nutritional requirements that are crucial for their growth, development, and overall health. This period is characterised by rapid physical changes, increased energy needs, and the onset of menstruation, which further affects dietary needs. An adequate intake of calories, proteins, vitamins, and minerals is vital for adolescent girls' health and development. The nine core lessons may not fully cover all aspects of good nutrition and development for adolescent girls in their reproductive age. To improve the inclusion of this age group under the Care Group Model, the methodology and content need to be adapted.

6 **Creating ownership for the Care Group Model for sustainability and upscaling:**

a To ensure the sustainability of interventions, the Zambian government should be actively involved in the initial stages of the project. Project and community structures should be set up within the delivery channels of the MoH.

b The Care Group Model approach has proved to help prevent malnutrition among children. The MoH aims to reach women of reproductive age with nutrition messaging and improve the uptake of critical WASH infrastructure such as toilets, handwashing facilities, dish racks and pit latrines by rural households to reduce malnutrition. The Care Group Model can support the MoH to achieve these goals very efficiently. In order to sustainably anchor the model under the Zambian MoH, it will be important to convince the ministry of the model's preventive strength and effectiveness. In the long run this should lead to adequate budget allocations and allocation of resources for smooth implementation of the project.

c Challenges to the implementation of the project under the MoH and its health facilities were identified as:

- Insufficient technical support to Nutrition Focal Point persons from the District Health Office (DHO),
- Difficulties with transport (motorbikes and fuel) at health facility level for supervision and monitoring, and
- Timely onboarding and orientation of new staff at health facility level through the DHO. High staff turnover at health facility level has been identified as one of the major challenges to the success of the project.

Changing WASH behaviours needs special attention:

Impacting on the practice of the promoted WASH behaviours requires effort and the right interventions. We learnt that relapses can happen quickly. To obtain sustainable results when it comes to good sanitation, promoting handwashing behaviours including sanitation, and safe water handling amongst other behaviours, barriers and enablers must be identified early and addressed with appropriate interventions. It is important to know the audience (project beneficiaries) and be aware that increased knowledge and even attitudes regarding WASH behaviours do not automatically lead to action.

There might be a need for additional interventions, apart from the Care Group Model, to achieve the desired impact, e.g. identifying respected change agents, like traditional leaders, who promote and practice intended behaviours, and ensuring that the volunteers under the Care Group Model practice what they preach.

In addition to the implementation of the Care Group Model, the project supported WASH-related behaviour change in various ways:

1 **Intensification of collaboration with important stakeholders and change agents, such as** traditional leaders, the WASH Coordinators Council, the Ministry of Water and Sanitation and a UNICEF Workshop with traditional leaders and key government partners led to the following outcomes:

a After a sensitisation workshop, **chiefs included WASH topics in their bylaws.**[11]

b Training of 90 masons in standard toilet construction. A specific problem was the frequent collapsing of toilets during the rainy season. The project, together with the WASH coordinators at district level and the Ministry of Water and Sanitation, trained masons in the construction of five different standard toilets for different environments and soil conditions.

2 **Collaboration with the WASH coordinator responsible for rural water and sanitation at the District Council** and a successful pilot of the Community Lead Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach with headmen in one chiefdom. However, scaling up CLTS was limited due to resource constraints.

3 **Behaviour change communication through radio jingles** about the benefits of good WASH practices, using voices of villagers. These jingles were aired twice a day over six months by two local radio stations.

4 **Inclusion of WASH messages in agricultural training.** The project developed a two-pager with information and messages on promoted WASH behaviours, which was distributed to the **Lead Farmers** ↗ who are experienced and trusted community volunteers selected to assist in agricultural projects by serving as role models and educators under the nutrition-sensitive agriculture component. The farmers were briefed on the content and have been using the messages in their agricultural training.

Finally, acknowledge that "knowing your audience" is key. Conduct a Barrier and Enabler Analysis to understand your audience and design impactful interventions that address barriers and enablers.

[11] Bylaws are in this context local laws enacted by the traditional chiefs, which apply specifically to their chiefdoms. Bylaws in Zambian chiefdoms are typically rooted in customary law and local traditions, reflecting the governance structures and social norms of the communities.

The Care Group Model stands as a cost-effective solution to prevent malnutrition and enhance health outcomes in rural Zambia, advocating for continued investment in preventive measures for long-term impact.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & MATERIAL

CARE GROUP LESSON BOOKLET FOR HEALTH PROMOTERS

2021 (119 pages)
English
Developed by: GIZ FANSER, CRS

COOKING DEMONSTRATION GUIDE

2024 (50 pages)
English
Developed by: GIZ FANSER, CRS

NUTRITION ACTION CARDS

2018 (36 pages)
Developed by: GIZ FANSER, CRS

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

DAINESS CHILEMBO

09:54 min
Sinda,
Eastern Province

Listen to Dainess Chilembo, senior project officer at CRS, as she explains the care group model and shares how it has been instrumental in helping the project achieve its goals.

BENARD CHIMUNGU

09:30 min
Sinda,
Eastern Province

Hear from Dr. Benard Chimungu, district health director for MoH in Sinda district, as he discusses how the collaboration between FANSER and MoH has strengthened their service delivery, improving food and nutrition security while enhancing resilience.

CHANDA NKANDU

06:00 min
Sinda,
Eastern Province

Chanda Nkhandu, district nutritionist in Sinda district, explains how the MoH was capacitated on the care group model and is taking up its implementation. Listen to her insights on growth monitoring and active case finding of malnourished children during the 2024 drought.

SHAUDA KHONDOWE

05:44 min
Katete,
Eastern Province

Listen to Shauda Khondowe, a traditional leader from Katete, as he reflects on his role in spearheading the fight against malnutrition within his community.

EVELES MWANZA

08:26 min
Katete,
Eastern Province

Hear Eveles Mwanza share her journey of learning the importance of good sanitation and adequate diets as well as growing diverse crops for balanced nutrition through FANSER trainings and how it has led to improvements in her children's health.

BRIDGET AND LIGHTONE SHAWA

07:32 min
Katete,
Eastern Province

Bridget and Lightone Shawa are parents to three children. Listen to them share their journey of learning about the importance of balanced nutrition through FANSER lessons and how it has transformed their children's health.

FADALES PHIRI

05:34 min
Katete,
Eastern Province

Listen as Fadales Phiri, a nutrition and WASH volunteer under the care group model, shares how the adoption of nutrition and WASH practices has positively impacted households.

LETESIA PHIRI

04:25 min
Katete,
Eastern Province

Listen to Letesia Phiri, a caregiver from Katete, as she shares how she supports and provides childcare when mothers are away.

Steps to behaviour change: Understanding enablers and barriers to improve nutrition and hygiene practices

Dr. Annette Roth
FANSER Regional Coordinator, Eastern Province

SUMMARY

How do you inspire lasting change in the way people eat, grow food, and care for their health? The FANSER project took on this challenge in Zambia, working to improve the nutrition of vulnerable households, and particularly of women and young children. Instead of just sharing information, the project looked deeper into what drives or blocks change in people's daily lives. This document highlights the FANSER project's approach to improving nutrition by promoting key WASH behaviors, including handwashing, sanitation, and safe water handling. Through a Social and Behavior Change (SBC) strategy, the project sought to understand the barriers and enablers that shape people's choices. Why do some families prioritize good hygiene practices, while others don't, despite knowing the risks? How do traditional beliefs and social norms affect the way people care for their health?

This document outlines the FANSER project's efforts to improve nutrition among women of reproductive age and children under two in Zambia by promoting targeted behaviours related to complementary feeding, dietary diversity, and WASH practices. Using a Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) strategy, the project built on understanding not just individual habits, but the influences of family, community, and society, seeking to understand the barriers and enablers that shape people's choices. Why do some households grow and eat nutritious foods like orange-fleshed sweet potatoes, while others don't? Why do misplaced beliefs persist about what children should eat, even when better information is available?

By analysing these barriers and enablers, the team developed targeted interventions to close the gap between knowledge and action. Interviews with mothers, farmers and community leaders were supplemented by research to uncover insights, such as why families kept eggs for hatching instead of eating, or how social norms shaped decisions. Through this process, the team learnt which approaches proved effective, where and why challenges persisted, and how targeted behaviour changes were able to deliver measurable impact. This document shares the process, the results and the lessons learned, including the importance of tailoring activities to local realities and involving communities every step of the way. It goes beyond summarising activities; by offering actionable insights for designing effective, community-driven interventions.

CONTEXT

The project aimed to enhance nutrition among women of reproductive age and children under two by promoting specific behaviours linked to improved nutritional outcomes. Success was measured through individual adoption rates of practices related to complementary feeding, dietary diversity for women, and WASH behaviours. Key indicators included the Minimum Acceptable Diet (MAD) for children and the Individual Dietary Diversity Score (IDDS) for women. The project also focused on nutrition-sensitive agriculture to ensure year-round access to nutritious foods, promoting the cultivation of improved vegetable and legume varieties, among others.

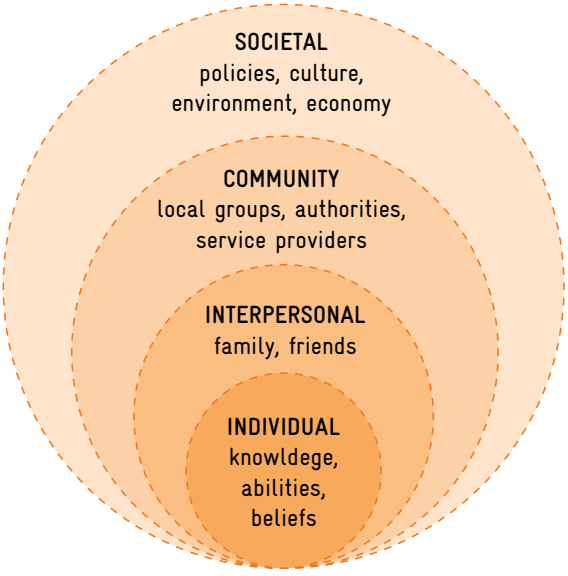
Training sessions using the **Care Group** ↗ and **Lead Farmer models** ↗ educated participants on over 30 behaviours. Under the Care Group Model, nutrition volunteers employed the ASPIRE (Ask-Show/Explain-Probe-Inform-Request/Examine) approach to facilitate behaviour change at household level. Results from the Follow Up Survey II (FUSII) in 2020 showed significant knowledge gains, although gaps remained in translating this knowledge into practice.

Behaviour change is determined by eleven key factors, with knowledge being only one factor among, for example, self-efficacy, perceived positive or negative consequences, perceived social norms, perceived severity of a certain issue and access to certain inputs or services. The project wanted to better understand how factors at different levels influenced people's behaviours, following the Socio-Ecological Model (see figure below). According to this model, our behaviours are determined by a range of personal and external factors at the following levels:

- **Individual level**: includes a person's knowledge, skills, self-confidence, life experience, socio-economic status, age, health, and other factors.
- **Interpersonal level**: includes a person's partner, family, friends or the closest classmates/colleagues.
- **Community level**: includes various local-level groups and institutions (e.g. presence of a savings group or of a school), local authorities (e.g. traditional leaders) and providers of commercial and public services (shops, health facilities, transportation).[12]
- **Societal level**: includes policies, culture, environment and economy.

[12]
See GIZ's Guide: Social and Behaviour Change: Insights and Practice | Behaviour Change ↗

FIGURE 8: Socio-ecological model



Source: Adapted from Schmied, P. (2017) Behaviour Change Toolkit

IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANT
(REMOTE SUPPORT):

- Responsible for the research methodology and tools
- Backstopping support in data collection process
- Data analysis
- Writing SBC strategy

NATIONAL CONSULTANTS

- Responsible for enumerators training
- Lead in data collection
- Supervision quality
- Participated in developing SBC strategy

GIZ FANSER AND CRS STAFF

- Played a key role in the selection of behaviours under research
- Supported SBC research
- Participated in developing the SBC strategy, which included the development of suitable interventions to address identified barriers and strengthen enablers
- Ensured that the strategy was operationalised effectively.

STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

To further increase FANSER's effectiveness, great care was taken to ensure that its activities addressed the most prevalent and influential barriers and enablers to change. Accordingly, the project:

1. conducted a barrier and enabler analysis in 2021 to understand why project participants adopt or do not adopt certain promoted nutrition, hygiene, agronomic, and household decision-making practices. The project wanted to analyse the factors that enable the 'doers' to practise the promoted behaviours, and the barriers hindering the 'non-doers' to do the same.
2. developed a Social and Behaviour Change strategy, which outlines interventions that would address the identified barriers and strengthen the enablers.

The process of implementation was designed as follows:

- **Prioritisation and selection of the behaviours under research**: Key behaviours were identified, based on available data regarding the level of adoption of behaviours by project participants from the FUSII, and a participatory selection process within the team.
- **Qualitative research** was conducted to identify the existing barriers and enablers.
- Based on the findings from the qualitative research, a **quantitative survey** was conducted to gain evidence on how prevalent the barriers and enablers are.
- **Development and validation of the SBC strategy**: Based on the findings, a draft of the SBC strategy was developed and validated. The strategy provided very practical guidance on how key enablers and barriers can be addressed.
- **Operationalisation**: This included the development of interventions to bring about the desired change, address barriers, and strengthen the enablers in participatory processes, as well as develop an activity implementation plan.
- **Monitoring and evaluation**: The project developed indicators to track and assess coverage, quality and impact of the identified interventions in order to address the barriers and strengthen the enablers.

KNOWLEDGE MAP

SELECTION OF BEHAVIOURS UNDER RESEARCH

STEP 1 Based on the survey (Follow Up Survey II), the project identified promoted behaviours with a low adoption rate.

STEP 2 The project used three selection criteria to identify behaviours to be assessed under the research. The following criteria were used for decision-making:

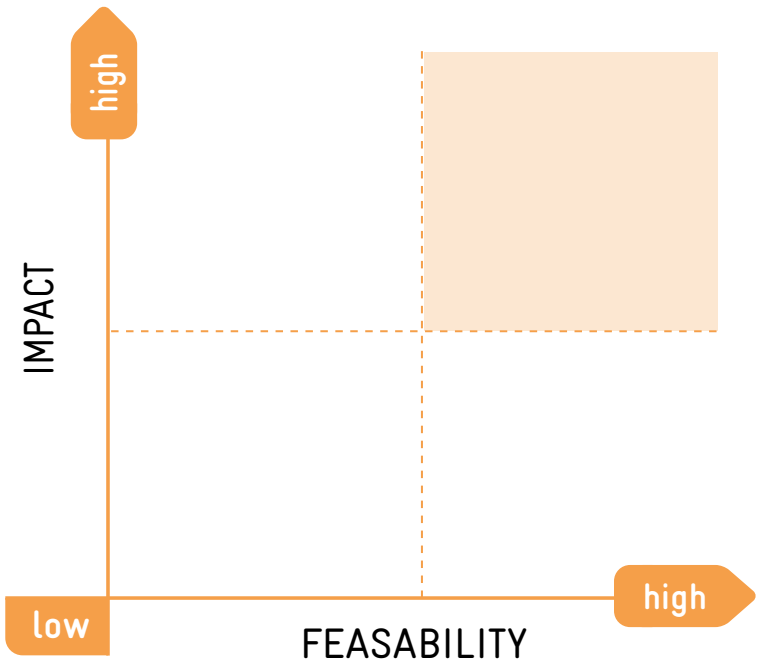
- **Impact, considering:**
  1) the extent to which the behaviour can contribute to improved nutrition; and
  2) the extent to which people already practise the behaviour (i.e. establishing possible room for improvement).

- **Feasibility, considering:**
  1) how easy / difficult the behaviour is for people to practise; and
  2) how likely it is that FANSER can promote this behaviour effectively, considering its resources and mandate.

- **Contribution** to the project indicators, considering how likely it is that the behaviour might contribute to achieving one or more of the project indicators.

When selecting the behaviours to be targeted, the project used the following tool to assess the impact of the promoted behaviours and the feasibility for their adoption by the target group. We did this exercise because we were not able to identify barriers and enablers for all the behaviours the project promoted. We prioritised those that were most **impactful** in achieving the project indicators and most **feasible** to be adopted:

FIGURE 9: Tool to assess the impact of the promoted behaviours



SOURCE: Adapted from Alive @Thrive (2018)

For each selected behaviour, the project defined the intended target groups. This process led to the prioritisation of the following behaviours for research:

TABLE 1: Studied behaviours

	Prioritised behaviours	Luapula Province	Eastern Province
1	Children aged 6–23 months consume any type of pulse at least every second day	×	
2	Children aged 6–23 months consume an egg at least every second day	×	
3	Children aged 6–23 months consume solid, semi-solid or soft foods at least the minimum number of times[13]	×	
4	Women of reproductive age consume any type of pulse at least every second day	×	×
5	Women of reproductive age consume an egg at least every second day	×	
6	Women of reproductive age consume vitamin A-rich fruit or vegetables at least every second day	×	×
7	Male and female members of the targeted households grow orange fleshed sweet potatoes (OFSP) for homestead consumption		×
8	Male and female members of the targeted households dry sweet potatoes (any type) for consumption	×	×
9	Male and female members of the targeted households use plastic containers to store cowpeas, beans and vegetables		×
10	Targeted couples decide jointly on how to use money from the savings their household makes/loans they take	×	×
11	Female beneficiaries attend at least two thirds of conducted nutrition/ WASH modules	×	×
12	Male and female members of the targeted households treat their drinking water by using chlorine	×	
13	Male and female members of the targeted households treat their drinking water by boiling it for one minute at a boiling temperature[14]	×	
14	Adult household members use handwashing facilities with water and soap available		×
15	Additionally, the research will investigate why only a few people report washing hands before preparing foods, before feeding a child, after handling garbage, after handling raw food and after handling animals	×	×

[13] The minimum meal frequency recommended by WHO/UNICEF is:
- two feedings of solid, semi-solid or soft foods for breastfed infants aged 6–8 months;
- three feedings of solid, semi-solid or soft foods for breastfed children aged 9–23 months; and
- four feedings of solid, semi-solid or soft foods or milk feeds for non-breastfed children aged 6–23 months whereby at least one of the four feeds must be a solid, semi-solid or soft food (i.e. non-fluid food)

[14] The recommendation of water boiling at a boiling temperature for one minute is provided by US EPA ↗. A number of other agencies and research papers provide the same or similar recommendation

HAPPY BREAST FEEDING MOTHERS

PROJECT PARTICIPANT WASHING HANDS WITH SOAP AND WATER USING A TIPPY TAP

PROJECT PARTICIPANT WASHING DISHES

QUALITATIVE SURVEY TO IDENTIFY POSSIBLE BARRIERS AND ENABLERS

During the qualitative survey, Zambian researchers conducted 30 group interviews with fathers, mothers, nutrition volunteers, lead farmers, agricultural extension workers, health and sanitation promoters and gender champions. In total, 218 people were interviewed. All interviews were audio recorded, transcribed in English and coded.

- **Examples of main research questions used were:**
  - What do you think about ...
  - What makes it difficult to ...
  - What could make it easier to ...
  - What would happen if you ...
  - Who (dis)approves of you ...
  - And always, the question 'Why?'

The qualitative survey offered valuable insights into perceptions and barriers that prevented the adoption of certain behaviours. Some examples include:

- Perception that young children (8-10 months) shouldn't eat pulses
- Perception that purchased eggs aren't very nutritious compared to home eggs (However, poor access to inputs and know-how was a much bigger barrier than any beliefs.)
- Households producing eggs but keeping them to raise more chicks
- Lack of clarity on how long water needs to be boiled to be safe

The qualitative research did not reveal how widespread certain barriers or enablers were. For example, some respondents believed that young children should not eat pulses, but the key question was whether this was a minority opinion or a common belief that required the project's attention. Understanding the prevalence of these barriers or enablers was crucial for FANSER to effectively allocate resources. Therefore, the project conducted an additional quantitative survey to determine which issues were most widespread.

QUANTITATIVE SURVEY

The quantitative survey was conducted to identify the prevalence of barriers or enablers from the qualitative research. Structured interviews with randomly selected mothers of children aged 6-23 months were conducted with 1,051 respondents, using multi-stage cluster sampling with probability proportional to size; margin of error was < 5 p.p. The KoBo tool[15] was used to collect the data. Examples of the types of research questions used are:

- Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: ...?
- Do you know anyone who can advise you on ...? If so, who?
- How easy or difficult is it for you to ...? Why is it ...?
- What do you see as the (dis)advantages of ...?

[15]

KoboToolbox is an open-source platform designed for data collection, management, and visualisation, particularly in humanitarian and development contexts. Developed by the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, it is widely utilised for its user-friendly features that facilitate data gathering in challenging environments, such as during emergencies or in remote areas.

SBC STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Based on the findings, the project used the Designing for Behaviour Change (DBC) framework to design its strategy for promoting the prioritised behaviours (see below an example for the production of OFSP). The DBC framework is a structured approach used to develop effective behaviour change strategies across various sectors.[16]

[16] The Designing for Behaviour Change (DBC) framework was developed by Food for the Hungry as part of their efforts to create effective behaviour change strategies. This framework is grounded in evidence-based practices and aims to help practitioners systematically address barriers to behaviour change in various contexts, including health and nutrition.

TABLE 2: Framework for promoting prioritised behaviours

BEHAVIOUR	PRIORITY + INFLUENCING GROUPS	BARRIERS + ENABLERS	REQUIRED CHANGES	ACTIVITIES
OUTCOME INDICATORS		ACTIVITY INDICATORS		

FANSER conducted a two-day workshop where its staff and partners discussed the changes that were required and the activities that should be implemented to address the required changes for each behaviour. Workshop participants included CRS staff and staff from the Ministry of Agriculture. During the workshop, the project always asked: "Which activities are most likely to achieve the required change?" Activities were defined, always specifying which required change they wanted to achieve. Many activities contributed to achieving several required changes. This process was used for all the prioritised behaviours. The DBC frameworks formed the core part of the SBC strategy. It is important to mention that FANSER selected activities that the project was able to implement in the remaining time for project implementation and with the resources available. This influenced the type and number of identified activities. An overload of additional and costly activities would have influenced the probability of their implementation.

See the example below: Production of **Orange Fleshed Sweet Potatoes (OFSP)** ↗ vines.

TABLE 3: Behaviour of male and female household members grow OFSP for homestead consumption.

BEHAVIOUR	PRIORITY + INFLUENCING GROUPS	BARRIERS + ENABLERS	REQUIRED CHANGES	ACTIVITIES
1. Limited access to OFSP vines. 2. Limited access to competent advice on producing OFSP. 3. Limited awareness of nutritional benefits of OFSP. 3. Pests and rodents affect the production of OFSP. 4. Limited number of positive examples of farmers growing OFSP in some areas.	Male and female household members	1. Limited access to OFSP vines. 2. Limited access to competent advice on producing OFSP. 3. Limited awareness of nutritional benefits of OFSP. 3. Pests and rodents affect the production of OFSP. 4. Limited number of positive examples of farmers growing OFSP in some areas.	1. Improve farmers' long-term access to OFSP vines. 2. Improve farmers' long-term access to advice on producing OFSP. 3. Improve women and men's ability to prevent and deal with pests and rodents affecting their OFSP. 4. Improve women and men's knowledge of inspiring examples of farmers producing OFSP.	(1) Support competent farmers in multiplying OFSP vines for sale. (1, 4) Training of lead farmers and agri extension workers on the storage and multiplication of OFSP vines. (1, 2, 3, 4) Training of farmers on OFSP nutritional benefits and production. (4) Identify and promote good examples of farmers growing OFSP, letting them share their experience.
OUTCOME INDICATORS		ACTIVITY INDICATORS		

A FAMILY ENJOYING A NUTRITIOUS MEAL FROM LOCALLY AVAILABLE FOODS

A PRESENTATION OF DIFFERENT FOODS COOKED DURING A COOKING DEMONSTRATION

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

To track the implementation, impact and quality of the identified interventions, the project developed indicators, such as:

- % of people / households who follow the promoted practices
- % of people who experience the given barrier / enabler (e.g. % of farmers who know where to access OFSP vines)
- Coverage of activities – % of people exposed to a given activity
- Quality of activities – e.g. % of activities meeting given quality standards
- Number of activities implemented, number of people participating

OPERATIONALISATION OF THE SBC STRATEGY

The project developed an activity implementation plan for each province. This plan included:

1. **Activities to be implemented**
2. **Milestones**
3. **Responsible persons/organisation**
4. **Targets**
5. **Period of implementation**

Later, the project included these activities in the main Project Annual Operational Activity Plan to avoid having two different plans for project implementation.

LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The development of the project's Social and Behaviour Change strategy was a well-structured process, which helped the project to broaden its focus on developing individual capacity to achieve behaviour change. It helped to identify activities that address barriers beyond the individual knowledge level, addressing identified determinants for behaviour change for each behaviour under research at an interpersonal and community level in a structured way. E.g., the implementation of the activities in the DBC example of OFSP together with another initiative, the **promotion of different varieties of OFSP** ↗, led to an increased demand for OFSP vines for production and availability in households.

An important success factor in the development of the strategy was the inclusion of project staff and implementing partners at certain stages, creating understanding, meaning and ownership of the product and its implementation.

An SBC strategy should be developed at the start of a project to guide the design of interventions, using the socio-ecological model as a base for the most effective intervention design. At this stage the project developed the strategy and no major changes to the implementation design were possible due to the remaining time for implementation and defined resource allocation.

Although the project developed indicators to track the implementation, quality, coverage and impact of the planned SBC interventions, the monitoring was not fully implemented, as the indicators were only partly integrated in the project's main monitoring plans and because of resource constraints to roll out the full SBC monitoring plan. It is recommended that SBC indicators are fully integrated in the project's monitoring system to be able to track changes and inform implementation.

AGENTS OF AGRICULTURAL CHANGE

STRENGTHENING THE BEHAVIOUR CHANGE SKILLS OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

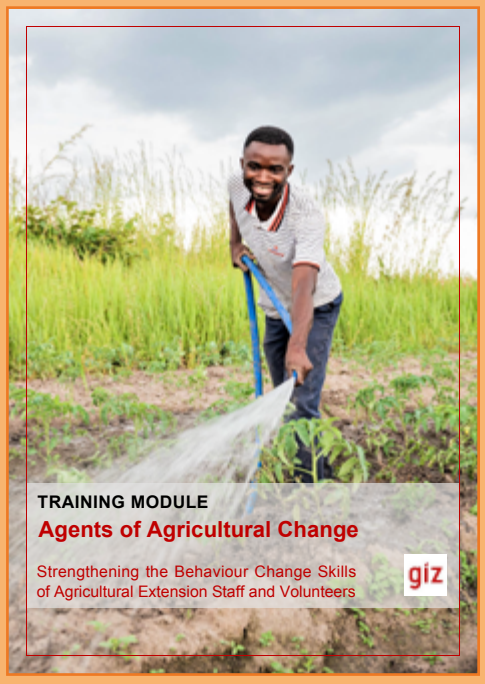
Even the best designed SBC strategy will not achieve much if the behaviours are not well promoted. 'Promoters' need to have effective SBC communication and facilitation skills. They need to know how to negotiate behaviour change and small doable actions with project participants. The desired behaviours need to be promoted in a manner that motivates and enables people to practise these behaviours in the long term).

Against this background, the project, with a consultancy, developed a Trainer of Trainers (ToT) 'Agent of Agricultural Change' training guide, which was oriented to enhance the facilitation and communication skills of the main change agents/intermediaries under the nutrition-sensitive agricultural interventions, the senior lead farmers and lead farmers. The resources Make Me a Change Agent (USAID (2020) and Training Guide on Effective SBC Skills (ADRA (2020)) were used as a resource for its development.

The guide was developed in an easy-to-read way, using proven adult learning methodologies, such as examples, experience sharing, brainstorming, group work, individual tasks, role plays, questioning and games. It included step-by-step guidance, allowing the trainers to easily follow the training content. A set of relevant training materials (handouts, exercises, etc.) was developed alongside the guide for easy implementation.

A three-day ToT was delivered by the consultant to selected camp extension officers under the Ministry of Agriculture to enable them to train the cascade of senior lead farmers and lead farmers. Selection criteria were:

- Proficiency in English
- Interest in the topic
- Commitment and ability to deliver at least three ToTs for agricultural intermediaries



The project rolled out the training to

3,500

LEAD FARMERS

under the project in both provinces.

It helped to identify activities that address barriers beyond the individual knowledge level, addressing identified determinants for behaviour change for each behaviour under research at an interpersonal and community level in a structured way.

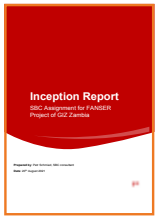
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & MATERIAL

POSITIVE DEVIANCE APPROACH – DEEP DIVE SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

2023 (30 pages)
English
Developed by: GIZ FANSER

SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE STRATEGY

2022 (24 pages)
English
Developed by: GIZ FANSER

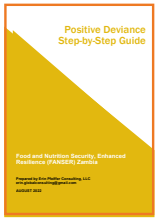


SBC INCEPTION REPORT

2021 (23 pages)
English
Developed by: GIZ FANSER

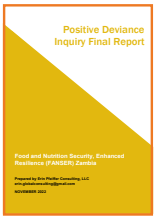
BARRIER AND ENABLER ANALYSIS

2022 (139 pages)
English
Developed by: GIZ FANSER



POSITIVE DEVIANCE STEP BY STEP GUIDE

2022 (12 pages)
English
Developed by: GIZ FANSER



POSITIVE DEVIANCE INQUIRY FINAL REPORT

2022 (44 pages)
English
Developed by: GIZ FANSER

CHAPTER 02

HYGIENE FOR NUTRITION

Enhancing women's WASH knowledge and shaping positive attitudes

FANSER has been promoting measures to improve the food and nutrition security of women and children in Zambia and strengthen their resilience since 2015. In addition to knowledge about a healthy diet and access to nutritious food, hygiene plays an important role when it comes to improving the nutritional situation in households. Diseases such as diarrhoea are often caused by inadequate hygiene or unclean water, and exacerbate malnutrition and undernourishment, as nutrients can no longer be adequately absorbed. Improved hygiene practices can reduce disease-related nutrient losses, making them an important pillar of the FANSER project.

For this reason, the hygienic preparation of food was already anchored in the project objectives at the beginning of the project, even though Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) only became a separate field of action in 2018. As part of the cooperation with Catholic Relief Services, knowledge about WASH (as well as nutrition) was taught using the Care Group Model approach, initially in Katete and Petauke (Eastern Province) and – as part of the expansion of FANSER into new districts – from 2019 also in Kawambwa and Mwense (Luapula Province) and finally, from 2021, also in Sinda (Eastern) and Mwansabombwe (Luapula). Detailed information about the Care Group Model can be found in the Nutrition chapter.

In the same way as they impact on healthy diets, social behaviour change strategies also play a major role in WASH practices, as imparted knowledge does not always automatically lead to changes in behaviour. More detailed information on the FANSER social behaviour change implementation can also be found in the Nutrition chapter.

In order to improve the hygiene situation within its target group, FANSER promoted various measures, such as the construction and use of latrines and hand-washing stations, as well as training to increase knowledge on the importance of WASH for good nutrition, key moments to wash hands, water treatment techniques, and measures to avoid food contamination.

On the following pages, you will gain an insight into the results and impact of the supported measures, and learn which enablers and barriers favour or inhibit improved WASH practices. You will also learn what lessons can be drawn from the implementation of WASH activities and why the targeted promotion of WASH practices continues to pose challenges.

Hygiene and Sanitation in rural Zambia: What worked, what didn't and why it matters

Dr. Annette Roth
FANSER Regional Coordinator, Eastern Province

SUMMARY

What can be done to bring about lasting behaviour change in communities to improve water, sanitation, and hygiene practices as essential components to reduce malnutrition, especially stunting in young children? FANSER addressed this challenge, recognising that improving nutrition requires more than just providing information. It requires addressing the underlying social, cultural, and practical factors that influence people's daily decisions.

Rather than simply educating communities, the project took a deeper look at what drives or blocks change. This document highlights the FANSER project's approach to improving nutrition by promoting key Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) behaviours in rural households, including handwashing, sanitation and safe water handling. Through a Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) strategy, the project sought to understand the barriers and enablers that shape people's choices. Why do some families prioritise good hygiene practices, while others don't, despite knowing the risks? How do traditional beliefs and social norms affect the way people care for their health?

Through a combination of community engagement, research, and behavioural insights, the project worked to bridge the gap between knowledge and practice. It focused on empowering women, involving traditional leaders, and making behaviour change both achievable and sustainable in the context of local realities.

This document offers not just a summary of activities but also an in-depth look at the process the project engaged in, sharing practical insights for designing effective WASH interventions that are grounded in the needs and capacities of communities. It highlights the complexity of achieving sustainable behaviour change, while providing concrete examples of what worked and what required adjustment along the way.

BACKGROUND

Malnutrition is prevalent among children under five in Zambia, with the 2024 Zambian Demographic Health Survey indicating that 32% are stunted, which means they are too short for their age as a result of chronic malnutrition. The FANSER project has supported the Zambian government in reducing stunting in children under two years and has been one of the key implementers of the Zambia 1,000 Most Critical Days Program (MCDPII). The first 1,000 days of a child's life, from conception to their second birthday, are crucial in preventing chronic malnutrition, which adversely affects physical and cognitive development. **These negative effects are irreversible if not addressed during the critical timeframe of a child's first 1,000 days.** Chronic malnutrition has long-term consequences not only for the child and its family, but also for national development, as

> "Stunted children today mean stunted economies tomorrow.
>
> Dr. Akinwumi A. Adesina (Director AfDB)

Addressing malnutrition requires that women of reproductive age have a diverse diet and adequate feeding practices are in place for small children. **However, improving nutrition is a multifaceted challenge that extends beyond merely increasing food quantity and quality.** The interplay between hygiene, sanitation and health is crucial in achieving optimal nutritional outcomes, particularly in vulnerable populations such as children and pregnant women. Access to clean water, adequate sanitation and proper hygiene practices significantly influence nutritional status. Poor sanitation and hygiene can lead to the transmission of diseases, particularly diarrhoeal diseases, which are among the leading causes of malnutrition in children. Diarrhoea can result in a loss of nutrients and decreased nutrient absorption, leading to stunting and other long-term health issues. Environmental factors, such as exposure to faecal pathogens, contribute to conditions like environmental enteric dysfunction (EED), which impairs nutrient absorption[17] and causes chronic intestinal inflammation.[18] EED is particularly prevalent in regions with inadequate sanitation and hygiene, and further exacerbates existing malnutrition.

The WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) situation in rural Zambia presents significant challenges, particularly with regard to access to clean water and adequate sanitation facilities. There is a high prevalence of open defecation, as many rural communities have no access to sanitation facilities. The health risks associated with open defecation are severe. It is a major contributor to the spread of infectious diseases, including diarrhoea, cholera, and dysentery. In addition, open defecation poses significant environmental challenges. It contributes to the pollution of soil and water bodies, which can have long-term effects on ecosystems. Contaminated water sources can lead to further health issues for communities relying on these sources for drinking and agriculture.

Hygiene practices in rural Zambia are critically inadequate, with low rates of handwashing. Fewer than half of individuals in rural areas use soap to wash their hands at critical moments, e.g. after using the toilet, or before handling food and before eating and feeding a child (MCDPII Baseline, 2019). This low rate of handwashing is a critical factor in the spread of diseases, particularly diarrhoeal diseases, which are a major health concern in these communities. This is why the promotion of safe WASH practices is among the key priority areas to reduce stunting under the MCDPII Program.

[17]

EED leads to structural changes in the intestinal lining, including villous atrophy and increased intestinal permeability. This damage reduces the surface area available for nutrient absorption, leading to deficiencies in essential vitamins and minerals

[18]

EED triggers a chronic inflammatory response in the gut. The presence of pathogens and the resulting immune reaction can lead to the production of pro-inflammatory cytokines, which not only affect gut function but also have systemic effects on the body. Continuous activation of the immune system can lead to a state of exhaustion, where the immune response becomes less effective over time. This can make individuals more susceptible to infections and further complicate nutritional recovery.

STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

The FANSER project implemented a multi-sectoral approach. Among other interventions, the project promoted good WASH behaviours in rural households. **The project's outcome indicator as well as sub-indicators were formulated as follows:**

Outcome Indicator

110,000 women using at least three of the four hygiene practices promoted has increased by an average of 25% points.

Sub-Indicators

Practice: Minimum standard pit latrine (latrine with lid and cleanable surface)
Knowledge: Key moments to wash hands
Knowledge: Water treatment techniques
Knowledge: Key measures to avoid food contamination

On the **output level**, the hygiene **indicator** focused especially on the change in **knowledge** and **attitude**, with the following objective: 70% of the 110,000 women (15-49 years) and an additional 33,000 men advised by the project confirm an increase in knowledge of the promoted hygiene practices.

To achieve the intended change, the project implemented a cascade model, the **Care Group Model** ↗, to reach out to the 110,000 targeted women of reproductive age. Previously trained **Nutrition Volunteers (NVs)** provided **monthly lessons** on nutrition and **WASH** to household members. Around **8,700 Nutrition Volunteers** were trained and **delivered monthly lessons** on good maternal and child nutrition and **good hygiene and sanitation behaviours** to other households in their vicinity. Their task was to promote good nutrition and WASH behaviours and to **trigger** and **negotiate behaviour change** by using the **ASPIRE approach**. This approach follows a defined process in each lesson:

A	S	P	I	R	E
Ask	Show/ Explain	Probe	Inform	Request	Examine the results

The NVs encouraged household members to start implementing small doable actions. Beneficiary households received at least two cycles of the nine core lessons, thus ensuring that every household received every lesson at least once. The topics related to WASH were: **(1) Handwashing, (2) Sanitation, (3) Water Handling, Treatment and Storage and (4) Food Hygiene**. In addition, the NVs promoted safe disposal of infant faeces and clean environments for children.

Key WASH infrastructure was promoted, namely that every household should construct and use an **improved pit latrine, a handwashing station** with water and **soap, a dish rack as well as a rubbish pit**. The project did not provide any materials; those had to be sourced by the households themselves.

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS BUILDING A DISH RACK

PROJECT PARTICIPANT SHOWCASING CORRECT HANDWASHING PROCEDURE

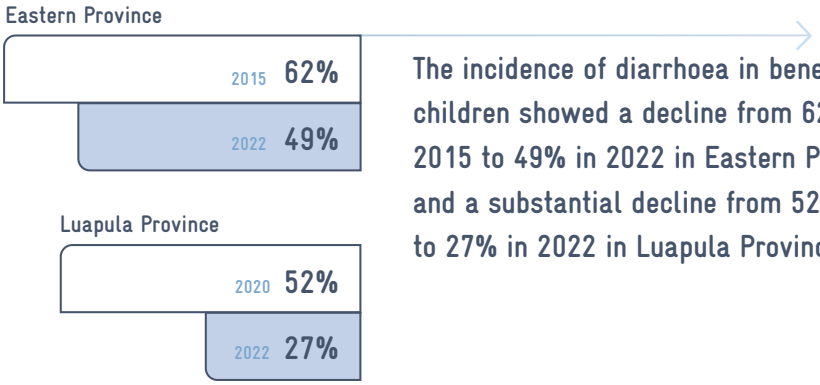
RESULTS AND IMPACT

During the project period, more than **125,000 women of reproductive age and 56,000 men** were trained in nutrition and **WASH topics** through the Care Group Model.

The project conducted a Follow Up Survey to measure success indicators at outcome level every two years. The baseline surveys were done in Eastern Province in 2015 and in Luapula Province, where implementation started later, in 2020. In addition, output assessments were done every year.

The following positive developments were observed through the Follow Up Surveys:

- Survey results showed that beneficiary households performed better throughout all indicators than households in the control group without project interventions.



The development of the WASH outcome indicator[19] showed a mixed picture:

- In **Eastern Province**, the indicator dropped after the first Follow Up Survey in 2018 (FUS I) and remained low, at 13 % in 2020 and 2022. The results in **2022** showed that the **sub-indicators** "knowledge of how to treat and store water", "key moments when to wash hands", and "knowledge of how to avoid food contamination" improved significantly. However, the indicator **"use of improved sanitary facilities"** dropped from **43.6%** in **2020** to **22.5%** in **2022**.

- In **Luapula Province** the results of the first Follow Up Survey (FUS I) in 2022 showed a significant **improvement** of the **WASH indicator**. At sub-indicator level, the indicator "women who know at least 4 ways to prevent food contamination", decreased. **The other three indicators improved**. WASH interventions from a project funded by the German development bank KfW, implemented by the NGO CARE, might have also contributed to the positive results.

[19] WASH indicator (women complying with at least 3 out 4 of the mentioned in the following in %): (1) Respondents who treat water by boiling, adding bleach, suing a water filter or letting stand and settle, (2) Use of an improved sanitary facility, (3) Women who know at least 4 key moments when to wash hands, (4) Women who know at least 4 ways to prevent food contamination.

TABLE 4: Development hygiene practice/knowledge, Eastern and Luapula Provinces

Hygiene Practices/ Knowledge

Hygiene indicator (women complying with at least 3 out of 4 promoted practices (%)

EASTERN PROVINCE	2015 Baseline	2018 FUS I Beneficiaries	2018 FUS I Control	2020 FUS II Beneficiaries	2020 FUS II Control	2022 FUS III Beneficiaries	2022 FUS III Control
	-	36.7	2.5	14.0	9.5	13.0	9.0
LUAPULA PROVINCE				2020 Baseline		2022 FUS I Beneficiaries	2022 FUS I Control
	-	-	-	8.2	-	17.6	7.0

The results from 2020 and 2022 indicated that the project was far from achieving its WASH outcome indicator of 25% of women complying with at least 3 out of 4 promoted practices, especially in Eastern Province. Circumstances, for instance the COVID-19 pandemic and the related reduction of implementation of the Care Group Model for a period of three to four months, may have contributed to the deterioration. However, this did not seem to sufficiently explain the lack of progress.

LEARNING JOURNEY FOR EASTERN PROVINCE

After a thorough analysis of the data and results from the FUS 2020, the FANSER project immediately implemented the following actions:

1. We intensified the WASH lessons under the care group model
2. We strengthened WASH expertise and resources in the project
3. We conducted a barrier and enabler analysis related to WASH behaviours (construction and use of latrines and use of handwashing facilities) and developed a social behaviour strategy, which included special interventions to address the identified factors hindering the adoption of the promoted WASH behaviours.
4. We collaborated with the WASH coordinator at the Council in Sinda District. The Council is responsible for rural water and sanitation and successfully implemented the Community Lead Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach with headpersons in one chiefdom. However, the project had limited resources to scale-up CLTS.

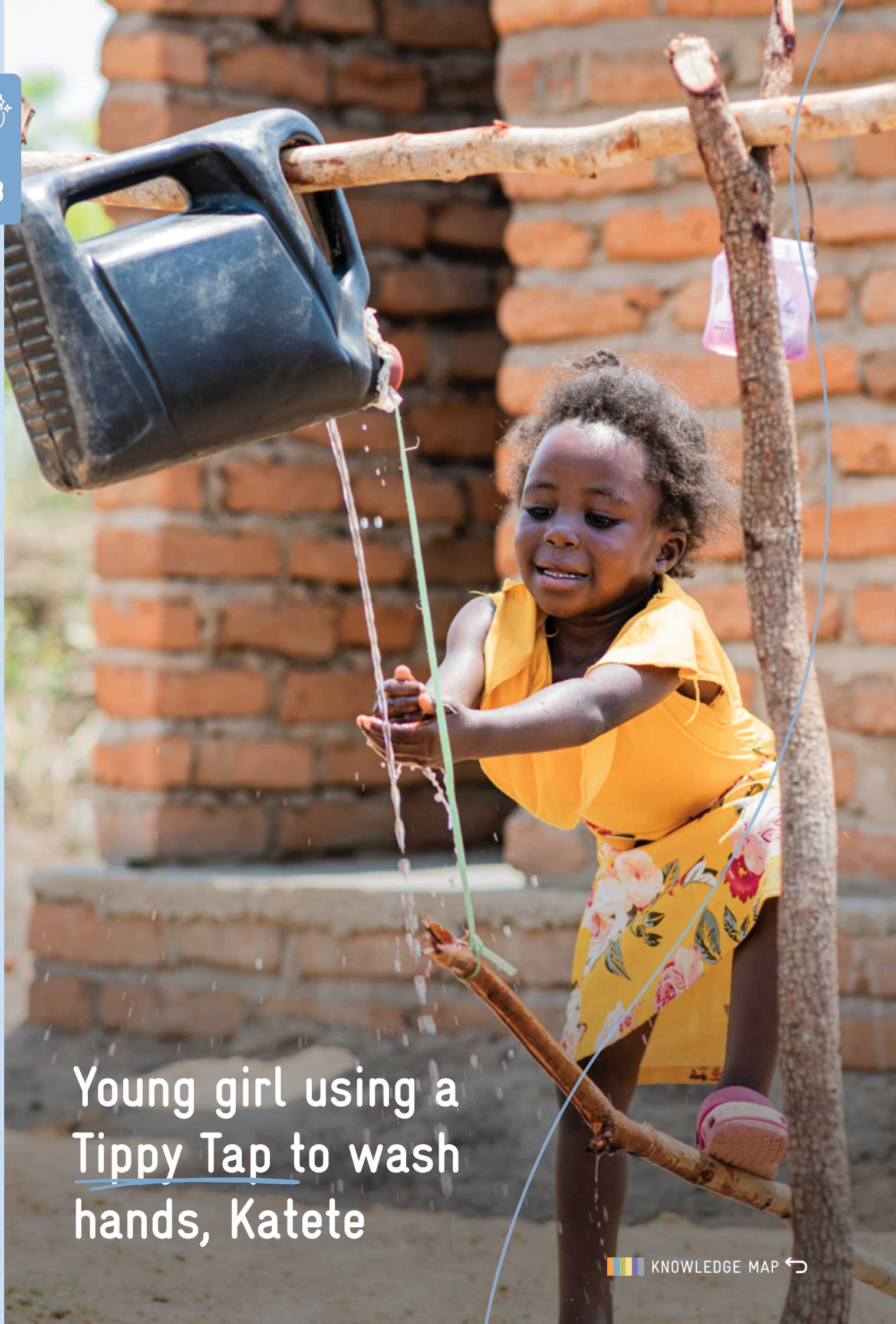
TABLE 5: Barriers and enablers for construction and use of latrines and handwashing facilities

CONSTRUCTION AND USE OF LATRINES

BARRIERS	ENABLERS
→ toilets frequently collapsing after building them	→ promotion of toilets by traditional leaders/headpersons
→ toilets filling up quickly	→ enforce the Zambian legal framework and traditional bylaws in the community (e.g. by local leadership)
→ more privacy in the bush	→ frequent monitoring
→ cultural: people do not want to share toilet with in-laws	
→ lack of support from men to construct toilets	
→ not having enough space to build a toilet	
→ bad smell	

HANDWASHING WITH SOAP

BARRIERS	ENABLERS
→ children and animals repeatedly damage handwashing facilities	→ frequent exposure to positive examples and handwashing messages from headmen/traditional leaders
→ animals eat the soap	→ belief in the importance of washing hands with soap
→ containers are stolen	→ mixing soap with water
→ lack of money for soap	→ handwashing station located near a toilet or/and kitchen (cue for action)
→ lack of positive examples in the community	
→ not in the habit of washing with soap	
→ people forget, e.g. when busy preparing food, when distracted	



Young girl using a Tippy Tap to wash hands, Katete

KNOWLEDGE MAP

Apart from the barriers above, the **very high poverty levels** in these communities may also prevent community members from prioritising the investment in the construction of quality latrines and to using their limited resources to buy soap. In **Eastern Province**, more than 70% of the households in rural areas are poor, and in **Luapula Province**, more than **80%** (Highlights from the 2022 Poverty Assessment, Zambia Statistics Agency, 2022). The following voices from **project participants** and community members in Eastern Province illustrate the results.

VOICES ON LATRINE CONSTRUCTION AND USE:

Village Headman, Nyakawise ward – Petauke

> "In my village, a lot of people have constructed toilets because I monitor the number of toilets constructed and report to the chief during our meetings. There are very few people without toilets.

Male, Sinda ward – Sinda

> "Rainfall is another reason why some people don't have toilets, once there is heavy rainfall, some toilets collapse and we resort to use the neighbour's toilet or go to the bush rather than construct another one.

KNOWLEDGE MAP

VOICES ON CONSTRUCTION OF HANDWASHING FACILITIES AND USE OF SOAP:

Fathers, Katete

> "If someone can afford to buy a bucket and make a handwashing facility but they choose not to, I think it could be that they have looked around and no one in the village has a handwashing facility so they don't want to be the only one with a handwashing facility because of fear of being laughed at or talked about.

Nutrition volunteers, Petauke

> "Sometimes when you leave soap in the open like that you will find it has been eaten by animals, especially goats and cows. So, what we do is we mix soap and water first – that is, we put it in the bucket – so when people are washing their hands the water has already got soap.

Based on the findings from the barrier and enabler analysis, the project developed a more comprehensive approach, with different interventions to address the barriers and strengthen the enablers. The quotes from the community members underline the importance of traditional leaders and monitoring behaviour change.

STEPS TAKEN TO IMPROVE THE RESULTS IN WASH, A CASE OF EASTERN PROVINCE

1. The project team consulted CARE Luapula, who implemented a WASH approach in the FANSER intervention areas. Close collaboration and engagement with community headpersons seemed to be the key to success.

2. FANSER intensified the collaboration with key stakeholders and traditional leaders (chiefs), the WASH Coordinators Council, the Ministry of Water and Sanitation and UNICEF.

   - Conducting a sensitisation workshop with government officials from WASH and Health and traditional leaders (chiefs), with the following commitments:
     - WASH topics included in bylaws of chiefdoms
     - FANSER supported intensive training of 90 community masons in standard toilet construction (see description in Box 1)
   - Strengthening the district WASH committees

3. Behaviour change communication through radio jingles with key WASH messages (2x days over 6 months) (see description in Box 2)

4. Inclusion of WASH messages in agricultural training.

© GIZ, Peter Bunonge, Ministry of Water Development and Sanitation

TRAINED MASONS, PETAUKE DISTRICT

© GIZ, Peter Bunonge, Ministry of Water Development and Sanitation

SUB-STRUCTURE OF A CERTAIN STANDARD TOILET

RAISED DOME TOILET FOR SWAMPY AREAS

BOX 1

TRAINING OF MASONS IN STANDARD TOILET CONSTRUCTION

The construction of **durable quality standard latrines** requires special skills. For instance, the builders need to know:

- Which type of latrine is suitable to be constructed?
- What is the type of soil there?
- What is the environment like?
- Are challenges like floods, rain seasons or swampy areas present?

To address the challenge of latrines collapsing, especially in the rainy season, the FANSER project supported an intense **5-day training of 90 masons** from **three districts** in Eastern province. Health facility staff identified suitable people. **One third** of them were **women**.

GOALS OF THE TRAINING

1. Review sanitation performance and approaches
2. Capacitate local builders
3. Train participants in sanitation marketing (SanMark)
4. Create demand for supply of sanitation services and products

THEORETICAL + PRACTICAL TRAINING

OCTOBER 2023

The **theoretical training** included **soil mapping, toilet designs** for different soils, super structures, hand washing technologies, entrepreneurship, monitoring and reporting, and sanitation marketing. In the practical component, masons constructed **five different types of standard toilets**, suitable for **different environmental conditions** and **economic possibilities**. The types of toilets constructed during the practical included the **corbel raised, dome-shaped toilet, and the different corbel standard line toilets**. **Trainers and resource persons** formed a team comprised of two provincial staff from the Ministry of Water Development and Sanitation and the Department of Water Supply and Sanitation, two district Water, Sanitation, Hygiene, and Education (D-WASHE) committee members from each district, and one trained mason from Lundazi District. Each participant received a work suit, tools and handbooks for future use in their communities.

JULY 2024

FOLLOW-UP WORKSHOPS

The workshops showed **a mixed picture with regard to the results**, especially on the **number of toilets constructed** by the trained masons.

13 Petauke 9 Sinda 8 Katete

The masons were still very committed and willing to support toilet construction in the communities going forward. **Self-marketing seemed to be a challenge** for most of the **masons**. Traditional leaders committed to promoting them by mobilising communities and households to seek their services. Overall, it seems that successful self-marketing needs more intense skills development. In addition, the **demand** for standard toilets needs to be increased, which is something staff at health facilities (Environmental Health Technicians (EHT) as well as the WASH coordinator can support. In addition, the council can link trained masons to the Sanitation Action Groups (SAGs), which are formed by the council in communities to oversee and monitor sanitation interventions. The SAGs can further promote the work of the skilled masons.

SEASON 2023/2024

DROUGHT

However, demand from community members might have been greatly affected by the drought period during the agricultural season 2023/2024, which resulted in a low harvest and reduced income in many communities in the intervention districts. A lack of resources might affect the intended outcome of this activity.

BOX 2

BEHAVIOUR CHANGE COMMUNICATION: DEVELOPMENT AND AIRING OF WASH JINGLES ON RADIO

Good examples are key to bring about behaviour change. Peers and highly recognised personalities in communities can enable community members to adopt uncommon behaviors, such as the construction and use of toilets, setting up handwashing facilities, and use of soap. We used the following conceptual elements:

RADIO AS A CHANNEL FOR WASH

We decided to use radio as an additional channel for WASH messages, to reinforce the messages coming from the Care Group Model and to reach men and women alike. We broadcasted from two different radio stations to generate the widest reach to a broad audience.

TAILORED MESSAGING

We designed the messages so that they were concise, clear, and culturally relevant. They addressed the specific behaviours in WASH that the behaviour change communication was aiming to change. We developed six small story lines around four main WASH behaviours:

1. Construction and use of toilets
2. Handwashing with soap at key moments
3. Water treatment
4. Prevention of food contamination

EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT

For the six different jingles, we recorded real voices from the communities: a man, a woman, a couple, a headman and a school child. They performed small realistic and engaging stories and conversations, e.g. between husband and wife, a voice from a traditional leader, etc. in order to transmit the same messages in an interesting and entertaining way. We wanted the actors and stories to resonate with the listeners' own lives and realities. We used drama and music to create emotional connections and thus enhance retention and motivate action.

MESSAGE LENGHT

The duration of each individual radio message was kept under 60 seconds to maximise retention and impact.

REGULARITY, CONSISTANCY AND FREQUENCY

We made sure that messages were delivered regularly to reinforce the information and understanding, and maintain audience engagement. Jingles were aired **two times a day** over a period of **four months**.

The impact from this activity on knowledge and adoption of practice of the promoted behaviors was indirectly measured in September 2024 Follow Up Survey.

KNOWLEDGE MAP

WHAT NEXT?

According to the latest **Output Assessment** from **2023, the data showed a promising picture for Eastern province:**

OVER

95%

of the project beneficiaries (women and men) acquired good knowledge in maternal and child nutrition, hygiene and sanitation through care group lessons.

53%

of the beneficiary households had a functional pit latrine meeting the minimum standards in place (latrine with lid and cleanable surface).

The number of households with functional tippy taps with water and soap increased from 24% in the previous assessment to

38%

Results from the next Follow Up Survey (FUS,) conducted in September 2024, will deliver more information about the effectiveness of the interventions.

PROJECT PARTICIPANT SHOWCASING SANITATION AND HANDWASHING FACILITIES CHIBOTE, LUAPULA PROVINCE.

MOTHER HELPING THE CHILDREN TO WASH HANDS BEFORE EATING

LESSONS LEARNT SO FAR

1. **Expertise on WASH topics** and successful, context-related social and behaviour change approaches are critical at every stage of a project.

2. **Plan and invest adequate resources** in WASH-related behaviour change processes.

   - **Know your audience:** a barrier and enabler analysis is critical at the beginning of a project – build on evidence-based insights to develop your approaches.
   - **Note:** Knowledge and changes in attitude do not automatically lead to changes in practice. Social and other factors have a strong influence.

3. **Behaviours in WASH are fragile.** Gains can be lost within a short period of time – consistent effort and monitoring are key.

4. **Include and address the right change agents and actors:** Identify powerful and knowledgeable collaborating partners (governmental and traditional).

5. **Do not forget the men:** Decisions on investment in hygiene and sanitation infrastructure is made at household level, thus joint decision-making is key.

6. **Community-led total sanitation** (CLTS) seems to be an effective approach.

   Success factors:

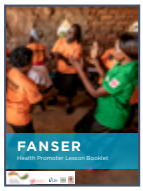
   - Ownership by communities (traditional structures)
   - Long-term monitoring
   - Follow-ups by community leaders and governmental institutions.

7. **Market-based approaches e.g. in toilet construction:** Strengthening competencies for the self-marketing of mansons is paramount in making a success of sanitation marketing. Apart from content-related capacities, business skills need to be strengthened. Early mentorship should be considered. In addition, women and men might need different, tailored support in the set-up of their businesses. At the same time, and in parallel, the commitment and action by influential governmental and non-governmental actors and agents is essential to create demand for these services at community level.

Nutrition Volunteers, Petauke

> "The challenge for most women is finding money to buy soap ... the man is the one who works outside the home so ... he needs to give some of the money to his wife so that she can buy soap.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & MATERIAL



CARE GROUP LESSONS BOOKLET

2021 (119 pages)
English
Developed by: GIZ FANSER, CRS

TOILET CONSTRUCTION GUIDE VOLUME I: TRAINING MANUAL

2021 (49 pages)
English
Developed by: UNICEF

TOILET CONSTRUCTION GUIDE VOLUME II: CONSTRUCTION GUIDE

2021 (43 pages)
English and Bemba
Developed by: UNICEF

WASH ACTION CARDS

2021 (19 pages)
English (Pictures)
Developed by: GIZ FANSER, CSR

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

DAINESS CHILEMBO

09:54 min
Sinda,
Eastern Province

Listen to Dainess Chilembo, senior project officer at CRS, as she explains the care group model and shares how it has been instrumental in helping the project achieve its goals.

EVELES MWANZA

08:26 min
Katete,
Eastern Province

Hear Eveles Mwanza share her journey of learning the importance of good sanitation and adequate diets as well as growing diverse crops for balanced nutrition through FANSER trainings and how it has led to improvements in her children's health.

SINOTI PHIRI

05:20 min
Songwe,
Katete

Sinoti Phiri from Katete, shares insights into his role as a sanitation and health promoter and the impact of his work in the community.

FADALES PHIRI

05:34 min
Katete,
Eastern Province

Listen as Fadales Phiri, a nutrition and WASH volunteer under the care group model, shares how the adoption of nutrition and WASH practices has positively impacted households.

CHAPTER 03

NUTRITION-SENSITIVE AGRICULTURE

Increasing year-round availability of nutrient-rich foods through nutrition-sensitive agriculture

The following chapter presents various approaches that were implemented as part of the project to strengthen the food and nutrition security as well as the resilience of rural households through nutrition-sensitive agriculture, and thus increased access and consumption through the year-round availability of nutrient-rich food. During FANSER's initial phase from 2016 to 2018, Catholic Relief Services in Petauke and CARE in Katete collaborated with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock to deliver training in nutrition-sensitive agricultural interventions. Since 2019, a key element for implementing agricultural activities under the FANSER project was the Lead Farmer Model, an approach adapted from the Ministry of Agriculture, and which proved to be an effective method for knowledge dissemination and capacity development. It was a cascade approach that enabled the project to train many beneficiary farmers in diverse agricultural practices as well as post-harvest management and processing techniques, ensuring year-round access to nutritious foods. By training so-called lead farmers within the communities, sustainable agricultural practices were disseminated and applied on a broad basis.

With the aim of specifically tackling nutrient deficiencies in households by promoting access to, the consumption of and year-round availability of foods rich in under-consumed nutrients, the project has also promoted the cultivation and multiplication of various high-value, nutrient-rich fruit and vegetable species. For example, papaya and orange-fleshed sweet potatoes were promoted due to their high vitamin A content, while pulses such as Mbereshi beans and cowpeas were promoted by FANSER in particular due to their high protein and iron content.

To further promote the availability of different vegetables at household level, the project supported the construction and use of different types of home gardens, especially keyhole gardens, which, due to their high water use efficiency, are particularly important in areas with limited access to water.

The following pages provide a detailed overview of these approaches that have proven successful throughout the project. You will find information on the strategy and implementation of the lead farmer model, a participatory tasting approach for better acceptance of orange fleshed sweet potatoes, and a concept paper for cowpea seed multiplication. You will also learn what lessons can be drawn from the introduction of Mbereshi beans and keyhole gardens, and what has contributed to the success of the papaya initiative.

The Lead Farmer Model:
Enhancing knowledge transfer and the adoption of improved agricultural practices among smallholder famers

Richard Lilamono
Advisor for Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture, Eastern Province

SUMMARY

Reaching thousands of smallholder farmers with practical, nutrition-sensitive agricultural training when there is only one extension officer for every 3,500 households? The Lead Farmer model offers a solution: a peer-to-peer learning system where trained community members share agricultural knowledge, promote improved practices, and support their neighbours in achieving year-round access to diverse, nutritious foods.

This document unpacks how the FANSER project in Zambia implemented this approach together with the Ministry of Agriculture, addressing challenges in agricultural extension while fostering community ownership and sustainability. It provides a hands-on guide to the model's core components, from selecting and training lead farmers, to using a cascading structure that amplifies reach. You'll discover how these local farmers are equipped to address not only agricultural practices but also gender dynamics, shifting norms to empower women and men equally in farming and decision-making.

Beyond explaining the model, this document offers insights into its real-world application. What made it work? How were challenges addressed? And what lessons can others learn from this experience? With over 99,000 beneficiary households trained, and improved dietary diversity observed, the model's impact speaks for itself.

This document provides a roadmap for designing and scaling agricultural interventions that are practical, inclusive, and transformative. Explore the strategies, results, and recommendations that make the lead farmer model a game-changer in agricultural extension.

BACKGROUND AND TARGET GROUP

As part of the FANSER project, tackling malnutrition during the 1,000 most critical days window from conception until the age of two years to end the vicious cycle of stunting, the Lead Farmer model is part of the third of five fields of action aimed at increasing the all-year round availability of nutritious foods and dietary diversity at household level.
The target group for the Lead Farmer model concept are smallholder farmers who, under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture, are equipped to train beneficiary households.

STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LEAD FARMER MODEL CONCEPT

The Lead Farmer Model is a participatory and inclusive agricultural extension approach, designed to enhance knowledge transfer and adoption of improved agricultural practices among smallholder farmers. The model leverages the expertise and influence of selected lead farmers within the community to facilitate peer-to-peer learning, thereby promoting sustainable agricultural production and food and nutrition security at household level.

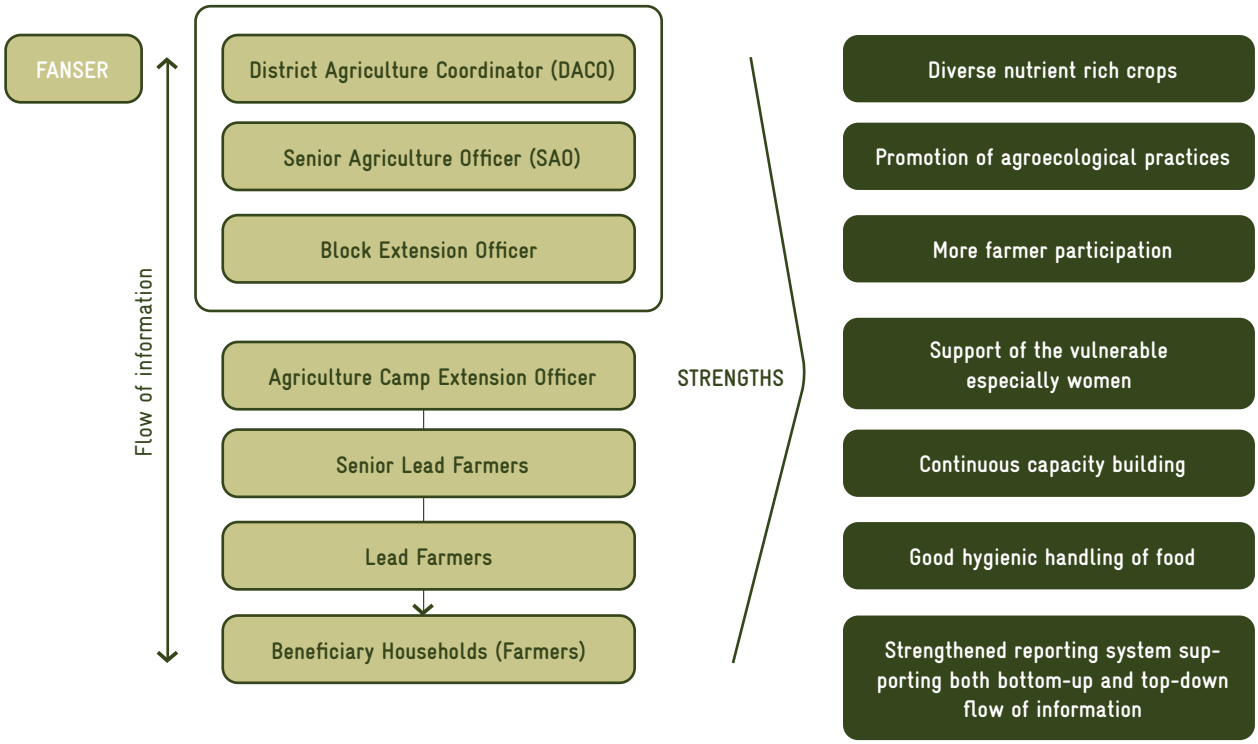
CHALLENGES OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICES

The Lead Farmer model plays a crucial role in addressing the challenge of having too few agriculture extension officers to reach a large number of beneficiaries (1:3500). It helps to impart the necessary knowledge and skills needed for improved agriculture production, ensuring year-round access to nutritious foods. The model approach uses a network of trained lead farmers to address the challenge of having only a small number of agricultural extension officers to service a high number of farmers. This network of trained farmers can effectively disseminate information to a wider audience of beneficiaries through training and monitoring within specific communities. The chart (figure 10) gives an overview of how the project is implemented this approach in collaboration with the MoA.

Senior lead farmer is training lead farmers on effective pest and disease management in cowpea seed production.

KNOWLEDGE MAP

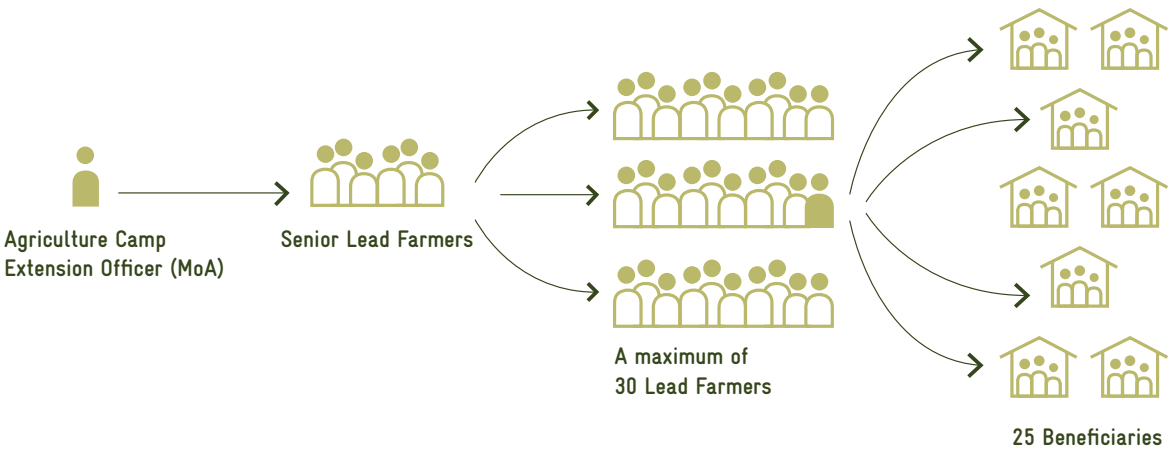
FIGURE 10: Lead Farmer Model as implemented by MoA under the FANSER Project



TRAINING THROUGH THE CASCADE MODEL APPROACH: FROM ONE CAMP EXTENSION OFFICER TO MANY LEAD FARMERS AND BENEFICIARIES

Under this approach, one Agriculture Camp Extension Officer (CEO) from the MoA trains three senior lead farmers (SLF), while one SLF trains an average of 30 lead farmers. Thereafter, one lead farmer trains a maximum of 25 project beneficiary households in good agricultural practices, including nutrition-sensitive agriculture and post-harvest management practices. In this way, the impact and reach are maximised with minor effort on the part of the MoA, as just one MoA training session can reach a large number of beneficiaries.

FIGURE 11: Cascading approach from Camp Extension Officers to project beneficiaries



SELECTION CRITERIA FOR THE LEAD FARMERS AND SENIOR LEAD FARMERS

The Ministry of Agriculture, in collaboration with the FANSER project, spearheaded the selection of lead farmers, based on the criteria developed and agreed on with community members. The process hinges on the correct selection of qualified individuals in the community who can effectively guide and support other farmers with training and field monitoring visits through regular community participatory meetings.

The senior lead farmers (SLFs) are selected from the already chosen lead farmers by means of a comprehensive recruitment process that involves screening of applications, interviews and selection of the successful candidates **(see further information at the end of the article)** ↗.

NOTE GENDER EQUALITY IS EMPHASISED, WITH THE FINAL SELECTION COMPRISING 50% WOMEN AND 50% MEN.

MBERESHI BEANS IN THE FIELD DURING A FIELD DAY AT A BENEFICIARY FIELD

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

District Agriculture Coordinators Office (DACO)

- Capacity building of the lead farmers in agricultural extension services.
- Development and distribution of training materials fo the lead farmers.
- Development and distribution of monthly report templates to the lead farmers.
- Development of guidelines for identifying and rewarding the best performing lead farmers.
- Establishment and maintenance of a database on lead farmers and project beneficiaries.
- Conducting collaborative meetings with stakeholders on the implementation of the lead farmer approach.
- Creation of opportunities for lead farmers and follower farmers to access micro-financing and marketing services.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF

The FANSER Project

- Support joint reviews and planning meetings related to the implementation of the lead farmer approach.
- In collaboration with the MoA, facilitate the identification of lead farmers during the selection process.
- Provide resources and logistics, like stationery and food for participants during the lead farmer orientation training.
- Motivate lead farmers through trainings, field days and provision of extension reference materials.
- In collaboration with the MoA, award the best performing lead farmers.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF

Senior Lead Farmers and Lead Farmers

The senior lead farmers are responsible for training the lead farmers on different good agriculture practices (GAP) with regard to nutrition-sensitive agricultural interventions, with support from the Camp Agricultural Extension Officer under the Ministry of Agriculture. Meanwhile, the lead farmers are in charge of conducting the following activities, with back-stopping support from the SLFs:

- Training of project beneficiaries in good agricultural practices.
- Implementation of technologies introduced by the FANSER project, in collaboration with the Ministry.
- Conducting demonstrations and field days with support from the senior lead farmers and MoA extension officers.
- Monitoring the project beneficiaries and providing a back-stop while they engage in agricultural activities.
- Reporting on the status of project implementation to the senior lead farmers and the Ministry of Agriculture extension officers.

STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING COMMUNICATION, FACILITATION SKILLS AND GENDER TRANSFORMATION

To increase intermediaries' capacities regarding communication and facilitation skills and enable them to provide effective extension services, the FANSER project in collaboration with the MoA developed a training manual called **Agent of Agriculture Change** through a consultancy. The training manual focuses on "strengthening the communication and facilitation skills of intermediaries who promoted agricultural practices" among project beneficiary households. The manual centres around ten skills that help the lead farmers to effectively promote agricultural practices (**see further information at the end of the article**) ↗. To be effective in helping farmers or project beneficiaries adopt good agricultural practices, it is important for lead farmers to apply these ten skills as they go about their extension activities.

GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACHES IN AGRICULTURE (GTA)

Gender transformative approaches recognise that there are significant gender disparities when it comes to access to and control of assets, and in decision-making within agricultural systems. They also acknowledge that such disparities greatly reduce people's abilities to harness the benefits of these systems for human well-being. The project therefore integrated gender lessons into the lead farmer model to fundamentally transform underlying gender norms and power relations, especially at household level. Selected agricultural extension officers and senior lead farmers have therefore been trained to build capacity in gender transformative approaches, focusing on topics that challenge existing unequal gender norms and power relations; promote power sharing, equal control of resources and equal decision-making; and support women's empowerment to create lasting change at multiple levels (**see further information at the end of the article**) ↗.

To be effective in helping farmers or project beneficiaries adopt good agricultural practices, it is important for lead farmers to apply these gender skills as they go about their extension activities in the community.

BENEFITS OF THE LEAD FARMER MODEL STRUCTURE AND PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

- Availability of local extension services to project beneficiaries within the community.
- Improved communication, given that the lead farmers live with and among the beneficiaries and share the same culture and language.
- Increased adoption of agricultural practices due to enhanced and reciprocal support from fellow farmers.
- Increased number of beneficiaries reached by extension services for different agriculture technologies and practices.
- Ensures regular monitoring and supervision of project activities.
- Lead farmers promote community members' ownership of agricultural projects.
- Supports data collection and reporting for project management.
- Allows for early identification of challenges and the ability to adapt project interventions at community level. This approach boosts the sustainability of the interventions.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT:

TRAINING UNDER THE LEAD FARMER MODEL

The lead farmers were trained in good agricultural topics, which included site selection, construction of **keyhole gardens** ↗, planting of seeds, pest and disease management, as well as post-harvest management practices, including the utilisation and nutritional values of the following nutrient-rich vegetables and field crops:

VEGETABLES

(amaranthus, spinach, mustard, onions, carrots, and fruits such as papayas)

LEGUMES

(cowpeas and Mbereshi beans)

Orange-fleshed

SWEET POTATOES

Vitamin A-rich

ORANGE MAIZE

RESULTS AND IMPACT

Through the lead farmer model, the project has achieved the following results:

Intermediary level:

- A total of **99** Ministry of Agriculture Camp Extension Officers have been trained in nutrition sensitive agriculture.
- About **3,678** lead farmers have been selected and trained in nutrition-sensitive agricultural interventions focusing on crop diversification.
- **All of the 3,678 intermediaries trained in nutrition-sensitive agriculture displayed increased knowledge and the ability to train beneficiaries in nutrition-sensitive agriculture interventions.**

Project beneficiary level:

- A cumulative total of over **99,000** beneficiary households have been trained in crop production and utilisation of vegetables, legumes, OFSP, orange maize and papaya production to enhance agricultural diversification and ensure the year-round availability of dietary diversity at household level.
- **93% of the project beneficiary households** (Eastern 94% and Luapula 91%) demonstrated increased knowledge in vegetable growing.
- Increased crop diversification (nutritious crops) has positively influenced the dietary diversity of women (IDDS-W). (Follow Up Survey 2022 report)

LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

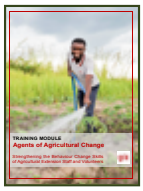
In order to ensure that lead farmers are well-equipped for effective extension services, the following factors were identified to be fairly critical:

- Capacity building of lead farmers through training and back-stopping by the Ministry of Agriculture or other private sector development agencies.
- Building the capacity of lead farmers in communication and facilitation skills to enable them deliver effective training to project beneficiaries.
- Monitoring and back-stopping visits to lead farmers by the Ministry of Agriculture extension (MoA) officers.
- Regular exchange visits among the lead farmers to promote peer learning.

KNOWLEDGE MAP ↩

- Regular monthly/quarterly reviews and planning meetings with the lead farmers (the success of this approach has been confirmed by the reviews and planning meetings that took place between the FANSER project and the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) with the active participation of the project intermediaries.
- Supporting and motivating lead farmers with incentives to enable them to work effectively.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & MATERIAL



AGENTS OF AGRICULTURAL CHANGE

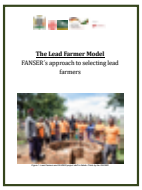
2024 (62 pages)
English, Bemba and Nyanja
Developed by: GIZ FANSER, MOA

VEGETABLE PRODUCTION MANUAL FOR TRAINERS

2023 (99 pages)
English, Bemba and Nyanja
Developed by: GIZ FANSER, MOA

POST HARVEST MANAGEMENT

2024 (80 pages)
English, Bemba and Nyanja
Developed by: GIZ FANSER, MOA



THE LEAD FARMER MODEL FANSER´S APPROACH TO SELECTING LEAD FARMERS

2020 (11 pages)
English
Developed by: GIZ FANSER, MOA

GENDER TRAINING CARDS

2023 (22 pages)
English
Developed by: GIZ FANSER

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

KABANGE MASENGA

14:06 min
Katete,
Eastern Province

Hear from Kabange Masenga, the district agricultural coordinator of the MoA in Katete, as he highlights the importance of nutrition-sensitive agriculture and the positive impact of the collaboration between MoA and the FANSER project, especially in supporting communities during the drought crisis.

KALUBA MULENGA

10:00 min
Katete,
Eastern Province

Hear from Kaluba Mulenga, senior agricultural officer at the MoA in Katete, as she discusses how the lead farmer model has enhanced extension services and helped farmers build resilience during the 2024 drought crisis.

SARAH PHIRI

06:57 min
Katete,
Eastern Province

Sarah Phiri, a lead farmer from Mkumbanji village, shares her experience as a lead farmer, the knowledge gained through the project and how this new expertise has benefited both her and the farmers within her community.

Tasting events for better nutrition: Promoting orange fleshed sweet potatoes

Patrick Chikomba
Advisor for Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture, Eastern Province

SUMMARY

Orange-fleshed sweet potatoes (OFSPs) are a powerful tool against malnutrition, particularly in Zambia, where vitamin A deficiency is a major challenge among women of reproductive age and children under two. These nutrient-dense crops are rich in vitamin A, which supports immune health, protects eyesight, promotes healthy growth in children, and even reduces the likelihood of diarrhoea due to their high fibre content. Early maturing and resilient to dry spells, OFSPs have the potential to improve food and nutrition security for vulnerable populations, even in the context of climate change.

What happens, however, when such important foods are not embraced by the communities that need them most? This is the reality the FANSER project faced, particularly in Eastern Province, where OFSP adoption was hampered by their unfamiliar taste and lower starch content, compared to traditional varieties. Recognising that no amount of nutritional benefit can overcome cultural and taste preferences without meaningful engagement, the project took a participatory approach to tackle this challenge.

This document dives into the strategies, results and lessons learned from the project's efforts. From introducing and testing five OFSP varieties alongside a local white variety, to engaging farmers in taste evaluations, the project successfully identified the varieties preferred by communities. Crop presentations, cooking demonstrations and radio campaigns reached over 420,000 people, driving awareness and increasing adoption.

The following pages highlight not only the success stories but also practical recommendations for improving the adoption of nutritious foods through community-driven methods, household involvement and targeted training. If you're looking for strategies to bridge the gap between nutritional science and community acceptance, this document is a must-read.

BACKGROUND

Malnutrition and vitamin A deficiency is one of the major nutritional challenges among women of reproductive age and children under two in Zambia, with Eastern and Luapula provinces among the most affected regions. The cultivation and consumption of vitamin A-rich OFSPs play a vital role in combatting vitamin A deficiency and reducing stunting in children. However, the uptake (production and consumption) of OFSPs in Zambia has been slow, particularly in Eastern Province.

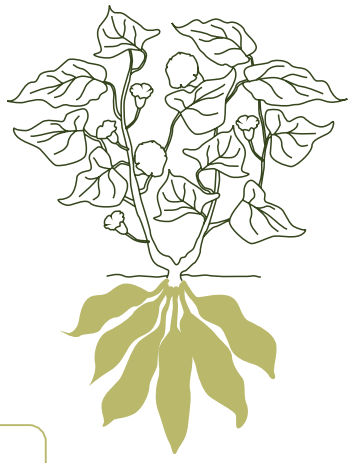
STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

The FANSER project and the Zambia Agricultural Research Institute (ZARI) worked together to promote the production and consumption of OFSPs among targeted beneficiaries in Katete and Petauke districts in Eastern Province. The Msekera Research Station, an important station for ZARI in Eastern Province, played a key role in this process.

Once OFSPs are established they can withstand dry spells throughout their growth cycle. In addition, they grow in less fertile soils and contain high levels of vitamin A, making them a very important crop to improve food and nutrition security.

The project introduced five different OFSP varieties based on their performance in terms of taste, yield, and resilience against dry spells and pests and diseases, among other factors. A local, white variety of sweet potato was also selected for the purpose of comparison.

1. NC 09-350
2. Zambezi
3. Olympia
4. MGSG-15018-1 (ID No. 20)
5. Irene (ID No. 04)
6. Local variety



KEY BENEFITS OF PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION OF

ORANGE FLESH SWEET POTATOES

Regular consumption of OFSPs supports a strong immune system, crucial for defending the body against infections and diseases.

They help maintain good eyesight, protecting the eyes from blindness.

They promote healthy growth in children during their critical first 1,000 days and beyond.

Regular consumption promotes healthy skin and hair.

Regular consumption can reduce the likelihood of diarrhoea in children due to their high fibre content, which helps improve digestion.

They improve food security: early maturing varieties are ready for harvest after 3 months compared to local varieties, which need 5 months.

The OFSP varieties are able to survive dry spells, especially when planted early.

The objectives of the approach included:

- Introducing the selected orange fleshed sweet potato varieties to communities.
- Testing the performance of promising varieties under farmer-controlled growing conditions in terms of yield and susceptibility to pests and diseases.
- Testing the participants' acceptance and ranking preference of the different varieties for quality attributes such as taste, starchiness and fibre.
- Obtaining information about which varieties the project should promote to increase the adoption rate of OFSPs.
- Provide recommendations to the breeders for possible further future improvements if necessary.

The primary reason for the low adoption rate was that the taste and lower starch content of the OFSPs, compared to local varieties, did not appeal to the project beneficiaries. In order to increase demand for OFSPs and enhance production and consumption, the project adopted a participatory approach, where community members were consulted about their preferences with regard to the selection of varieties.

Furthermore, in order to promote the consumption and production of the newly introduced OFSP varieties, the project aired a radio series to raise further awareness about the benefits of OFSPs.

a) Methodology and design

To implement a participatory variety selection approach, demonstrations plots of six different OFSP varieties were set up in selected agricultural camps in Katete and Petauke districts. The aim was to identify superior varieties with the attributes and traits preferred by local farmers.

To test participants' acceptance and ranking preference of the varieties for yield and quality attributes, a total of ten varieties were established and planted, with five OFSP varieties and one local variety each. Four OFSP demonstration plots were set up in Katete and Petauke districts respectively. These plots served as practical examples for learning, and demonstrated the benefits of OFSPs. The plots were prepared and planted by ZARI in collaboration with agricultural extension officers and farmers. In addition, a demonstration plot was set up at the Farmer Training Centre located in each district.

a) The assessment process

The main objective of the assessment was to identify the OFSP varieties preferred by local farmers. First, participants evaluated the yield of each variety and assessed their susceptibility to pests and diseases. The five OFSP varieties, along with one local variety, were prepared, using a standard cooking method prescribed by nutritionists. Beneficiaries then tasted all the respective varieties for attributes such as taste, starchiness, fibrousness and appearance. All varieties were evaluated on root tuber attributes and the overall acceptability of the variety.

The evaluation and selection of superior varieties involved both male and female project intermediaries and beneficiaries, with children also taking part in the tasting process.

FARMER PLANTING OFSP VINES

OFSP PLANT

COOKED OFSP FOR TASTING

RESULTS AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF OFSP

Following the assessment, the **NC 09-350** variety of OFSP ranked highest, followed by **Zambezi II** and **Olympia** as the next most preferred by the participants, based on qualities such as starchiness, fibrousness and yield, among others. The local variety was least preferred by farmers in both districts.

The results and impact of this community participatory approach to the selection of preferred varieties enabled the following outcomes:

- Farmers selected their favorite OSFP variety, with superior qualities such as taste, starchiness, fibrousness, appearance, high yield, early maturing, and low susceptibility to pests and diseases.
- Farmers appreciated the intervention and were able to raise funds and procure OFSP vines without relying on project support.
- Seed multipliers have been identified and trained in vine multiplication to improve the availability of vines of the new OFSP varieties.
- Farmers are now involved in vine multiplication to produce OFSPs.

About
2,785 LEAD FARMERS + **52,000** HOUSEHOLDS
have been trained in the production, processing and storage of OFSPs.

About
420,000
LISTENERS
have been reached by the radio programme on OFSPs.

LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

During the promotion and implementation of Orange Fleshed Sweet Potatoes, we identified the following key lessons:

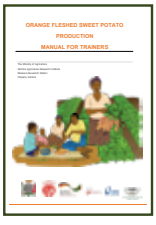
- Involvement of the participants in the selection of OFSP varieties for promotion is essential. The project participants were more likely to adopt the varieties that they selected during the participatory process.
- Close collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Zambia Agriculture Research Institute is essential for monitoring and mentoring farmers during the production, pest and disease management of OFSP. This enabled project participants to successfully manage their crops.

To effectively promote and enhance the adoption of the OFSP, the following key recommendations are suggested:

- **Involvement of households:** We recommend involving the whole household at the beginning of the project in training in production and consumption.

- **Use of appropriate training materials and capacity building:** We recommend that lead farmers use the translated materials on methodology during the training to effectively deliver the content of the lessons. This is very important in the rural communities of Zambia.
- **Exchange visits:** We recommend that exchange visits are included as part of the strategy in order to promote peer to peer learning and encourage the adoption of the technology at the start of the intervention.
- **Cooking demonstration:** We recommend the cooking demonstration as a method to promote consumption. Cooking demonstrations are a powerful tool for promoting the consumption of nutrient-rich foods.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & MATERIAL



ORANGE FLESHED SWEET POTATO REFERENCE BOOK

2023 (86 pages)
English and Nyanja
Developed by: GIZ FANSER, MOA, Zambia Agriculture Research Institute (Musekera research station)

OFSP DOCUMENTARY

2024 (24:32 min)
English
Developed by: GIZ FANSER

Meeting protein demands: How cowpea seed multiplication supports smallholder farmers and nutrition

Richard Lilamono
Advisor for Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture, Eastern Province

SUMMARY

Access to quality seed remains one of the most pressing challenges for smallholder farmers in rural communities. The following pages take you through the process of tackling this challenge and show how a well thought-through concept can make a real difference. The FANSER project's cowpea seed multiplication approach is a perfect example of how communities can take charge of their own food and nutrition security.

Through joint efforts with the Ministry of Agriculture, ZARI and the SCCI, as well as a thorough selection and training process of 130 local farmers as seed multipliers, FANSER demonstrated how sustainable seed multiplication can lead to increased availability of nutritious, affordable food in Zambia´s Eastern Province. By empowering local farmers to produce certified cowpea seeds, the project not only addressed food security but also boosted income generation.

However, the project faced challenges. The demand for cowpea seeds was initially low, as many farmers relied on old seed and hesitated to buy the new. To address this, the project leveraged local leaders and extension officers to educate farmers on the benefits of using certified seeds, highlighting the potential for better yields and improved nutrition.

This document details the steps involved in setting up a seed multiplication initiative, the challenges you may encounter, and how to overcome these. It provides valuable insights for those looking to enhance seed production, improve food security and support sustainable agricultural practices in local communities.

CHALLENGE OF AVAILABILITY AND ACCESS TO QUALITY COWPEA SEEDS

Under its nutrition-sensitive agriculture component, the FANSER project promoted the production of nutrient-rich crops such as cowpeas to increase all year-round availability of nutritious foods at household level.

Since its inception in 2015 through to 2023, the FANSER project provided beneficiary households with training and vegetable seed packs, including legumes such as cowpeas, in order to improve crop diversification and enhance dietary diversity at household level.

However, the last Follow Up Survey, conducted in 2022, showed that the consumption of cowpeas by the beneficiary households was low. This was mainly due to the fact that availability and access to affordable quality cowpea seeds at community level was inadequate.

To address this challenge, the FANSER project, in collaboration with MoA, ZARI and the Seed Control and Certification Institution (SCCI), initiated the cowpea seed multiplication concept, aimed at enhancing the availability and access to quality cowpea seeds at community level.

A COWPEA SEED MULTIPLIER WITH SOME LEAD FARMERS HARVESTING COWPEA SEEDS IN KATETE DISTRICT

BENEFITS OF COWPEA SEED MULTIPLICATION

CROP ROTATION

Practice of growing different crops sequentially on the same field to improve soil fertility and reduce pest and weed pressure.

DROUGHT TOLERANT

Ability by which a plant adapts features to maintain its biomass production during rainfalls, dry spells or drought conditions.

LOW INPUT CROP

Refers to a crop that requires very few inputs such as fertilisers, as the crop is able to fix atmospheric nitrogen into the soil.

NITROGEN FIXATION

Process of converting atmospheric nitrogen into a form that plants can readily utilise.

Availability of quality cowpea seeds at community level.

Affordable cowpea seeds accessible to smallholder farmers.

Improved dietary diversity through consumption, leading to household food and nutrition security.

Cowpea contributes to soil fertility improvement through nitrogen fixation and crop rotation.

Cowpea is a low input crop, which is also drought tolerant and suitable for smallholder farmers.

(See explanation of the words below).

TARGET GROUP AND OBJECTIVES

The target group for the cowpea seed multiplication concept included FANSER implementing partners like the Ministry of Agriculture, the Zambia Agriculture Research Institute, and private seed companies involved in seed production and marketing in Eastern Province and the rest of the country.

This concept paper therefore provides key steps on the participatory selection of 130 cowpea seed multipliers at community level and the capacity building skills that formed part of their training.

The primary objective was to increase the availability and accessibility of cowpea seeds to smallholder farmers at community level, and thereby contribute to the all year-round availability of nutritious foods at household level.

Specific objectives:

- To build the capacity of the identified 130 cowpea seed multipliers in seed production and post-harvest management and storage.
- To enable the intermediaries to produce a minimum of 130 x 50 kg cowpea seeds at community level.

KEY STEPS IN ORGANISING COWPEA SEED MULTIPLIERS

The FANSER project, working in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Zambia Agriculture Research Institute (ZARI), spearheaded the cowpea seed multiplication concept through joint meetings, addressing the following key points:

- Stakeholder meeting on the Importance of Cowpea Seed multiplication.
- Selection criteria for seed multipliers to be involved in the concept.
- Marketing of cowpea seeds by the project beneficiaries. Each seed multiplier was given the target of having the cowpea seeds certified by the SCCI after the harvest and mobilising a minimum of 50 beneficiaries to purchase 2 kg of seed.
- The certification process of the cowpea seed multipliers by the Zambia Seed Control and Certification Institute (SCCI) resulted in a total of 82 intermediaries being certified.
- Requirements for registration as cowpea seed multipliers were set out in line with Zambia Seed Act regulations.

STEPS FOR THE FORMATION OF THE COWPEA SEED MULTIPLIERS GROUP

Selection criteria for cowpea seed multipliers:

The MoA, in collaboration with the FANSER project and the farming community, developed the following criteria for selecting cowpea seed multipliers:

- Need to be stable and resident in the target area for at least six months.
- Must have arable land for cultivation within the community.
- The ability to procure 10 kg of cowpea primary seed from ZARI after three seasons when the earlier seed loses vigour and viability.
- Experience in cowpea production.
- Willingness to invest in pest and disease management.
- Have sufficient household labour for crop management and post-harvest management practices.
- Must be literate and able to keep records of crop management and yields, using the local language.

STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COWPEA SEED MULTIPLICATION

1 Capacity building of the seed multipliers

The FANSER project in collaboration with the MoA supported the training of 130 seed multipliers, comprising **Lead Farmers** [20], **Nutrition Volunteers** [21] and **Private Service Providers** [22] from different communities in Katete, Sinda and Petauke districts (Eastern Province). The project also facilitated the development and translation of the cowpea seed multiplication training guide from English into the local language, Nyanja, to make it easier for the intermediaries to comprehend and understand the principles of seed multiplication.

The Zambia Agriculture Research Institute and Seed Control Certification Institute conducted training in seed multiplication, focusing on the following key topics:

- Land selection
- Quality seed selection
- Planting
- Crop management
- Harvesting
- Post-harvest management practices (PHMPs)
- Seed storage

The project provided each seed multiplier with 10 kg of cowpea primary seed as capital for multiplication. The seeds can be replanted for a maximum of three seasons before new primary seeds have to be purchased from SCCI.

[20]
Community volunteers that provide extension services on good agriculture practices.

[21]
Community volunteers that provide counselling sessions to beneficiaries on nutrition and WASH practices.

[22]
Community members that provide support and mentorship to group saving (SILC)

ZARI and SCCI conducted monthly field monitoring visits to assess if the seed multipliers were following the recommended principles and guidelines on seed multiplication, namely:

2 Testing seed quality

The **Seed Control and Certificate Institute** tested the quality of cowpea seeds by collecting samples from farmers in the field, and conducting the germination tests in a laboratory. After successful testing, 82 seed multipliers were issued with quality certificates, allowing them to sell the cowpea seeds.

3 Success of the concept

The success of this initiative was evaluated using benchmarks such as the quantity of quality seeds produced, sales revenue, and the amount of seeds preserved for future multiplication by the cowpea seed multipliers. See the graph below for more information.

FIGURE 12: Cowpea seed production x 50kgs

Eighty-two (63%) out of 130 seed multipliers who managed to produce high quality seeds were certified by the SCCI in line with the Zambia Seed Regulations Act, 2021. In total, 182 x 50 kg bags of cowpea seeds were produced by the 82 seed multipliers. A total of 120 x 50 kg bags was sold to seed companies and within communities, while 62 x 50 kg bags of seed were preserved for planting in the next farming season (2023/24).

In monetary terms, **a total of ZMW 46,600 was raised from the sale of cowpea seeds** by the seed multipliers during the pilot stage. Furthermore, the voluntary decision by intermediaries to save some cowpea seeds for the next planting season reflected the satisfaction and motivation of smallholder farmers to continue and sustain this innovation even beyond the FANSER project.

4 Factors contributing to the success

There was effective collaboration and communication among stakeholders such as MoA, ZARI, SCCI, seed multipliers, farmers and some seed companies to discuss the key steps in the formation of cowpea seed multiplication groups. The selection of the seed multipliers was very successful, being highly motivated individuals and active participants in the training and seed production. Also, the good market linkage meetings between the seed multipliers and the seed companies organised by the MoA provided a good platform for effective communication and interaction between the multipliers and the seed companies. Furthermore, field monitoring visits and backstopping from FANSER, the Ministry of Agriculture, ZARI and SCCI greatly contributed to the success of this initiative.

5 Challenges

One significant challenge encountered was the low demand for cowpea seeds among beneficiaries within local community markets. This was partly because some local farmers and project beneficiaries had kept (preserved) cowpea seeds from previous seasons and therefore felt no need to buy from the seed multipliers. To address this challenge, the FANSER project, in collaboration with the MoA, worked through agriculture camp extension officers and lead farmers to raise awareness among farmers on the benefits of planting certified seeds. This approach emphasised the potential for higher yields, increased food production, greater income, and enhanced dietary diversity.

6 Sustainability of the concept

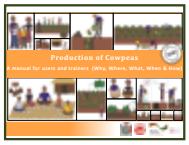
Strategies for sustaining this initiative included the following:

- Continued training and sensitisation of the seed multipliers by MoA in collaboration with ZARI and SCCI.
- Monitoring visits by the MoA, ZARI and SCCI to check on the performance of the seed multipliers.
- Creating awareness among community members through meetings and training on the importance of consuming cowpeas.
- Support for market linkages from the Ministry of Agriculture, ZARI and SCCI.
- The formalisation of farmer groups into cooperatives to enhance seed bulking, improve bargaining power for pricing, and enable access to available empowerment opportunities such as finance for entrepreneurship.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & MATERIAL

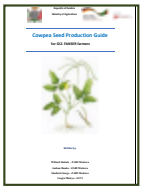
COWPEA AND BEANS REFERENCE BOOK

2019 (36 pages)
English, Bemba and Nyanja
Developed by: GIZ FANSER



PRODUCTION OF COWPEAS TRAINING MANUAL

2020 (26 pages)
English, Bemba and Nyanja
Developed by: GIZ FANSER, MOA



COWPEA SEED PRODUCTION GUIDE

2022 (12 pages)
English
Developed by: GIZ FANSER, MOA

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

LAZAROUS BANDA

08:40 min
Mkumbanji Village, Katete

Hear from Lazarous Banda from Katete as he shares his experience as a senior lead farmer and seed multiplier, highlighting the benefits of producing cowpea seeds and its impact on his community.

Keyhole Gardens:
A water saving innovation for vegetable production right at the doorstep

Patrick Chikomba
Advisor for Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture, Eastern Province

SUMMARY

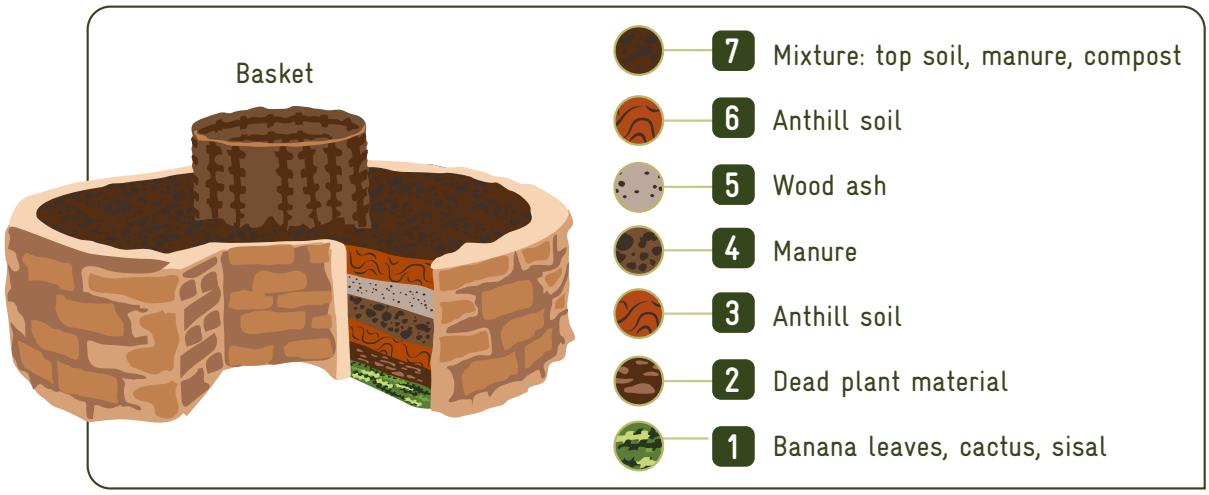
The following pages explore how the FANSER project addressed malnutrition through the promotion of keyhole gardens – a water saving innovation with a powerful impact. By focusing on the construction and maintenance of these innovative gardens, the project worked to improve access to nutritious vegetables for women of reproductive age and children under two, helping to combat nutritional deficiencies in rural households. Keyhole gardens enable year-round vegetable production, facilitating greater dietary diversity and improved nutrition.

But how does it work in practice? The keyhole garden is a raised bed designed to maximise soil fertility and moisture retention, even in dry conditions. Its unique design comprises a central compost bin, where organic materials like kitchen waste, manure, and ash create nutrient-rich soil while also conserving moisture, and an easy-to-access circular layout, making it an efficient solution for sustainable vegetable production.
The project trained staff from the Ministry of Agriculture, over 2,500 lead farmers and 50,000 beneficiaries in constructing these gardens. More than 5,000 functional keyhole gardens were established, contributing to increased food security, higher vegetable yields, and better nutrition in households.

However, building the keyhole garden isn't always without its challenges. What if the garden collapses during the rainy season, or the initial construction is too labour-intensive for the community? FANSER addressed these challenges through increased hands-on training, teaching the community how to build more durable structures and how to effectively manage pests and disease. By involving men in the construction phase and using local materials, the project ensured long-term success and sustainability.

By reading through this document, you will gain practical insights into how to replicate this approach in your own context. Learn from the successes and challenges of the FANSER project and discover actionable steps that can lead to better food security, improved nutrition, and a more sustainable way of growing food in your community.

FIGURE 13: Different layers of the Keyhole Garden



STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

In an effort to fight malnutrition, particularly nutritional deficiencies, the project promoted the keyhole garden approach to enhance production and consumption of nutritious vegetables among women of reproductive age and children under two years. A keyhole garden supports households to have all year-round availability and accessibility of nutritious vegetables for increased dietary diversity and improved nutrition.

The keyhole garden is a circular, raised bed made of bricks and layers of plant materials, soil, ash, and manure. The layers act to retain moisture and nourish the soil, making it more productive than a conventional garden, even during dry or cold months. The garden's name comes from the keyhole-like cutout, which allows farmers access to all parts of the garden, and in particular to the central compost bin. This is located in the centre of the bed and is filled with kitchen waste and other organic materials, which promote the supply of nutrients to the soil, as the waste decomposes over time and releases valuable nutrients. The project promoted the keyhole garden through the lead farmer cascade model under the Ministry of Agriculture.

FANSER project staff responsible for nutrition-sensitive agriculture trained the Ministry of Agriculture extension officers and lead farmers in the construction and maintenance of the keyhole garden, as well as in the production and management of vegetables. The lead farmers then trained the project beneficiaries and supported them in the construction of the keyhole gardens. The approach uses locally available materials such as bricks and organic materials (e.g. plants and manure).

BENEFITS OF KEYHOLE GARDEN

HIGH PRODUCTIVITY

It produces more than 3 nutrient-rich vegetables year-round

REDUCED WATER USE

Efficient use of water (20 liters/week)

ACCESSIBILITY

Easy accessibility to vegetables all year round

LOCAL

Use locally available materials (bricks, plants, materials etc.)

BENEFICIARIES BEING TRAINED ON CONSTRUCTION OF KEYHOLE GARDENS

RESULTS AND IMPACT OF THE KEYHOLE GARDEN PROMOTION

The following summarises the key activities and outcomes of the project, including training efforts, support provided to beneficiaries, and the establishment of functional keyhole gardens:

Training of about

2,785

LEAD FARMERS

in keyhole garden construction and management of vegetables, using organic practices such as the use of botanical extracts for disease and pest management, manure and compost application, etc.

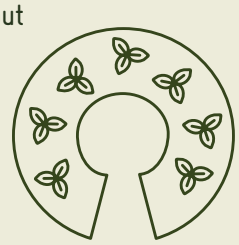
Training of about

50,000

PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

in keyhole garden construction and management of vegetables, as well as supporting them with green leafy vegetable seeds such as spinach, Chinese cabbage, rape, etc.

The project beneficiaries have constructed about



5,131

FUNCTIONAL KEYHOLE GARDENS

contributing to the production of quality nutritious vegetables.

Based on the experience of project beneficiaries, households that have adopted the keyhole garden technology have observed the following benefits:

- Keyhole gardens are located near the house, making it easy for households to access fresh vegetables, even in the evening. Beneficiaries have stated that the vegetables grown in these gardens are very tasty. Additionally, they find managing vegetable production and maintaining the garden to be both simple and efficient.
- They have gained confidence in their ability to cultivate the gardens and effectively manage pests.
- Keyhole gardens contribute to crop diversification and households' dietary diversity.
- The structure ensures soil fertility for four to seven years, making the continued production of vegetables possible.
- It enables the cultivation of at least five different varieties of vegetables simultaneously and it is highly productive, often yielding more than enough to meet a household´s needs. Some beneficiaries even sell the surplus.

LESSONS LEARNT

From the six years of implementing the keyhole garden technology, the following lessons have emerged:

- Enhancing keyhole garden sustainability through improved training: The functional keyhole gardens were collapsing during the rainy seasons due to poor maintenance. To address this challenge, the project intensified the training, with a focus on construction and maintenance of the keyhole gardens. This step led to more keyhole gardens that were able to withstand the rainy seasons and prevent the collapse of the structures.
- The initial construction of keyhole gardens requires significant labour. We have learnt that involving men in the early stages of the project is crucial, as they play a key role in supporting the construction of and investment in keyhole gardens. It is therefore essential to include husbands in the training sessions.
- We have learnt that some headmen do not allow people to cut small trees, which are used for basket making and fencing. To address this issue, beneficiaries have adopted an alternative approach, using wire for baskets and grass for fencing.
- **Training materials:** The translation of materials into local languages played an important role in encouraging the adoption of the technology.

Although the adoption rate was low, keyhole gardens proved to be a promising technology in Zambia as a simple, low-cost, and effective way to improve year-round household food security and nutrition. Continued capacity building of intermediaries, especially in construction, maintenance and pest and disease management, can promote the adoption of the technology.

To effectively promote and enhance the adoption of the keyhole garden technology, the following key recommendations are proposed:

- **Involvement of husbands:** we recommend involving husbands in the training sessions from the beginning of the project to support the construction and maintenance of keyhole gardens.
- **Use of appropriate training materials and capacity building:** We recommend that lead farmers use the translated methodology materials during the training to effectively deliver the content of the lessons. This is very important in rural Zambian communities. In addition, the training should emphasise maintenance as well as pest and disease management.
- **Exchange visits:** We recommend incorporating exchange visits as a strategy to foster peer-to-peer learning, thus enhancing the adoption of the technology right from the start of the intervention.

By involving men in the construction phase and using local materials, the project ensured long-term success and sustainability.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & MATERIAL

KEYHOLE GARDEN
REFERENCE BOOK

2022 (38 pages)
English and Nyanja
Developed by: GIZ FANSER, MOA

KEYHOLE GARDEN
TRAINING CARDS

2019 (22 pages)
English and Nyanja
Developed by: GIZ FANSER, MOA

Promoting Papaya:
A practical approach to vitamin A rich diets

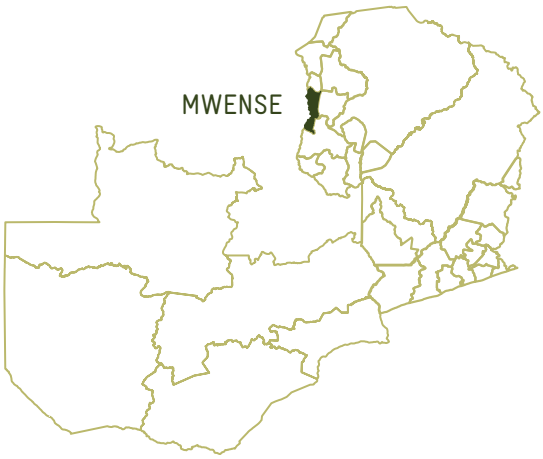
Zungukanji Nachilongo
Advisor for Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture, Luapula Province

SUMMARY

Papaya is more than just a tasty fruit – it's a powerhouse of nutrition; rich in essential nutrients like Vitamin C, Vitamin A, and dietary fibre, which play a critical role in maintaining good health and improving nutrition. For communities battling malnutrition, especially among children under two and women of reproductive age, introducing papaya cultivation helps provide a valuable source of these nutrients. By promoting the cultivation of papaya among 2,000 beneficiaries in Mwense district, the FANSER project aimed to address the nutrient gaps in Luapula Province, where the consumption of vitamin A-rich foods has been particularly low.

Beneficiaries were equipped with high-yield, pest-resistant papaya seedlings and trained extensively in cultivation techniques, pest management and post-harvest practices. The outcomes speak for themselves: a high survival rate of seedlings, impressive yields of up to 15 fruits per plant, and an enthusiastic adoption of the initiative. Many households not only improved their diets with the sweet, nutrient-rich papayas but also began selling the surplus for extra income. This initiative offered powerful lessons in community-driven change and sustainable development.

What made it work so well? How did stakeholder collaboration, training and thoughtful variety selection create such tangible impacts? And most importantly, how can this be replicated elsewhere to combat malnutrition and poverty? The following pages provide a comprehensive look at the strategy, outcomes, and valuable lessons from this initiative as well as actionable insights to inspire future work and help transform lives.

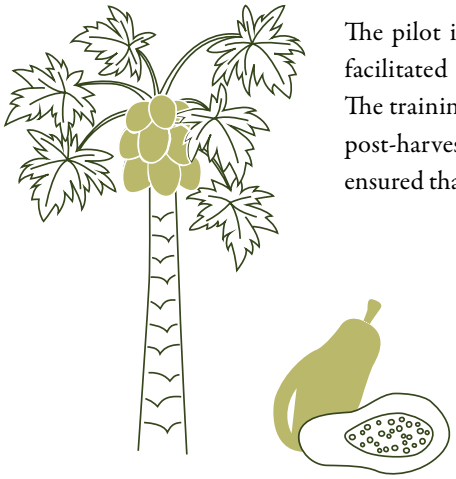


CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

Papaya is a nutrient-dense fruit, providing a significant source of essential vitamins and minerals, as it is particularly high in Vitamin C, Vitamin A, folate, and dietary fibre. These nutrients are crucial in maintaining good health, supporting immune function, and preventing various diseases. The fruit's high antioxidant content also helps to protect the body against oxidative stress.

The introduction of papaya cultivation under the FANSER project in Luapula aimed to address critical nutritional deficiencies, especially among vulnerable populations such as children under two years and women of reproductive age. As the 2022 Follow Up Survey (FUS) highlighted, the consumption of vitamin A-rich foods among women was, at only 13%, concerningly low in the three project districts in Luapula. Consequently, the FANSER project started promoting the cultivation and consumption of papaya to help combat the noted challenges among beneficiaries in Luapula.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) in Mwense, Luapula, the FANSER project implemented a pilot initiative to promote papaya cultivation. This initiative focused on three wards in Mwense district, namely Kapamba, Munwa, and Pebekabesa, targeting a total of 2,000 beneficiaries, of which about 80% were women. Each beneficiary received two matured papaya seedlings of the Calina IBP9 variety for planting at their homestead.



The pilot initiative offered comprehensive training and capacity building for beneficiaries, facilitated by an individual consultant and agricultural extension officers from the MoA. The training included practical sessions on papaya cultivation, pest and disease management, post-harvest handling, and the value addition of papaya. The continuous technical support ensured that farmers were effective in managing their papaya plants and optimising their yield.

STRATEGY AND IMPLEMANTATION

1 Cultivation

Papaya thrives in tropical and subtropical climates with temperatures between 21-33°C and requires well-drained, fertile soils with a pH of 5.5-7.0. Propagated mainly from seeds, which germinate in two to three weeks, seedlings are transplanted at a height of 15-20 cm. Plants should be spaced 1.8-2.5 meters apart for optimal growth. Regular watering, ideally through drip irrigation, and balanced fertilisation, including organic matter, are essential. Effective pest and disease management, along with regular pruning and careful post-harvest handling, are crucial to maintain fruit quality.

PAPAYA SEEDLINGS IN SHED NET

YOUNG PAPAYA PLANT BEFORE FLOWERING STAGE

PAPAYA PLANT AT FRUIT STAGE

2 Training and capacity building

As per the implementation of agricultural activities under the FANSER project, the training in papaya cultivation and utilisation was conducted under the **Lead Farmer Model** ↗, closely supervised by and in collaboration with MoA. The training and capacity building programme for papaya recipients involved comprehensive training in papaya cultivation techniques and utilisation. Lead farmers and **nutrition volunteers** ↗ were trained first, and then tasked with training the beneficiaries. Beneficiaries, primarily women, were trained in best practices for planting, irrigation, pest and disease management, and post-harvest handling of papayas. Continuous technical support from agricultural extension officers ensured successful implementation, enabling recipients to effectively grow and utilise papayas for improved nutrition and food security.

OUTCOME OF THE PAPAYA INITIATIVES

Beneficiaries expressed satisfaction with the papaya initiative in various ways. To begin with, most beneficiaries recorded a high survival rate of the distributed seedlings, with about **70% of the beneficiaries able to grow all their seedlings to maturity.** Some beneficiaries commented that the seedlings were faster growing and more resistant to pests and diseases than the local varieties. The beneficiaries were also pleased with the high yield of the papaya variety that they received, with each plant producing an average of 15 fruits at maturity.

BENEFICIARY TESTIMONIES

Rosemary Kaseba, Kapamba ward

> "The sweeter taste of the papayas has encouraged my children to eat more of the fruit compared to the local varieties.

Chama Chanda, Shilombe village

> "The increased yield from the new variety means we have more papayas to eat and sell.

Beneficiary training in papaya production in Pebekabesa ward

KNOWLEDGE MAP

SUCCESS FACTORS

A Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement was key to the success of the papaya production initiative. Involving the Ministry of Agriculture and FANSER intermediaries at all stages, from planning to implementation, fostered a sense of ownership and collective responsibility. This collaborative approach ensured that knowledge and resources were effectively distributed, with lead farmers and nutrition volunteers playing key roles in training and supporting their communities. Active participation of these stakeholders not only facilitated smooth execution but also boosted sustainability, as the community was invested in maintaining and scaling the benefits of papaya cultivation.

B Variety selection

Selecting the appropriate papaya variety proved crucial to the success of the cultivation initiative. The choice of the Calina IBP9 variety, known for its disease resistance, high yield potential, and superior fruit quality, significantly contributed to the project's outcomes. The MoA and intermediaries (lead farmers and nutrition volunteers) in the participating wards were actively involved in the selection of this variety. Calina IPB9 demonstrated resilience against local pests and diseases, ensuring consistent fruit production and quality. The experience underscored the importance of matching papaya varieties to local agroecological conditions and consumer preferences, highlighting that robust variety selection is a fundamental aspect of sustainable and productive papaya cultivation initiatives.

LESSONS LEARNT

This pilot project, promoting papaya for vitamin A-rich diets, demonstrated promising results in improving both nutrition and livelihoods of the beneficiaries. The lessons drawn from this initiative were:

- **Community acceptance:** The papaya initiative was well-received in pilot areas due to its dual role as both a nutritious food and a potential income-generating crop. Communities were eager to adopt the cultivation practices, seeing the crop as both beneficial for their health and livelihoods.
- **Capacity building and training:** One of the critical successes was the hands-on training provided to beneficiaries on papaya cultivation, post-harvest handling, and its nutritional benefits. The training helped increase knowledge of proper agricultural practices, but continuous extension support was identified as necessary for sustained success.

[...] a high survival rate of seedlings, impressive yields of up to 15 fruits per plant, and an enthusiastic adoption of the initiative. Many households not only improved their diets with the sweet, nutrient-rich papayas but also began selling the surplus for extra income.

PAPAYA DISTRIBUTION IN KAPAMBA WARD (MWENSE)

Boosting iron intake and income generation with Mbereshi beans: Learnings from implementation

Dean Mpande
Advisor for Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture, Luapula Province

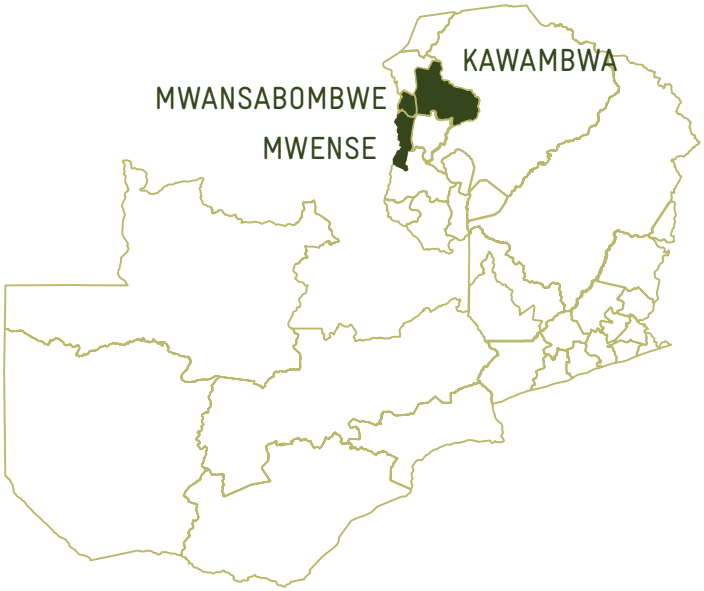
SUMMARY

Mbereshi beans have proven to be a power food for improving nutrition and livelihoods in Luapula Province. These biofortified beans, enriched with high levels of protein, iron and zinc, were selected for promotion by the FANSER project due to their potential to address nutritional deficiencies and their suitability for local production and acceptance. From 2020 to 2024, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, the project fostered both the cultivation and consumption of Mbereshi beans to tackle nutritional deficiencies, while creating income opportunities for vulnerable households, particularly women.

Through a targeted implementation strategy, the project distributed seeds, provided hands-on training to lead farmers and developed localised educational materials. These efforts empowered over 30,000 beneficiaries, primarily women, to incorporate Mbereshi beans into their diets and farming systems. The results were striking: improved dietary diversity scores and increased income opportunities from surplus harvests. The adoption of Mbereshi beans even spread beyond FANSER districts, with the legume gaining recognition at agricultural shows as a promising cash crop.

This document takes you through a journey of how Mbereshi beans were integrated into local farming and diets. It outlines the step-by-step process, from selecting this nutrient-dense crop to distributing seed and providing tailored training for farmers. It also shares practical insights into what worked, such as leveraging lead farmers and developing localised training materials, and where improvements are still needed, like ensuring consistent access to affordable certified seed and improving post-harvest storage solutions.

By reading this, you'll gain actionable knowledge on strategies that successfully boosted food security and dietary diversity in Luapula Province.



CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

In collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), FANSER promoted the production and consumption of Mbereshi beans in Kawambwa, Mwense, and Mwansabombwe districts in Luapula province from 2020 to 2024. This initiative was based on the need to increase protein-rich food sources within FANSER operational districts, as well as on the findings of a 2019 scoping study to identify ideal crops for promotion under the FANSER project. The study evaluated the bio-physical suitability of crops, their crop production potential, market viability, and consumption patterns of several pre-selected crops.[23] As a result, the Mbereshi bean, a biofortified bean legume, rich in protein and fibre and enriched with significantly higher levels of iron and zinc than regular beans, was selected for promotion; not only because of its potential to address nutritional deficiencies, but also because Mbereshi beans were found to be both suitable for production in Luapula and socially accepted by the local population. As a high cash-crop, Mbereshi beans also offered project beneficiaries the opportunity to generate income.

[23]

Three vitamin A-rich crops including pumpkin, orange maize, and orange fleshed sweet potatoes. Other crops evaluated were three protein-rich crops that included soybeans, cowpeas, and iron-rich beans.

FANSER beneficiaries harvesting Mbereshi beans

KNOWLEDGE MAP

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Mbereshi bean promotion process

To ensure year-round access to nutrient-rich foods in vulnerable households, and encourage the expansion of nutrient-dense crop production, the project introduced a targeted strategy to promote Mbereshi beans:

FIGURE 14: Implementation process: Mbereshi beans promotion in Luapula

1. **Partnership engagement:** The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) was involved to ensure collaborative and sustainable interventions.
2. **IEC material development:** Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials on Mbereshi beans were created in partnership with the MoA and consultants.
3. **Community outreach and beneficiary identification:** Vulnerable households, primarily women of reproductive age, were identified and sensitised.
4. **Lead farmer training:** Beneficiaries were trained using hands-on methods aligned with the regional agricultural calendar.
5. **Seed distribution:** Mbereshi bean seeds were distributed to identified households during land preparation prior to the planting season.
6. **Beneficiary production:** Beneficiaries planted, managed, and harvested Mbereshi beans, with some producing twice in the season (one between November and February, and another between February and May).
7. **Post-harvest activities:** Harvested beans were processed, consumed, and preserved for future consumption and seed use.

A MARKETEER AT KAWAMBWA MARKET SMILES AS SHE CHECKS HER MBERESHI BEANS

MBERESHI BEANS DISPLAYED AMOND OTHER PRODUCTS DURING A LUENA BLOCK AGRICULTURAL SHOW IN KAWAMBWA

LEAD FARMERS IN SHINONDE CAMP ATTEND A PRACTICAL TRAINING UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE CAMP EXTENSION OFFER

RESULTS

The project's efforts to promote the production and consumption of Mbereshi beans encouraged many beneficiaries to begin cultivating the legume. This in turn led to an increase in the availability of protein-rich food at household level across the three districts. **The 2022 Follow Up Survey linked the increase in the Individual Dietary Diversity Score for Women (IDDS-W) to the increased production of crops promoted by the project.**

Additionally, the adoption of Mbereshi beans production extended beyond the FANSER operational areas, with non-FANSER agricultural camps also embracing the production. This became evident as Mbereshi beans were showcased at agricultural shows in these camps, often labelled as FANSA or FANSER beans, despite not being directly part of the project.

LESSONS LEARNT

WHAT WENT WELL

The FANSER project employed several strategies that contributed to the successful promotion of Mbereshi beans, leading to the high adoption rate of their production and consumption in all three districts in Luapula. Among them were:

Working with consultants

To help accelerate the promotion of Mbereshi beans in the districts, the FANSER project contracted a consultant for a period of two years, from 2021 to mid-2023, to provide training, monitoring and backstopping to project intermediaries and beneficiaries in Mbereshi bean production, first in Kawambwa and later in Mwense and Mwansabombwe respectively. The consultant also collaborated well with the Ministry of Agriculture, collaborating directly with the Camp Extension Officers while also providing periodic updates to the District Agriculture Coordinating Officer (DACO) offices. This collaboration proved effective in the promotion and adoption of good agricultural practices by project beneficiaries.

Training materials on Mbereshi bean production

While the MoA is responsible for overseeing all agricultural activities in the districts, it often lacks resources to develop training materials on various agricultural topics for use in extension services. To address this gap, the project hired a consultant to develop training materials on legume production (Mbereshi beans and cowpeas). After approval by the MoA, these materials were later translated into the local language Bemba and used to train both intermediaries and beneficiaries in the districts. The materials covered essential topics like the nutritional benefits of Mbereshi beans, agronomic practices and post-harvest management, equipping project intermediaries and beneficiaries with the necessary knowledge.

The Lead Farmer Model

The project utilised the **Lead Farmer Model** ↗ to train a large number of beneficiaries in Mbereshi bean production. Nearly 900 trained lead farmers served as crucial knowledge disseminators within their communities, promoting the adoption of good agricultural

practices and contributing to the project's success in promoting Mbereshi bean production and consumption. Building the communication and facilitation skills of the lead farmers strengthened their effectiveness.

The model also created opportunities for bottom-up information flow, influencing decision-making within the extension system and leading to improved delivery of extension services, particularly in promoting Mbereshi beans and other agricultural activities.

Provision of seed

One of the gaps identified in the crop assessment study was the lack of access to improved and certified seed for all the crops evaluated in Kawambwa and Mwense districts. To tackle the limited availability of certified Mbereshi bean seed, the project had initially provided starter seed packs to a select group of vulnerable beneficiaries. After consultation with stakeholders, seed distribution was expanded, reaching over 30,000 beneficiaries and intermediaries, which significantly boosted both production and consumption.

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

Despite the project's achievements, some areas still require further attention for long-term sustainability:

Access to certified seed

Although the project provided initial seed support, access to affordable certified Mbereshi bean seed remains a challenge for farmers. Collaboration between the MoA, cooperating partners and future projects is necessary to establish a network of local seed growers for strategic crops like Mbereshi beans. Additionally, incentivising agro-dealers to stock Mbereshi bean seed and further partnering with farmer cooperatives to bring certified seed to communities could improve seed availability within the communities in the districts.

Unpredictable rain patterns

The erratic nature of rainfall patterns in the region poses challenges for farmers trying to determine optimal planting times. Investing in weather forecasting tools and disseminating this information through the Lead Farmer Model and agricultural radio programmes could help farmers make informed decisions about planting schedules and mitigate potential crop losses.

Post-harvest management

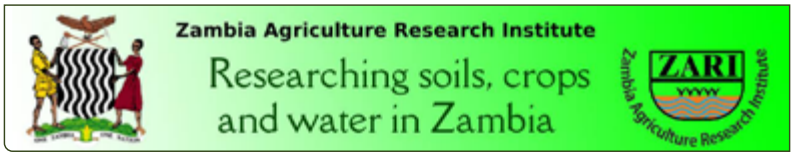
Although the project provided training in post-harvest management practices, there is a further need to improve access to advanced processing and storage solutions, such as hermetic bags and solar dryers, which remain limited due to their high cost. Exploring more cost-effective options for food processing and storage equipment could significantly reduce post-harvest losses and ensure year-round availability of Mbereshi beans and other agricultural products.

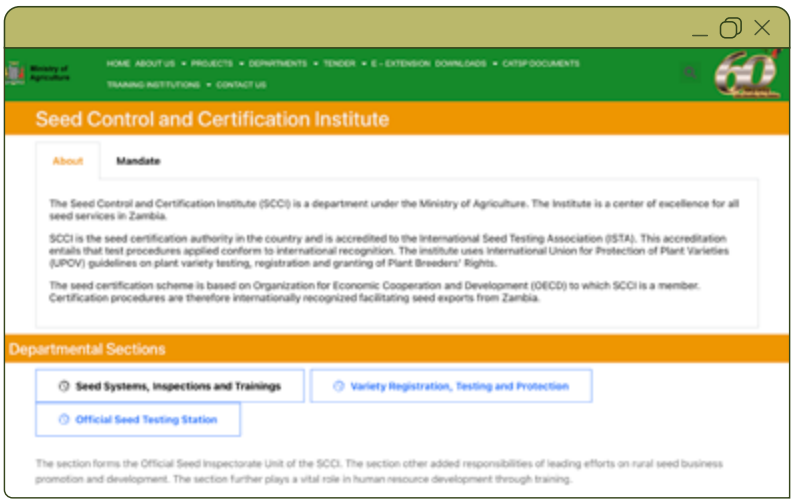
RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure the long-term sustainability of Mbereshi bean production and enhance food security and nutrition in Luapula province, the following recommendations are proposed:

Enhance seed accessibility

Establish a network of local certified seed growers for Mbereshi beans in collaboration with **the MoA, the Zambia Agricultural Research Institute (ZARI), and the Seed Control and Certification Institute (SCCI)**. Incentivise agro-dealers to stock Mbereshi bean seed and explore and encourage partnerships between agro-dealers and farmer cooperatives to improve seed supply to the rural communities in the districts.





Improve climate resilience

Invest in weather forecasting tools and disseminate this information through the Lead Farmer Model and agricultural radio programmes to help farmers adapt planting schedules based on seasonal weather patterns.

Promote cost-effective storage solutions

Explore and implement strategies to make food processing and storage equipment such as hermetic bags and solar driers more accessible to rural households in Luapula. Increased Constituency Development Fund (CDF)[24] allocations in the constituencies within the districts offer potential opportunities for supporting such initiatives.

[24] The fund provides government funds to local constituencies for grassroots projects, managed by elected representatives to address community needs, such as infrastructure and social services.

After consultation with stakeholders, seed distribution was expanded, reaching over 30,000 beneficiaries and intermediaries, which significantly boosted both production and consumption.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & MATERIAL

PRODUCTION OF MBERESHI BEANS MANUAL

2020 (28 pages)
English and Bemba
Developed by: GIZ FANSER, MOA

KNOWLEDGE MAP

CHAPTER 04

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT FOR BETTER NUTRITION

Economic empowerment through improved household and productive resources

The economic empowerment of households is key to sustainably improving food and nutrition security, as economic insecurity and limited resources are often the main barriers to a balanced diet. To address these challenges, FANSER has focused on approaches that not only increase households' income, but also increase their resilience to external shocks, and improve the availability and accessibility of nutritious food. Since 2019, the goal of improving access to household and productive resources has been firmly anchored as a field of action in the implementation of the project.

To strengthen financial resilience and food security for sustained nutritional improvements among beneficiary households, the project promoted the formation of Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC) as a central instrument to enable participants to build up financial resources and at the same time gain access to small loans. Recognising the importance of joint decision-making within households for improved nutrition, this approach included gender-transformative training to promote joint decision-making on the use of income from SILC groups, and agricultural investments to increase profitability.

In addition, the project promoted the Farmer Business School approach, through which smallholder farmers were equipped with business skills to make farming a profitable business. This not only strengthened the economic base of households, but also their ability to invest in a diversified and nutritious diet in the long term.

The improved village chicken approach supported the build-up of resources, as the breeding, sale and keeping of this improved chicken breed can generate income and improve and diversify nutrition. The project therefore supported households in professionalising production and increasing productivity.

The following chapter provides insights into the various strategies the project implemented to support beneficiaries in achieving financial stability and access to resources. It provides information on the concept, challenges and lessons learnt from the implementation of SILC Groups and Farmer Business Schools and explains exactly why investing in improved village chicken to increase income and food security is worthwhile.

Empowering rural households: How savings and lending groups improve nutrition resilience

Thulason Mtonga
Advisor for Agro-Economic Capacity Development, Eastern Province

SUMMARY

How do you empower rural communities to save, invest, and grow when access to traditional financial services is nearly non-existent? This document takes you on a deep dive into one of FANSER's transformative interventions: the Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC) approach.

Learn how SILC groups tackled the challenge of financial exclusion, enabling nearly 50,000 participants, 80% of whom were women, to save over 22 million Zambian Kwacha (more than USD 795,000) and invest in income-generating activities, agricultural inputs and household nutrition. Discover how SILC groups fostered not only financial independence, but also stronger community ties, thanks to their self-managed structures, flexible lending terms and built-in social safety nets. Find out how the SILC approach integrated gender transformative perspectives and training, engaging men in group participation and enhancing gender relations to improve joint decision-making and financial outcomes. Additionally, you will discover how the SILC approach empowered communities to take ownership of their financial futures through innovative solutions like community-based private service providers (PSPs), whose fee-for-service model ensures long-term sustainability.

Whether you're curious about how to replicate SILC's success in other contexts, interested in scaling up community-driven initiatives, or looking to understand the role of financial literacy in breaking the cycle of poverty, this document offers actionable insights and proven strategies.

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SILC APPROACH

The fourth out of five fields of intervention instituted by the FANSER project supported families to develop strategies to manage their household and productive resources. This focus on the economic aspects of ensuring good nutrition led to the establishment of Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC). Through membership of these SILC groups, project participants gained access to financial resources earmarked for investments in agricultural or nutrition-related activities. Additionally, they participated in **Farmer Business School (FBS)** training, which equipped them with skills to approach farming as a business, with the ultimate aim of growing their income and improving household nutrition. 80% of the project participants who benefited from this approach were women.

Most smallholder farmers in rural communities face challenges when trying to borrow funds from financial institutions to invest in different entrepreneurial activities. Commercial banking, and even microfinance, are simply not available in many rural areas. According to a 2008 Ministry of Finance report, only 28% of adults in rural areas have access to formal credit or an account with a financial institution.

The SILC approach, implemented by the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) under FANSER, addressed the financial exclusion of vulnerable populations by offering a secure environment for low-income households to save and borrow small amounts on flexible terms. This initiative enhanced members' financial management skills, increased financial inclusion, and boosted overall economic resilience. By utilising these resources, participants could invest in productive assets and business activities, thereby generating income and improving nutrition at household level.

STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

The SILC approach includes the following key features:

- **Community ownership:** SILC groups are self-managed by their members, enabling long-term sustainability and financial independence.
- **Financial education:** Participants receive training in basic financial management, which helps them effectively manage their savings and loans.
- **Flexible savings and loans:** Members can save according to their ability, with minimum contributions required. They can also access loans with flexible terms, which allows for greater participation by marginalised groups.
- **Private Service Providers (PSPs):** To ensure ongoing support and sustainability, CRS has introduced a market-based strategy where local entrepreneurs, known as PSPs, provide services to SILC groups on a fee-for-service basis. This model allows for the scalable and self-sustaining delivery of financial services to underserved communities.

HOW DO SILC GROUPS OPERATE?

SILC operates as community-based savings groups, designed to provide financial services to people who lack access to formal banking systems, especially in rural areas. Here's how SILC generally works:

1. **Group formation** – SILC groups are typically composed of 15-30 self-selected individuals from the same community. The group is guided by a field agent or a Private Service Provider (PSP), who helps train and organise members. Members contribute savings on a regular basis, usually weekly or monthly, into a communal fund.

2. **Savings pool** – The members pool their savings into a common fund. This fund serves as the capital from which loans are made to members. Members determine how much each person will contribute, based on their financial capacity. Contributions can be equal, or members may contribute varying amounts.

3. **Internal lending** – Once a sufficient amount of savings is collected, members can borrow from the group's pool for various needs such as agricultural inputs, emergency expenses, or small business investments. Loans are typically short-term and repaid with interest, which allows the group's fund to grow. The interest rates are decided collectively by the group.

4. **Loan repayment** – Borrowers repay their loans with interest over an agreed period, typically between three to six months. This creates a continuous cycle of lending and saving within the group. The interest generated adds to the overall fund, benefiting all members.

5. **Share-out –** At the end of the group's cycle (usually eight to twelve months), the savings and any profits made from the interest are shared out among members in proportion to their contributions. After the share-out, the group can start a new cycle of savings and lending.

6. **Emergency or social fund** – SILC groups may also create an emergency or social fund, which is separate from the savings pool. This fund is used to help members in cases of illness, funerals, or other unexpected expenses, without expecting repayment.

BOX 1

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF FIELD AGENTS AND PRIVATE SERVICE PROVIDERS

Field agents are trusted community members, with communication and facilitation abilities, organisational and planning skills, as well as knowledge of basic economic principles. Their responsibilities encompass various aspects of group formation, training, and ongoing support. They were initially recruited by the project and received a stipend for their services for a certain time. After successfully forming and managing six SILC groups up to the first share-out after 12 months and passing an exam, they were certified as independent Private Service Providers (PSP). These PSPs continued mentoring and coaching SILC groups and formed new groups without support from the project. SILC group members paid small, predefined fees for their services.

Trusted Community Members

Formation, Training and Support

Mentoring and Coaching

Field agents/PSPs were responsible for forming SILC groups by promoting the benefits of saving and lending within the community.

They provided training sessions to SILC members, focusing on the principles of saving, lending, and group management. This included helping members understand their roles and responsibilities within the group.

Supervision and monitoring: They supervised SILC groups for a defined period, ensuring that members adhere to the established procedures and practices.

They regularly reported on the performance of the groups they trained, assessing their effectiveness in terms of amount of savings and purpose.

Field agents helped build the capacity of SILC members by encouraging them to take ownership of their groups. This included training members in planning, organising, and managing their savings and lending activities independently.

They assisted in resolving conflicts that arose within the group, fostering a safe and respectful environment for all members.

Encouragement and motivation: Field agents created an atmosphere that encouraged participation and active involvement from all members, especially those who might have been timid or reluctant to speak.

Transition to independence: After a set period of supervision, field agents helped groups transition to self-management, ensuring that they had the skills and confidence to operate independently.

BOX 2

THE SILC + GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE (GTA) TRAINING APPROACH

Integrating a gender-transformative perspective into SILC aimed to engage men in group participation and enhance gender relations, ultimately improving decision-making and financial outcomes. Traditionally, savings programmes have focused on women, based on the assumption that increased access to finance leads to empowerment. **However, evidence shows that women's membership in savings groups does not always result in control over funds or increased involvement in income-generating activities.**

To address this, gender-transformative training for SILC members and their spouses has been implemented. This training challenges harmful social norms and power dynamics while complementing the SILC methodology. It fosters pathways for members to invest time and money in productive activities, leading to equitable development outcomes for both women and men.

KEY ASPECTS OF THE TRAINING:

Promote positive gender norms: Encourage shared financial decision-making within households.

Foster gender equality: Deconstruct harmful norms and highlight the benefits of gender equality for all.

Create safe spaces: Facilitate cross-gender dialogue to enhance mutual understanding of daily challenges and opportunities.

Encourage active parenting: Inspire both men and women to create gender-equitable households and foster emotional connections with their children.

THE SILC APPROACH UNDER FANSER

The following steps were taken to set up the SILC approach in FANSER intervention areas:

1. **Recruitment of field agents and building capacity:** Field agents play a crucial role in the implementation and success of SILC. They are instrumental in ensuring the sustainability and success of SILC initiatives, ultimately contributing to the economic strengthening and empowerment of community members (**see Box 1**) ↗.

   - **Advertising:** The project advertised the field agent positions by using community boards and through village head persons to ensure that the recruitment process was transparent and inclusive.

   - **Choosing the right candidates:** The project screened the applications, conducted interviews to assess candidates' suitability for the role, and selected those candidates who demonstrated a strong commitment to community development and had the necessary skills to facilitate SILC groups.

   - **Training and ongoing capacity building:** The selected field agents received a comprehensive eight-day training course, covering the SILC methodology, facilitation skills, and group dynamics. The training included the following:

     + Overview of SILC principles
     + Roles and responsibilities of field agents
     + Techniques for group facilitation and conflict resolution
     + Furthermore, the trained field agents received ongoing on-the-job coaching and mentoring from project staff (CRS field supervisors) as they began their work with SILC groups
     + **Gender** ↗: In addition, the project trained field agents through a Training of Trainers to facilitate training with SILC members and their spouses on gender-related topics in a way that promoted personal reflection, respectful dialogue, and attitudinal and behavioural change (**see Box 2**) ↗.

2. **SILC group formation:** Trained field agents formed SILC groups and trained members in the methodology. SILC groups selected their members on the basis of trust, location (within the same village) and absence of a criminal record.

90% of the members also received monthly lessons through the Care Group Model to ensure that nutrition-related aspects were considered when deciding on savings and investments. Field agents helped members understand the benefits and processes involved in saving and lending.

3

SILC group management: Trained field agents assisted the SILC groups in developing a constitution to serve as a guiding document for managing all group activities. The constitution comprises the following elements:

- **Group name and objectives:** Each group specifies the official name of their SILC group, along with its mission or objectives, which often include improving members' financial security, promoting savings, and providing access to loans.

- **Membership eligibility criteria:** The constitution defines who can join the group, such as individuals from a particular community or those interested in savings and lending. It also outlines each member's duties, including regular attendance, making contributions, participating in meetings, and following group rules. Members' rights to save, borrow, and participate in decision -making processes are also detailed, as well as any fees required to join the group.

- **Savings contributions:** The constitution specifies the minimum and maximum contribution amounts members must make and the frequency (weekly, monthly). It details how contributions are made and recorded to ensure transparency. Additionally, it outlines the criteria for taking out loans, including how long a member must be part of the group before borrowing. The agreed-upon interest rates, typically kept low to encourage internal borrowing, are also explained. The document defines the loan repayment period and sets limits on how much a member can borrow at once, often based on the amount they have saved.

- **Governance structure and leadership roles:** The constitution defines the group leadership roles, such as chairperson, secretary, treasurer, and other officers responsible for managing the group's affairs. It outlines how leaders are chosen, the duration of their term of office, and the procedures for re-election or replacement. It also describes the decision-making processes, such as using a majority vote for matters like loan approvals and constitutional amendments. Additionally, the constitution specifies how often meetings are held (weekly, bi-weekly, monthly), guidelines for attending meetings, and penalties for non-attendance.

- **Fines and penalties:**
  - **Late payments:** The constitution outlines consequences for members who fail to repay loans on time, including fines or a temporary suspension from borrowing.
  - **Absenteeism:** It also defines penalties for missing meetings or failing to contribute regularly.

- **Social and emergency fund**
  - **Purpose:** The constitution defines how the social fund will be used, e.g. for emergencies, funerals, or medical expenses for members.
  - **Contributions:** It also states whether members contribute a small percentage of their savings to a separate social fund.

- **Share-out procedure:**
  - **Timing:** The constitution defines when the group's savings will be distributed (usually at the end of an 8-12-month cycle).
  - **Distribution method:** It also outlines how savings and any profits from interest are divided among members, typically proportional to their contributions.

- **Record keeping:**
  - **Roles and responsibilities:** It defines who is responsible for maintaining financial records, loan repayments, and savings.
  - **Transparency measures:** Also, the constitution outlines procedures to ensure that records are accurate and accurate and transparent, including regular audits or reviews by the members.

- **Amendments:** The constitution outlines the process for making changes to the document, typically requiring a majority or consensus vote from members.

- **Conflict resolution:** The constitution details procedures for resolving disagreements between members or over group decisions, often involving group discussions or third-party mediation.

The **constitution** provides structure to the SILC groups, promotes accountability, and ensures that the group operates fairly and transparently. Each SILC group may tailor its own constitution to reflect its unique needs and local context.

4 **Monitoring and evaluation:** The project established a monitoring system which generated regular information on the effectiveness of the SILC activities. Field agents reported monthly on the following indicators: number of SILC groups formed; amount of money saved per member per SILC group; and area of investment. Information was compiled in a project data base.

5 **The PSP concept and formation and management of PSP networks:** The PSP concept is a key component of the SILC approach, designed to offer sustainable support to SILC groups beyond the project, and make SILC groups self-reliant. Unlike field agents, who received a stipend from the project, PSPs operate on a fee-for-service model, providing long-term support independently (see Box 1). PSPs charge SILC groups for their services, which ensures the sustainability of SILC operations even beyond the project. The fees are agreed upon between the PSP and the groups, making it affordable and flexible. This helps PSPs to continue offering mentorship and technical support to SILC groups, ensuring that they continue to function effectively. This includes helping with record-keeping, troubleshooting issues, and advising on best practices. PSPs have formed, and manage networks that meet quarterly to share experiences, discuss challenges and solutions, and improve their skills. The networks were used by the project to deliver information and discuss topics relevant to the SILC approach.

6 **Transition of SILC group to independence:** After guiding the group through its first full cycle up to the share-out, the field agents gradually reduced their direct support as the groups became more self-sufficient and independent, having gained the skills and confidence to manage their operations on their own.

CHARITY SAKALA, MONEY COUNTER FOR TIKONDANE SILC GROUP IN KATETE DISTRICT OPENING THE CASH IN THE PRESENCE OF ALL MEMBERS DURING A WEEKLY SILC MEETING

BEYOND THE SILC BOX

To support SILC members investing in nutrition activities, the project integrated farming as a business into the SILC group approach. Members were trained in **Farmer Business Schools (FBS)** ↗ on how to profitably invest in agriculture value chains that enhance both income and nutrition.

Additionally, as part of the Farmer Business School intervention, the project promoted 'saving for purpose', encouraging members to save for purchases like vegetable seeds, **cowpea seeds** ↗ or **improved village chickens** ↗.

FANSER started promoting the formal registration of the SILC groups in 2023 to make it possible for them to participate in different economic activities and gain access to government programmes. PSPs were linked to the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS) as well as the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), which supported the formal registration of 294 groups until 2024. This process is still ongoing. In addition, this helped the groups to jointly link with input suppliers and markets and negotiate better prices.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND RESULTS

Between 2018 and 2024, a total of 168 field agents were trained and certified as PSPs. **They in turn formed 2,000 SILC groups, comprising more than 49,900 SILC members** in all six FANSER districts in Eastern and Luapula Provinces.

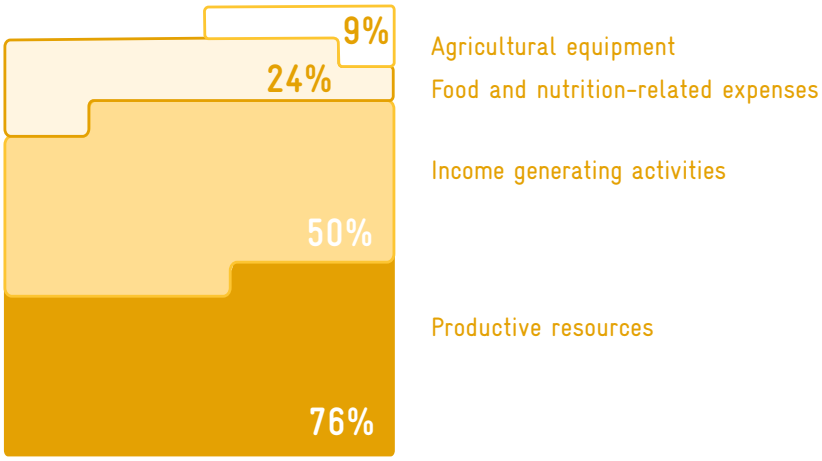
Total savings amount of

22.3 Mio

Zambian Kwacha (EUR 772,000)

was managed by SILC members over the six-year period, and 27.8 Mio Zambian Kwacha (EUR 962,000) was distributed as shareouts after members borrowed, with interest accumulating.

Investments of SILC members from the share-out



To ensure the sustainability of SILC activities, FANSER engaged with the MCDSS to provide ongoing support and monitoring for PSPs beyond the project. The MCDSS will also support and participate in PSP network meetings, using these gatherings as a platform for communication and collaboration. Additionally, the project facilitated the standardisation of a reporting tool for both MCDSS and FANSER, ensuring that in future, PSPs are integrated into the MCDSS reporting system.

CHALLENGES

- **Limited financial resources:** Members frequently faced restrictions due to limited savings and access to capital, which constrained the total amount available for loans, and consequently impacted the overall share-out amount. To address this challenge, some group members sought additional funding from financial institutions.

- **Lack of financial literacy:** Limited financial literacy impacted members' understanding and management of finances, particularly during share-outs, leading to conflicts within some groups. As a result, these groups often struggled to sustain their savings practices after a few cycles. This challenge was addressed through frequent support from PSPs, who encouraged the groups to persist with their savings efforts.

- **Social and cultural barriers:** Cultural norms and social structures sometimes influenced participation and decision-making within the groups. For example, the inclusion of traditional leaders in some SILC groups resulted in limited participation by certain members. This was due to the cultural belief that it is subordinate or disrespectful to question ideas or suggestions made by traditional leaders. As a result, group members often accepted a leader's contributions, even if they were not supported by the majority.

  This challenge was mitigated through extensive sensitisation by PSPs during group formation, emphasising that each member of the SILC groups had equal rights to decision-making and participation.

Money Counter for Tikondane SILC group in Katete district counting money during a weekly SILC meeting

KNOWLEDGE MAP

TIKONDANE SILC GROUP IN KATETE DISTRICT HOLDING THEIR WEEKLY SILC MEETING

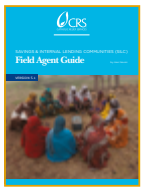
LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- **PSP concept:** The PSP concept within the SILC approach was crucial for the successful formation, management and sustainability of the SILC groups. Intensive training and frequent mentoring of the field agents/PSPs ensured effective group formation and management.
- **Expanding beyond saving and share-out:** SILC groups need to think beyond saving and share-out by working together and becoming formally registered. This helps SILC groups to access additional opportunities for further development and growth.
- **PSP networks:** The PSP networks significantly enhanced the sustainability of SILC activities. By meeting regularly, PSPs were able to share experiences and best practices in managing groups within their respective areas, contributing to more effective and resilient SILC operations.
- **FBS training:** FBS training enabled SILC members to invest in profitable agricultural activities, leading to an increase in their savings within the SILC groups.
- **Ensure continuous training and mentorship for PSPs and SILC groups:** Providing ongoing training and capacity building to PSPs on financial management, group dynamics, and conflict resolution will strengthen the skills of SILC members and leaders.
- **Strengthen linkages with agricultural input suppliers:** Enhancing connections between SILC groups and agricultural input suppliers will facilitate the integration of profitable farming activities among members, leading to increased profits that can be reinvested into the SILC groups.
- **Encourage formal registration:** Promoting the formal registration of SILC groups would enable broader economic participation by linking them to various external resources, such as government programmes (e.g. the Constituency Development Fund and women and youth empowerment initiatives), microfinance institutions, and other support and opportunities.

CONCLUSION

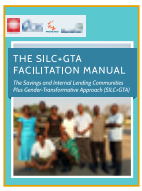
The Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC) approach, implemented under the FANSER project in Zambia, has proven to be a powerful tool in fostering financial inclusion and improving the economic resilience of smallholder farmers in rural areas. Through community-managed savings groups, members, especially women, gained access to financial services, allowing them to save, borrow, and invest in productive and income-generating activities. The integration of financial education, flexible lending, and the Farmer Business School (FBS) model further strengthened their capacity to view farming as a business and improve household nutrition. The key to the SILC model's sustainability has been the introduction of Private Service Providers (PSPs), who continue to offer support through a fee-for-service system. This approach not only boosts financial management skills but also fosters gender equality by involving both men and women in financial decisions. The SILC groups now stand as resilient, self-managed entities contributing to long-term food and nutrition security in Zambia.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & MATERIAL



SILC FIELD AGENT GUIDE

2024 (143 pages)
English
Developed by: GIZ FANSER, MOA, CRS



SILC & GTA FACILITATION MANUAL

2024 (60 pages)
English
Developed by: CRS, CARITAS, World Fish, PROMUNDO

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

MARGRET NKHOSI

14:53 min
Petauke,
Eastern Province

Margret Nkhosi, an assistant community development officer in Petauke district, explains the SILC approach and how these saving groups have empowered local communities to build resilience.

MASULANI AND ENELISE BANDA

03:18 min
Songwe, Katete

Masulani and Enelise Banda from Katete are members of a saving group. Listen to them share how savings and loans have supported their agricultural endeavors.

The Farmer Business School: Equipping women and farmers with essential business skills

Thulason Mtonga
Advisor for Agro-Economic Capacity Development, Eastern Province

SUMMARY

Low productivity, limited business knowledge and a lack of tools to make informed decisions about profitable agricultural ventures often hinder smallholder farmers from unlocking the full potential of their agricultural activities. This document is a guide to understanding how the Farmer Business School (FBS) approach, implemented under the FANSER project, empowered farmers to tackle these challenges.

It takes you through the journey of how the FBS taught farmers to see farming as a business, not just a livelihood. With its tailored training modules and a proven strategy, FBS equipped farmers with the knowledge and tools to improve food and nutrition security, productivity and income generation. You'll discover how financial literacy, cost-benefit analysis, and sustainable farming practices transform not only farms but entire communities.

The FBS prioritises inclusivity and social empowerment. From helping women gain decision-making power in their households, to ensuring that high illiteracy levels among participants are not a barrier, FBS is a model for equitable development.

You'll also learn about the key role of Savings and Internal Lending Communities in providing farmers with the resources they need to invest in agricultural ventures, and how the project carefully selected and adapted value chains to ensure local relevance and sustainability.

If you're looking for practical strategies that bridge economic empowerment and improved nutrition through agriculture, this is a must-read. With real-life success stories, detailed strategies and lessons learned, this document offers valuable insights for development practitioners, policy makers, and anyone passionate about advancing sustainable agriculture. Explore how the FBS has reached over 17,000 farmers, achieved remarkable adoption rates, and set the stage for long-term impact – and how farming can become a thriving business for smallholder farmers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE FBS APPROACH

As the fourth out of five fields of action, the project supported households to develop improved strategies to manage their productive resources and enhance their resilience to achieve better nutritional outcomes. Under this economic dimension of good nutrition, the project implemented two major interventions, the first being the establishment of **Savings and Internal Lending Communites (SILC)** ↗. Through membership in these SILC groups, project participants gained access to financial resources to invest in agricultural or nutrition-related activities. The second intervention was tested and standardised training under the Farmer Business School approach (FBS), demonstrating how approaching farming as a business and improving the nutritional situation in households can lead to income generation. Eighty percent of the project participants who benefitted were women. The project selected members of the SILC groups as the target group for the FBS training, as they already had basic financial literacy through the SILC activities, as well as access to resources to invest in agricultural activities.

Low productivity is a challenge for many smallholder farmers in Zambia, besides which they often neglect to evaluate the cost-benefit ratio of their agricultural value chains, making it difficult to come to informed decisions about profitable crops.

The FBS approach addressed these challenges through a comprehensive four-day adult learning programme designed to shift the mindset of smallholder farmers to take farming as a business and promote practices that enhance food security, productivity, and income through:

- **Business skills development:** FBS equips farmers with essential business skills, such as cost-benefit analysis, financial management, and strategic planning, **allowing them to make informed decisions that boost productivity and profitability**.
- **Promoting improved and sustainable agricultural practices:** FBS emphasises the adoption of good agricultural practices and innovative techniques, contributing to sustainable farming methods, improved productivity and better food security.
- **Promoting group dynamics:** FBS encourages farmers to work together, which enhances their negotiating power for better prices for inputs. Their collective market presence improves market opportunities with better prices for the produce, leading to better economic outcomes.
- **Social inclusion and economic empowerment:** A significant share of FBS participants are women who are gaining decision-making power within their households, thereby fostering gender equality.

FBS farmer adopting improved village chicken practices after attending FBS training

KNOWLEDGE MAP

THE FARMER BUSINESS SCHOOL APPROACH UNDER THE AGRI-BUSINESS FACILITY

The GIZ's Agri-Business Facility (ABF) has successfully implemented the FBS approach across numerous African countries, tailoring the curriculum to align with specific value chains. Since its inception in 2010, 1.3 million smallholder farmers in 19 African countries have benefitted from FBS training. The FANSER project used this approach, as the FBS curriculum is designed to be flexible, allowing for modifications based on the targeted value chains. This ensures that the training is relevant to the local agricultural context and market demands. The ABF guided the project throughout the preparation work for the FBS approach (market analysis, selection of value chains) and the adaptation phase of the learning.

The FBS training manual has the following 12 standard modules:

- MODULE 1 – Farming is a business
- MODULE 2 – Know the units to know your assets
- MODULE 3 – Manage your farm for more and better food
- MODULE 4 – Money-Out, Money-In: Know whether you are doing successful business
- MODULE 5 – Decisions for more income
- MODULE 6 – Improve your farm enterprise for more income throughout the year
- MODULE 7 – Manage your money throughout the year
- MODULE 8 – How to get good financial services
- MODULE 9 – Earning more money by investing in good quality seed
- MODULE 10 – Improve yield – Good Agriculture Practices (GAP)
- MODULE 11 – Benefits from membership in farmer organisations
- MODULE 12 – Becoming an entrepreneur in practice

STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

As a first step, the project used a structural process to select three value chains, including one lead value chain to be promoted in the project intervention areas and to be covered by the FBS training. Selection criteria were aligned with the project objectives as well as with the local context in the two provinces where the project operated.

The selection process was done as follows:

- **Definition of objectives and scope:** The first step involved reviewing the programme's objectives and the rationale for selecting specific value chains.

- **Screening and shortlisting:** A list of potential value chains was developed for the two provinces, based on the following criteria:
  - The value chain should require low inputs but provide high returns.
  - It should contribute to improving nutrition.
  - The value chain should be easy for beneficiaries to adopt.
  - Beneficiaries should already have some knowledge of production in the lead value chain.
  - It should have the potential to expand both the area or size of production, and be transferable to households that are not direct project beneficiaries.
  - The value chain should offer opportunities to connect with input suppliers and markets.

- This was followed by an in-depth market analysis of the shortlisted value chains in the two provinces. This was done with the support of a consultant who was certified as a FBS Master Trainer[25] and involved consultations with relevant stakeholders, a market study, and secondary data analysis, e.g. with the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), Ministry of Agriculture, the Agribusiness and Marketing Department, the non-governmental organisations **Solidaridad and COMACO**, the private supplier **Good Nature Agro**, and farmers in the communities. The following aspects were assessed:
  - **Economic potential: Assessing market demand, growth potential, and profitability.**
  - **Social and nutritional impact: Evaluating how the value chain can benefit local communities, including fostering gender equality.**
  - **Environmental sustainability: Considering the ecological impact and resilience to climate change.**

- **Final selection:** Based on the gathered information and analysis against the selection criteria, three value chains were selected in each province: improved village chicken as the lead value chain as well as tomato and soybeans in Eastern Province, and village chicken as the lead value chain as well as cowpeas and cassava in Luapula Province.

The selection process was followed by the FBS Master Trainer adapting the FBS training materials, including both the Training of Trainers (ToT) manual and the FBS handbook for participants, to fit the specific requirements of the selected value chains. Afterwards, the FBS Master Trainer conducted a pilot training session to ensure that the materials were well-suited and appropriately adapted for the FBS trainer candidates.

As the third step, the project, in partnership with key stakeholders, initiated a recruitment process to select qualified trainers for the Farmer Business School. Interested candidates submitted their CVs for review, and shortlisted candidates were invited for interviews. The selection criteria were as follows:

[25] A Master Trainer is an individual who has been trained and certified to teach other trainers, specifically in how to deliver Farmer Business School (FBS) training.

+ A minimum of a diploma or higher in tertiary education
+ Strong skills in adult education and facilitation
+ At least two years of experience in the agricultural sector
+ 50% of the trainers had to be between 25 and 40 years of age

In the next step, the FBS Master Trainer led a four-week ToT workshop for the selected FBS trainer candidates. The workshop included two weeks of classroom training, followed by two weeks of practical field training. After completing the ToT, all candidates were evaluated, and those who passed were certified to deliver FBS training on a large scale to farmers in their communities, either as individual trainers or in pairs. This standard procedure under the ABF ensures that only well-trained and qualified FBS trainers are selected.

During the three-year implementation period from 2021 until 2023, FBS facilitators participated in a two-week refresher course at the start of each new training cycle. This training included a reflection on their experiences from the previous year's implementation, allowing them to build on lessons learned and improve their facilitation skills.

A FBS TRAINER CONDUCTING COMMUNITY TRAINING FOR A FBS GROUP

FBS TRAINERS DURING A TRAINING OF TRAINERS

During the FBS training in the communities, farmers were trained in groups of 25 to 30 participants over four half-day sessions. Private Service Providers (PSPs) were responsible for managing the SILC groups and helped mobilise FBS group members for training.

In addition, the PSPs mentored participants in applying what they had learned after their FBS training. A total of 120 PSPs provided ongoing monthly mentorship sessions and routine coaching of trained farmers in adopting the FBS practices. This was crucial in ensuring the adoption of the training content and encouraging group members to continue exchanging experiences. Given the high illiteracy levels among beneficiaries, this measure was especially important to ensure that no one was left behind. In addition, those participants who struggled with literacy were paired with more literate individuals.

Within the groups, farmers were able to practise together, learn from each other, and adopt the FBS practices. The continued group engagement facilitated easier connections with input suppliers and market opportunities for the value chains promoted in the FBS.

With the support of a consultant, the project developed a 'Reference guide on how to form and manage farmers groups', which included the training concept and training material on how to use the guide. This was reviewed and validated by the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) at district level and adapted after a pilot training session. In 2023 and 2024, in collaboration with the Ministry of Community Development (MCDSS) and MSME, the project trained a total of 98 PSPs in Eastern Province in the use of this reference guide. Both ministries played a key role in the formation of farmer groups and supported PSPs in the group registration process. Their involvement ensured that the groups were established effectively and in compliance with local requirements. So far around 294 SILC/FBS groups have been formally registered in Eastern Province with the support of both ministries. Once formally registered, the groups were eligible to apply for and access support programmes, such as the Constituency Development Fund (CDF). This registration opened opportunities for additional resources and support to enhance their agricultural activities.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND RESULTS

FANSER developed and adapted two FBS curricula: one for Luapula Province, focusing on village chickens as the main value chain, with cassava and cowpeas as complementary value chains, and another curriculum for Eastern Province, where village chickens are also the lead value chain, complemented by soybean and tomato value chains.

FBS Trainers

27

10 Eastern Province
17 in Luapula Province

FBS Groups

567

192 Eastern Province
375 in Luapula Province

Beneficiaries of the FBS

16,554

10,547 Eastern Province
6,007 in Luapula Province

The project measured its success with the following indicators at output level:

+ 50% of the trained beneficiaries are able to adopt at least three out of the key practices, decided jointly (by women and men) at household level.

Survey results from the output assessment in August 2024 showed the following promising picture: **84% of the trained FBS participants were actively implementing a minimum of three out of the ten promoted key practices under the Farmer Business School, and were doing this jointly with their spouses at household level. This was above the project target of 50% as well as above the 41% scored in the 2023 output assessment.**

In 2024, preliminary results from the external impact survey conducted by ABF showed that:

- FBS strongly addresses the needs and meets the capacity of participating farmers.
- FBS is seen as a complementary initiative to the government's own efforts, aligning with the Department of Agribusiness and Marketing, which also provides agribusiness training.
- Results showed that most trained farmers have developed a business mindset, as many started small businesses such as grocery shops, aggregation of crops, and buying and selling other items.
- The village chicken intervention provided a good source of protein in the form of eggs and chickens for members who could buy the chickens.

LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Participant selection criteria for FBS training is key:** The project focused on members of Saving and Internal Lending Communities (SILC), who already possessed basic financial literacy. Their SILC membership also provided access to financial resources through savings and loans, enabling them to invest in the value chains promoted by the Farmer Business School.
2. **Addressing high illiteracy levels:** The high illiteracy levels among some beneficiaries posed challenges in adopting FBS practices for transitioning to farming as a business. Providing supportive measures for these individuals was essential to ensure success. The project's approach became a model of inclusion, ensuring that no one was left behind.
3. **Monthly meetings with PSPs:** Regular monthly meetings between trained farmers and PSPs were crucial in consistently reminding farmers to apply FBS practices.
4. **Capacity building for PSPs:** Effective capacity building and training of the PSPs were key to ensuring high-quality mentoring and coaching for farmers after the FBS training.
5. **Trainer Training (ToT):** The intensive standard of Training of Trainers (ToT) significantly improved trainers' communication and facilitation skills, ensuring the delivery of high-quality FBS training.
6. **Language and training materials:** The project used English materials, including posters and FBS handbooks, while the facilitators conducted training in local languages. For future interventions, it is recommended the FBS handbooks and posters are translated into local languages to improve farmers' understanding of the FBS modules. Monthly meetings between trained farmers and the PSPs were key to consistently reminding farmers to adopt FBS practices.

The Farmer Business School (FBS) approach has proven to be a transformative tool in enhancing smallholder farmers' ability to view farming as a business. By providing comprehensive training in business skills, sustainable agricultural practices and group dynamics, the approach has empowered farmers, especially women, to make informed decisions that increase productivity and household income. The targeted value chains, including village chickens, soybeans, and cassava, provided pathways for greater food security and improved nutrition.

Over three years, the FBS approach fostered the adoption of key agricultural practices, benefitting over 17,000 farmers across Zambia's Luapula and Eastern Provinces. The mentorship provided by Private Service Providers (PSPs) ensured that even illiterate participants could implement the knowledge gained. The FBS approach has not only contributed to increased farm productivity but has also promoted gender equality and economic resilience, thus helping communities adapt to climate change and secure better livelihoods for future generations.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & MATERIAL

AGRI-BUSINESS FACILITY FOR AFRICA

agribusiness-facility.org

English and French
Developed by: GIZ

FBS GUIDELINE FOR INTRODUCTION AND MANAGEMENT

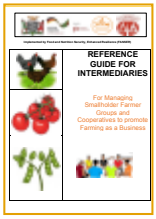
2017 (132 pages)
English
Developed by: GIZ

THE FBS TRAINING NOTEBOOK FOR FARMERS

1) Eastern province: village chicken, tomato, soybean
2) Luapula province: village chicken, cassava, cowpeas

2020 (81 pages) English
Developed by: GIZ FANSER

REFERENCE GUIDE FOR INTERMEDIARIES



2024 (50 pages)
English, Bemba and Nyanja
Developed by: GIZ FANSER, MOA

FBS TRAINING POSTER

2020 (33 pages)
English, Bemba and Nyanja
Developed by: GIZ FANSER

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

ANDERSON JULIUS NTHELE

07:36 min
Songwe, Katete

Anderson Julius Nthele, a private service provider from Katete, shares his experiences and insights on how members have benefited from the farmer business school. He discusses his involvement with the farmer business school, the advantages gained from the training and the positive impact of the village chicken intervention.

Improving nutrition and income: How FANSER promoted improved chicken breeds for economic empowerment

Thulason Mtonga
Advisor for Agro-Economic Capacity Development, Eastern Province

SUMMARY

Are you curious about how smallholder farmers in Zambia turned traditional chicken rearing into a thriving business while improving community nutrition? This document reveals how the FANSER project introduced an innovative approach to village chicken production, combining business training and financial empowerment with sustainable farming practices.

At the heart of the initiative is a challenge many farmers face: raising village chickens without proper management leads to low productivity and limited nutrition benefits. FANSER tackled this by promoting improved chicken breeds alongside the **Farmer Business School** ↗ and **Savings and Internal Lending Communities** ↗. Together, these tools transformed poultry farming from subsistence-level asset management to a sustainable livelihood strategy, with clear benefits for income, resilience and nutrition.

By reading this document, you'll gain insights into the practical implementation of this model, from the initial setup of demonstration units to the collaboration with local stakeholders like the NGO Solidaridad and the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock. You'll see how tailored support and training enabled farmers to raise over 14,000 chickens, providing thousands of households with better access to protein-rich eggs and meat.

By linking savings groups with agricultural innovation, the FANSER project created lasting economic and nutritional benefits for communities. Dive into this document to uncover actionable insights, practical strategies and lessons learned, which could serve as a blueprint for replicating this success in other regions and contexts.

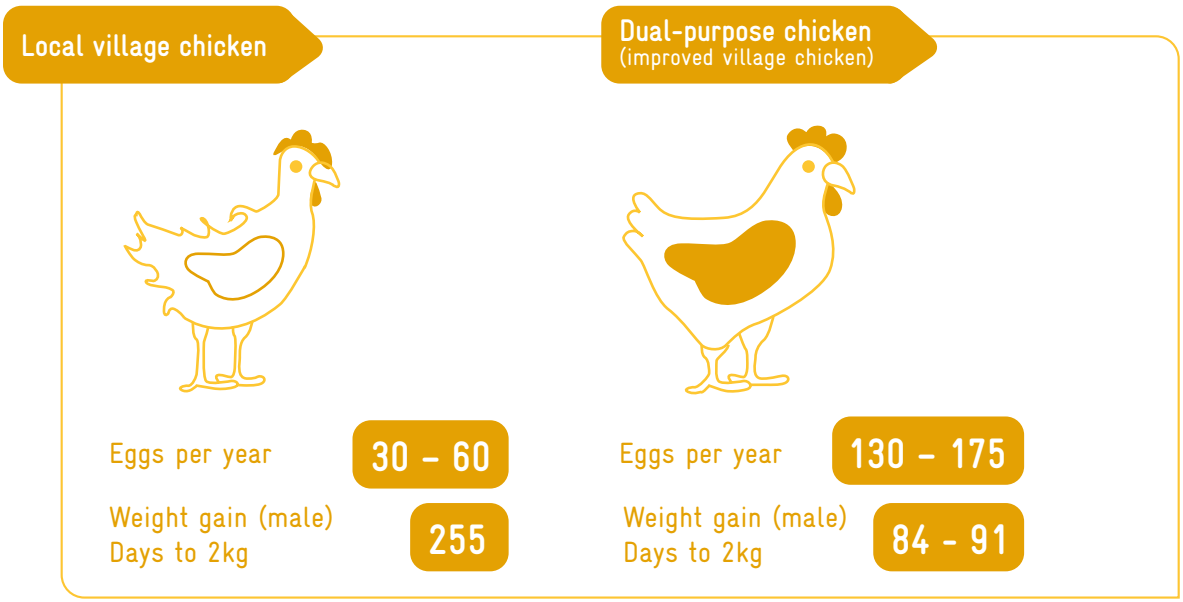
OBJECTIVES OF PROMOTING THE IMPROVED VILLAGE CHICKEN APPROACH

FANSER aimed at enhancing household resource management and resilience through the establishment of the **Farmer Business School (FBS)** and **Saving and Internal Lending Communities (SILC)**. Through these approaches, the project focused on the economic dimensions of malnutrition; facilitating access to financial resources and providing business skills training to beneficiaries. The village chicken initiative emerged from these two approaches and the interlinkages between them.

The FBS approach focused on value chains that improve both income and nutritional outcomes. One of the value chains promoted by the FBS was the improved village chicken value chain.

Most smallholder farmers in Zambia raise traditional village chickens without proper management, primarily as a household asset rather than for business. This leads to high mortality rates due to inadequate health practices, resulting in low production of eggs and meat. Project survey results indicate very low consumption levels of these products among project beneficiaries.

The Farmer Business School intervention taught farmers how to enhance productivity in the village chicken value chain, focusing on improved breeds that mature faster and produce higher yields. Improved village chickens require only six to eight weeks to reach market weight and 16 weeks to start laying eggs, compared to traditional breeds, which take longer and have lower yields. Well-managed, improved breeds can provide eggs daily for at least a year, while traditional breeds stop earlier and provide fewer eggs. The improved village chicken is resilient and performs better in harsh conditions, making it a dual-purpose option for meat and egg production.



SOURCE: ©Hybrid/World Poultry Foundation

The main objectives of the project's improved village chicken promotion were to:

- Demonstrate with selected farmers (project intermediaries) how to set up and run a profitable business through improved village chicken production, using demonstration units.
- Motivate project beneficiaries to improve village chicken management for better outcomes.
- Increase availability of eggs and chicken meat and increase consumption for better nutrition in communities.

STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Commitment + Contribution

The village chicken production started in 2022. As a first step, the project selected 25 project intermediaries in the three districts in Eastern Province who were interested in producing improved village chickens and establishing a demonstration unit (so-called demo unit hosts). Since the project aimed to create a clear linkage between the **savings groups** ↗ (saving for purpose) and the village chicken production initiative, the selected demo unit hosts were chosen from the project intermediaries who managed the savings groups under the FANSER project (the PSPs or Private Service Providers). **The selected demo unit hosts had to show their commitment by setting up the superstructure for the chicken house and fencing the outside area by themselves.**

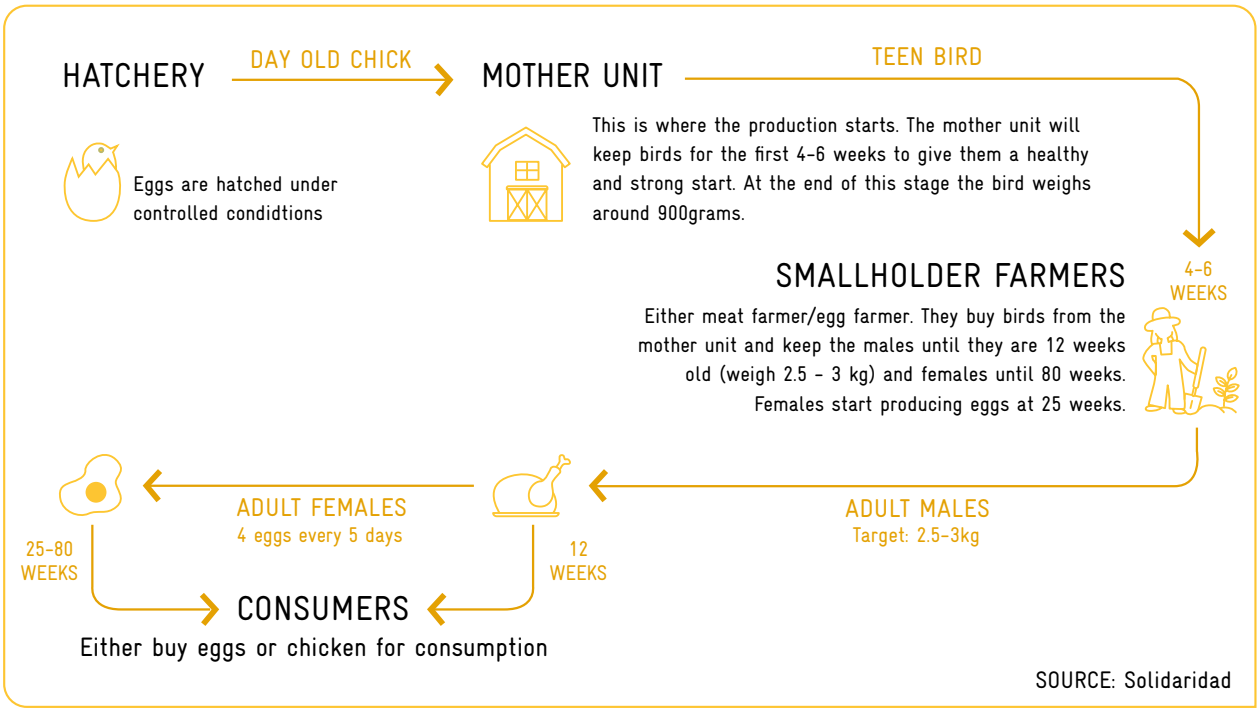
The project then supported them with:

+ The iron sheets for the roof of the chicken house
+ Feeders and drinkers for 200 chickens
+ The first batch of 200 one-day old chicks
+ Starter feed for the chicks and grower concentrate
+ Necessary vaccines

The project provided initial support to the demo unit hosts with essential items, covering only the first round of supplies. Following the sale of their initial batch of 200 chickens, which are sold at eight weeks, hosts were expected to independently invest in the procurement of new chicks and additional resources.

To implement the village chicken approach, the project worked closely with the NGO Solidaridad and the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MoFL). Solidaridad had prior experience in promoting the village chicken value chain in Katete, Eastern Province, and FANSER adopted their successful promotional strategies (**see figure 15**).

FIGURE 15: Village chicken promotion approach – showing the implementation model



ROLES OF THE TWO PARTNERS

SOLIDARIDAD

Trained the 25 poultry demo unit hosts in:

- the construction and management of poultry houses, and
- management practices for village chickens.This included management of day-old chicks, feeding practices for different ages, health management, including vaccination, and feed preparation for older chickens.

Provided access to suppliers (hatcheries) for the day-old, improved village chicken breed. The supplier delivered them together with the starter feed and grower concentrate. When the project started the promotion initiative in 2022, there were no hatcheries or suppliers based in Eastern Province. Solidaridad supported the procurement from suppliers who were based in Central and Southern Province at the beginning of the initiative.

Solidaridad

MINISTRY OF FISHERIES AND LIVESTOCK (MOFL)

Supported the 25 poultry demo unit hosts with weekly monitoring visits to provide technical advice and vaccination routines from the moment they received the day-old chicks. FANSER provided transport refunds to MoFL to support these visits.

Trained the households who bought the eight-week-old chickens from the demo plot hosts in general management, vaccinations and feeding practices.

Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock

FANSER and Solidaridad have been working in close collaboration with hatcheries to facilitate the procurement of the day-old chicks on behalf of the demo hosts. Each poultry demo host usually purchased at least a hundred day-old chicks as a second batch after receiving assistance from the project. A hundred day-old-chicks is the minimum number purchased by each demo host on the second and follow up batches, but varies depending on marketing, pricing and sales from the previous batch of chickens. The demos receive the chicks, together with feed and vaccines. The feed includes starter feed for the first two weeks as well as grower concentrate, which the demo hosts mix with local sunflower cake once the chickens are between three and eight weeks old.

Once chickens reached the age of six to eight weeks, they were ready for sale. Besides the promotion of the business approach, the project wanted to **create demand** for the chicken within those communities **to increase egg production and consumption** in particular. To achieve this, the project developed and implemented the following strategy:

- The project promoted **"saving for purpose"** among the **savings group members** ↗, in this case, saving for the purchase of improved village chickens.
  - + When the poultry demo hosts received the day-old-chicks they started informing and registering savings group members who were interested in buying one or more mature chickens at six to eight weeks.
  - + Members of the weekly savings group meetings saved small amounts of money to buy these fully vaccinated, six to eight-week old chickens for meat consumption or to keep them free-range for up to 16 months to produce eggs.
- When beneficiaries bought the eight-week old chickens they were able to feed free-range, supplemented with a mixture of sunflower cake and maize bran.

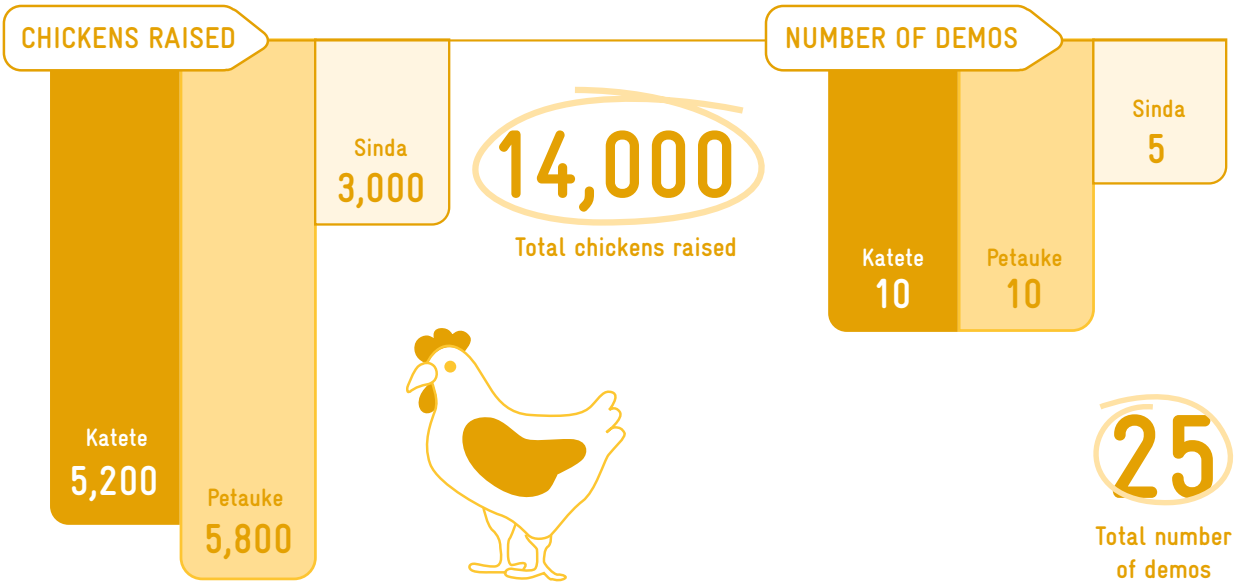
ACHIEVEMENTS

A total of around 14,000 chickens have been raised from these 25 demos between 2022 and the beginning of 2024. In total **5,400 project beneficiaries** have managed to buy a total of **8,600 chickens**, either for meat or egg production. There was additional indirect benefit for other community members who were not project participants but purchased an additional **5,400 chickens** from the poultry demo hosts. The Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock trained around **7,000 households** in the communities on village chicken management, including vaccination requirements and feed preparation. A summary of the numbers is provided in the tables below:

TABLE 6: Number of households trained in village chicken production by the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock; number of chickens bought by beneficiaries and community members

District	Number of households trained	Number of beneficiaries who bought chickens	Number of chickens bought by beneficiaries
PETAUKE	2,400	1,900	3,200
KATETE	2,800	2,100	3,600
SINDA	1,800	1,400	1,800
TOTAL	7,000	5,400	8,600

NUMBER OF CHICKENS RAISED BY THE DEMO UNIT HOSTS



Of the 25 demo plot hosts, **16 continued with improved village chicken production** and bought and raised five batches of village chickens between 2022 and the beginning of 2024, while the remaining nine hosts raised at least three batches. The village chicken promotion approach was overall a successful initiative.

SUSTAINABILITY OF THE APPROACH BEYOND THE FANSER PROJECT

1 **Linkage with input supply was key to sustainability:** At the beginning of the initiative in 2022, Solidaridad organised the procurement of the day-old chicks, including starter feed and concentrate, because they had a well-established collaboration with suppliers in the country. At that time, there were no suppliers in Eastern Province. To ensure sustainability, the project facilitated a reliable and effective linkage between the suppliers of the day-old chicks and the poultry demo hosts. At the beginning of 2024, the project organised meetings in all three districts with the participation of the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, different suppliers and the poultry demo host to discuss collaborations beyond the FANSER project implementation period. Poultry demo hosts got in contact and were shown how to do the procurement on their own. Fortunately, at that time the World Poultry Organization started to collaborate with one supplier who had established his base in Eastern Province, which made the procurement of the inputs easier for the producers.

2 **Working in producer groups was key to success:** The project facilitated the formation of registered poultry farmer groups (demo hosts), so that the procurement of the day-old chicks and feed could be organised together to save costs. In addition, producers learned that they could agree as a group on contracts with suppliers and negotiate favourable conditions, e.g. the replacement of day-old chicks within one week if a certain percentage turned out to be unhealthy.

SILC MEMBERS SAVING FOR IMPROVED VILLAGE CHICKEN

A POULTRY DEMO HOST WITH HER CHICKENS

LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Training and the right support bring success:** The approach worked very well in terms of production outcomes. Poultry management training, mentoring, continuous monitoring of management and health-related issues as well as vaccination services led to a very low mortality rate and a good health and growth rate among the birds. Collaboration with the MOFL was key to success.

2. **Poultry production supports farmers to diversify their production** and sources of income. It complements crop production and offers income possibilities all year round.

3. **Knowledge of the market and demand is key:** During the implementation it became clear that there are certain periods in the year when demand for chicken is high and community members have the resources to procure 8-week old chickens. For instance, in December, before Christmas, there is high demand for chicken. After Christmas, people can no longer afford it. The whole production cycle needs to be planned accordingly. Any delay in procurement of the day-old chicks impacts sales and profits.

4. **Capacity and skills development of entrepreneurs is key to success:** During the implementation, the project realised that some of the demo hosts involved in village chicken production as a business had little capacity to do so. The Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock offered to do entrepreneur skills training for the poultry producers.

5 **Integration of SAVINGS GROUPS and saving for the purchase of chickens played a key role** in creating demand in the communities, which contributed to increased production and availability of eggs and chicken meat for better nutrition.

6 **Facilitation of linkages between input supply and producers** was key to sustainable success.

The establishment of Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC) and the Farmer Business School (FBS), has empowered smallholder farmers to adopt better management practices, thereby increasing both productivity and income. The introduction of improved chicken breeds has proven beneficial, offering higher egg production and faster growth rates compared to traditional breeds. With over 14,000 chickens raised and thousands of beneficiaries trained, the project has not only improved local food availability but also fostered community engagement and economic resilience.

Looking ahead, the sustainability of these practices will depend on the linkage of poultry farmers to the supply side and the establishment of poultry farmer groups, which can facilitate resource sharing and cost-saving measures. Key lessons learned emphasise the importance of training, market awareness, and effective linkages between producers and suppliers. The anticipated outcomes will further highlight the impact of improved village chicken production on consumption patterns, particularly among vulnerable groups such as women and children. Overall, the improved village chicken production serves as a model for integrating agricultural innovation with community development to combat malnutrition and enhance livelihoods.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & MATERIAL

THE FBS TRAINING NOTEBOOK FOR FARMERS

1) Eastern province: village chicken, tomato, soybean
2) Luapula province: village chicken, cassava, cowpeas

2020 (81 pages) English
Developed by: GIZ FANSER

POULTRY TRAINING MANUAL

2020 (44 pages)
English
Developed by: K´fuya, Crossroads International, Solidaridad

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

ANDERSON JULIUS NTHELE

07:36 min
Songwe, Katete

Anderson Julius Nthele, a private service provider from Katete, shares his experiences and insights on how members have benefited from the farmer business school. He discusses his involvement with the farmer business school, the advantages gained from the training and the positive impact of the village chicken intervention.

CHAPTER

05

NUTRITION GOVERNANCE

Strengthening nutrition governance at district, provincial and national level

Effective governance is a fundamental requirement for sustainable improvement of food and nutrition security. Since its inception in 2015, the FANSER project has prioritised strengthening nutrition governance as a core element for achieving impactful and long-lasting outcomes. In collaboration with government partners, the project worked to enhance Zambia's nutrition policy framework, establish decentralised coordination structures, and promote cross-sector collaboration to address nutrition challenges holistically and at scale.

A key focus of the project was building governance structures at the provincial, district and ward levels, enabling effective coordination among stakeholders and fostering local ownership of nutrition initiatives. Nutrition Coordinating Committees (NCCs) became vital platforms for aligning resources and goals, facilitating multi-stakeholder approaches, and integrating nutrition into broader development agendas. These efforts were complemented by the development of practical tools and strategies for hosting learning events, which offered stakeholders opportunities to exchange experiences, identify challenges and refine solutions.

The following chapter provides a detailed exploration of Zambia's nutrition policy landscape, highlighting the stakeholders, frameworks and foundational elements underpinning the country's efforts to combat malnutrition. It also delves into the processes and lessons learned from establishing and strengthening decentralised governance structures at various levels, offering practical insights for practitioners. Finally, the chapter outlines step-by-step guidance for planning and implementing effective learning events to enhance capacity building and knowledge sharing among nutrition actors.

Together, these initiatives represent a comprehensive approach to strengthening governance for improved nutrition outcomes, showcasing FANSER's commitment to fostering sustainable systems.

Exploring Zambia's nutrition governance: Policy, practices, and lessons from FANSER

Xavier Tembo
Advisor for Multisector Coordination and Organisational Development, Eastern Province

Musa Bwalya
Junior Advisor for Nutrition Governance, Luapula Province

SUMMARY

Zambia's journey towards improving nutrition is a complex interplay of challenges and opportunities. This document provides a deep dive into the policies, strategies and frameworks shaping its path towards food and nutrition security. With nearly one third of children under five stunted and 31% of the population facing severe food insecurity, achieving this goal is critical for the nation's wellbeing.

This document explores Zambia's efforts to effectively address pressing issues through a multi-sectoral lens. It provides an overview of key programmes like the national First 1000 Most Critical Days Programme, which targets maternal and child nutrition during the critical window from pregnancy to a child's second birthday – a period crucial also for future health and development. The text examines Zambia's evolving policy landscape, from the introduction of the National Food and Nutrition Commission to the integration of nutrition goals into broader development frameworks, illustrating the importance of aligning policies with practical interventions, and thus offers insights into how coordinated governance, strategic investments and evidence-based approaches can drive impactful change.

By reflecting on Zambia's successes and persistent challenges, the document highlights the critical role of leadership, community engagement and evidence-based strategies in driving progress. Ultimately, it emphasises that addressing malnutrition requires a comprehensive approach that prioritises collaboration and adaptability. It serves as a resource for understanding how countries can develop comprehensive, context-specific approaches to improve nutrition outcomes and reduce stunting and malnutrition in a sustainable manner.

ZAMBIA'S NUTRITION POLICY OVERVIEW

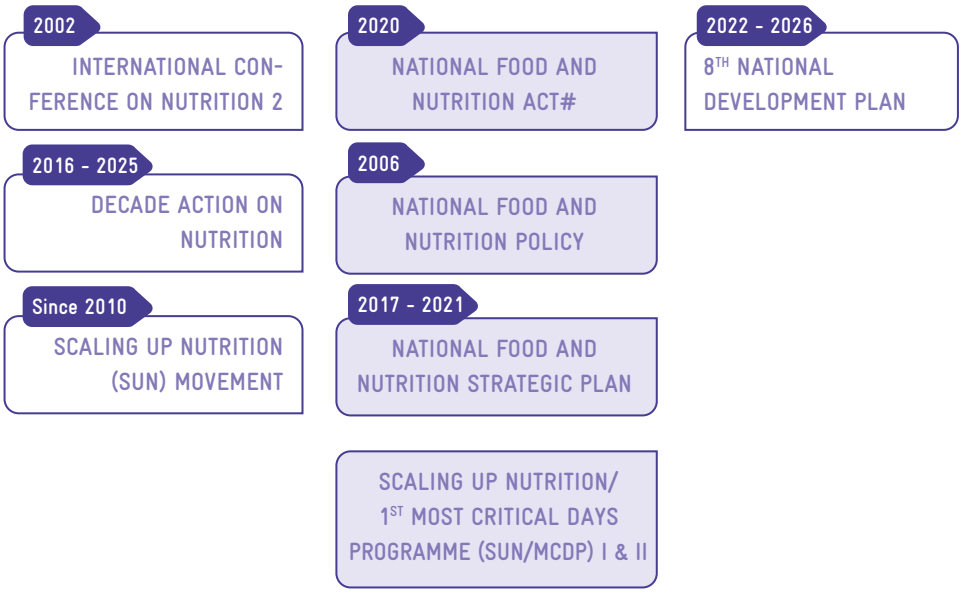
The 2024 Global Hunger Index Report shows that Zambia ranks number 115 among the 127 countries analysed, and that around 31% of the general population is still experiencing severe food insecurity. 32% of children under the age of 5 are stunted (low height-for-age), 3% are wasted (low weight-for-height) and 12% are underweight (low weight-for-age) (ZDHS, 2024). It is clear that policies have not sufficiently supported poverty reduction and hunger eradication in rural and peri-urban areas. Equally, Zambia's food system is beset with numerous challenges, such as low agricultural production of nutrient-dense foods, a lack of awareness of safe and nutritious foods, high costs of healthy diets, a degraded natural environment limiting nature-friendly food production initiatives, insufficient market access, and inadequate financial support for agricultural activities, particularly among small scale farmers. These challenges make it impossible to meet the nutritional needs of a rapidly growing population, especially in the wake of the severe drought of 2024, with an estimated 5.6 million Zambian people, representing 32 percent of the population, being classified as in crisis (IPC-Acute Food Insecurity Analysis, 2024).

To mitigate the above challenges in food security and accelerate the reduction of malnutrition, the Zambian government prioritised nutrition in national development policies and plans, such as the National Food and Nutrition Policy (2006), the National Food and Nutrition Strategic Plan 2011-2015, 2017-2021 and the National Development Plans (6th, Revised 6th, 7th and 8th National Development Plan), national agricultural policies, agricultural strategic plans and agricultural investment plans. In line with SDG 2 and in order to achieve food security and improve nutrition by 2030, Zambia undertook national and sub-national dialogues on the transformation of food systems. Zambia's vision is to achieve food and nutrition security by 2030.

ZAMBIA'S NUTRITION POLICY FRAMEWORK

While the 2006 National Food and Nutrition Policy is archaic and currently undergoing review by the National Food and Nutrition Commission, Zambia's nutrition policy framework has been sustained by the country's food and nutrition strategic plans as well as the Food and Nutrition Act # 3 of 2020.

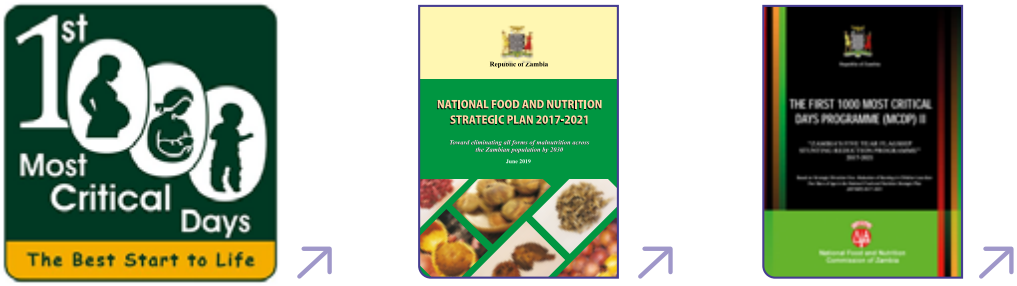
FIGURE 16: Global and in-country policy environment for nutrition



SOURCE: Adapted from National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC) MCDP Orientation Materials, 2021

The above policy documents have shaped Zambia's strategy for nutrition, as outlined in both the 2011 to 2015 National Food and Nutrition Strategic Plan and the **National Food and Nutrition Strategic Plan (NFNSP) 2017-2021. This document highlighted multi-sectoral pathways to address nutrition problems through:**

- Strengthening governance
- Enhancing planning and monitoring through a common result framework and a responsive information system
- Capacity building of multi-sectoral cadres to implement both nutrition-specific and sensitive interventions
- Strengthening community service delivery, especially through a comprehensive Social Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) approach
- Increasing investment, advocacy and communication support at all levels



Arising from these respective strategies were the development of the 1st 1000 Most Critical Days Programme (MCDP I) (2015-2017), and the subsequent MCDP II (2019-2023); both of which formed the overall guiding framework for a multi-sectoral nutrition response in the country. The MCDP has been the government's blueprint, translating the Global Scaling Up Nutrition Initiative into a national programme. This was to implement the operational strategic direction 1 of the National Food and Nutrition Strategic Plan: 'Prevention of stunting in children under two years of age: First 1000 Most Critical Days'. This made the MCDP fundamental to the realisation of the NFNSP's vision of eliminating all forms of malnutrition across the Zambian population by 2030. The projection is that if effectively implemented, the MCDP is expected to stir collective, collaborative and well harnessed action to accelerate the achievement of the 2025 World Health Assembly's (WHA) global target of reducing stunting in Zambia from 40% in 2015 to 25% by 2025, and achieving SDG target 2.2 on ending all forms of malnutrition.

Zambia's MCDP was part of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement that was born from the collective recognition that the international system was failing to address malnutrition in all its forms – the cause of nearly half of all deaths in children under five years of age. It was a framework that outlined a multi-stakeholder plan of action – calling for an end to fragmentation and urging unprecedented collaboration, for impact at scale. The 2008 Lancet Series on Maternal and Child Undernutrition laid out the evidence, and the Copenhagen Consensus made the economic case explicit.[26] The evidence was that stunting is irreversible and devastates children's physical and cognitive development and, therefore, the economic growth and stability of countries. It was a political call to action, and subsequently the SUN Movement was launched in 2010 by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. SUN is led by governments and driven by evidence. Zambia joined the SUN Movement in 2010 as one of the 'early risers' and translated this global initiative of Scaling Up Nutrition into a national programme – The First 1000 Most Critical Days Programme. The programme was developed from the first Strategic Direction of the National Food and Nutrition Strategic Plan 2011-2015. NFNC is the SUN Focal Point Institution on behalf of the Zambian Government.

[26]
In 2008, the British Medical journal The Lancet published a landmark series of papers which led to a seismic shift in how the world addresses maternal and child malnutrition. The 2008 Lancet Series provided the foundation of scientific evidence upon which 1,000 Days was created. It outlined the benefit of Every Dollar Spent by Country for stunting reduction targets, the aim being that by 2030, the number of children who are stunted is reduced by 40%.

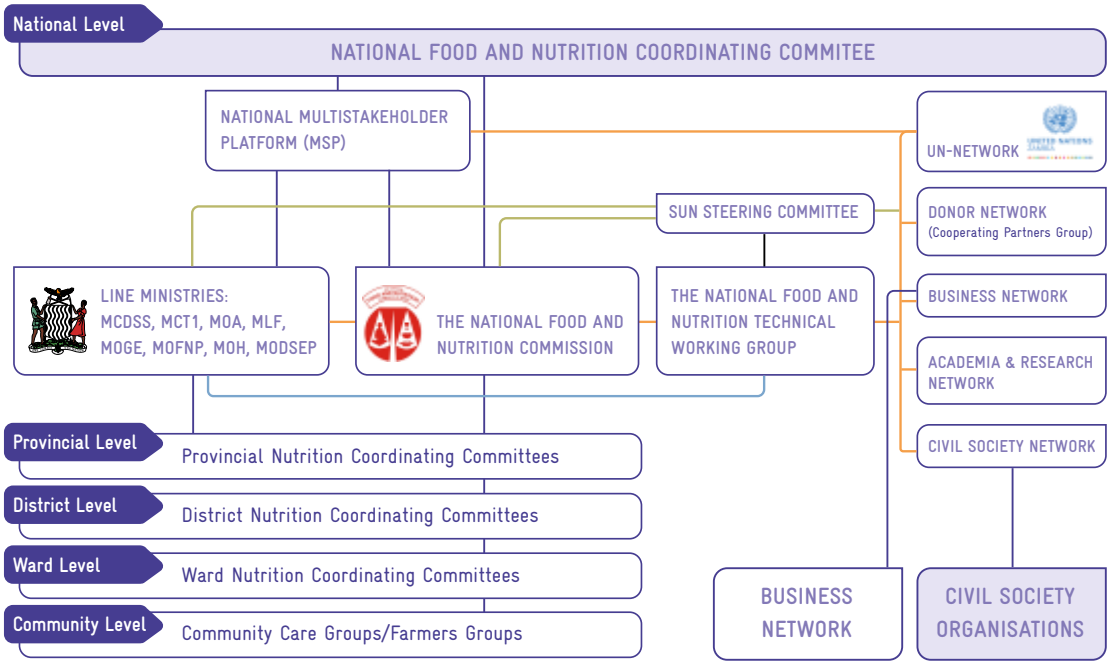
The MCDP I was implemented from 2015 to 2017 with amplified efforts in 14 pilot districts under the SUN Fund, and was followed by the MCDP II in 36 districts from 2019 to 2023. Building on the lessons learned from MCDP I, as well as insights from studies conducted in the country under the first phase, MCDP II was shaped by the global action agenda and guidance on high-impact nutrition interventions. The programme expanded on the achievements of its predecessor, while aligning with growing global and national efforts through various networks.

For many years, nutrition governance in Zambia has been anchored in the NFNC Act CAP 308 of the Laws of Zambia, which gives the NFNC the mandate to spearhead and coordinate the food and nutrition sector. The government adopted the National Food and Nutrition Policy in 2006, which articulated the need for a multi-sector approach to food and nutrition issues in the country. However, the great milestone in Zambia's nutrition policy framework was the repeal of the 1967 Food and Nutrition Act, replaced by the current Act of 2020. The many positive elements in the new Act include:

1. The National Food and Nutrition Commission of Zambia, as the main coordinating body, was given a broader mandate to design a national food and nutrition programme for the country, as opposed to piecemeal nutrition projects and programmes.
2. The establishment of Food and Nutrition Coordinating Committees at various levels (national, provincial, district and sub-district), which are responsible for the coordination of the multi-sectoral response to food and nutrition programmes. At national level, this committee sits in the Office of the Vice President.
3. Each committee is responsible for providing oversight over the structures that are accountable to them, as well as feedback. This involves higher structures providing governance and policy direction for the programme, whilst implementation, review, monitoring, supervision etc. are done by lower structures.

Some challenges and gaps remain, such as the actual operationalisation of the Act, as well as the substantive dual position of the NFNC, where administratively it falls under the auspices of the Ministry of Health, but in its coordination role is based in the Office of the Vice President. The graph below shows Zambia's coordination mechanism for nutrition programme implementation across all levels, starting from national structures through to provincial, district and sub-district levels.

FIGURE 17: Zambia multistakeholder platform: coordination structures



Based on the table 7, a brief explanation of the core responsibilities of key components of the Nutrition Governance Structure:

TABLE 7: Core responsibilities of the nutrition governance structure

National Level	
The Office of the Vice President	The Office of the Vice President provides policy direction and oversight of the programme.
Ministry of Health	The MoH is a key ministry, as administratively the NFNC still reports to it. To that effect it does have some influence in ensuring a fair share of both financial and human resource to support NFNC operations.
National Food and Nutrition Coordinating Committee	Comprises permanent secretaries from key line ministries (MoH, MoA, MFL, MoGE, MoFNP, MCDSS, MGEE, MLG), chaired by the Deputy Secretary to Cabinet. This coordination body provides oversight and policy direction on all food and nutrition matters referred to it by the implementing structures.
National Multi-Stakeholder Platform	Comprises focal point persons at directorship level from the respective key line ministries. Provides oversight on implementation of projects, monitoring and reporting on nutrition, and making recommendations for policy consideration to the National Food and Nutrition Coordinating Committee.
National Food and Nutrition Commission	The NFNC is a semi-autonomous government institution mandated to coordinate the food and nutrition programme in the country. It acts as the focal point institution and coordinates all activities and actors operating in the food and nutrition space, especially in the wake of the MCDP.
National Food and Nutrition Technical Working Group	This group comprises the technical focal points (specialists) from respective key line ministries who discuss technical issues and feed into the multi-stakeholder platform at national level. Key technical committees have been Monitoring and Evaluation and Communication and Advocacy.
SUN Business Network	This is a network for engaging the private sector in nutrition programming and implementation. See: **SUN Business Network Zambia** ↗
Provincial Level	
Provincial Nutrition Coordinating Committee	Comprising technical focal point persons, drawn from key line ministries and other stakeholders, to coordinate, supervise and monitor implementation in the districts.
District Level	
District Nutrition Coordinating Committee	Responsible for planning, implementation, monitoring and review of nutrition programmes at district level.
Community Level	
Ward Nutrition Coordinating Committee	Responsible for planning, implementation, monitoring and review of nutrition programmes at ward level.
Zonal Nutrition Coordinating Committee	Below the WNCC there is the Zonal Nutrition Coordinating Committee (ZNCC), responsible for planning, implementation, monitoring and review of nutrition programmes at zonal level. While this structure is built into the framework, most districts have not yet rolled it out.

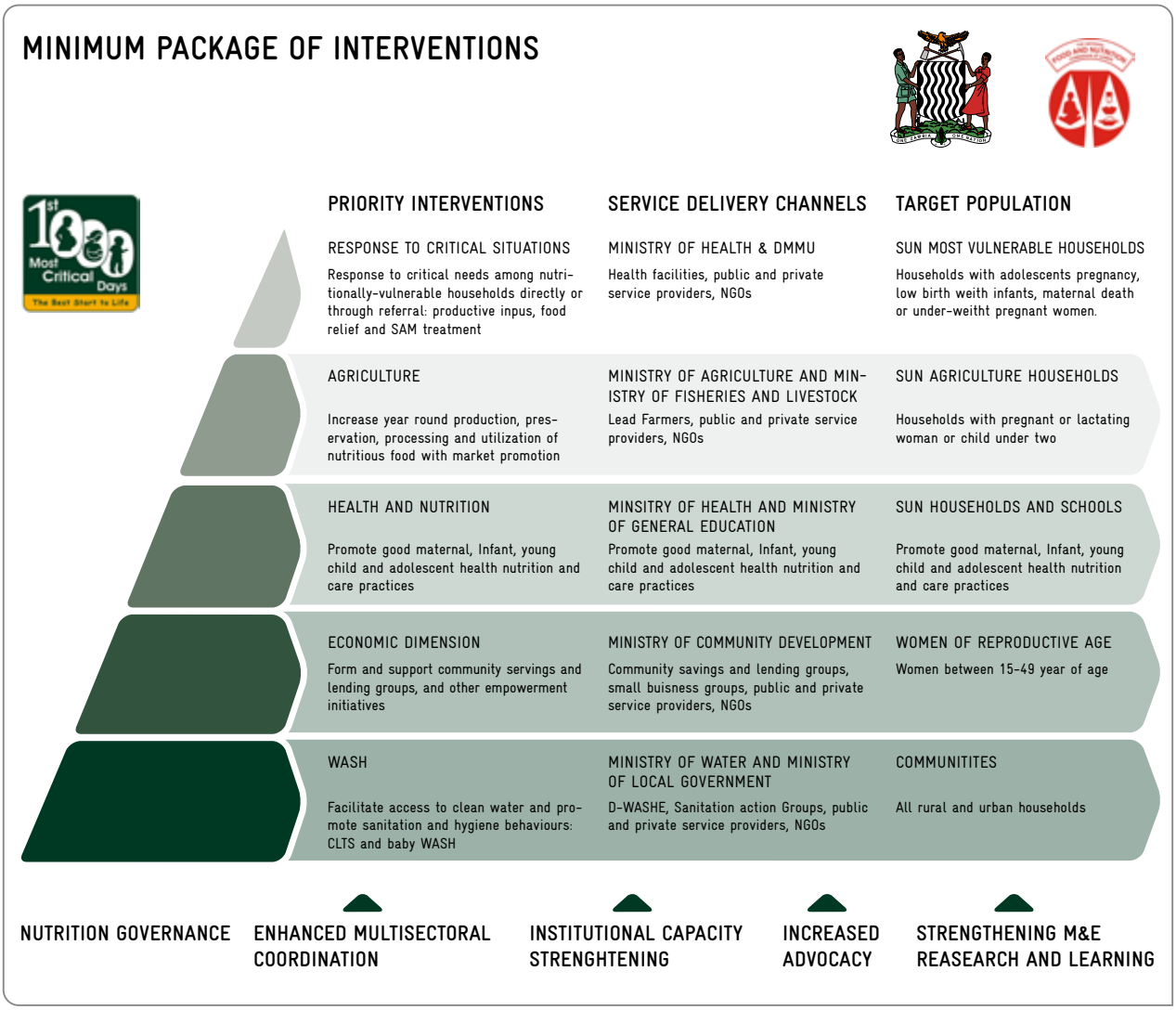
The table below shows the pyramid of sector specific interventions with their delivery channels and target populations. For example, interventions under Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) will be done by the Ministry of Water Development and the Ministry of Local Government, and they will target the entire population, as seen at the base of the pyramid. On the other hand, agricultural interventions will be done by the Ministry of Agriculture, but only targeting farmers out of the entire population.

Ministry of Water Development & Sanitation

Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development

Ministry of Agriculture

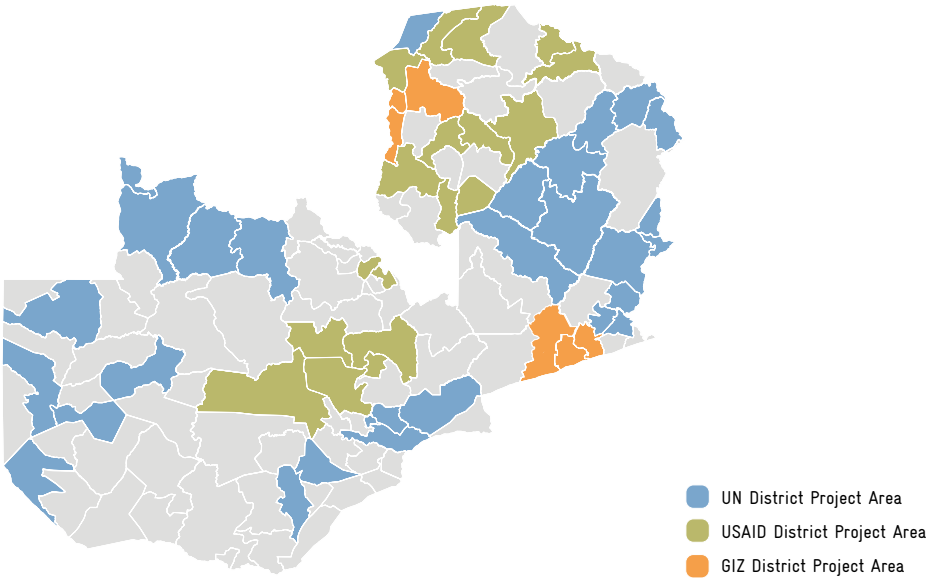
FIGURE 18: Scaling up Nutrition in the 1,000 Most Critical Days



GIZ SUPPORT TO STRENGTHEN NUTRITION GOVERNANCE

Within Zambia's First 1000 MCDP framework, and with NFNC as its main government partner, the FANSER project has supported nutrition governance by prioritising multisector coordination, engagement of partners, joint monitoring and reporting for the ten years the project has been implemented. GIZ FANSER has been one of three official SUN implementers (besides UNICEF & SUN TA) and has been the main implementing partner for the six districts in Luapula and Eastern Provinces. Below is the map showing the geographical coverage of the GIZ and the other two implementers:

FIGURE 19: Map of Zambia showing MCDP II districts supported by different partners



In collaboration with other implementers under the coordination of NFNC, GIZ aligned its implementation model with the ultimate objective of the MCDP II, aiming to reach at least 90% of households hosting the targeted groups, with particular emphasis on households with pregnant and lactating women and children less than 2 years of age in the target districts. GIZ utilised the Care Group Model Approach; an innovative approach that facilitates fast reach to households, builds community capacity to oversee their own change practices, and mobilises them to act on their problems. This cascade approach was one such intervention, which the MCDP utilised to achieve lasting community empowerment, in addition to using other existing community support groups and structures.

- Specific to nutrition governance, the aim of the support has been to strengthen governance interventions at all levels, through
- Advising DNCCs, PNCCs and NFNC on competence development for planning, monitoring, reporting and coordination
- Supporting the adoption of the MCDP II monitoring and evaluation system at district, provincial and national level
- Providing best practices to the national steering structures to harmonise approaches, e.g. the Group model
- Participating in the NFNC MCDP II steering committee
- Supporting the development of the Common Results Framework[27]

[27] A framework with common agreed indicators to guide all implementers as well as the reporting processes, to make the results more comparable.

GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE 10 YEARS OF IMPLEMENTATION

1. **It is evident that with the multi-sector approach**, there is more recognition, knowledge and appreciation of the malnutrition problem and the need to address it in a multi-sectoral manner.

2. **There is a need to continue providing capacity and strategic support to NFNC**. Increased emphasis on coordination aspects is critical, building on the opportunities offered by constant engagement in the SUN process, the MCDP II, and the evolution towards a national food and nutrition programme.

3. **Continued nutrition advocacy and communication can have great results**. When we talk, people listen and are challenged to bring about change. Therefore, advocacy efforts tailored towards strategic topics and interventions in nutrition can change the narrative, with increased emphasis on the risks of the double burden and non-communicable diseases, and the importance of sustainable healthy diets.

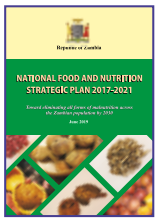
4. **Continued and consistent communication across all the governance structures is key**. For example, when the WNCC members joined the DNCC meetings the WNCC felt motivated, connected, accountable and that their contribution was valued. This also applied to the DNCC members; once their role was recognised and appreciated, they were more motivated to be part of the bigger food and nutrition programme.

5. **There is a need to continue strengthening the capacities of provincial nutrition committees in Eastern and Luapula provinces** so that they are capacitated to guide streamlined nutrition planning, implementation, M&E, knowledge sharing and communication. Particularly important is a focus on

   - increasing the role of PNCCs in streamlining partners' interventions by leveraging the mapping of stakeholders as piloted in the Eastern and Luapula Provinces, and
   - promoting local ownership of PNCCs, ensuring that they are chaired by the right level of authority, namely the deputy permanent secretary of the province. Once the capacity for the operations of the PNCCs is in place, PNCCs functioning in these two provinces can be used as a model in other provinces.

6. Build on the momentum created around the DNCCs' work and interest from multiple partners by **investigating the different possible budgeting and funding strategies for the implementation of the DNCCs' multisectoral nutrition plans**. This includes exploring the opportunities around the Constituency Development Fund as an alternative source of funding.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & MATERIAL



NATIONAL FOOD AND NUTRITION STRATEGIC PLAN (NFNSP) 2017-2021

2019 (60 pages)
English
Developed by: NFNC

THE FIRST 1000 MOST CRITICAL DAYS PROGRAMME (MCDP) II

2017 (118 pages)
English
Developed by: NFNC

Practical steps to strengthen nutrition governance at district and ward levels

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SUMMARY

This document offers an essential roadmap on how to create lasting change in nutrition governance at local level. It will give you a clear understanding of how these structures work, why they are crucial, and what can be learned from their implementation.

The challenge of malnutrition is deeply rooted in multiple sectors, and this document reveals how a coordinated, multi-sectoral approach is key to sustainable improvement. With lessons drawn from the National Food and Nutrition Commission's collaboration with the FANSER project, you'll discover how the creation of provincial, district and ward nutrition coordinating committees is shifting governance to grassroots level, where the real impact happens.

Beyond the technicalities of structure building, this document highlights the powerful influence of collaboration. By following the steps laid out, you'll see how better coordination between health, education, agriculture and other sectors is paving the way for more effective interventions to combat malnutrition.

If you are engaged in food security, nutrition or governance, this document offers valuable insights into both the achievements made and the potential applications of these lessons in other contexts. It provides a comprehensive look at Zambia's efforts to improve nutrition, and the practical steps being taken to ensure long term impact. This document invites readers to explore how these approaches can contribute to sustainable improvements in nutrition and governance, both within Zambia and beyond.

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

Malnutrition has been a persistent issue in Zambia, affecting a significant proportion of the population, particularly children under five. Addressing this challenge requires effective coordination and governance at all levels. In response, the National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC), as the central body responsible for nutrition governance in Zambia, collaborated with the FANSER project to establish and sustain decentralised nutrition coordination structures. Fedele describes a nutrition coordination structure as

> "a group of organisations/stakeholders committed and willing to support nutrition by jointly coordinating their activities to achieve better nutrition results.
>
> Stefano Fedele[28]

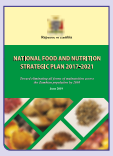
[28] Stefano Fedele, 2019 Nutrition coordination mechanisms: the whats, whys and wherefores

Decentralised coordination is done at provincial and district levels. The decentralised structures aim to create a more effective and integrated approach to combatting malnutrition by enhancing local governance and fostering multisectoral collaboration. The NFNC recognised that improving nutrition requires the combined efforts of various sectors such as health, agriculture, education, community development and social services. Since the causes of malnutrition are multifaceted – ranging, amongst others, from inadequate food access and poor healthcare to insufficient education and social inequalities – it is only through the coordinated actions of diverse sectors that sustainable improvements in nutrition can be achieved.

The initiative to set up Provincial Nutrition Coordinating Committees (PNCCs), District Nutrition Coordinating Committees (DNCCs) and Ward Nutrition Coordinating Committees (WNCCs) was part of a broader effort to decentralise nutrition governance, ensuring that interventions are better tailored to local contexts and needs. The NFNC, leveraging its mandate under the Food and Nutrition Act #3 of 2020, worked closely with FANSER to implement these structures in three districts in Luapula Province (Kawambwa, Mwansabombwe and Mwense) and three districts in Eastern Province (Petauke, Katete and Sinda). The collaboration focused on improving coordination among various stakeholders, enhancing resource mobilisation and building capacity at the district and ward levels to effectively address malnutrition. To understand why these nutrition coordination structures were established, please see page 182.

PETAUKE DNCC MEMBERS AFTER A COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY TRAINING

THE 1000 MOST CRITICAL DAYS PROGRAMME IN ZAMBIA




The NFNC and FANSER's role in establishing nutrition coordination structures was determined by the 1000 Most Critical Days Programme (MCDP) document.[29] MCDP II is a successor program to the MCDP I, following the expiry of the latter in 2017. MCDP I was the programme used to operationalise the National Food and Nutrition Strategic Plan (2011-2015) and drive the nutrition agenda, and saw a number of successes such as i) the establishment and capacity development of coordination structures at national, sector, provincial, district and community level; and ii) systems strengthening and capacity development of core staff in the line ministries.

MCDP II is essentially a programme document that builds on MCDP I, outlining the Zambian government's desired programme priority actions and targets to guide multi-sectoral action under the strategic direction of the National Food and Nutrition Strategic Plan. It is informed by lessons learnt from MCDP I and recommendations made by studies conducted under MCDP I. It is further informed by the global action agenda and guidance on nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive high impact interventions to reduce stunting, and by the regional and international commitments that Zambia has subscribed to.

[29]
Stefano Fedele, 2019 Nutrition coordination mechanisms: the whats, whys and wherefores

More information on Zambia's nutrition profile can be found in the **"Exploring Zambia's nutrition governance"** document.

KEY COMPONENTS OF MCDP II

Building on lessons from MCDP I, and aligned with global nutrition agendas, MCDP II focuses on three components to strengthen nutrition governance and outcomes:

1. **Scaling up cost-effective, high-impact interventions:** Expanding proven strategies to reduce stunting in target districts.
2. **Targeted technical assistance:** Strengthening coordination and management across the NFNC, line ministries and SUN networks to improve nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive actions.
3. **Evidence-based implementation and continuous learning:** Employing operational research and adaptive management to refine programmes.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF MCDP II

These components are designed to achieve five objectives:

1. Enhance policy, coordination, financing and partnerships.
2. Improve coverage and quality of interventions for stunting reduction.
3. Strengthen institutional and systems capacity.
4. Promote advocacy for stunting reduction.
5. Advance monitoring, evaluation, research and learning.

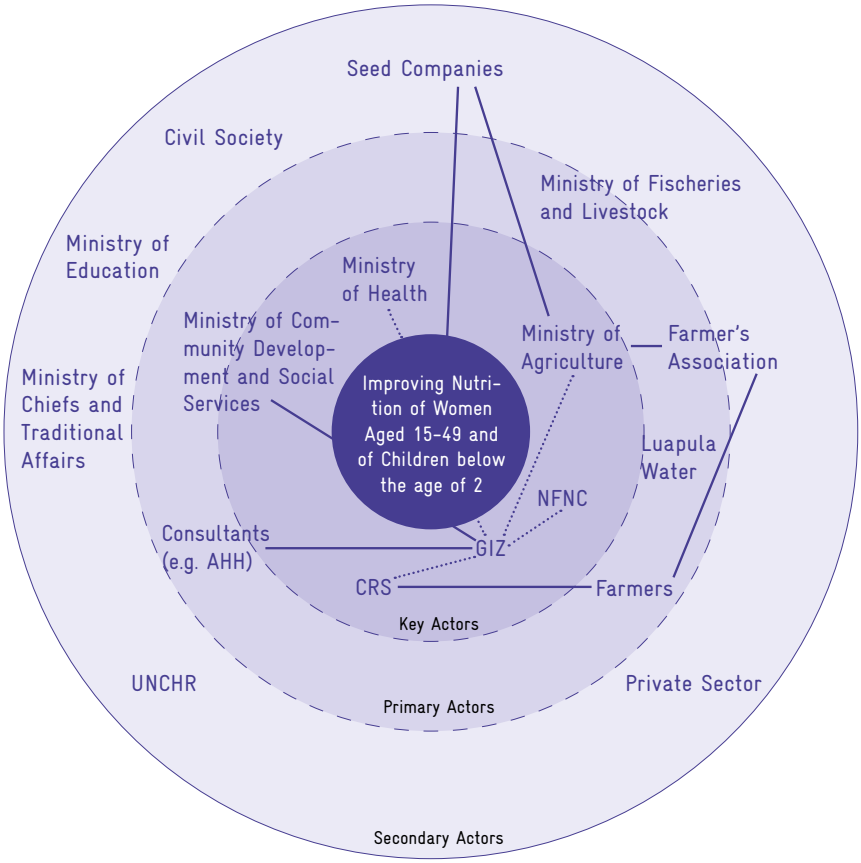
SETTING UP DECENTRALISED NUTRITION GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

NFNC facilitated the formation of the PNCCs, DNCCs, and WNCCs, with strategic support from GIZ under the FANSER project. The NFNC, as the national secretariat for nutrition initiatives, was instrumental in guiding the process, bringing together key stakeholders, and ensuring alignment with Zambia's Food and Nutrition Act No. 3 of 2020. The PNCCs, initially supported by GIZ, were tasked with setting up DNCCs, which in turn oversaw the creation of WNCCs to provide oversight down to grassroots level. Specifically, the process involved several steps:

1 STEP 1: CONDUCTING LOCAL STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

Before formalising these structures, a stakeholder mapping exercise was conducted by the NFNC at provincial and district level. This was a critical step in identifying key organisations and institutions involved in nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions. The mapping process provided detailed information on stakeholders' operational capacities, geographical reach, strengths and challenges, allowing for an informed approach to setting up the PNCCs, DNCCs and WNCCs. The insights from this mapping exercise were essential in selecting organisations and defining their roles within the new nutrition coordination framework.

FIGURE 20: Key stakeholders from the stakeholder mapping exercise in Luapula



Solid lines symbolize close relationships in terms of information exchange, frequency of contact, overlap of interests, coordination, mutual trust, etc.

Dotted lines symbolize alliances and cooperation partnerships that are formalized contractually or institutionally

2 STEP 2: COURTESY CALL TO PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT AUTHORITIES

Following stakeholder mapping, courtesy calls were made to provincial permanent secretaries and district commissioners across the targeted regions. These meetings were essential to garner support and endorsement from local authorities, aligning the nutrition agenda with provincial and district development plans. Engaging these leaders early on helped position nutrition as a shared responsibility across government sectors and promoted a collaborative approach to the nutrition agenda.

3 STEP 3 ENGAGING HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS (HODS) FOR MULTISECTOR COLLABORATION

The next step involved meetings with heads of departments (HoDs) at the provincial and district levels. These meetings provided an opportunity for sectoral departments, including health, agriculture, and education, to understand their roles in the nutrition agenda. The HoDs were integral to fostering a multisector approach, because they assigned members to represent their office as each department brought specific expertise and resources to the nutrition coordination efforts. This collaboration helped with integrating nutrition objectives into the plans and activities of various sectors.

4 STEP 4: ESTABLISHING AND FORMALISING A SECRETARIAT FOR PNCC AND DNCC

According to NFNC guidelines, the PNCC is convened by the Provincial Permanent Secretary's Office, while the DNCC is convened by the District Commissioner's Office. At provincial level, the Deputy Permanent Secretary (DPS) serves as chairperson and is responsible for bringing together provincial heads of department from key line ministries. The District Administrative Officer (DAO) serves as chairperson at district level. Once the chairpersons were in place, secretariats were established for both the PNCC and DNCC to provide administrative support. The chairperson appointed a technical officer from the line ministries to serve as secretariat and coordinator of the committee. The secretariats played an essential role in organising meetings, managing documentation, and facilitating communication between various stakeholders. This administrative backbone ensured that the PNCCs and DNCCs operated efficiently and were able to effectively coordinate activities at provincial and district levels. With key personnel and secretariats established, the PNCCs and DNCCs were formally constituted. This step marked the official establishment of these committees, giving them a clear mandate to oversee and coordinate nutrition initiatives at their respective levels. The NFNC's role in this formalisation process ensured that the committees adhered to national guidelines, fostering consistency across regions.

5 STEP 5: ORIENTATION OF PNCC AND DNCC MEMBERS

Orientation sessions were conducted by the NFNC to familiarise PNCC and DNCC members with their roles and responsibilities. This training focused on cross-sectoral cooperation, strategic planning, and the importance of data sharing. The orientations ensured that all committee members had a clear understanding of their duties and the significance of their contributions to the larger nutrition agenda.

THE COMPOSITION OF THE NUTRITION COORDINATION STRUCTURES

MEMBERS OF A DISTRICT NUTRITION COORDINATION COMMITTEE

In line with the multi-sector approach adopted by MCDP II, the following stakeholders make up the nutrition coordination committees:

1. Line ministries implementing nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions of MCDP II. These include representatives from the line ministries such as:

- Nutritionists, environmental health technicians, public health officer, planner, and/or health promotion officer from Ministry of Health (MoH)
- Social welfare officer and/or community development officer from the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS)
- Principal agricultural officer, food & nutrition officer & crops officer, district nutritionist, and/or camp officers from the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA)
- Principal fisheries officer, principal livestock officer and/or principal veterinary officer from the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MFL)
- Standards officer, school health & nutrition coordinator, planner and/or statistician from the Ministry of Education (MoE)
- Water & sanitation officer, social economic officer, public health and/or environment officer from the Ministry of Water Development, Sanitation and Environmental Protection.

The Cabinet Office directed these and several other representatives and ministries to participate in MCDP II activities.

2. Advisors, specialists and other representatives from relevant partner NGOs and private companies involved with the SUN/ MCDP II.

THE COMPOSITION OF THE NUTRITION COORDINATION STRUCTURES

PNCC ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Convened by Provincial Permanent Secretary's Office, bringing together provincial heads of department from key line ministries.
- Provincial Nutrition Support Coordinator (PNSC) or technical officer appointed by PNCC chair serves as secretariat and coordinator.
- Develops provincial MCDP plans based on DNCC priorities.
- Facilitates formation of DNCCs in new districts.
- Supports DNCC in development of plans, stakeholder mapping and gap analyses.
- Oversees the updating of databases pertaining to the province.
- Reports to NFNC through Permanent Secretary's Office.
- Provides technical advice to Provincial Permanent Secretary's Office and other key decision makers.

DNCC ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The District Administrative Officer (DAO) serves as chairperson of the DNCC, while a technical officer from line ministries serves as the secretariat.
- The DNCC meets bi-monthly in the early stages and monthly upon commencement of the programme.
- Develops district plans based on ward work plans.
- Facilitates the formation, orientation, and supervision of WNCCs (Ward Nutrition Coordinating Committees).
- Coordinates stakeholders across the district.
- Supports government sector staff supervising community care/support groups and community-based volunteers in wards.
- Facilitates monitoring by utilising ward data for learning and decision-making.
- Compiles reports from WNCCs for submission to the PNCC (Provincial Nutrition Coordinating Committee).
- Provides technical guidance to the District Commissioner.

WNCC ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Convened by a chairperson who is elected by WNCC members.
- A technical officer appointed by WNCC members serves as secretariat and coordinator.
- Meets monthly to review progress and attend to ad hoc issues.
- Identifies priority actions based on local context to be considered in WNCC work plans and budgets.
- Works with local and traditional leadership to strengthen advocacy activities at ward/zonal levels.
- Uses ward nutrition data for identifying priorities and decision-making to influence service delivery at the ward level.
- Generates and submits progress reports to the DNCC.
- Provides technical advice to local and traditional leadership on implementing nutrition interventions

6 STEP 6: ESTABLISHMENT OF SUB-COMMITTEES/TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS WITHIN THE PNCCS AND THE DNCCS

To enhance efficiency and targeted action, sub-committees and technical working groups (TWGs) were established within PNCCs and DNCCs. Comprising heads of departments and sector experts, these TWGs – such as the Communication and Advocacy Technical Working Group (CATWG) and the Monitoring and Evaluation Technical Working Group (M&E TWG) – focus on areas like resource mobilisation, integrating nutrition into sectoral plans, and ensuring rigorous monitoring and evaluation. For example, the CATWG developed a region-specific plan on how the other sectors of the committee can support and coordinate with local health and community leaders in implementing Child Health Week and campaigns on the importance of breastfeeding, to increase awareness and improve practices in early child nutrition. Meanwhile, the M&E TWG tracked campaign progress, collecting data on breastfeeding rates in targeted areas and adjusting strategies as needed. Through such specialised efforts, TWGs provide a structured, data-driven approach to achieving sustainable nutrition improvements at all levels.

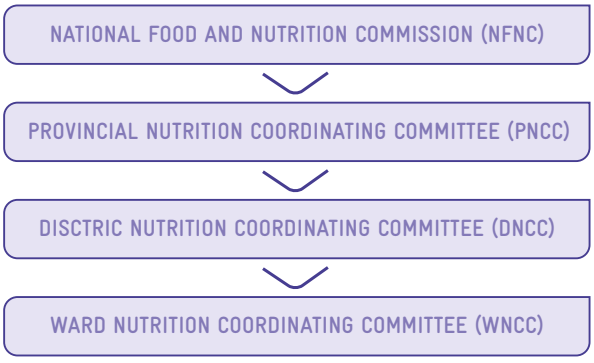
7 STEP 7: REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Once established, the PNCCs and DNCCs began holding regular meetings to monitor progress, discuss challenges, and plan further actions. The involvement of HoDs in these meetings facilitated continuous cross-sector collaboration, ensuring that nutrition initiatives were well-coordinated and aligned with other regional and sectoral priorities.

8 STEP 8: ESTABLISHING WARD NUTRITION COORDINATING COMMITTEES (WNCCS)

Once the DNCCs were formalised, the focus shifted to the creation of Ward Nutrition Coordinating Committees (WNCCs). These ward-level committees brought nutrition governance to the grassroots level, making it possible to effectively implement and monitor nutrition programmes within each ward. The DNCCs guided the formation of the WNCCs by coordinating with local government bodies, community leaders, line ministry representatives and local NGOs. After the establishment of WNCCs, focal point persons (FPPs) were designated from DNCCs to support the numerous WNCCs. With WNCCs operating across multiple wards, having dedicated FPPs was essential to maintain consistent support and communication between the DNCC and WNCC levels. This strategy ensured a direct link across the nutrition coordination structure, which was critical for effective oversight, consistent guidance, and the successful implementation of activities at the ward level. Without FPPs, monitoring and supporting the large number of WNCCs would have been challenging, impacting the overall success of nutrition interventions. At district level, the PNCC supplied the FPPs to support the DNCCs.

FIGURE 21: The hierarchy of nutrition coordination structures from national level down to ward level



FANSER'S ROLE IN SUSTAINING THE NUTRITION COORDINATION STRUCTURES

As GIZ-FANSER, we did the following to sustain nutrition coordinating structures:

- We advised WNCCs, DNCCs, PNCCs and the NFNC on competence development for planning, monitoring, reporting and coordination. This guidance aimed to create more responsive, data-driven plans, improve reporting accuracy, and enhance collaboration across sectors, ultimately achieving better nutrition outcomes.

MEMBERS OF THE DISTRICT NUTRITION COORDINATING COMMITTEE ATTENDING THE FANSER SUSTAINABILITY SUMMIT IN LUSAKA IN FEBRUARY 2024

- By supporting the establishment of sub-committees such as M&E TWG, FANSER supported the adaption of the MCDP II monitoring and evaluation system at district, provincial and national level. This was important, because the committees effectively monitor programme performance, report progress, and make informed adjustments to strategies, ultimately contributing to a responsive and effective national nutrition programme.

- We promoted multi-sector collaboration. Nutrition is inherently multi-sectoral, requiring inputs from health, agriculture, education, water and sanitation, social protection and local governance. By helping to set up nutrition coordination structures, FANSER helped to bring together representatives from multiple government ministries, NGOs, the private sector and community organisations. FANSER facilitated events where these different stakeholders could conduct joint monitoring, reviews and planning.

- FANSER facilitated the exchange of knowledge and best practices across committees. For example, if joint monitoring visits were conducted in Mwense, members of Kawambwa DNCC or Mwansabombwe DNCC were also invited to see the nutrition-sensitive and nutrition-specific activities being implemented in other regions.

- We facilitated the attendance of PNCCs and DNCCs at sustainability workshops. For instance, in February 2024, GIZ FANSER organised a sustainability summit in Lusaka, where stakeholders gathered to discuss, among others, long-term strategies for maintaining the momentum of nutrition governance structures.

- FANSER also supported media engagement for nutrition action.

MEDIA ENGAGEMENT FOR NUTRITION ACTION

As part of the nutrition governance efforts, the FANSER project engaged the media in nutrition advocacy to strengthen the visibility and accountability of nutrition interventions. In March 2021, GIZ supported the Communications and Advocacy Technical Working Group within the Petauke, Katete, and Sinda District Nutrition Coordination Committees (DNCCs) in organising a one-day orientation on various nutrition topics for media professionals. The 29 media personnel from local radio stations who participated in the event gained knowledge on key nutrition topics such as the causes of malnutrition and the importance of the most critical 1,000 days. This training resulted in an ongoing collaboration between media and nutrition stakeholders, leading to increased public awareness through radio programmes, games and documentaries.

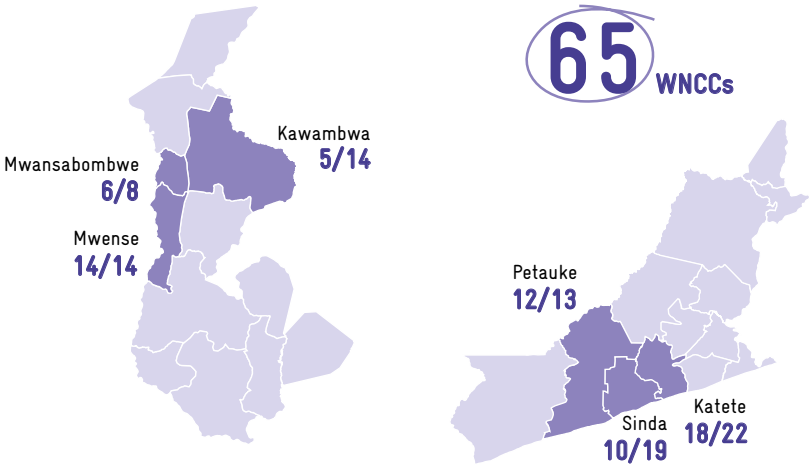
Key outcomes from media engagement for nutrition advocacy:

- A more engaged media corps committed to nutrition advocacy.
- Media scrutiny to hold institutions accountable for commitments to nutrition programmes, providing a platform for feedback on programme effectiveness and resource allocation.
- Media disseminating key nutrition messages.
- Increased community awareness and demand for better nutrition behaviours through media-led initiatives.

FANSER'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN HELPING SET UP AND SUSTAINING THE NUTRITION COORDINATION STRUCTURES

In total, six DNCCs were established across the six FANSER districts: Katete, Petauke, and Sinda in Eastern Province, and Kawambwa, Mwansabombwe, and Mwense in Luapula Province. Additionally, 65 WNCCs were established within these districts, distributed as follows: 18 out of 22 wards in Katete, 10 out of 19 wards in Sinda, 12 out of 13 wards in Petauke, 5 out of 14 wards in Kawambwa, 14 out of 14 wards in Mwense, and 6 out of 8 wards in Mwansabombwe. There were plans to establish WNCCs in the remaining wards, but this has not yet been done due to challenges like high staff turnover of DNCC members who were capacity-built to orient newly established WNCCs.

FIGURE 22: Established WNCCs across all six FANSER districts



From these established structures, the following success factors were recorded:

- **Facilitatory role of FANSER:** Initially, FANSER played a more direct and hands-on role in managing the operations of the WNCCs and DNCCs. This meant that FANSER was heavily involved in activities like organising monthly and quarterly meetings and the implementation of nutrition programmes. However, at the beginning of 2023 FANSER transitioned to a facilitatory role, stepping back from direct management to focus on strengthening the communication between WNCCs and DNCCs with PNCCs and the NFNC.

- **Learning events ↗:** Five learning events were held between 2019 and 2024, proving instrumental in identifying key intervention areas, enhancing stakeholder capacity, and influencing policy. For example, the 2021 learning event held in Eastern Province on food systems was part of the national dialogue and contributed to the development of the National Food Systems Pathway. These learning events also fostered communication, learning, and exposure to new ideas, which were vital in keeping the stakeholders engaged and informed about the latest developments and best practices in nutrition governance.

- **Cost-saving measures:** In response to resource constraints, cost-saving measures were implemented, such as reducing the duration of meetings and eliminating unnecessary venue expenses. These measures improved the efficiency of resource utilisation, ensuring that funds were allocated to essential activities that directly impact the effectiveness of the nutrition programmes. For example, instead of hiring a venue for DNCC meetings in Kawambwa, the Council chamber is used.

A NUTRITION GOVERNANCE EXHIBITION SHOWCASING ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE THE SETUP OF THE DECENTRALISED STRUCTURES

LESSONS LEARNT

Several valuable lessons were learnt that are vital to the success of similar initiatives in the future:

- **Capacity development:** Investing in capacity development initiatives such as resource mobilisation, leadership and management, and gender responsive planning has proven essential for building the knowledge and skills necessary for effective implementation and coordination. Ensuring that all stakeholders are well-equipped with the necessary understanding and abilities enables them to perform their roles effectively, contributing to the overall success of the programme.

- **Stakeholder engagement:** Early and continuous engagement, combined with a comprehensive stakeholder mapping exercise, has been essential for establishing sustainable nutrition governance structures. The detailed stakeholder mapping exercise conducted by the NFNC of stakeholders at provincial and district level provided critical insights, ensuring that all relevant parties were involved and that roles were well defined. By involving these stakeholders early on and maintaining their engagement, the initiative fostered a strong sense of ownership and commitment, which is crucial for the long-term success of nutrition initiatives. This ongoing involvement has kept stakeholders invested in the process.

- **Resource mobilisation:** Diversifying funding sources and reducing dependency on donor funding enhances the sustainability of interventions. For example, in September 2024, FANSER supported an orientation workshop in Eastern Province on how constituency development funds can be used to implement nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive activities. By broadening the financial base, these structures are less vulnerable to fluctuations in donor support.

- **Need for standard operating procedures for focal point persons:** Establishing standard operating procedures (SOPs) for focal point persons within the DNCCs and WNCCs is essential in order to provide clear guidelines and uniform approaches to coordination tasks. SOPs help ensure consistency in actions, streamline communication and enhance accountability, allowing focal point persons to execute their roles effectively and contribute more significantly to the objectives of the nutrition governance structures.

- **Multisector collaboration:** Strengthening collaboration across sectors has been vital to integrating nutrition governance into broader development plans and achieving multisector collaboration; for example, the collaboration between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health within the DNCC. The district nutritionist from the Ministry of Health coordinates with the district agricultural officer to integrate nutrition-sensitive agriculture practices. This includes training farmers to diversify crops, focusing on nutrient-rich varieties like orange-fleshed sweet potatoes and iron-rich mbereshi beans. These crops are promoted not only for market value, but also for household consumption, to improve nutritional intake at community level. This collaboration helps reduce the causes of malnutrition by increasing the availability of nutrient-dense foods, improving household food security, and aligning agricultural production with health goals. This intersectoral collaboration thus ensures that nutrition initiatives are not isolated but are part of a comprehensive effort to improve health and development outcomes.

CRITICAL REFLECTIONS FROM THE LESSONS LEARNT

1 **Constituency Development Fund as funding opportunity**

The Constituency Development Fund is a decentralised funding mechanism in Zambia designed to support decentralised development initiatives and address local community needs. It is therefore a potential funding opportunity for supporting the operations of the nutrition coordination structures.

2 **Leveraging decentralised nutrition coordinating structures for nutrition**

Decentralised nutrition coordinating structures have the potential to be leveraged for nutrition, but more recognition and guidance from national level is needed, especially in the wards.

3 **Need for continuous capacity development**

For the nutrition coordination structures to be properly sustained, there is a need for continuous capacity development to address knowledge gaps and to enhance technical expertise. Members of nutrition coordination structures therefore need scheduled periodic refresher training, tailored training content and other knowledge sharing sessions.

4 **Appropriate resource allocation**

In terms of resources needed in running the nutrition coordination structures sustainably, the Zambian government through the Office of the Vice President and the National Food and Nutrition Commission needs to consider allocating sufficient nutrition coordinators at provincial and district administration level. These coordinators should have a specified government budget line that should be utilised for routine activities such as quarterly planning meetings, joint monitoring visits, learning events, etc. The nutrition coordinators office can additionally leverage on existing infrastructure, assets and personnel under the various ministries and to a limited extent on support from cooperating partners to conduct their core activities of multisectoral coordination of all nutrition actors.

Investing in capacity development initiatives such as resource mobilisation, leadership and management, and gender responsive planning has proven essential for building the knowledge and skills necessary for effective implementation and coordination.

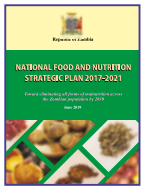
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & MATERIAL

THE FIRST 1000 MOST CRITICAL DAYS PROGRAMME (MCDP) II

2017 (118 pages)
English
Developed by: NFNC

NATIONAL FOOD AND NUTRITION STRATEGIC PLAN 2011-2015

2011 (156 pages)
English
Developed by: NFNC



NATIONAL FOOD AND NUTRITION STRATEGIC PLAN (NFNSP) 2017-2021

2019 (60 pages)
English
Developed by: NFNC

TRAINING MATERIALS ON GENDER AND GENDER RESPONSIVE PLANNING FOR THE DISTRICT NUTRITION COORDINATING COMMITTEES

2023 (60 pages)
English
Developed by: GIZ FANSER

PROMOTING NUTRITION GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTARY

2022 (28:25 min)
English
Developed by: GIZ FANSER

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

BONGANI MVULA

11:49 min
Sinda,
Eastern Province

Listen to Bongani Mvula, the DNCC secretary of the MoA, as he explains how FANSER's support has strengthened their capacity to coordinate impactful nutrition interventions within the community.

LYSON BANDA

05:52 min
Sinda,
Eastern Province

Lyson Banda Chingaipe, the WNCC chairperson and a camp extension officer of the MoA in Sinda reflects on how improved governance within the WNCC has led to tangible benefits for the communities.

Building capacity in nutrition governance: A guide to hosting learning events

Xavier Tembo
Advisor for Multisector Coordination and Organisational Development, Eastern Province

Musa Bwalya
Junior Advisor for Nutrition Governance, Luapula Province

SUMMARY

How do you create impactful nutrition governance? By sharing knowledge, engaging stakeholders, and translating lessons into action. In this document, you will discover how learning events can be an effective and powerful tool for driving change in nutrition. These structured gatherings are more than just presentations – they serve as opportunities for real-time problem-solving, exchanging innovative ideas, and shaping strategies that lead to better policies and practices in the field of food and nutrition security.

Are you eager to learn how you can use these events to influence policy and practice? This document will walk you through the process step by step, from clearly defining a purpose to ensuring impactful and sustainable outcomes. It covers everything you need to plan a successful learning event: identifying key topics that resonate with your audience, engaging the right participants, and ensuring your messages are heard. It also shares practical examples from the FANSER project, showing how real-world events have led to tangible improvements in Zambia's nutrition landscape.

Whether you're a policymaker, practitioner or community leader, this document provides the essential tools and inspiration to transform how you approach nutrition governance. By leveraging structured knowledge exchange, you can become a catalyst for lasting change in food security and nutrition. Let's dive in and explore how these events can be organised and how they can help drive positive, long-term impacts in the fight against malnutrition.

DNCC MEETING IN KAWAMBWA PLANNING FOR A LEARNING EVENT

WHAT IS A LEARNING EVENT? WHY IS IT USEFUL IN NUTRITION GOVERNANCE?

Learning events offer a valuable chance for individuals to explore the practices of their peers and to share their own insights and expertise. These exchanges not only inspire organizations and individuals, but also encourage them to rethink their strategies. As a result, they foster innovative approaches and enhance long-term impact.

This document outlines the structure of learning events, beginning with the identification of a relevant topic, based on the problem at hand and existing evidence. Based on specific examples from the FANSER project, it details the process of defining objectives and crafting messages for the exchange. Key considerations include selecting key informants and participants. Additionally, the paper emphasises the importance of media engagement and other logistical factors that need to be addressed before the event itself.

OVERVIEW OF A LEARNING EVENT

A learning event, also known as a knowledge-sharing platform, is **a structured meeting designed to facilitate interaction among participants with shared interests or common challenges**. It enables subject matter experts, beneficiaries and other stakeholders to add their voices on a specific topic that is of priority concern in the community, based on best practices and experiences arising from project implementation. In this context, FANSER supported the District Nutrition Coordinating Committees (DNCCs)[30] to hold learning events with the aim of allowing participants to share and exchange knowledge, practices and experiences for better policy and implementation.

Learning events are valuable for identifying intervention areas, ensuring the relevance of these interventions to specific contexts, and enabling stakeholders to influence policy making and development activities. They also play a key role in capacity development by enhancing communication, fostering learning, and providing exposure to new people and ideas.

[30] A DNCC is a multi-sector body whose members are drawn from key government sectors, NGOs and private and faith-based organisations. It is responsible for planning, implementation and monitoring of nutrition-related activities in the district with the view to ensuring convergence of nutrition interventions.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS WHEN PLANNING AND HOLDING LEARNING EVENTS

This section outlines the critical components necessary for organising effective learning events. It provides guidance on defining problems and objectives, gathering pertinent evidence, incorporating expert presentations, hosting impactful exhibitions, including the perspectives of beneficiaries, and utilising media coverage. Each element is strategically designed to maximise the effectiveness and outreach of the learning event.

Before the event:

1. **Definition of problem, purpose and objectives:** It is essential to first reflect on the primary issue or topic that participants collectively want to address and learn about. Stakeholders who are relevant to the focus of the learning event or have an interest in the topic are also to be invited. The key questions to consider are: What specific knowledge or insight are you seeking? What information are you currently lacking? Who else can be relevant to this process?
For instance, if farmers have an insufficient understanding of soil testing, this could be a focal point. Alternatively, if there is a low intake of vitamin A-rich foods among selected households, this could also be an area for exploration and improvement. Defining these aspects clearly helps in setting the purpose and objectives of the learning event.

2. **Evidence:** Once the problem has been identified, the next step is to gather and evaluate existing information on the topic. This involves determining whether there is established, proven knowledge related to the issue. Investigate who has previously worked on that topic and review the evidence they have provided. This could include research studies, reports or data that establish what is already known about the issue. Understanding the existing evidence helps to build a solid foundation for the learning event and ensures that discussions are informed and relevant.

3. **Stakeholder involvement:** A participatory approach is crucial during the planning and budgeting phases. The organisers should engage all stakeholders and ensure a comprehensive plan and budget that incorporates diverse inputs. It is important to organise all logistical details well in advance, such as transportation, accommodation, and venues for meetings, workshops, or field visits. This proactive approach helps prevent disruptions on the event day, ensuring optimal participation from all members.

Pre-conditions for the event:

1. **Logistics:** Ensure that all logistical arrangements are in place on the day of the event. Determine an appropriate budget for expenses and consider how to cover costs. Share the budget with key stakeholders and discuss cost-sharing arrangements as needed.

2. **Time management:** Plan the timing of the flow of the event to ensure that on the day you adhere to the planned schedule and respect allocated time slots to ensure the programme runs smoothly. Managing the unforeseen/contingency: Prepare for unexpected issues by creating buffers in resources such as time, personnel and finances.

3. **Collaborative approach:** Conduct all preparations in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, especially those directly involved in the learning. This collaborative approach lays the groundwork for a successful event and maximises the value of the experience for everyone involved.

The day of the event:

1. **Expert** presentations: Incorporating insights from an expert on the topic is crucial. The expert's presentation will bridge the gap between the evidence and the problem at hand, and propose solutions for further discussion. This presentation serves as the foundation for the subsequent knowledge exchange among participants, providing a structured basis for informed dialogue and collaborative problem-solving.

2. **Exhibitions or marketplace:** To enhance participation and facilitate a broader knowledge exchange, it is important to engage partners who are involved in interventions related to the topic and invite them to contribute through exhibitions. These exhibitions provide a real-time, hands-on experience that complements the information discussed in presentations.
At the exhibition, exhibitors will provide detailed explanations and relevant information about various items, offering participants a deeper understanding and practical insights into the topic.

3. **Beneficiary voices:** In addition, presentations from subject specialists, incorporating the perspective of beneficiaries, not only completes the picture but also validates the evidence by showcasing real-life examples of impact and the feasibility of positive deviance. The 2021 learning events pictures show the community beneficiaries practicing what they learnt from the project: thereby becoming good examples for others to follow. It highlights community members who are actively addressing the problem and who can serve as role models.

4. **Key messages and actions:** The final session of the learning event focuses on consolidating and generating key takeaway messages that participants can integrate into their existing action plans or multi-sector district nutrition plans.

5. **Media engagement & involvement:** Engaging the media during the learning event is crucial to ensure that the shared messages reach a broader audience. This can include news coverage on national television as well as the production of a documentary to document best practices for future reference and use.

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IS KEY TO THE SUCCESS OF LEARNING EVENTS

LESSONS LEARNT ON CONDUCTING LEARNING EVENTS

The following lessons learnt highlight the importance of tailored content, media engagement, flexibility, and practical outcomes so as to help enhance future learning events and ensure their lasting impact:

- **Tailoring content to audience needs:** It's essential to tailor the content of learning events to meet the specific needs of participants, whether policy-makers, technical practitioners, or community members. This ensures that the knowledge shared is relevant, practical, and can be immediately applied to their specific contexts. Customised content helps maintain participant engagement and maximises the impact of the event.

- **Media engagement is crucial for amplification:** Engaging the media during learning events has proven essential for extending the reach of the key messages discussed. Television coverage, documentaries, or even online platforms amplify the impact of the event by ensuring that the knowledge shared reaches a broader audience, including those not directly involved in the event. This approach also supports long-term documentation and future reference.

- **Flexibility and adaptability are key:** Despite careful planning, unforeseen challenges are inevitable. The need for flexibility, both in terms of time and resources, was a major lesson learned. Creating contingency plans and buffer zones around resources ensured that the learning event could adapt to unexpected circumstances without losing momentum.

- **Beneficiary involvement strengthens relevance:** Including the voice of beneficiaries not only validates the evidence presented but also makes learning events more relevant. Hearing directly from those impacted by interventions adds practical insights and highlights approaches that can be replicated or scaled.

- **Stakeholder buy-in ensures long-term success:** Early involvement of stakeholders in both the planning and execution phases creates a sense of ownership and accountability. This buy-in helps to ensure that the ideas and key takeaways from the learning events are not only understood but also integrated into participants' ongoing work, increasing the likelihood of long-term success.

- **Creating actionable outcomes:** Learning events are most effective when they result in clear, actionable outcomes. Instead of ending with theoretical discussions, participants should leave with concrete steps they can implement in their work or within their communities. The consolidation of key messages and the development of practical action points ensure that the knowledge gained translates into real-world impact.

FANSER supported DNCCs to hold learning events to share and exchange information, good practices and working approaches. These events focused on important topics or were timed with international events such as World Breastfeeding Week. Some examples of these events are shown on the following pages.

2019 DNCC LEARNING EVENT

Theme: 'Exploring linkages in nutrition – the importance of breastfeeding for a healthy life'

OVERVIEW

World Breastfeeding Week is celebrated every year in many countries from 1-7 August. The aim of this campaign is to create awareness and promote child breastfeeding, based on the statement that "breast milk is always good, at all times, and in all environments". In line with the 2019 celebration, the DNCC learning event was held in Petauke on 14 August 2019: joining the world in increasing awareness of the importance of breastfeeding.

HOW IT WAS ORGANISED

The event was organised by the DNCC but led by the Ministry of Health under the District Health Office. It was characterised by presentations providing information on breastfeeding. Apart from the expert presentations, drama performances and exhibitions on the theme showcased existing breastfeeding practices and information.

KEY MESSAGES

- Malnutrition levels were still high, especially in rural communities, despite the reduced rate of stunting to 35% at national level and 34% at provincial level (Eastern), according to the 2018 Zambia Demographic and Health Survey Report.[31]
- Trends on breastfeeding: breastfeeding figures were still unsatisfactory with 90% at birth up to 1 month, but exclusive breastfeeding figures dropping to 76% at 6 months and 42% at 1 year (2018 DHS).
- In promoting breastfeeding, male involvement needs to be considered, as men are decision makers and influencers.

[31]
These figures are no longer up to date (DHS 2024), but were current at the time of the learning event.

MOTHERS ATTENDING A GROWTH MONITORING SESSION

2022 DNCC LEARNING EVENTS

Theme: Exploring Linkages in nutrition: Scaling up the production and consumption of vitamin a rich foods

OVERVIEW

Zambia has for a long time grappled with the 'triple burden of malnutrition'; that is, high levels of under-nutrition and increasing levels of obesity coupled with micronutrient deficiencies such as iron, zinc and vitamin A. The recently conducted **Zambia Food Consumption and Micronutrient Status Survey (2020)** indicate that micronutrient deficiencies are generally a public health concern in Zambia.

In response to these challenges, FANSER supported DNCC learning events as a way of promoting the production and consumption of vitamin A-rich foods. This learning event was held in Katete, Sinda and Petauke from 30 August to 2 September 2022 under the theme: **Exploring linkages in nutrition: Scaling up the production and consumption of vitamin A-rich food; with a focus on orange maize, orange-fleshed sweet potatoes and fruits such as papayas and mangoes.**

DNCC AND WNCC MEMBERS DURING A LEARNING EVENT IN PETAUKE

DNCC MEMBERS EXHIBITING VITAMIN A-RICH FOODS

ORANGE MAIZE RICH IN VITAMIN A

HOW IT WAS ORGANISED

- **Hosting and lead facilitation:** The event was hosted by the DNCCs, with lead facilitation provided by the Ministry of Agriculture and Msekera Research Station. Both institutions play an active role in promoting sustainable agriculture and diverse food production.
- **Key participants**: A range of key stakeholders attended the event, including the District Administration, ZANIS, Catholic Relief Services, COMACO, a teacher from Katete Boarding Secondary School known for propagating papayas, and representatives from the UNIQUE Project.
- **Presentations:** The event included presentations that provided valuable information on Vitamin A-rich foods and emphasised the importance of micronutrients, particularly Vitamin A, for health.
- **Thematic drama and exhibitions:** Drama performances aligned with the theme of the event were staged to enhance engagement, and exhibitions were organised to showcase various practices and information on the production and consumption of Vitamin A-rich foods, offering participants a comprehensive view of local nutrition resources.

KEY MESSAGES

- Vitamin A is essential for your health as it helps protect against certain eye diseases.
- Vitamin A deficiency raises the risk of anemia and death in pregnant women, and negatively impacts the foetus by slowing growth and development.
- Foods high in plant-based vitamins (pro-vitamin) include the following: orange maize, orange-fleshed sweet potatoes (OFSP), pumpkins, carrots, papaya and mangoes.

2023 PNCC LEARNING EVENT

Theme: 'Water is life. Water is food. Leave no one behind.'

SAMFYA, LUAPULA PROVINCE

OVERVIEW

A nutrition promotion learning event hosted by Samfya District was held in Luapula Province and attracted all the seven Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) II implementing districts. Local traditional leadership and different stakeholders at national level were also part of the event. The learning event was held with the objective of sharing knowledge and experiences. The event was also aimed at enabling participants to interact with each other and exchange information on the best practices aimed at reducing stunting.

The theme of the event was **'Water is life. Water is food. Leave no one behind'**, with a sub-theme: 'Easy access to adequate water can contribute to food and nutrition security.' The learning event built up and celebrated the upcoming international Global Handwashing Day and World Food Day that fell on 15 and 16 October 2023 respectively.

HOW IT WAS ORGANISED

- Hosting and lead facilitation: The event was organised by the Provincial Nutrition Coordinating Committee (PNCC) and had the full support of the Luapula provincial administration. The PNCC secretariat scheduled three planning meetings in a hybrid format over a period of four months. Government ministries and cooperating partner representatives from the UN FAO and UNICEF, USAID, CARE, GIZ, CRS and PLAN International attended these meetings. This platform was used to produce key decisions in a participatory and inclusive manner. Decisions on where to hold the event, theme interpretations, objectives, logistics sharing and assignment of roles were discussed on this platform.

- Water plays a key role in winning the fight against malnutrition, and greatly determines the quality of life of a household. There was a demand that this event be made into an annual event and that it should include all districts in the province, including those that are not covered by cooperating partners.

- A key recommendation resounding from all involved in the feedback was that the nutrition support group model be fully adopted and implemented by the Zambian government so as to further concentrate and converge nutrition interventions at household level.

EXHIBITION OF INTERVENTIONS FOR THE PERMANENT SECRETARY OF LUAPULA

FANSER has embraced this approach in nutrition programming, not as a singular event but as an ongoing process. This approach promotes continuous collaboration and integration among participants, leading to a shared sense of responsibility and collective ownership of nutrition outcomes, which is key to achieving long-term, sustainable impact.

DNCC AND WNCC MEMBERS PREPARING FOR A LEARNING EVENT

Through these learning events, policy makers and technical development practitioners have the opportunity for open and honest knowledge exchanges, discussing both successes and challenges in addressing common issues.

CHAPTER

06

CROSS-CUTTING APPROACHES FOR NUTRITION

Ensuring inclusive, impactful, and lasting change across all fields of action

Throughout the entire duration of the FANSER project, cross-cutting aspects such as gender equality, results monitoring, impactful communication materials for social behaviour change and the sustainability of the impacts beyond the end of the project were central to maximising effectiveness, addressing challenges early, and ensuring long-term results. These topics were consistently integrated into all project activities, influencing their design and implementation.
Monitoring data was collected and analysed through a results-based system to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and make necessary adjustments. This data not only tracked the project's progress and ensured accountability to donors, but could also offer valuable insights for other development projects or organisations in the future.

Gender transformative measures were another cornerstone, addressing inequalities through gender-sensitive training and actively involving both men and women in all project measures to promote joint decision-making. Male participation was particularly emphasised, as sustainable nutrition outcomes can only be achieved with active male engagement.

In addition, a variety of creative, entertaining, and easy-to-understand communication materials were developed and disseminated to broaden and strengthen the impact of FANSER's social behaviour change measures, using engaging formats such as comic booklets, an animated series, radio programmes and card games to ensure the messages resonated with and reached diverse target groups, including those in remote areas.

In the final years of implementation, FANSER focused on sustaining the project's impact beyond its lifespan. A graduation strategy was piloted as part of the Care Group Model to create more ownership amongst beneficiaries and volunteers, and to allow for more sustainability and outreach. Additionally, interactive and entertaining roadshows were organised to motivate volunteers and rural health facilities to continue implementing the Care Group Model. These roadshows recognised the commitment of volunteers, health facility staff and communities and reinforced the importance of WASH and nutrition interventions.

This chapter explores the FANSER monitoring system, potential future use of its data, and highlights the concept, lessons learnt from the roadshows, and FANSER's social behaviour change communication strategy. You will also learn about the results achieved through the graduation strategy and the gender approach, and what could be improved in the future.

Circus in Action:
Creative ways of community engangement for sustainable impacts

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SUMMARY

How to ensure sustainability and lasting impact through community engagement, appreciation, acrobatics and fun? This document showcases a unique approach: appreciation roadshows designed not only to engage and educate rural communities on nutrition and hygiene practices, but also to celebrate the dedication of volunteers, health facility staff and beneficiaries.

The roadshows, organised by FANSER in cooperation with the social circus company Circus Zambia, its implementing partner the Catholic Relief Services, and, at district level, the Ministry of Health, combined theatre, circus, and community involvement to showcase success stories, reinforce lessons, and give public recognition to those who contributed the most. With key lessons, challenges, and a proven model for replication, this document is packed with practical takeaways. You'll discover how the project motivated over 5,000 community volunteers, reinforced essential knowledge on nutrition and WASH, and created commitment and ownership of traditional leaders and government representatives.

Are you interested to see how appreciation can be a powerful tool for motivation and sustainable change? Dive into this document to see how a creative, flexible approach can boost morale, foster long-term commitment and change the course of development projects, ensuring they're not only effective, but sustainable in the long run.

BACKGROUND AND CONCEPT

The Food and Nutrition Security, Enhanced Resilience (FANSER) project aimed to improve the food and nutrition security and dietary diversity of women of reproductive age, particularly pregnant and lactating women, and of children under the age of two. To achieve this, the project implemented a cascade approach known as the **Care Group Model** ↗ . This model aimed to enhance the knowledge of rural households with regard to nutrition and WASH practices. Various community volunteers were trained to disseminate this knowledge to households in their vicinity on a monthly basis.

In preparation for the end of the project in March 2025, FANSER worked intensively with its partners from the Zambian government to anchor successful approaches so as to ensure sustainability and long-lasting impact. As part of the sustainability and phasing out strategy, GIZ, in collaboration with its implementing partner Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and the social circus company Circus Zambia developed innovative roadshows.

The objectives of these roadshows were to show appreciation for the work of the project volunteers and MoH health facility staff; to celebrate the fact that health facilities under the MoH have committed to continue the Care Group Model by guiding and supporting community volunteers in lesson delivery; and to celebrate the progress that has been made thus far. In addition, the roadshows aimed to reinforce content messages on WASH and nutrition and to motivate the volunteers to continue lesson delivery and leading by example.

The engaging and participatory events featured theatre, circus and acrobatic acts, dance competitions and success story booths. They centred around success stories that covered the different core messages on nutrition and WASH, and used imaginary characters based on real people such as community volunteers, beneficiary households and officials from the Ministry of Health. These characters drove the events; the audience first encountered them in the recorded success stories, followed by the main show and the appreciation ceremony. In this way, the different key messages were repeated, reinforced, and made relatable.

Officials from the MoH and traditional leaders had a stage to address and motivate the volunteers and health facility staff. Circus Zambia ensured that the events balanced fun and respect. Each event concluded with a handing over of certificates to all participating volunteers, after which selected volunteers, MoH officials and traditional leaders were invited to place coloured stamps on a mural to symbolise their commitment.

In order to reach as many people as possible, the key messages were summarised and presented in a simplified form. Achievements were recognised, and the importance of continuing the programme was underscored. To allow a large-scale roll out, the roadshows were planned and implemented as cost-effectively as possible and without relying too much on staff from local GIZ or CRS offices.

ROADSHOW ELEMENTS

PHASE 1

ARRIVAL AND SET-UP (30MIN)

The team assessed the site with local representatives to identify areas for different activities (success stories booth, mural and main stage). Loud music was played to attract and engage the audience.

PHASE 2

MOBILISATION (30 MIN)

The audience was engaged with walkabout acts like acrobatics and juggling and was invited to the success stories booths, which displayed five photos each and played five recorded success stories using radio drama methods. Facilitators in the booths engaged the audience and emphasised key messages.

PHASE 3

WELCOME & MAIN SHOW (40 MIN)

Gathering for the main event, the audience was welcomed officially by the headman or traditional leader, followed by a dance competition and the drama performance as the highlight of the event. The drama featured characters from the success stories, who prepared for the appreciation ceremony. Using participatory theatre techniques, the audience was engaged interactively. The play concluded with all characters ready for the ceremony, leading into the appreciation event.

PHASE 4

APPRECIATION CEREMONY (45 MIN)

The ceremony started with a short speech by CRS or GIZ and was followed by testimonials from volunteers. Subsequently, the volunteers received certificates as recognition for their work, and the MoH and traditional leaders made closing remarks.

PHASE 5

MURAL PAINTING & CLOSING (30 MIN)

The ceremony closed with a fire show and selected representatives were invited to stamp the mural ↗ with shapes related to WASH and nutrition. The mural is adorned with key messages from the FANSER project, and the text translates to "It is in our hands: we are the agends of change for good nutrition."

CIRCUS ZAMBIA CAPTIVATING THE AUDIENCE WITH A MESMERISING FIRE SHOW

THE MURAL, CREATED BY A LOCAL ARTIST, IS A VISUALIZATION OF THE COMMITMENT MADE BY THE DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS. THE TEXT TRANSLATES TO "IT IS IN OUR HANDS: WE ARE THE AGENTS OF CHANGE FOR GOOD NUTRITION".

HANDING OVER OF CERTIFICATES

THEATRE PERFORMANCE ENGAGING THE AUDIENCE WITH WASH AND NUTRITION SUCCESS STORIES

To test the concept, identify areas for improvement, and assess how it would be received by volunteers, four pilot events were held in November 2023.

A total of 75 shows ran from 27 May until 26 June, running concurrently in Luapula Province (21 shows in Kawamba, 7 in Mwansabombwe and 13 in Mwense) and Eastern Province (10 shows in Katete, 20 in Sinda and 4 in Petauke), with two shows per day. Each roadshow took approximately three hours, with 20 shows per week (two per day for five days a week) in each province, targeting 5144 intermediaries.

Due to the severe drought that hit Eastern Province in 2024 and the subsequent negative effect on the harvest and food security in the region, the roadshow programme in that region was shortened and modified to reflect the seriousness of the situation. In addition, it was decided to run the shows in the two provinces in parallel, instead of one after the other as originally planned, so that they would conclude at the end of June 2024 instead of August and not interfere with the emergency relief measures.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In order to ascertain whether the objectives mentioned above were achieved, Circus Zambia recorded the attendance of the volunteers who received certificates, and gathered feedback from the audience. Pre-determined questions were used to establish whether the volunteers and the audience enjoyed the show and understood the messages of the event.

The **survey results** were overwhelmingly positive, with **96.5%** of respondents **'very satisfied'** and the remaining **3.5% 'satisfied'** with the overall event. There was no significant difference between the responses from Eastern and Luapula Provinces. All components of the programme received very positive ratings.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING CONFIDENCE

In Eastern Province, 90% of respondents reported feeling 'excellent' about their ability to share information on nutrition and WASH, while 9% felt 'good', and only 1% felt 'less confident'. In Luapula Province, all 216 survey participants (100%) felt 'very confident' about continuing to give lessons on WASH and nutrition.

The survey results from Eastern Province also indicated a high level of motivation among participants.

99% **expressing a strong commitment to continue as role models** in their communities. Similarly, in Luapula Province, all 216 participants reported feeling highly motivated to remain community role models.

As a **key takeaway**, most respondents identified a need for proper hygiene practices, such as washing hands after using the toilet, and building toilets instead of open defecation. Other issues seen as promoting community well-being included maintaining clean household environments, avoiding contamination of water sources, ensuring good nutrition, exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, as well as continued education on health and nutrition. Respondents also recommended an ongoing collaboration with the Ministry of Health to maintain the delivery of lessons and the application of learned practices. Boosting morale and motivation to remain actively involved in community initiatives was seen as crucial.

Respondents also highlighted the need for additional resources such as bicycles, T-shirts and bags to support fieldwork and visibility, and more teaching materials and farming supplies to better equip participants. Respondents also suggested that improved communication and timely information about events would boost attendance.

> "The way the lessons have been shared today has given an opportunity to those who didn't allow us in their homes to learn about the FANSER project too. I'm sure after this they will start allowing us to teach them.

> "I will continue to work as a Nutrition Volunteer even if the project has now been given to the MoH. The benefits I've gotten from this project are far more valuable than any money that I can be given.

CIRCUS ZAMBIA HIGHLIGHTING IMPORTANT WASH MESSAGES IN THEIR ENGAGING PERFORMANCE

SMILING AND LAUGHING AUDIENCE ENJOYING THE ROADSHOW

A PARTICIPANT ADDS A STAMP TO THE MURAL, SYMBOLISING HIS COMMITMENT TO WASH AND NUTRITION

TRADITIONAL LEADER HOLDING A SPEACH

INTERMEDIARIES PROUDLY DISPLAYING THEIR CERTIFICATES TO THE CAMERA, CELEBRATING THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS

LESSONS LEARNT

Looking back on the roadshows, several valuable lessons have emerged, offering insights into both the successes and areas for improvement. Firstly, flexibility of the team is key, as it was important that the content of the main show could be adapted to varying local circumstances, e.g. using local 'slang', music and dance, to make the show as engaging and effective as possible. Additionally, good collaboration between the different parties is crucial, and successful briefing meetings ensured buy-in from various stakeholders such as the health facilities, MoH, CRS and GIZ. It was noted that the workload of ten shows per week in each province was hard on the performers, as the events require high levels of energy, and that more rest periods should be included. However, dividing the workload between two teams for parallel implementation was effective, and the long preparation time helped create a sense of ownership of the process by the various parties.

Weather challenges such as strong winds proved detrimental to some of the equipment like tents, highlighting the need to invest in stronger, more resilient materials. Even though the murals, created by local artists, were a success, some guidance was required to ensure consistent quality. The volunteers greatly appreciated receiving their certificates:

> "This certificate is the best part of this event for me because it will serve as a testimony of my work as a nutritional volunteer. Any NGO that will come to Kabila will give me an opportunity to work with them because I am knowledgeable and experienced in nutrition and sanitation work.

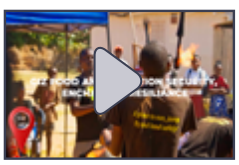
VOLUNTEER WITH CERTIFICATE

Running the pilot projects was effective, as they enabled the organisers to eliminate problems in advance and ensure the success of the eventual implementation. Overall, the roadshows were an effective tool in generating continued interest in the topic and sharing the FANSER key messages and philosophy with a wider audience.

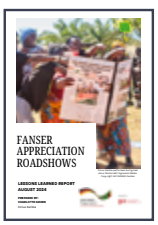
It can be concluded that the roadshows were very successful, as the audiences enjoyed the events and felt motivated to continue implementing the lesson delivery under the new structure. They understood the key messages communicated during the event, while having an enjoyable time. The pilot phase ensured that the project was well planned and prepared, and the commitment, flexibility and enthusiasm from all the relevant stakeholders underscored their buy-in and support.

MURAL OF THE APPRECIATION ROADSHOWS, THE TEXT TRANSLATES TO "IT IS IN OUR HANDS – WE ARE THE AGENTS OF CHANGE FOR GOOD NUTRITION"

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & MATERIAL



APPRECIATION ROADSHOW SHORT DCOUMENTARY
2024 (4:31 min)
English
Developed by: FANSER



LESSONS LEARNT REPORT CIRCUS ZAMBIA
2017 (118 pages)
English
Developed by: Circus Zambia for FANSER

Graduating beneficiaries: FANSER's approach to measure and secure knowledge for lasting impact

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SUMMARY

Empowering communities to take ownership and champion good practices is key. This document highlights how the FANSER project piloted an innovative graduation strategy to enhance the long-term sustainability of the Care Group Model.

The graduation strategy combines the process of lesson delivery with regular, clearly communicated knowledge and practice assessments, offering a defined endpoint for participating households. This structured approach motivates both beneficiaries and volunteers to not only gain, but also to apply the acquired knowledge. It goes beyond simply tracking progress by actively recognising achievements, sharing them at community level, and involving traditional leadership to celebrate successes while also identifying areas for improvement and further development.

Graduated beneficiaries are formally recognised and empowered to become influential nutrition champions within their communities. At the same time, this strategy creates opportunities for new households to join the Care Group Model, ensuring a continuous cycle of learning, capacity building and positive impact.

The document presents insights on how to blend recognition, education and community engagement to create interventions that don't just deliver results but leave a lasting, positive impact. It explores how the graduation strategy strengthens community ownership while fostering long-term benefits. If you're looking to replicate or build on such efforts, this document provides detailed results, key lessons learned and actionable takeaways.

BACKGROUND AND CONCEPT

The Care Group Model implemented under FANSER focused on disseminating knowledge, delivering nine core lessons on nutrition as well as water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) to households in rural communities. Different types of community volunteers were trained in the nutrition and WASH content, and then passed on their knowledge to fellow households in their vicinity on a monthly basis. Each month a specific topic was taught, so that theoretically, after nine months, a beneficiary would have completed one lesson cycle.

With repeating lesson cycles and a growing number of beneficiaries, it became essential to define when and under what criteria beneficiaries would stop receiving lessons and open up space for new beneficiaries, thus expanding the positive messaging regarding nutrition and WASH within their communities. The graduation strategy aimed to improve the long-term sustainability of the project outcomes and ensure focused implementation by enabling communities to take ownership of the project and increasing the number of people with good knowledge of nutrition and WASH to become 'nutrition champions', thus leading by example.

The graduation strategy was piloted by the FANSER project on two different occasions. The first pilot was a simplified mass graduation in Petauke district, Eastern Province, in 2022. It needed to be simplified as it was impossible to follow the original plan of a three-step approach, due to the very high number of beneficiaries. The second pilot was supposed to stick to the three-step approach outlined below. However, the approach had to be slightly modified for organisational reasons.

FIGURE 23: Key facts on the graduation strategy pilots

First pilot in Petauke

- Took place in August 2022
- Mass graduation with more than 24,000 beneficiaries
- No 3-step-approach due to huge numbers
- Knowledge assessment with a sample size of 378 beneficiaries
- **83% met criteria for graduation** based on knowledge in nutrition and WASH
- 57% met graduation criteria based on WASH practices

Second pilot in Sinda and Mwansabombwe

- Took place April-December 2023
- Adjusted version of the 3-step- approach
- Knowledge assessment with 45 beneficiaries from Sinda (Eastern Province) and 66 from Mwansabombwe (Luapula Province)
- In Mwansabombwe, **all respondents got above 50% correct answers** and hence passed the assessment
- In Sinda, all beneficiaries were able to pass the second assessment. In terms of nutrition, all of them passed **with at least 75% correct answers or better**

CRITERIA FOR GRADUATION

In order to graduate, the beneficiaries had to complete the nine core Care Group lessons at least once. The knowledge gained in these lessons was assessed using a predefined list of questions, the so-called graduation checklist, of which graduates had to answer at least 50% correctly. The checklist covered the most essential information in the nine core lessons, verified the presence and functionality of WASH facilities such as latrines and hand washing stations (so-called WASH milestones), and was administered by fellow nutrition volunteers (NVs). For ease of understanding, it was translated to the predominant vernacular languages in the respective FANSER districts (Nyanja and Bemba).

The aim of setting WASH milestones was that households should have at least the most relevant facilities, namely a handwashing station with soap and water, a functioning pit latrine, a rubbish pit and a dish rack.

BENEFICIARY USING A DISH RACK

BENEFICIARY USING A HAND WASHING STATION WITH SOAP AND WATER

BENEFICIARY USING A PIT LATRINE

IDEA AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The graduation criteria outlined above were to be assessed by the nutrition volunteers as part of the planned roll-out process. To ensure objectivity, the concept included the random selection of an independent nutrition volunteer within the same care group to evaluate the beneficiaries (nutrition volunteers were not supposed to assess their own beneficiaries). The nutrition volunteers were to be trained in administering the criteria, and a paper-based graduation checklist was to be provided. It was also deemed crucial to involve the regional and district structures of the Ministry of Health in the process as early as possible (ideally from the beginning).

FIGURE 24: Sample extract from the knowledge assessment questionnaire, the so-called graduation checklist

Healthy Diet for Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women, Better Breastfeeding and Complementary Feeding for Children 6-23 Months

Why does a pregnant woman need to be smart, healthy and strong?

◯ To make a strong healthy baby

◯ To have a successful childbirth

How can a pregnant woman manage to be smart, healthy and strong?

◯ Eat plenty and diverse, nutritious foods
◯ Eat one extra small meal or snack each day

◯ Go to antenatal check-ups

Why does a breastfeeding mother need to be smart, healthy and strong?

◯ To produce plenty of milk

◯ To keep the baby healthy

◯ To continue breastfeeding while she is working at home, in the fields, and in business

For how many months should the mother give only breastmilk to the baby?

◯ For six months
◯ incorrect answer

What are the *benefits* of giving your baby only breastmilk for the first 6 months?

◯ It has all necessary nutrients and energy and helps your baby to grow smart, healthy and strong.

◯ The stomach of the baby is not ready to fully digest food or water

◯ It prevents diseases

At what age should complementary foods be introduced to young children?

◯ After six months
◯ incorrect answer

Why do we need to introduce complementary foods?

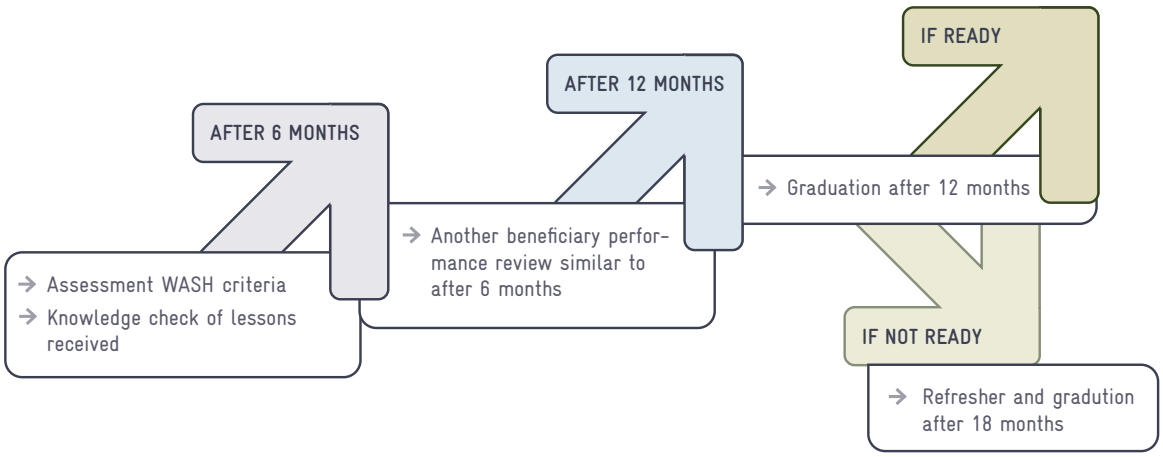
◯ Breastmilk alone is not sufficient anymore to meet the growing demand

◯ It supports the development of the growing child

◯ To ensure children's bodies and brains develop very well

The roll-out process was conceptualised as a three-step approach; after six months, the WASH criteria would be assessed and a knowledge check carried out on the lessons already received. After twelve months, a further review of beneficiary performance would be conducted, which would involve reassessing whether all WASH milestones had been achieved, as well as another knowledge assessment to identify existing gaps. Those beneficiaries considered ready based on this assessment would be able to graduate, while those who were not ready would receive refresher lessons and have the opportunity to graduate after 18 months, when the 'final graduation' was scheduled to take place, requiring all criteria to be met (completion of all core modules, passing the knowledge assessment, fulfilment of WASH criteria).

FIGURE 25: Initial concept of the 3-step approach for the roll-out process



THE PILOTING

1 First pilot: Petauke 'mass graduation'

[32] Camp is an administrative unit under the Ministry of Agriculture in Zambia.

In 2022, the FANSER project had to phase out in twelve camps[32] in Petauke where implementation had already been taking place for seven years. The project used this opportunity to pilot core elements of the graduation strategy for the first time. Over 24,000 beneficiaries and more than 70 nutrition volunteers were scheduled to graduate. Due to the huge number, it was not possible to follow all the steps as outlined in the strategy, and a mass graduation was identified as an alternative option. The graduation assessment was only implemented for a sample of the beneficiaries and the sample size was determined to be 378 beneficiaries at 95% confidence level and 5% confidence interval (margin of error). Nevertheless, based on the good assessment results (see below), all 24,000 beneficiaries in these camps in Petauke graduated at decentralised graduation ceremonies, and received certificates.

As part of the preparations for the first pilot in Petauke in 2022, the graduation checklist, being the main assessment tool, was pre-tested, and project staff as well as the nutrition volunteers were informed about the graduation strategy and the roll-out process. In addition, information on the graduation was communicated to beneficiaries and headpersons as well as government representatives, and various stakeholders were involved in the preparations for graduation. Finally, the beneficiaries' knowledge was assessed using the checklist, and the results were analysed and compiled.

FIGURE 26: Knowledge on nutrition and WASH assessment results during the first pilot

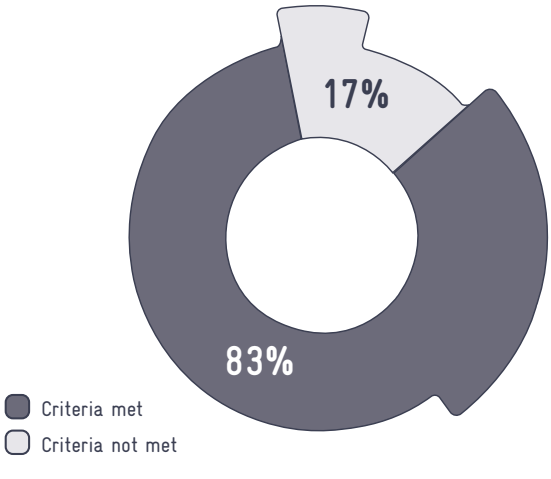
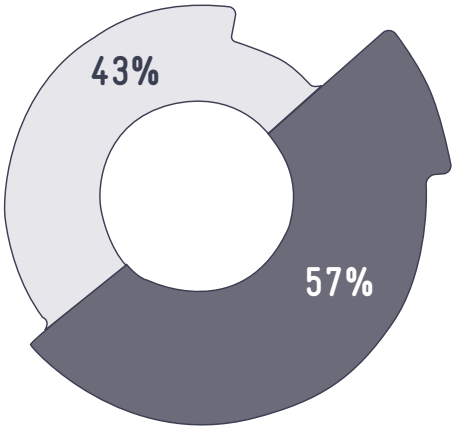


FIGURE 27: Assessment results on WASH milestones during the first pilot



The outcome of the first pilot was positive and results showed that, based on their knowledge on nutrition and WASH, 83% of the beneficiaries met the criteria for graduation, while 57% of the beneficiaries met the graduation criteria on key WASH practices; i.e., they used at least two out of the four WASH milestones, such as hand washing stations, pit latrines, dish racks and/or refuse pits.

Lessons learned and recommendations from the first pilot

The mass graduation in Petauke enabled a rapid assessment of knowledge and practices and promoted community awareness and ownership among beneficiaries. This led to participants expressing their opinions about the project and making independent suggestions on how the activities could be sustained without project support. For example, beneficiaries who had become community champions volunteered to act as mentors for households in the future. In addition, beneficiaries felt recognised because they were awarded certificates, which galvanised other community members to participate in the project.

However, even though stakeholder participation was excellent and cardinal for graduating beneficiaries, competing priorities unfortunately contributed to low attendance at a number of graduation ceremonies. Also, some facilitators reported that some volunteers were burnt out and were happy to be 'released' after several years of training beneficiaries.

Overall, the first pilot showed that the graduation strategy represents a promising approach and should be continued in accordance with the established framework, maintaining the pass rate of the knowledge assessment at 50%. Additionally, it seemed important to implement mandatory WASH indicators, such as latrines and hand washing stations, to ensure basic hygiene standards, rather than considering it sufficient if two of the four milestones were achieved. Continuous dissemination of information about the graduation process should be carried out through care groups and all relevant stakeholders.

PROUD BENEFICIARY WITH THE CERTIFICATE AFTER THE GRADUATION

HANDING OVER OF CERTIFICATES TO BENEFICIARIES

BENEFICIARIES READING THEIR CERTIFICATES CAREFULLY

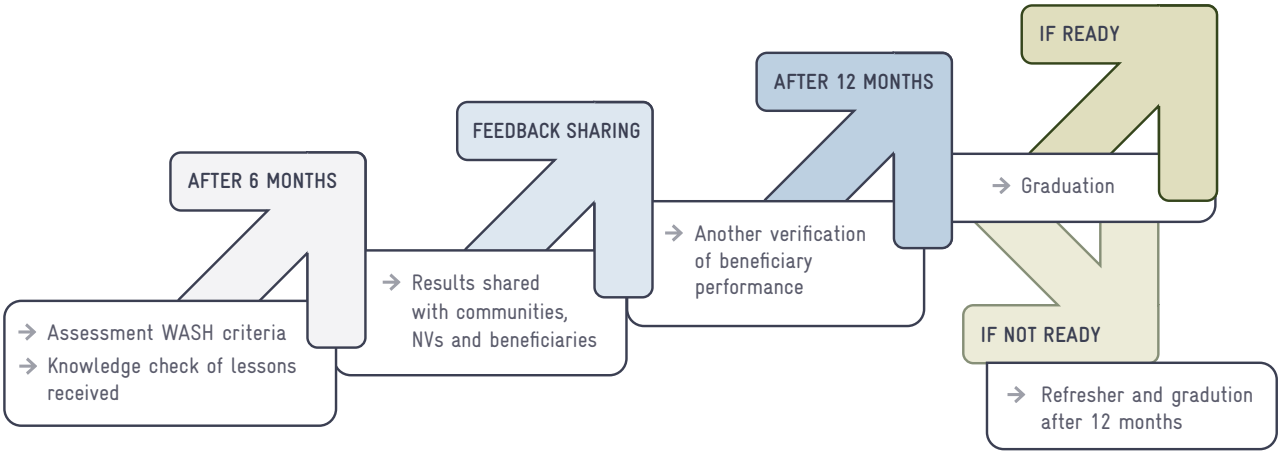
2 Second pilot & adjusted approach

The project decided to run a second pilot of the strategy, this time adhering closely to the outlined steps. The second pilot started in 2023, and focused on new districts and wards where the implementation had recently started. The purpose was to refine the approach, apply it to newly trained beneficiaries and analyse the impact of the graduation process on knowledge levels and learning curves. It also aimed to test if the three-step approach of the strategy (with corresponding time intervals and only one completed lesson cycle) was working. This could not be tested in Petauke, as the project had already been implemented there since 2015, and many beneficiaries had already been through several cycles and participated in lesson delivery for several years. The complete strategy approach was piloted in two communities in Sinda and Mwansabombwe, using a small sample. The main focus of the second pilot was to observe the effects of graduation **on the quality of lesson delivery and knowledge levels amongst beneficiaries**.

In addition, the roll-out process in the new districts had to be adjusted due to organisational reasons. Following the original concept, an assessment of the WASH criteria and a knowledge check regarding the lessons already received were carried out after six months. However, it was no longer sufficient to achieve two of the four WASH milestones, as had been the case before, while having a hand washing station and a pit latrine were now mandatory. Following the assessment and check, feedback on the results were shared with the communities, nutrition volunteers and beneficiaries to enable them to work on their learning areas. Nutrition volunteers were also informed about households that didn't perform well. After nine months (instead of twelve as originally planned), another verification of the 'beneficiary performance' took place, which included rechecking if WASH milestones, particularly the mandatory ones, were met, and conducting a knowledge assessment to identify any existing knowledge gaps. If all criteria were met, beneficiaries could graduate. If not, refresher lessons were organised, and graduation took place after twelve months.

During the feedback process with communities, results and data were shared via flip charts, areas of good knowledge and areas of improvement were explained, and concerns about hand washing stations and toilets were addressed. In general, the feedback process was a good experience, as the feedback was well received and village head persons and additional nutrition volunteers from neighbouring villages attended the meetings. CRS field supervisors followed up with the nutrition volunteers, and follow-up monitoring visits were scheduled to make sure that knowledge gaps were addressed.

FIGURE 28: Adjusted roll-out process for the pilot in the new districts



3 Results of the second pilot

Mwansabombwe

Luapula Province

The overall scoring from the second pilot in Mwansabombwe showed that out of 66 beneficiaries who participated in the first phase of the assessment, 74% of respondents got between 50% and 74% correct answers, while 26% got between 75% and 99%. In the second phase, slightly similar results were observed; 76% of respondents got between 50% and 74% correct answers and 24% got between 75% and 99%. In both phases, none of the beneficiaries got below 50%.

As per the assessment criteria, these findings show that all 66 respondents in both phases got above 50% correct answers and hence passed the assessment.

In both knowledge assessments, the results for WASH and nutrition were relatively similar, with over 90% of participants achieving over 75% correct answers in each case.

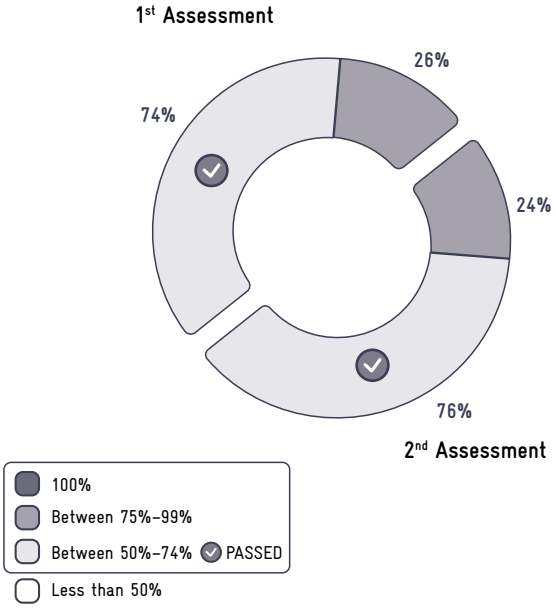
The results showed that only 6% of the beneficiaries in the first phase and 12% in the second phase had all the WASH facilities. In the first assessment, 64% had three WASH facilities while 30% had two; in the second assessment 39% had three facilities and 44% had two. In neither assessment did beneficiaries have no facilities.

The results of the assessment on WASH milestones showed that 67% of respondents in the first assessment and 64% in the second assessment had tippy taps, while 68% in the first assessment and 64% in the second assessment had functional pit latrines. In the first assessment, 68% had refuse pits and 77% had dish racks, while in the second assessment, 64% had refuse pits and 77% in the first and 71% of participants in the second assessment had dish racks. During the first assessment, only 39% of beneficiaries had all two mandatory WASH facilities, while in the second assessment the beneficiary number was even lower, at 29%. The overall results showed that 69% of beneficiaries in the first assessment and 65% of beneficiaries in the second assessment had at least one or more WASH facilities in their households.

The availability of sufficient WASH facilities was a weak point in Mwansabombwe. Particularly striking was the decrease in facilities in Mwansabombwe between the first and second survey, from 70% of beneficiaries with three or more facilities in the first survey, to only 51% in the second. A possible reason could be that the survey took place during the rainy season and, particularly in Luapula Province, heavy rainfall often led to the collapse of sanitation facilities. Beneficiaries were generally working in the fields at that time and did not have time to rebuild them. Moreover, the survey was conducted in the lean season when many households were struggling to cover basic needs, and the maintenance of latrines and tippy taps would not have been prioritised.

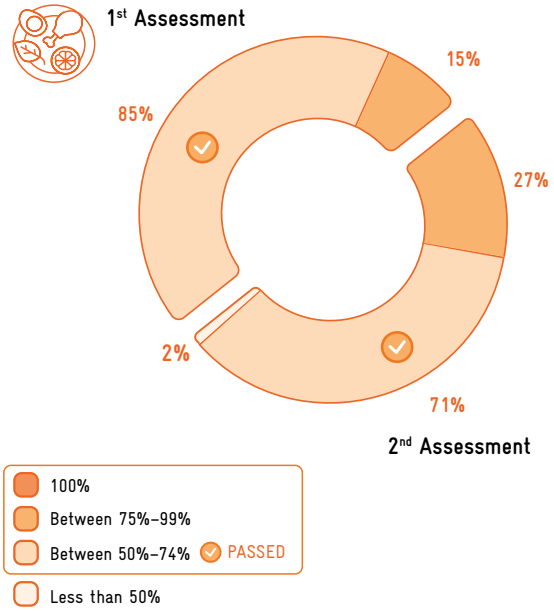
FIGURE 29: Outcomes Mwansabombwe

OVERALL KNOWLEDGE



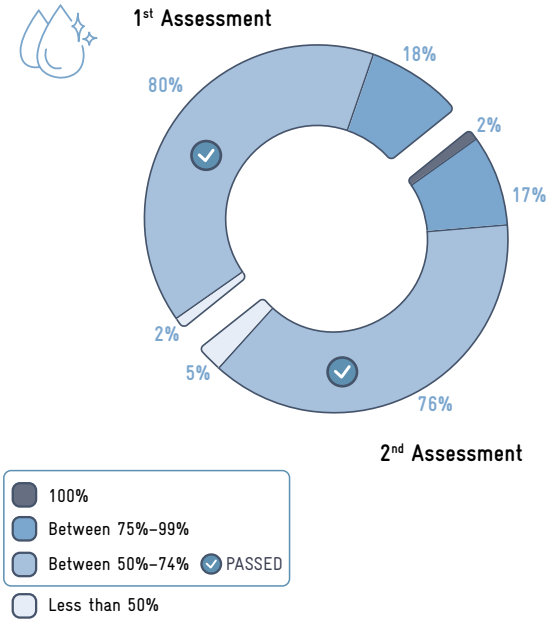
Share of beneficiaries who scored the specified knowledge in nutrition and WASH related questions.

NUTRITION KNOWLEDGE



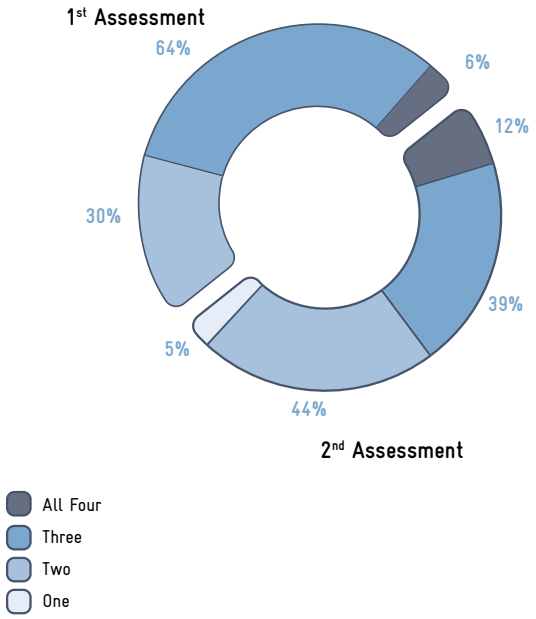
Share of beneficiaries and the respective knowledge levels they scored in nutrition related questions.

WASH KNOWLEDGE



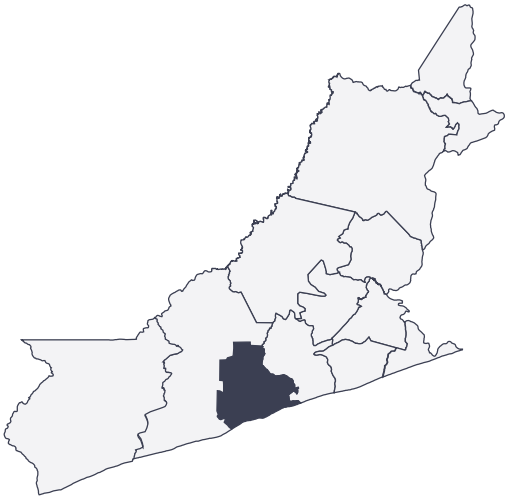
Share of beneficiaries and the respective knowledge levels they scored in WASH related questions.

WASH MILESTONES



Share of assessed beneficiaries who had either one to four out of the following WASH milestones:
TIPPY TAP, PIT LATRINE, DISH RACK, REFUSE PIT

Sinda



Eastern Province

During the first assessment in Sinda, a total of 44 beneficiaries participated, while 42 took part in the second assessment.

Regarding the overall knowledge results in the first assessment, none of the beneficiaries scored below 50%. 18% had knowledge levels between 50% and 74%, 75 % of the beneficiaries scored between 75% and 99%, and 7% knew all the correct answers. In the second knowledge assessment,

all beneficiaries also met the criteria to graduate, with 74% scoring between 75% and 99% and an outstanding 26% were able to answer all questions correctly.

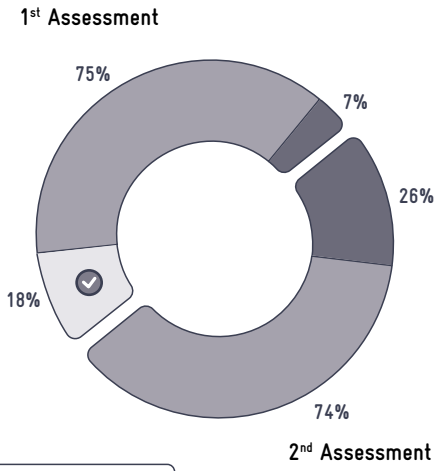
When analysing the knowledge results by intervention area, it showed that in Sinda, knowledge levels on WASH were generally low, compared to knowledge on nutrition. In the first WASH knowledge assessment, 7% of the total beneficiaries scored below 50%, while everyone scored above 50% in nutrition. The number of beneficiaries scoring over 75% in the first assessment was significantly higher for nutrition than for WASH. In the second assessment, the results for nutrition and WASH converged, although the results for nutrition were still visibly better.

Nevertheless, the results for nutrition as well as for WASH showed an impressive increase in knowledge between the first and the second assessment.

The first assessment of WASH milestones revealed that 68% of participants had all four promoted facilities, while 16% had three and another 16% had two. None of the beneficiaries had just one or lacked a WASH facility entirely. During the first survey, 75% of the beneficiaries had access to the two mandatory WASH sites, while the figure for the second survey was higher, at 91%. The results of the second assessment were even better, **with 91% of beneficiaries having all four WASH facilities available in their households, 7% having three, and 2% two facilities**.

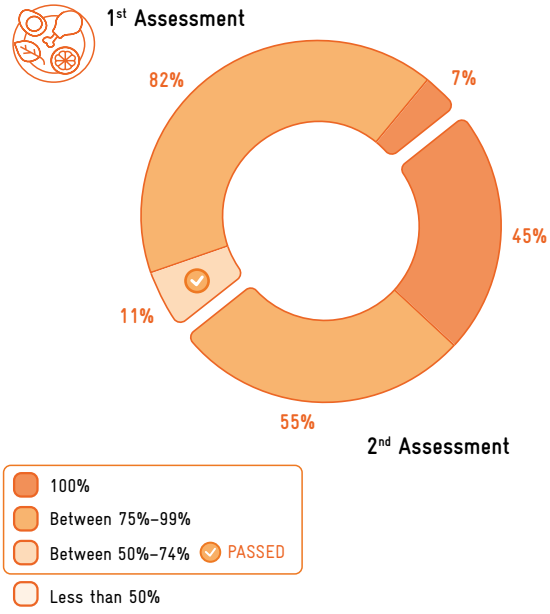
FIGURE 30: Outcomes Sinda

OVERALL KNOWLEDGE



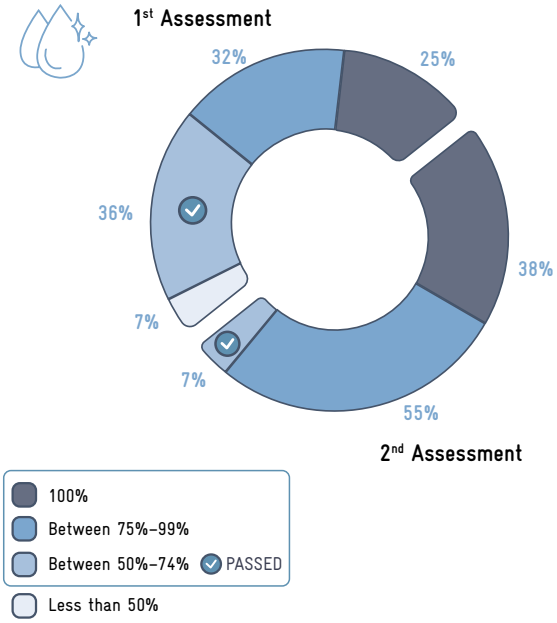
Share of beneficiaries who scored the specified knowledge in nutrition and WASH related questions.

NUTRITION KNOWLEDGE



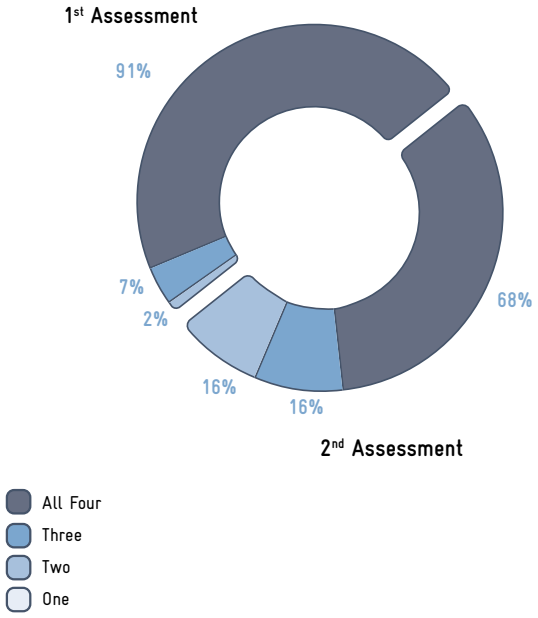
Share of beneficiaries and the respective knowledge levels they scored in nutrition related questions.

WASH KNOWLEDGE



Share of beneficiaries and the respective knowledge levels they scored in WASH related questions.

WASH MILESTONES



Share of assessed beneficiaries who had either one to four out of the following WASH milestones:
TIPPY TAP, PIT LATRINE, DISH RACK, REFUSE PIT

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SECOND PILOT

The second pilot revealed several important points. Firstly, nutrition volunteers need practical orientation on the checklist and the assessment, as some appeared a bit unsure and somewhat hesitant while conducting the assessment. This issue was addressed through role plays and practising with the volunteers to familiarise them with the questionnaire.

It is crucial to start the assessment on a positive note, as it should be perceived as a positive experience for both nutrition volunteers and beneficiaries.

Some nutrition volunteers felt uncomfortable pointing out wrong answers and need to be encouraged to correct the beneficiaries in a positive way and use this as a learning opportunity.

During the first assessment round, it was found that a number of latrines and hand washing stations did not meet the required standards, such as having soap and water, even though these were recorded as present. To ensure compliance, follow-ups should be made with all beneficiaries. This issue was also addressed with the volunteers before the second assessment round. Furthermore, the communal feedback to beneficiaries and intermediaries on the results of the assessment is crucial, and was a positive experience for the community. Providing feedback in the presence of traditional leaders is motivational for the communities. It offers a great opportunity to highlight areas of strength, encourage continued and sustained success, and identify areas that need improvement.

Nevertheless, although the sample size for this assessment was relatively small, it was an involving and time-consuming process. The intermediaries had to be trained in methodologies such as the checklist and its administration, and supervision by CRS staff was also required at the beginning of the assessment. The paper-based assessment approach is quite time and staff intensive, as the checklist has to be printed, communities and staff need to be introduced to the procedure, assessments have to be supervised, data has to be digitised and analysed, and feedback has to be shared. An additional challenge was that data collection took place during the rainy season, making it difficult for intermediaries to meet daily targets within the specified time frame, as the rains disrupted the process. In some instances, beneficiaries were not at home, forcing enumerators to wait for them to return from nearby fields. This led to more time being spent on meeting the daily target of surveying a minimum of two households.

In addition, a solution needs to be found to improve the WASH situation, which generally stands out as a weak spot, and to encourage volunteers, beneficiaries and communities to maintain the WASH facilities.

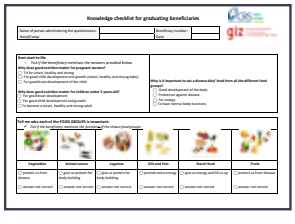
Follow-ups with the nutrition volunteers and beneficiaries are very time-consuming. Therefore, engagement with the Ministry of Health is needed to find ways to make the process more sustainable without missing out on core elements, and for the ministry to adopt the graduation strategy. It is also important to find a way to motivate the volunteers to take up new beneficiaries after the previous beneficiaries graduate.

Overall, the pilots demonstrated that the graduation strategy completes the Care Group Approach and creates a good framework for making it more efficient and sustainable.

The pilot assessment was successfully completed, with all planned activities carried out as scheduled. The assessment was smoothly conducted by intermediaries who exhibited high knowledge levels and enthusiasm, and were in absolute control of the activity. The encouraging results provide a strong indication of the project's positive impact on the communities. Moving forward, efforts should focus on ensuring that households acquire the WASH facilities that were commonly missing, such as standard tippy taps with water and soap, as well as functional toilets.

In addition, the second pilot in Sinda and Mwansabombwe showed better results than the first in Petauke, where the project had been running for a long time and conducting a knowledge assessment was not communicated from the beginning. It stands to reason that the motivation and thus also the knowledge level of the beneficiaries will increase if it is announced at the beginning of the implementation that a review of the knowledge gained will take place after a certain period of time.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & MATERIAL


Knowledge checklist for graduating beneficiaries

GRADUATION CHECKLIST

2022 (6 pages)
English
Developed by: GIZ FANSER

Empowering women for better nutrition:
The Gender Transformative Approch in FANSER

Dr. Annette Roth
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Eastern Province

Gladys Kabaghe
Advisor for Food Security
and Nutrition,
Eastern Province

SUMMARY

This document delves into the critical intersection of nutrition and gender in Zambia, highlighting how transforming gender dynamics can have a direct, positive impact on nutrition outcomes, particularly for children under five. As you read, you'll discover how the FANSER project has tackled the pressing issue of stunting, which affects 32% of Zambian children, and why women's empowerment is key to improving nutrition at household level. The project's approach is hands-on, targeting the most critical areas of influence: decision-making, access to resources and shared household responsibilities.

Gender norms and power imbalances in decision-making often hinder progress in rural households. However, through targeted yet culturally sensitive interventions, such as empowering women with the knowledge and skills to influence decisions on nutrition and resource management, the FANSER project proved that change is possible. By the end of this document, you'll understand how small, community-driven shifts can lead to long-term improvements in both nutrition and gender equality.

Whether you're involved in development, policy, or simply interested in the dynamics of social change, this document will provide valuable takeaways. It outlines not just the results, but the underlying approach that can help catalyse real transformation in communities. Explore how shifting gender roles can unlock better health and nutrition outcomes.

PROJECT PARTICIPANT ADOPTING VILLAGE CHICKEN PRODUCTION AS A BUSINESS, PETAUKE DISTRICT

PROJECT PARTICIPANT PREPARING NUTRITIOUS FOOD FOR HER CHILD, KATETE DISTRICT

WOMEN AND MEN WORKING IN THE FIELD

CONTEXT

Malnutrition is a major issue for children under five in Zambia. According to the 2024 Demographic Health Survey, 32% of Zambian children are stunted. The FANSER project supported the Zambian government in its efforts to reduce stunting among children under the age of two. The first 1,000 most critical days, from conception to a child's second birthday, are crucial to preventing chronic malnutrition, which impairs physical and cognitive development and impacts national progress. Addressing malnutrition requires a diverse diet, proper feeding practices, access to clean water, good hygiene and sanitation, and nutritious foods for the whole family. Availability of nutritious foods, investment in food production, and investment in hygiene and sanitation infrastructure are all crucial to achieving good nutrition and good hygiene and sanitation practices in rural households.

In rural Zambia, women have limited influence when it comes to agricultural and nutrition-related decisions. The 2023 Zambian National Gender Policy highlights that women in male-headed households have minimal say in land use and use of income from farming. This lack of power extends to decisions about health and other issues, including the production of crops typically managed by women, like groundnuts and vegetables. Women are often restricted to decisions about food crops, while men decide on cash crops.[33] The level of women's involvement varies by decision type and crop, including input purchases and labour division.

[33] Food crops are grown primarily for consumption by the farmer or local community, while cash crops are cultivated specifically for sale in the market to generate income.

The 2019 gender baseline survey conducted by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in Eastern Province showed that:

DOMINATION OF MEN

Men were more likely to have decision-making powers and control over resources in households, this includes:

- Household income
- Food purchases
- Ownership of land
- Farm equipment
- Livestock
- Earned income from sales of crops
- Participation in Savings and Internal Lending Committees (SILC)

Men dominated in most of the decision-making that impacted the nutrition outcomes of their families. Generally, the rate of joint decision-making among couples in almost all critical areas under consideration was low.

Equally low was male participation in childcare activities.

The project initially focused mainly on women of reproductive age, providing monthly lessons on good nutrition, child feeding, hygiene, crop production, and post-harvest management. Interventions included **Farmer Business School** ↗ training and Savings and Loan Groups (SILC), to enhance their resource management and nutrition. However, women's ability to implement these practices depends on how much say they have over household decisions, particularly those affecting nutrition. Decisions especially relevant to nutrition are the following:

- Who consumes which food in the household.
- Purchase and/or establishment of handwashing facilities, toilets, soap, having an appropriate container for water storage.
- Allocation of women's and household members' time for cooking adequate foods for children, breastfeeding, farming activities, etc.
- Land allocation e.g. for production of nutritious foods for home consumption (considering soil fertility, size, etc.).
- Labour allocation for production of nutritious foods.

- What is sold, and which crops are kept for consumption.
- Investment in proper food storage facilities and methods of food processing.
- Use of resources for investments in agriculture and livestock production and purchasing of nutritious food.
- Purpose and investment of savings and loans.
- Health care support for children and pregnant mothers.

STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Improving nutrition of women and children is highly dependent on the level of women's empowerment and decision-making power over income, time, land ownership as well as active support from men/husbands and their communities. Therefore, FANSER regards gender as an important component in the implementation of the project, not merely a crosscutting topic.

Without the support from husbands or other men in the community as a whole, and without joint decision-making and shared responsibilities in households, women are constrained when trying to improve their own and their children's nutrition in their families. The barriers and enablers to joint decision-making and support for better nutrition need to be addressed and are key in designing an effective and innovative Gender Transformative Approach (GTA) (see box on the right side). Therefore, the project supports households to develop and implement a family vision for better nutrition.

FANSER's goal is to empower women to improve their control over resources at household level and increase their decision-making power, especially related to nutrition. This includes:

+ Improving women's and men's self-efficacy
+ Improving joint decision making at household level
+ Enhancing shared roles and responsibilities at household level for better nutrition

GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH (GTA)

Support transforming unequal gender relations to promote shared power, control over resources, decision-making, and support for women's empowerment.
In transformative approaches, root causes of gender inequalities are assessed, addressed, and activities are implemented to transform harmful gender roles, norms, and relationships.

GENDER-SENSITIVE

Gender-sensitive approaches recognise and acknowledge the different needs, roles, and power dynamics of various genders. They aim to raise awareness of gender inequalities and promote respect for all genders without necessarily challenging the underlying structures that perpetuate these inequalities.

SELF-EFFICACY

Self-efficacy refers to "a person's belief that he/she is capable of learning something or performing a certain task." The need to measure self-efficacy was informed by the belief that "the conviction regarding one's own abilities determines how people feel, think, motivate themselves and also act in a concrete situation". It therefore influences perception and performance in a wide variety of ways. Self-efficacy was measured by identifying the kind of activities and processes in which project participants were involved, how those activities and processes influenced their way of life, what things they felt more confident to do as a result of their participation in FANSER and how their confidence in being able to do certain things may have influenced their behaviour.

Family of project participants, Katete District

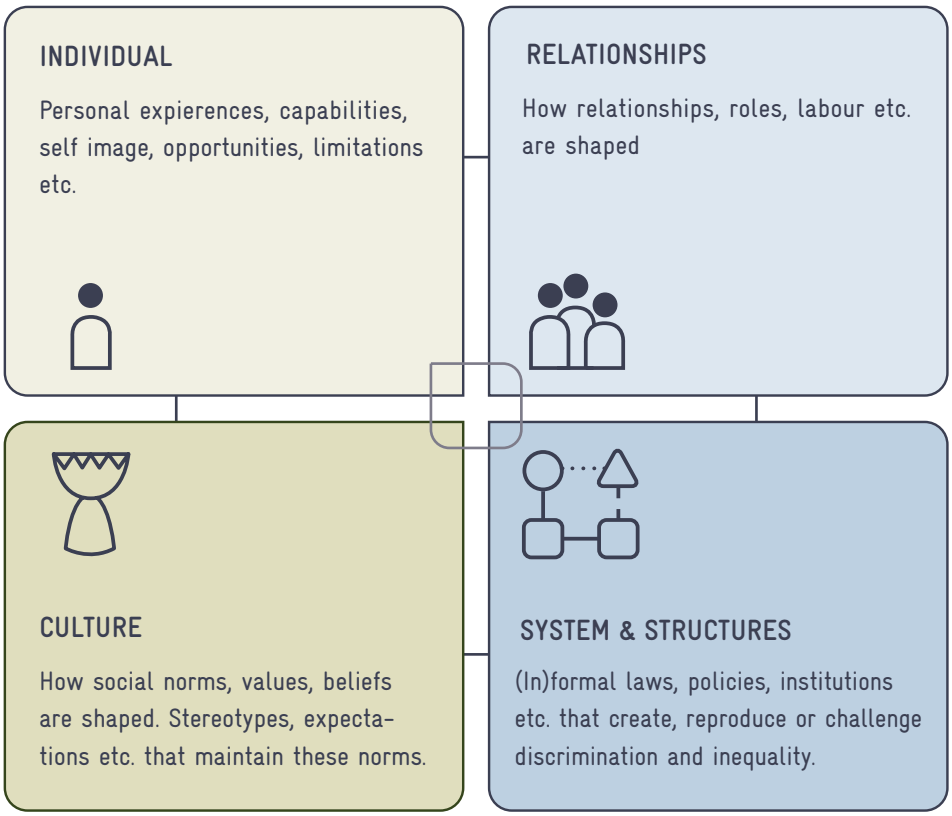
KNOWLEDGE MAP

The project used the **quadrant of change** as a conceptual framework for designing adequate interventions to address the four dimensions for transformative change. The quadrant of change to transform gender relations is a holistic model in which gender is approached from four angles:

+ the individual
+ relationships
+ culture, and
+ systems and structures

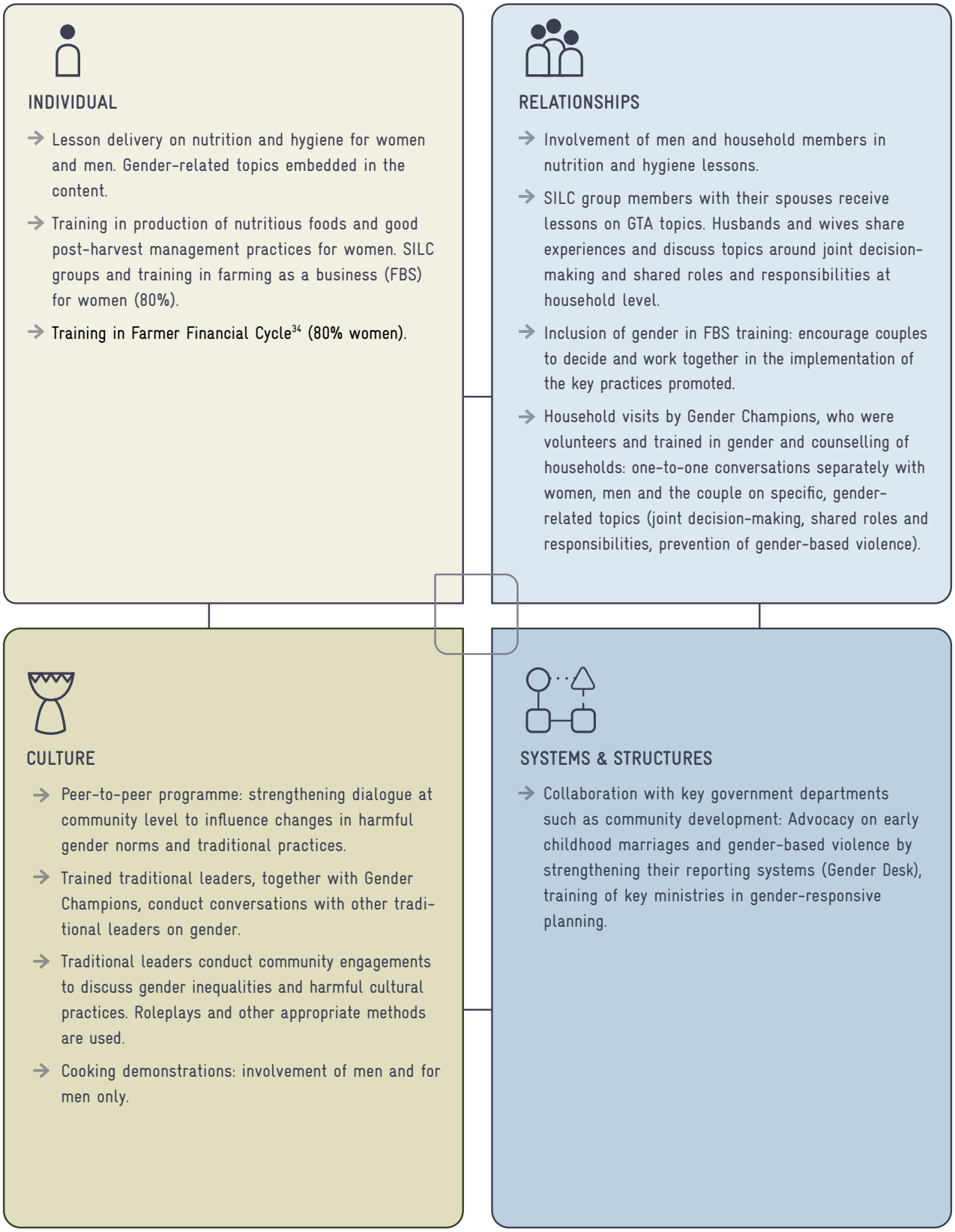
This model helped to design a gender transformative approach, addressing the four quadrants of change as a contribution to improved gender equality for the project's effectiveness.

FIGURE 31: The theory – the quadrant of change in the gender transformative approach



In figure 32, all FANSER gender activities are listed, using the quadrant of change as a conceptual framework.

FIGURE 32: In practice – activities implemented by FANSER under gender transformative activities in the auadrant of change



[34] The Farmer Financial Cycle training, provided by GIZ under the AgFin project, is designed to empower smallholder farmers by improving their financial literacy and management skills. This training covers savings, loans, investments, agricultural insurance, and personal financial management. Additionally, the FFC training emphasises building relationships between farmers and financial institutions, helping them access formal financial services more easily.

STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Employed Gender Animators planned, supervised, supported and monitored the activities under the Gender Transformative Approach. They trained intermediaries and change agents.

- **Nutrition Volunteers, Health and WASH Promotors** ↗ received a one-day training on gender-sensitive topics.
- Private Service Providers (PSPs), who have been managing the SILC groups, received a five-day Training of Trainers, which enabled them to deliver the 12 modules of the GTA+SILC training to members of the SILC groups and their spouses. For the training of the PSP and SILC members, the **SILC+GTA Facilitation Manual** ↗ was developed. It includes in-depth instructions on the preparation and the methodologies for the delivery.
- Gender Champions were selected from the communities by community members. They received an in-depth five-day training on gender and how it is related to the different project areas of intervention.
- Traditional leaders received a three-day training on gender (simplified, based on the SILC+GTA modules).

Although the project implemented interventions to improve gender equality related to all four quadrants of change, the focus, in terms of intensity and resource allocation, was on the individual and relationship levels.

RESULTS AND IMPACT

The FANSER project had no special success indicators to measure the above outlined objectives through the routine monitoring and evaluation system.

Therefore, a gender impact study was conducted in Eastern Province at the end of 2023 to measure the intended change and effectiveness of the different interventions, with the focus on (1) self-efficacy of women and men, (2) decision-making at household level and (3) men's support in household and child caring chores. Key informant interviews and focus group discussions (FGD)[35] were used in the research. Results from the gender analysis related to the 2019 indicators above were used as a baseline. Although the project supported interventions in all four dimensions in the quadrant of change, changes were measured at the individual level and at relationship levels between women and men in the household.

[35] Focus group discussions are a qualitative research method used to gather insights and opinions from a small, demographically defined group of participants. Typically consisting of 6 to 10 individuals, these discussions are moderated to facilitate interaction and dialogue around a specific topic or set of questions.

The results of the study show that by using a transformative approach, FANSER has contributed to positive change with regard to gender equality in the households of project participants.

1 **Increase in knowledge on gender topics among intermediaries and project participants:** On average 80% of the project participants (men and women) were able to differentiate between gender topics and demonstrated the right understanding. Overall, a high level of knowledge about gender was observed, with the highest (97%) displaying knowledge about physical violence.

> Gender is about helping each other among women and male. What the other is failing to do at that time the other can take it up to do it.
>
> Male project participant, Katete

> Some of us never knew what gender equality was all about so when my wife started going for FANSER lessons she started saying we make a garden, and we would go together to water. I never knew that we would start gardening so that we can have vegetables we want.
>
> Male project participant, Petauke

2 **There were notable improvements in self-efficacy among project participants, men and women.** Women expressed increased self-efficacy mostly around tasks which they initially believed to be for men only. However, because of women's participation in training and sensitisation activities, they started to perform these tasks as well. Examples are:

+ taking care of chicken production for business
+ being able to sell certain farm products
+ doing gardening
+ budgeting and managing funds on their own, making money and helping their families.

Similarly, men expressed increased self-efficacy, as they are now capable of performing tasks they formerly considered as exclusively for women. Men reported that they were able and more confident to make porridge, bath children and cultivate sweet potatoes, to name a few.

> We are able to remain home with children because we have been taught about the foods that we need to give them.
>
> FDG male project participant, Sinda

3 **Increase in male involvement in household chores and childcare:** 90% of the women reported that men are involved in household chores and/or childcare to some extent. E.g., the support of men for taking a child to a health facility has increased from 26% in 2019 to 52% in 2023; 37% of men provide support for child feeding (27% in 2019); and 32% help with collecting water (17% in 2019).

> In the past, when women were around we were not allowed to cook. But now, even if they are around, I do cut vegetables, light a brazier and cook food for all of us to eat just because of love.
>
> FDG with men, Petauke

> You would find that when I am busy, he would get the bucket of water to go and fetch some water, and also when I am not well, he will get the pot and cook.
>
> Female project participant, Sinda

Nonetheless, even though men's involvement in household chores and childcare activities has increased, there are certain tasks, like changing babies' napkins, where both men and women are not comfortable with men performing them. Barriers seem to be very high.

> "There are jobs that men can do and women can do but there are some that are just like that and are a little shameful … we can just come in to say; please do not do this and those jobs … like when I have a child, and I take off the nappies and then give them to a man to wash, that cannot be done by a man. I would just ask him to find the money so that I can wash those nappies.
>
> Female nutrition volunteer, Petauke

> "There are issues of culture and tradition which other people may not like, such as men doing women's work; washing plates, washing the children and changing napkins. About two weeks ago, there was even a misunderstanding between a couple over the issue of changing napkins. The man was uncomfortable to change napkins, but the wife felt that he should do it. The case was reported to the headperson and the couple is yet to be summoned by the headperson for conflict resolution.
>
> Male PSP, Katete

4 **Change of mindset and practicing joint decision making:** 75% of female project participants and 85% of male study participants expressed a positive attitude to women's participation in decision-making. 63% of the women reported that they were now involved in decisions on how to spend income, compared to 11% in 2019.

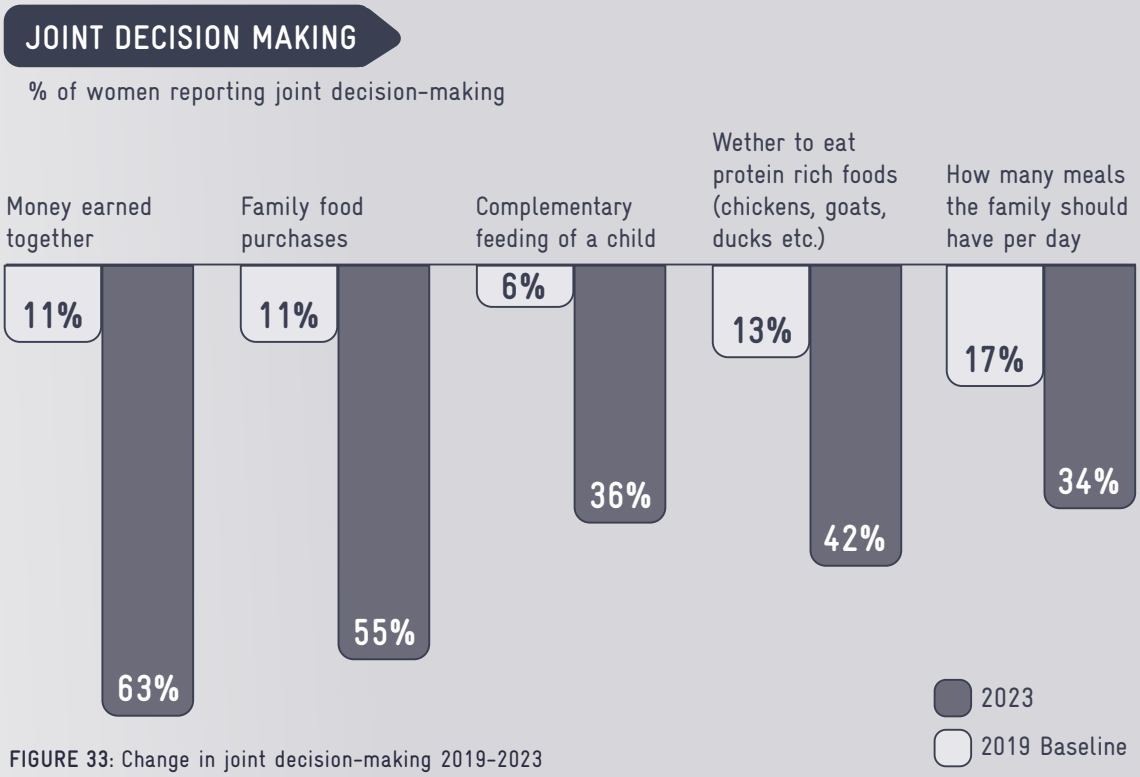


FIGURE 33: Change in joint decision-making 2019-2023

> I have seen the change where men and women are able to make a budget together at home when they harvest their produce. We are able to sit and there is change.
>
> IDI female project participant, Petauke

> When we have acquired something, I should not have authority that it is mine alone and I should not be making decisions alone.
>
> IDI male headperson, Petauke

> Men should not feel powerless because of making the decisions together; no, because you have to work together on what you have to buy and you will not have misunderstandings.
>
> FGD female, Sinda

5 **Gaps persist between the perceptions of men and women on desirable practices and actual practices in decision-making.** Both women and men agree that men still hold more authority as household heads, and that women are their deputies. Therefore, even when women are expected to make decisions, they still have to consult their husbands.

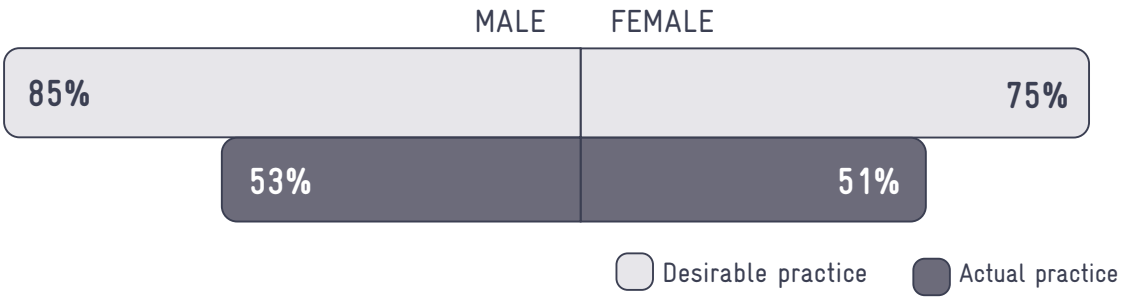


FIGURE 34: Percentage of desirable and actual practice in joint decision-making by women and men

[36] The differing figures indicate that women and men perceive the circumstances differently.

Joint ownership (by women and men) of assets and/or productive resources has increased from 2019 to 2023. E.g., in 2023, 45% of women and 36% of men confirmed that they jointly own large livestock,[36] while 41% of men confirmed that they were the sole owners. Small livestock were jointly owned by 50% of the respondents. Overall, single ownership by either men or women has decreased. Joint land ownership was confirmed by 20% of women and men; nevertheless, more than half the land is owned by men only. Generally, women's control over resources increased the older they were.

In the main, the project interventions contributed to teamwork and togetherness in families:

- **Interventions to promote gender equality resulted in increased feelings of togetherness and teamwork in families**; this brought unity and made it easier for women and men to jointly find solutions. Women and men started to appreciate the value of working together and making joint decisions. This reduced misunderstandings between spouses, increased happiness, promoted peace and generally led to a better life.

- Gender interventions contributed to making couples feel more respectful of each other and making women feel less oppressed.

- Most men displayed a positive attitude to women's empowerment. In the FGDs there was a strong feeling among men that empowerment was good for women themselves and for their families.

Effectiveness of the different gender interventions:

- Although gender activities under the project only started in 2019, the project contributed positively to gender knowledge, attitudes and practices in households in Eastern Province.

- Overall, the gender-sensitive nutrition and WASH lessons delivered through the Care Group Model, which reached the widest audience with the greatest intensity, combined with SILC and GTA training for SILC members, emerged as the two interventions with the most significant positive impact on the study's indicators. Project participants received gender-sensitive nutrition and WASH lessons monthly over a period of at least 1,5 years. The lessons were designed in a way to raise awareness and understanding of gender issues, and to promote working together.

- Interventions with traditional community leaders were not implemented with the needed coverage. No effect on gender equality could be measured.

LESSONS LEART AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Start early:** Gender transformative objectives and indicators for both intermediaries and beneficiaries should be included from the beginning of the project, with adequate resource allocation.

2. **Use appropriate frameworks for the effective design of GTA interventions:** The GTA interventions of the project focused mainly on individuals and relationships at household level. Effective GTA interventions should also address community and systemic issues in an effective manner.

3. **Address relevant change agents from the beginning:** Men and traditional leaders are powerful change agents for gender equality. A GTA approach to nutrition projects should specifically address and include these change agents. Adequate coverage of the interventions is also important.

4. **Capacity building of intermediaries is key:** Intermediaries who play a key role in gender training and messaging need to undergo intensive training and refreshers.

5. **Appropriate IEC materials are important:** Projects should prioritise the development, design and provision of adequate gender materials for successful implementation. Language is crucial here. All materials should be available in the local language. Gender Champions and Private Service Providers did not receive IEC material for their training and counselling activities.

6. **Inclusiveness is important:** When developing gender approaches, take intersectionality[37] and related requirements into account. Develop approaches according to the requirements and needs of different age groups and gender.

7. **Design processes and address systems:** Single once-off interventions might not be as effective as intended. For example, the training on gender-responsive planning for ministries should have been accompanied with supportive interventions during the planning and implementation cycle to support participants' implementation of the intended learnings.

[37] Intersectionality is a framework for understanding how various social identities—such as race, gender, class, and sexuality—interact and overlap to create unique experiences of discrimination or privilege. It highlights that these identities do not exist independently but are interconnected, influencing how individuals experience inequality or oppression.

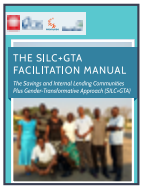
MALE PROJECT PARTICIPANT LEADING A COOKING DEMONSTRATION

NUTRITION VOLUNTEER GIVING A LESSON TO PROJECT PARTICIPANT ON COMPLEMENTARY FEEDING

CONCLUSION

The FANSER project, which promoted gender equality to enhance nutrition, made notable progress in fostering positive changes relating to gender knowledge, attitudes and practices among its participants. Key factors contributing to this success included the thoughtful design of interventions, their extensive coverage, and the intensity and duration of these efforts.
However, to maximise the potential for further transformative change in rural communities with regard to gender equality and nutrition, it is essential to incorporate gender transformative objectives and indicators in the project design. Additionally, ensuring adequate resource allocation, and engaging relevant change agents such as men and traditional leaders from the outset, can significantly enhance the impact of the project.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & MATERIAL



SILC&GTA FACILITATION MANUAL

2024 (68 pages)
English
Developed by: GIZ

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

EVELES MWANZA

08:26 min
Katete,
Eastern Province

Hear Eveles Mwanza share her journey of learning the importance of good sanitation and adequate diets as well as growing diverse crops for balanced nutrition through FANSER trainings and how it has led to improvements in her children's health.

BRIDGET AND LIGHTONE SHAWA

07:32 min
Katete,
Eastern Province

Bridget and Lightone Shawa are parents to three children. Listen to them share their journey of learning about the importance of balanced nutrition through FANSER lessons and how it has transformed their children's health.

Utilizing FANSER's food and nutrition security data for strategic development and resilience

Grace Tembo
Advisor for Monitoring and Evaluation, Luapula Province

SUMMARY

The following pages provide an in-depth overview of the datasets collected through the FANSER project, gathered over the course of ten years through carefully planned surveys and assessments. The dataset is a valuable tool that can be used beyond the project's conclusion to promote future work in the field of food security in Zambia and beyond. Collected throughout the project's duration – from the baseline survey in 2015 to the most recent assessments between 2022 and 2024 – it offers not only a detailed insight into the impact of project interventions on household food security, but also into the knowledge and behaviour changes of target groups, particularly in relation to hygiene, nutrition, and agriculture.

The methodology behind the surveys is based on internationally recognised procedures, allowing for the comparison of results with other projects and regions. Reliable sampling methods were used for each survey, which are crucial for providing robust and validated data. These datasets have the potential to not only support the evaluation of the project but also to serve as a valuable foundation for policymakers, political actors, academic institutions, and development organisations.

This document outlines how this data can be utilised in the future to analyse progress in food security, enhance programme efficiency, and make evidence-based decisions. It also highlights how various stakeholders can benefit from these findings, ranging from setting realistic goals to developing targeted policy measures and supporting further research initiatives.

BACKGROUND

The Global Programme 'Food and Nutrition Security, Enhanced Resilience' is a GIZ initiative implemented in 11 countries, including Zambia, to improve dietary diversity and nutrition practices. Key indicators include the individual dietary diversity score (IDDS) for women of childbearing age (15-49 years), the minimum acceptable diet (MAD) for children aged 6-23 months, and the adoption of 15 basic hygiene practices. The project had an overall target of 110,000 women of reproductive age, 64,000 children under two years and 33,000 men. Nutrition baseline surveys (NBS) and Follow Up Surveys (FUS) have been conducted to track progress across participating countries, including Zambia.

Under SUN/MCDP II, the FANSER project contributed to the Common Results Framework for Monitoring and Evaluation by aligning with standardised practices. These included using the survey methodology jointly developed by the National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC) and Scaling Up Nutrition – Learning and Evaluation (SUN LE); adopting common indicators to track progress, utilising shared reporting formats, conducting data quality audits, and participating in joint annual reviews of programme implementation. While SUN LE conducted baseline surveys across 30 priority districts in June/July 2018, the four GIZ-supported FANSER districts – Kawambwa, Mwansabombwe, Mwense, and Sinda – were not included. To address this gap, GIZ ensured a comparable evidence base was established in these districts by collecting harmonised data alongside the SUN LE midline survey in 2022. Furthermore, a joint endline survey will be conducted in 2025 with MCDP II cooperating partners, to assess not only the impact of project interventions, but to guide future implementation, particularly in light of the ongoing drought situation.

This Knowledge Product outlines the potential utilisation of these datasets for various stakeholders to enhance food and nutrition security initiatives in Zambia. Donors and development projects can leverage the data to establish baselines, facilitating realistic target setting and progress monitoring. Ministries and governmental institutions, such as the Zambian National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC), Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS) can use the data for evidence-based decision-making, policy formulation, and training programme development. Academic and research institutions, such as the University of Zambia and the Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute, can utilise the data for longitudinal studies, impact assessments and comparative research, thereby contributing to more effective interventions in the field of food and nutrition security.

OBJECTIVES OF THE DATA

Since its inception in 2015, the FANSER project has conducted numerous surveys to monitor progress, plan activities, guide decision-making and steer project initiatives. These surveys include biennial outcome assessment surveys, annual output assessments, and various topical assessments focusing on areas such as social behavioural change and gender dynamics. As a result, the project has amassed a substantial amount of data over its implementation period. This vast amount of data generated holds immense potential to extend its value beyond the lifespan of the FANSER project.

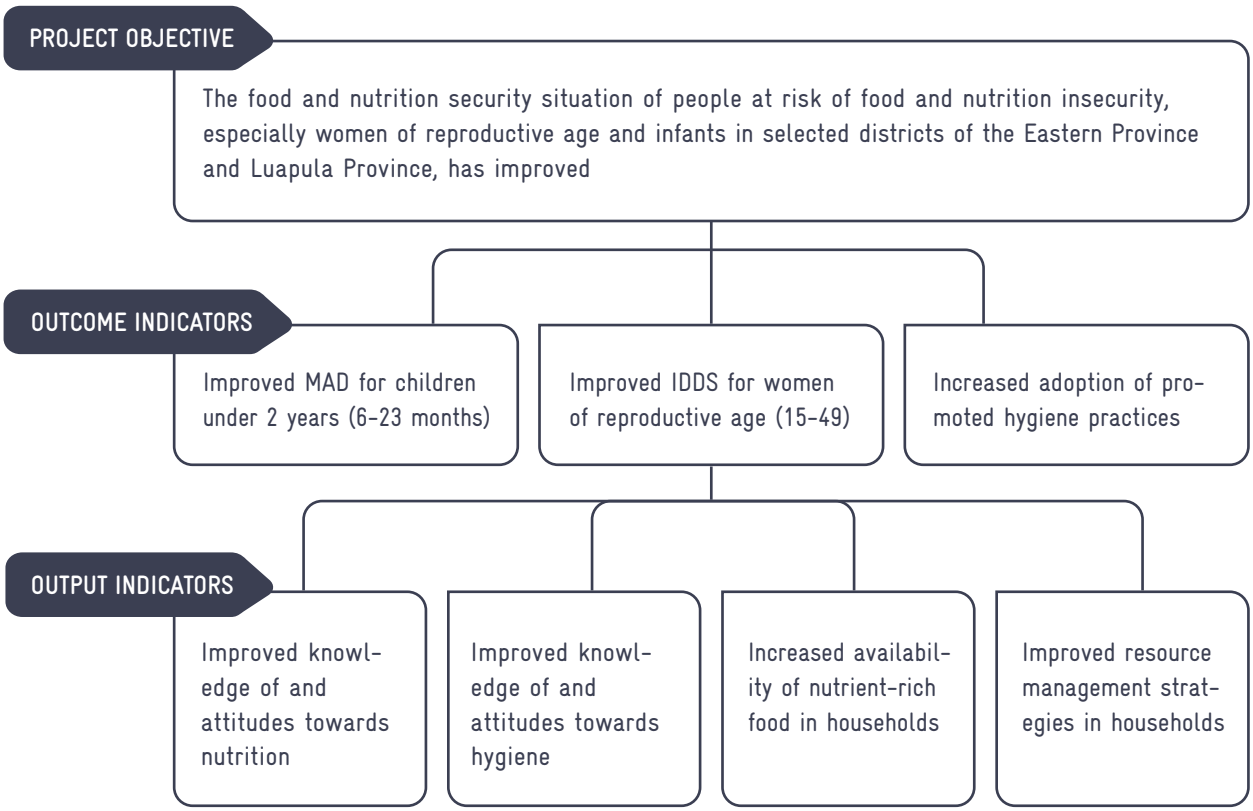
Against this background, the project intends to make the data available to diverse stakeholders. This could increase the project's impact, contributing to lasting improvements in Zambia's food and nutrition security landscape. The goal is to ensure that these datasets continue to provide valuable insights, support decision-making processes and contribute to ongoing efforts to enhance food and nutrition security and resilience. This document aims to:

1. Identify potential stakeholders who can use and benefit from the datasets
2. Highlight potential usage of the datasets
3. Outline the methodology/sampling techniques used to collect the data to validate the reliability of the datasets

WHAT WE HAVE

The data collected for the FANSER project includes a variety of raw datasets derived from comprehensive surveys conducted throughout the project's duration. These datasets contain information on various indicators, divided into outcome- and output-level indicators.

FIGURE 35: Overview of the FANSER project indicators



[38]
Outcome indicators measure intermediate changes as a result of the project or programme activities. Monitoring the outcomes tells us if activities are bringing about the intended intermediate changes (menu of outcome indicators, 2008)

Outcome-level indicators[38]

The data collected during the Follow Up Surveys is used to test the general global **hypothesis**:

Participation in GIZ interventions contributes to better food and nutrition security and diet diversity (HFIES, IDDS, MDD and MAD), compared over time and against control groups.

Outcome assessment surveys: Conducted biennially (every 2 years), these surveys provide in-depth data on key outcome indicators related to the project:

- **Increased knowledge and adoption of promoted hygiene practices:** Data on the promotion of four key hygiene practices: hand washing (knowledge), water treatment (knowledge and practice), preventive measures for food poisoning (knowledge), and the use of good sanitation facilities (practice). The project assesses whether the women are implementing at least three of the four promoted practices.

- **Individual dietary diversity for women (IDDS-W):** Information on the variety of food groups consumed by women, reflecting nutritional adequacy and diversity in their diets. The IDDS-W is calculated using a 24-hour dietary recall, grouping foods consumed into ten predefined food groups. Each group consumed is scored as 1, and the scores are added to arrive at a total between 0 and 10. A higher score indicates greater dietary diversity, with a score of 5 or more suggesting adequate micronutrient intake. The project aimed to increase the consumption of at least one food group from its baseline to the endline.

- **Minimum acceptable diet (MAD) for children aged 6-12 months:** Data on the dietary practices of young children, assessing whether they meet the minimum acceptable dietary standards for their age group. The MAD measures the quality and quantity of feeding in children aged 6–23 months. It combines two criteria: minimum dietary diversity (MDD), requiring a child to consume foods from at least five of eight food groups, and minimum meal frequency (MMF), which specifies the minimum number of meals based on breastfeeding status. Non-breastfed children must also consume at least two milk feeds. A child meets MAD if they fulfil both MDD and MMF criteria.

- **Minimum dietary diversity for women (MDD-W):** Data on MDD-W is a nutrition indicator that measures the dietary diversity of women of reproductive age (15-49 years). It is defined as the proportion of women in this age group who have consumed at least five out of ten defined food groups in the previous 24 hours. This indicator is used to assess whether women are likely meeting their micronutrient needs through their diet, with higher dietary diversity associated with better overall nutritional quality.

- **Household food insecurity experience survey (HFIES):** Data on HFIES is used to measure the prevalence and severity of food insecurity at household level. It assesses experiences of food insecurity by asking households about their access to adequate food over a specific period, typically for the past 12 months. The survey includes questions about uncertainties in food access, reductions in the quality or quantity of food consumed, and experiences of hunger. The responses help to classify households into different levels of food insecurity, ranging from food secure to severely food insecure.

[39] Output indicators measure the immediate results of project or programme activities and tell us if activities are happening as planned. Indicators that measure outputs are called 'output indicators' or 'process indicators' (menu of outcome indicators, 2008)

Output-level Indicators[39]

Output assessment surveys: Conducted annually, these surveys focus on project output indicators, measuring progress against specific targets. The project had four main output indicators for which data was collected, each with multiple specific indicators:

1 **Improved knowledge and attitudes towards nutrition among women supported by the project:** This indicator refers to the positive changes in women's understanding of nutrition principles and their attitudes towards healthy eating as a result of the project's interventions. This improvement is typically measured by assessing women's awareness, beliefs, and practices related to nutrition after the project's implementation. The focus is on the following targets:

85% of the 9,111 intermediaries confirm an increase in their ability to impart knowledge about appropriate nutrition (to women of reproductive age and their husbands or partners).

70% of the 110,000 women aged 15-49 and an additional 33,000 men who were advised by the project confirm an increase in knowledge regarding appropriate nutrition.

2 **Improved knowledge and attitudes towards hygiene among women supported by the project:** This indicator refers to the enhancement of women's understanding and practices related to hygiene, including personal, household, and food hygiene, due to the project's interventions. This improvement is measured by evaluating changes in women's awareness, attitudes, and behaviours towards maintaining hygiene after participating in the project. The focus is on the following targets:

85% of the 8,961 intermediaries confirm an increase in their ability to impart knowledge about hygiene.

70% of the 110,000 women aged 15-49 and an additional 33,000 men who were advised by the project confirm an increase in knowledge regarding propagated hygiene measures.

3 **Increased year-round availability of nutrient-rich foods in food-insecure households:** This indicator refers to the improvement in the consistent access to diverse, nutrient-dense foods throughout the year within households that are prone to food insecurity. This increase is typically a result of interventions aimed at enhancing food production, preservation, storage, and access, ensuring that vulnerable households have a stable supply of nutritious foods regardless of seasonal changes or other external factors. The focus is on the following targets:

85% of the 2,350 intermediaries confirm an increase in their ability to impart knowledge about nutrition-sensitive agriculture.

70% of the 110,000 women and additional men advised by the project confirm an increase in knowledge about vegetable cultivation in home gardens.

35% of the 56,500 households (38,750 in Eastern Province and 17,750 in Luapula) have expanded their production with an additional nutrient-rich food (plant or animal products) supported by the project.

35% of the 56,500 households (38,750 in Eastern Province and 17,750 in Luapula) trained in food preservation and storage are using a new preservation or storage technique promoted by the project.

4 **Development of improved strategies to manage household and productive resources in food-insecure households:** This indicator refers to the creation and implementation of more effective methods for utilising and conserving resources such as food, finances, land, and labour within households facing food insecurity. These strategies aim to enhance the efficiency and sustainability of resource management, thereby improving the household's ability to secure sufficient food and maintain livelihoods over time. The focus is on the following targets:

85% of the 332 facilitators confirm an increase in their ability to impart knowledge about household and productive resource management strategies.

75% of the 38,500 households organised in savings groups have used disbursements and/or loans from savings and internal lending communities (SILC) to develop their productive resources or improve their nutritional situation.

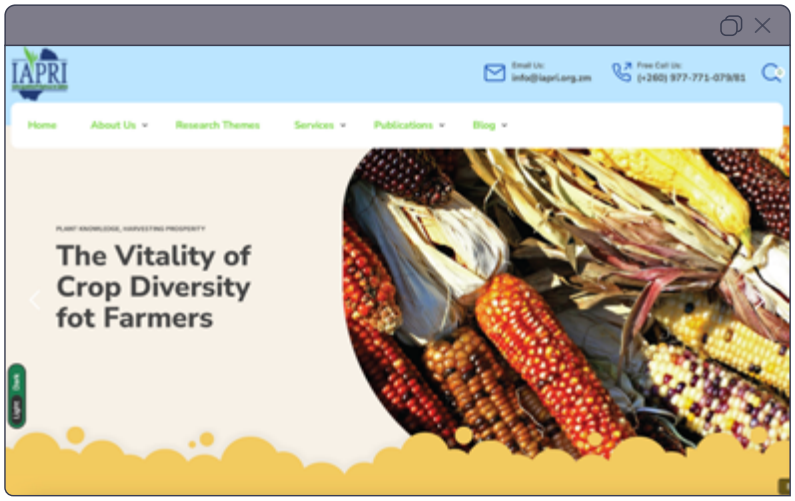
50% of the 16,500 households trained through farmer business schools (FBS) use 30% of the 10 key practices taught for shared decision-making and resource planning in their household.

These datasets, derived from output indicators (which are lower-level indicators) provide detailed insights into the immediate results of the project's interventions on food security, nutrition, hygiene practices, agriculture, and household resource management in the target districts. The project has been using this data for tracking progress, assessing the direct outcomes of specific activities, and making informed adjustments to enhance effectiveness. Externally, these datasets can be utilised to understand the short-term impacts of interventions, support evidence-based decision-making, and design targeted strategies to address food insecurity and improve health outcomes in similar regions.

PROCESS AND PROCEDURES FOR DATA COLLECTION

Outcome indicators – baseline, Follow Up Surveys, and Endline

Since the FANSER project in Zambia was part of a **global GIZ project with initiatives in different African and Asian countries** ↗, the monitoring of the outcome indicators was streamlined and harmonised to allow for consistency and comparability with the initiatives in other countries. To achieve this, international consultants were engaged to conduct these surveys in collaboration with national consultants from the Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute (IAPRI). The specific roles of the two consultants were as follows:



Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute (IAPRI)

KoboToolbox

INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANT

- Development of data collection tools in consultation with the GIZ FANSER project teams in Germany and Zambia.
- Engagement of Zambian consultants.
- Co-training of enumerators together with the local consultant.
- Conducting a data analysis and writing reports.
- Dissemination of research findings.

NATIONAL CONSULTANT

- Submission of protocols to the ethics committee for ethical clearance and obtaining the clearance certificate.
- Engagement of professionals to translate the questionnaire into local languages (Bemba and Nyanja).
- Recruitment of suitable enumerators to collect the data.
- Supervision of data collection process and conducting data quality checks.
- Conducting of data cleaning. Data collection was performed offline using Android mobile phones with Kobo Toolbox,[40] and the data was later synchronised after careful review of the completed questionnaires.

For proper comparability, data collection always took place in the time frame from mid-September to latest end October, which is roughly four months after the harvesting season.

[40] KoboToolbox is an open-source data collection tool designed for use in humanitarian and development settings. It allows users to create, deploy, and manage surveys and forms for collecting data in the field, even without internet connectivity. The tool is widely used for various purposes, including monitoring and evaluation, research, and needs assessments, enabling organisations to efficiently gather qualitative and quantitative data.

Sampling methodology

To ensure robust and reliable data collection, scientific sampling methods were used for both output and outcome assessments. **Outcome assessments sampling:** The sample size for the outcome assessments varied due to project extensions, shifting priorities and budget constraints.

2015 Baseline

400 women of reproductive age

Katete, Petauke

The sample size was calculated using GPower, targeting a 0.5 increase in the number of food groups consumed by women of reproductive age. The sample size was set at 400 households, including a 15% margin for dropouts. The survey focused on Petauke and Katete districts.

2018 Follow Up Survey 1

270 beneficiaries — **270** control

Katete, Petauke

An intervention-control design was used with a total target sample size of 400 beneficiary households (200 beneficiary and 200 control). Adjustments were made due to project changes in Katete, resulting in a sample size of 140 households in this district (70 control and 70 beneficiaries). Petauke retained the original target of 400 households.

2020 Follow Up Survey 2

600 beneficiaries — **600** control

Katete, Petauke, Mwense, Kawambwa — Sinda, Mwansabombwe

The intended sample size was 1,200 households, distributed across six districts (200 per district, including two control districts). GPower estimations ensured 95% statistical power for comparing baseline and endline results. This was a Follow Up Survey for Petauke and Katete with Sinda as a control group in Eastern Province.

2022 Follow Up Survey 3

400 beneficiaries — **400** control

Katete, Petauke, Mwense, Kawambwa — Sinda, Mwansabombwe

2024 Endline[41]

400 beneficiaries — **600** control

Katete, Petauke, Mwense, Kawambwa — Sinda, Mwansabombwe

A sample size of 500 households (200 beneficiaries and 300 control) per intervention area was determined using GPower. A two-stage cluster sampling method was employed, with villages selected proportionally to the number of female beneficiaries, and households within those villages selected randomly.

See further information at the end of the article. ↗

[41] The new districts were used as control and the data was also used as a baseline for a follow-on project (FANSER plus)

Output-level indicators

Output level assessments were conducted annually by the project's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) team, sometimes with support from an external consultant. The FANSER M&E team developed questionnaires tailored to specific indicators. These assessments primarily evaluated beneficiaries' knowledge from lessons and training provided by the project, as well as their practices related to hygiene, vegetable gardening, cultivation of additional nutritious crops, and joint decision-making within households regarding productive resources and farming as a business. Occasionally, questions on aspects of post seed distribution (e.g. if provided seeds were actually planted) were added if the survey was conducted right after the project provided seed support.

Structured interview questionnaires and focus group interview guides were used for data collection. These were administered to both project volunteers (including nutrition volunteers, health promoters, **sanitation promoters** ↗, senior lead farmers, **lead farmers** ↗, **farmer business school facilitators** ↗, **private service providers** ↗) and individual project beneficiaries, specifically women of reproductive age (15-49) and men.

The technical FANSER staff validated the questions to ensure they were understandable and not overly technical. Once finalised, the questionnaires were uploaded onto digital data collection tools such as Kobo Toolbox or CommCare.[42] The M&E team also ensured that they submitted the protocols to the ethics committee at the University of Zambia and the data protection unit at the GIZ headquarters to ensure that the respond data was protected.

[42]
CommCare is a mobile and web-based platform designed for data collection and management in health and social service programmes. It enables users to create customised applications for mobile devices to support community health workers, case managers and field staff in collecting, tracking, and managing data in real time.

The team engaged local enumerators and supervisors to ensure data quality and avoid language barriers. Enumerators were trained and the questionnaires were translated into local languages and piloted. Data collection then commenced, supervised by the M&E team to ensure the integrity of the process. Data collection was conducted annually between August and September to ensure consistency and comparability of results. This timing allowed for the collection of data that reflected seasonal variations and other relevant factors, enabling more accurate assessments and meaningful analysis at the end of each year. By adhering to this schedule, we could track trends over time. On completion of the data collection, the M&E team cleaned the data, conducted analysis, drafted reports and disseminated the findings to stakeholders.

Output-level indicators

The target province and districts for the assessment were purposively selected based on the project implementation area. In each district, the wards were selected using the probability proportion to size of the population. Villages within each ward were randomly sampled using simple random sampling. Households were randomly selected in each sampled village, using the beneficiary register as the sampling frame and based on a 95% confidence level with 5% allowable error, using the Yamane formula for calculating the sample size.

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)2}$$

Where:
n = sample size required
N = number of people in the population
e = allowable error (%)

The sample size varied over the years, based on the number of beneficiaries accumulated on the project, as the project would recruit the beneficiaries on a more regular basis.

PRODUCTS PRODUCED FROM THE SURVEY RESULTS

The project has been utilising the data generated to produce the following key outputs:

- Annual reports submitted to the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
- Reports aligned with GIZ's global standard indicators
- Reports prepared for Zambian government partners
- Survey impact briefs designed to summarise results for diverse audiences

Potential further use of FANSER data by other stakeholders

The datasets collected through the FANSER project can be highly beneficial for various stakeholders, enhancing their ability to make informed decisions, develop new projects and contribute to improved approaches to food and nutrition security. Here are some key stakeholders and ideas how they could utilise the data:

1. NEW DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Building on evidence-based good practices: Other GIZ projects, but also donors and other implementing agencies, can benefit from these datasets, as they highlight good practices and lessons learned. The dataset includes detailed information on successful interventions in nutrition-sensitive agriculture, WASH, nutrition, gender and joint decision-making, as well as the utilisation of funds from share-outs and loans from savings and internal lending communities for productive resources. These insights can be applied to design and implement similar initiatives in other regions or projects. Secondly, projects can use the data to benchmark their progress and outcomes against those achieved by the FANSER project, thus helping to identify areas for improvement and successful approaches worth replicating.

2. MINISTRIES AND GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

The National Food and Nutrition Commission, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture as well as the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services could make particular good use of the data. Areas of particular interest are listed below:

- **Evidence-based decision-making:** The detailed data on nutrition, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), nutrition-sensitive agriculture and utilisation of funds in households (e.g. for productive resources or for nutritious foods), as well as joint decision-making in a household, can enable ministries and government institutions to design and implement policies and programmes based on empirical evidence. For example, insights into good hygiene practices and dietary diversity can guide national strategies on nutrition and public health.

- **Enhanced training and capacity-building:** Information on successful interventions for increasing knowledge and attitudes of community volunteers and households regarding nutrition, hygiene, agriculture and utilisation of loans and share-outs from savings groups can be used to develop and refine training programmes for volunteers in the respective sectors. This ensures that future programmes are informed by past successes and best practices.
  Capacity building of government workers such as the extension service under the Ministry of Agriculture or health workers under the Ministry of Health, allows them to benefit from evidence-based good practices.

- Institutions such as universities and research institutes will be able to utilise the data for academic purposes, thus contributing to the nutrition, hygiene and food security sectors. Furthermore, the datasets have high potential to be used by undergraduate and graduate students for research projects and theses development.
- **Longitudinal studies:** The comprehensive datasets, covering multiple indicators over an extended period, provide an invaluable resource for longitudinal studies. Researchers can analyse trends and long-term impacts of food security interventions.
- **Impact assessments:** The data can be used to conduct impact assessments of various interventions, determining their effectiveness and areas for improvement.
- **Comparative research:** Academic and research institutions can utilise the data for comparative studies, comparing the effectiveness of different food security strategies and interventions. This can lead to more effective and targeted solutions for improving food and nutrition security.

By making the FANSER datasets accessible and usable for these stakeholders, the project's impact can be significantly extended, contributing to the ongoing efforts to enhance food and nutrition security in Zambia.

How the data will be shared

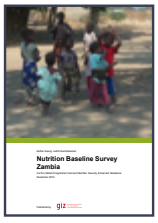
Dissemination will include formal collaborations with universities through Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) as well as the National Food and Nutrition Commission. For example, partnerships with institutions such as the University of Zambia and the University of Giessen in Germany will enable students and researchers to utilise the data, fostering academic growth and furthering research initiatives.

CONCLUSION

The comprehensive datasets generated from biennial outcome assessments and annual output assessments offer a valuable resource that extends beyond the immediate scope of the project. By strategically disseminating these datasets and ensuring access for new projects, government ministries, commissions and academic and research institutions, the impact of the collected evidence can be sustained and expanded. These datasets can inform evidence-based policy making, enrich training programmes, and support in-depth research studies.

The datasets collected through the FANSER project can be highly beneficial for various stake-holders, enhancing their ability to make informed decisions, develop new projects and contribute to improved approaches to food and nutrition security.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & MATERIAL



BASELINE REPORT 2016

2015 (60 pages)
English
Developed by: GIZ FANSER

FOLLOW UP SURVEY 2018

2018 (121 pages)
English
Developed by: GIZ FANSER

BASELINE SURVEY LUAPULA 2020

2020 (53 pages)
English
Developed by: GIZ FANSER

2ND FOLLOW UP SURVEY EASTERN PROVINCE 2020

2020 (105 pages)
English
Developed by: GIZ FANSER

FOLLOW UP SURVEY LUAPULA PROVINCE 2022

2022 (59 pages)
English
Developed by: GIZ FANSER

3RD FOLLOW UP SURVEY EASTERN PROVINCE 2022

2022 (53 pages)
English
Developed by: GIZ FANSER

All documents available upon request from **Heike.Hoeffler@giz.de** ↗

Improving project monitoring:
Lessons from FANSER's result-based system

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SUMMARY

How do you best measure the success of a project? And how can you ensure that everyone involved has the same understanding of progress and results? These questions are central to the implementation of an effective monitoring system. In the case of the FANSER project, Results based Monitoring (RbM) was key to tracking progress and making evidence-based adjustments to implementation. However, like any complex system, RbM came with its own challenges.

In this document, you will discover what has been learnt from the practical application of the RbM system in the FANSER project and how these findings can contribute to improving future monitoring approaches. It shows why it is so important to design monitoring systems that are robust and sustainable from the outset, and the role that digital tools play in this. The following pages also provide recommendations on how RbM systems can be better aligned with national governance systems to achieve effective long-term results.

Continue reading to find out how the right monitoring tools can not only support the implementation of a project, but also improve the quality of reporting and strategic decision-making. The experience gained in the FANSER project offers valuable insights that are not only relevant to the work in Zambia, but also to other development projects worldwide.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

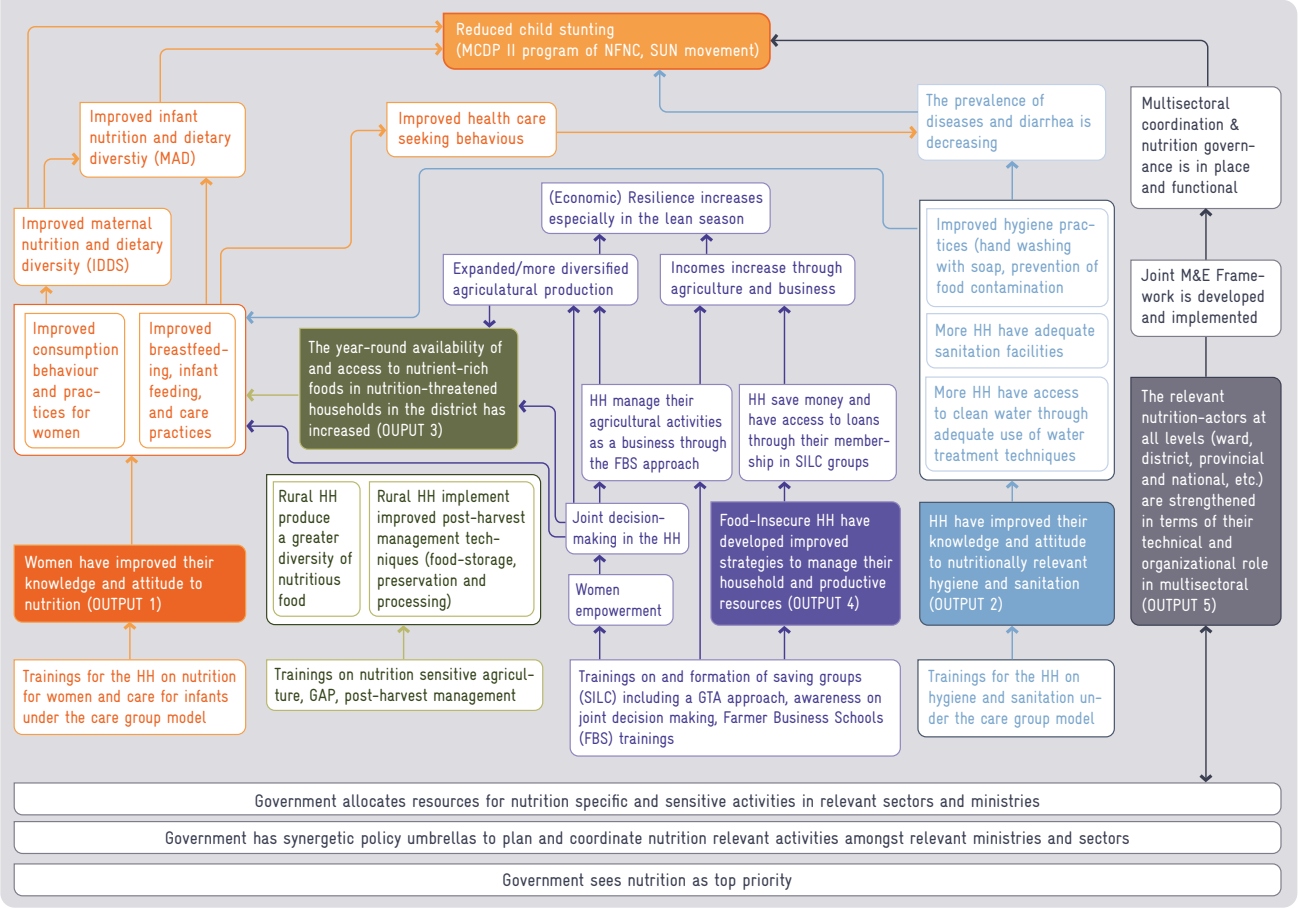
GIZ's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) policy is built on extensive experience, and is adapted to evolving conditions in international cooperation. These changes are shaped by shifts in the political landscape, expectations of commissioning parties, and the needs of partners and clients, as well as GIZ's internal developments. A key focus of the policy is accountability, which is also a fundamental principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.[43] M&E systems are critical for generating reliable data and statistics, which are essential for demonstrating progress towards developmental objectives. These systems provide the foundational information needed to show how resources are utilised and how they contribute to achieving the associated indicators. In line with this policy, the FANSER project adopted a Results-based Monitoring (RbM) system to track progress and foster accountability.

[43]
GIZ, "Guidelines for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in the context of the 2030 Agenda," p3 ↗

STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

The FANSER project's RbM system was based on the results model, aligned with other results logics like that of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD/DAC), an international body that designs international standards and guidelines for development co-operation based on best practices, and monitors the implementation by its members, Germany included. The results model shows the intended change process by linking related changes that the project aims to achieve throughout its lifespan, from inception to the overall goal. It considers the complexity and non-linearity of development processes, providing a clear view of how development measures influence change.

FIGURE 36: The FANSER project results model



The FANSER project's RbM system was developed in accordance with GIZ's M&E policy. The system's specific objectives included:

1. To track the effectiveness of different activities in achieving project results so that the implementation can be adjusted where there is need.
2. To obtain information about the project's progress with regard to its indicators.
3. To make strategic and management decisions based on the monitoring data.
4. To initiate dialogue with partners about the chosen strategy and operational planning.
5. To have a basis for reliably accounting and reporting the results achieved.

PRESENTATION OF FANSER OUTCOME LEVEL INDICATORS AT THE FANSER PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY EVENT IN FEBRUARY 2024

THE FANSER MONITORING APPROACH

Input monitoring

Input monitoring focuses on tracking the financial, human, and material resources utilised in a development intervention, including funds, personnel, time, and materials. In the FANSER project, seeds were the primary input monitored under the RbM system. Other inputs, such as bicycles and treadle pumps, were also captured in the database post-distribution. Beneficiaries and the specific inputs they received were recorded using an **'input distribution form'**. Initially, this data was manually entered into Microsoft Excel, later transitioning to a **web-based digital database** in 2021.

The **GIZ FANSER web-based digital database** was developed to enhance the planning, tracking, monitoring and evaluation of the project. It also aimed to demonstrate the convergence of interventions at household level. At its inception, master data was imported from the existing **Catholic Relief Services (CRS)** database, which managed the Nutrition and Hygiene components of the FANSER project. This data was regularly synchronised with the GIZ database. Additionally, existing GIZ FANSER data, previously stored in Excel, was integrated into the system. Together, these datasets formed the foundational input of the GIZ-FANSER database.

Activity monitoring

Activity monitoring within the FANSER project focused on tracking actions by both GIZ and its implementing partners that were carried out to achieve the intended project results with the financial, human and material resources allocated. Some of the activities included trainings, meetings, campaigns, surveys, crop cultivation and construction of keyhole gardens. The primary goal was to ensure that activities were executed as planned, and progress tracked accordingly.

Data capturing was carried out through parallel systems using both hard copy monthly reporting tools and mobile phones. Project volunteers entrusted to train, mentor and monitor beneficiary activities, submitted hard copy reports, which were subsequently entered into a web-based digital database by hired data entry clerks. Additionally, a selected group of volunteers in Luapula Province, working under the nutrition-sensitive agriculture component, used mobile phones to capture and transmit their data directly into the digital database. This served as learning ground for future digital reporting of similar projects.

Using the database, aggregated reports were generated to inform various stakeholders and platforms. Examples of the data reported included the number of beneficiaries trained by intervention, the number of beneficiaries that adopted **FBS practices** ↗, and the number of gardens constructed including **WASH** ↗ outputs such as tippy taps, toilets, rubbish pits, and dish racks.

To address gaps in the database, an additional tool – the core monitoring data template – was introduced. This tool captured cumulative data on inputs and activities not adequately reflected in the web-based database, and corrected inaccuracies caused by duplication, the unavailability of real time data, or underreporting. Examples include activities under nutrition governance and data on the number of beneficiaries trained in different modules, the number of constructed toilets, tippy taps, rubbish pits, and dish racks, the number of gardens by type, and the tracking of beneficiaries trained in improved village chicken production. This data was submitted by the GIZ team and CRS, providing input to the core monitoring data on a quarterly basis.

Monitoring and technical supportive visits were also conducted to assess on-site implementation of activities and provide support to the volunteers and implementing partners.

Quarterly and bi-annual progress reports submitted by implementing partners included activity data.

All this data made it possible to track the operational plan **milestones**, which was done on a quarterly basis and discussed during the **ONE FANSER team** meeting. The ONE FANSER team meeting was conducted monthly, providing an opportunity to discuss different project activities and, on a quarterly basis, discuss the operational plan milestones.

Output monitoring

Output monitoring involved tracking countable changes and conditions of the FANSER project activities, focusing on output-level indicators outlined in the project's **results matrix**. These indicators, assessed bi-annually in 2020 and annually from 2021 to 2024, measured aspects such as knowledge related to nutrition, hygiene, home gardening and economic strategies.

In addition, the assessment measured the adoption of key practices such as the addition of an additional crop into production, the adoption of a post-harvest technique, or households adopting key practices related to shared decision-making and resource planning, based on the knowledge they gained.

To ensure consistent understanding and measurement of each indicator across different stakeholders, projects, and evaluation cycles, an **indicator definition sheet** was developed for both output and outcome indicators. This provided clear, standardised and detailed descriptions of the project indicators.

In addition, **periodic post-seed distribution** assessments were conducted, not only to verify the completion and quality of the seed distribution, but also to assess early outcomes, such as whether beneficiaries planted the seeds, the performance of the crops, and the inclusion of the harvested crops in their diets.

Outcome monitoring

At the outcome level, the FANSER project tracked medium-term effects every two years to assess improvements in the immediate and underlying determinants of good nutrition for women of reproductive age (15-49 years) and children under two, influenced by the project's interventions. Key outcome indicators included:

1. **Individual Dietary Diversity Score (IDDS) for women:** This indicator measures the dietary diversity of individual women by calculating the average number of different food groups consumed within a 24-hour period (up to 10 food groups), providing a scale to assess nutritional intake among women of reproductive age.

2. **Minimum Acceptable Diet (MAD):** This indicator evaluates the diet quality and adequacy for young children (6-23 months) based on seven food groups, ensuring they meet dietary standards essential for growth and development.

3. **Hygiene indicator:** This assesses women's knowledge and use of hygiene practices promoted by the project, such as:

   - Knowledge of at least four key moments when to wash hands
   - Knowledge of at least four key measures to prevent food contamination
   - Water treatment techniques
   - Use of good sanitary facilities

Surveys were conducted at the baseline in 2015, with **Follow Up Survey (FUS)** in 2018, 2020, and 2022, and a final FUS in 2024. An independent consulting firm carried out these surveys across all twelve countries participating in the Global Programme, adhering to international standards and offering both country-specific and cross-country analyses. Outcome monitoring included beneficiary interviews through standardised questionnaires, and Focused Group Discussions (FDGs) to collect qualitative insights.

Project planning, reporting and review

The FANSER project used a structured approach to planning, reporting, and reviewing, supported by data from the RbM system. Key processes included:

- **Annual operational planning:** Insights from the RbM data shaped the annual operational planning, directing focus areas for interventions.

- **Progress reports:** During the period of implementation, the project worked with CRS and collaborative line ministries: Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, Ministry of Water Development and Sanitation and Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock.

    - **Submissions to GIZ:** The Ministry of Agriculture and CRS had contracts for the implementation of specific FANSER components: nutrition-sensitive agriculture (MoA) and nutrition, hygiene and economic strategies through SILC. Each partner submitted reports on a quarterly (MoA) and bi-annual (CRS) basis, which included detailed descriptions of activities undertaken, challenges faced, lessons learned, and recommended follow-up actions.

    - **Submission of reports to line ministries:** As part of the Scaling Up Nutrition First One Thousand Days Most Critical Days Programme (SUN-MCDP)programme, GIZ submitted reports to various line ministries based on agreed indicators. These were discussed in the National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC) M&E Technical Working Group meetings, conducted quarterly, informing decision-making and programming adjustments. The NFNC was GIZ's political partner and responsible for coordinating all nutrition activities in Zambia, whilst its M&E TWG focused on reinforcing accountability and tracking results against the M&E Common framework.

    - **Submission of reports to BMZ[44]:** To ensure accountability, transparency, and compliance with funding agreements while showcasing project impact and alignment with BMZ's priorities, GIZ submitted comprehensive annual reports on the FANSER project, detailing progress toward the agreed results matrix indicators, challenges encountered, lessons learned, and actionable recommendations to guide decision-making that would enhance project outcomes.

- **Quarterly and annual reviews:** Quarterly and annual reviews played a crucial role in assessing project performance and guiding decision-making. The project's technical advisors, along with MoA and CRS, provided updates to the operational plan, which were tracked using a traffic light system. This system visually indicated milestone progress: Green for completed milestones, yellow for milestones on track, and red for delayed milestones with noted challenges. Quarterly reviews were held during the ONE FANSER meetings, bringing together GIZ FANSER staff to discuss progress and identify areas that needed adjustments. In addition, annual operational planning meetings included all implementing partners, providing a platform for sharing lessons learned and addressing challenges collaboratively.

[44] Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (in German: Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung) was the commission party and funder of the FANSER project

RESULTS AND IMPACT – WHAT WORKED WELL

1. A comprehensive RbM system incorporated both standard project indicators and additional indicators collected through the core monitoring data. This enabled tracking of inputs, activities and outputs beyond the result matrix, enabling managers to capture a fuller picture of the project's progress. The additional data not only supported management and decision-making, but enhanced the quality of reports to various stakeholders, including government partners, community leaders and the BMZ. The information gathered through the RbM system contributed to the development of communication materials such as fact sheets and standardised FANSER presentations, which highlighted project achievements and outcomes in a clear and accessible format.

2. The FANSER project team received orientation on the results model, results matrix and performance indicators. This orientation helped team members understand clearly how project activities contributed to specific outputs, outcomes and, ultimately, the long-term impact. With a shared understanding of how each activity aligned with the project's overarching goals, the team was better equipped to implement interventions strategically. This clarity fostered accountability and focused efforts on achieving measurable targets, optimising the allocation of resources and ensuring consistency in performance evaluation across project components.

3. Developing a web-based digital database that provided detailed information about the project participants as well as convergence of interventions at household level was useful for the project, as the data was utilised to plan follow-up interventions as well as report the project's progress to various partners.

4. Integrating a structured planning and review process into the M&E system fostered continuous learning and improvement among the technical team. This approach encouraged regular meetings and discussions, where team members could review data, share challenges and exchange best practices. These collaborative sessions enabled the team to refine activities based on insights gained, strengthen interventions, and ensure that project strategies aligned with desired results. By cultivating a culture of open communication and adaptability, the team was able to maximise the project's impact and create sustainable change for participants.

LESSONS LEARNT

Input and activity monitoring

Setting up a simple digital database for the GIZ FANSER project from the start, covering all intervention areas with proper validation rules, or leveraging existing partner databases, could have prevented many complications:

- **Database delays:** The database took a year to finalise, another year to clean for meaningful data, and two more years to implement the mobile app. Consequently, the system was fully utilised only in the final year of the project, just as implementation was scaling down and activities being transitioned to government partners. Moreover, the master data imported from CRS was not adequately cleaned before integration. The database setup lacked necessary validation rules, which could have facilitated a smoother and more accurate data import process.

- **Backlog of data:** The complications with the database and mobile app led to a backlog of data, requiring extra support to ensure timely data entry once the system was operational.

- **Unreliable data for reporting:** The backlog of data that was not entered into the database compromised the reliability of key indicators, such as the number of beneficiaries receiving specific training and seeds. To address this, additional tools, like the core monitoring data template, were developed to capture delayed, duplicated, or underreported data.

- **Ongoing paper-based monitoring:** The project continued to rely on paper-based reporting, including photocopying monthly reports for 15,000 community-based volunteers, even in Luapula province, where mobile phones were used for reporting. This was because mobile phones were only provided to senior lead farmers, while lead farmers still used paper forms submitted to senior lead farmers.

- **Lack of post-project planning:** The database was a short-sighted investment, as there was no clear plan for its use after the project ended. Its design was not aligned with government systems, such as the Ministry of Health, which only collects aggregate data, so the database had to be shut down after project completion.

Output monitoring

The output monitoring process revealed several key lessons, highlighting areas for improvement in guidance, methodologies and collaboration. These specifically included:

- More guidance on the output assessment, e.g. on the sample size, assessment criteria, frequency of the assessments and standard questions, particularly at the beginning of the project, should have been given, especially with support from the global programme M&E steering unit.

- Adding qualitative data collection methods were seen as necessary to explain the trends in performance which were missing in the guidance provided in the project's results matrix, which mainly focused on the quantitative methodologies.

- Regular exchange meetings with other country packages on the output assessment would have been helpful for learning what to avoid and what to do in order to have a smooth output assessment.

Outcome monitoring

- Outcome monitoring for the project was commissioned by headquarters and implemented by an independent consultant, with certain processes involving the in-country project team. Among the lessons learned: Proper documentation of outcome-level indicators at the project's onset could have prevented delays in finalising the project indicator definition sheet, a critical tool for understanding indicator descriptions and measurement approaches. While standard indicator definitions for IDDS and MAD were available through WHO guidelines, project-specific documentation of full descriptions and measurement approaches was initially lacking. This gap was particularly evident for hygiene-relate indicators, delaying the finalisation of the entire document.

- Reducing the length of questionnaires to a manageable time range (30 – 60 minutes) minimises respondent fatigue and improves data quality.
- Timing FGDs after quantitative assessments allows for better alignment of questions with findings, enhancing their value in explaining evaluation trends. Conducting FGDs concurrently with household interviews reduced their usefulness in this context.
- It is essential to Initiate processes for ethical approvals and gather village population data early on, given the time these steps require.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The FANSER project's RbM system successfully provided insights for steering, learning, reporting and accountability, demonstrating empirical evidence of its impact at various levels. However, a periodic review of its implementation could have strengthened certain components, particularly the input and activity monitoring aspects. Initially reliant on a paper-based reporting system, the transition to a digital system faced challenges due to its lack of user-friendliness and substantial investment requirements. The misalignment with partner tracking systems led to inefficiencies and potential waste of resources, as the system was not designed for long-term sustainability and was ultimately decommissioned at the project's conclusion.

For future projects, both within GIZ and externally, it is crucial to develop robust RbM systems with a focus on:

1. Integrating project monitoring frameworks with existing government frameworks and databases to ensure sustainability, reduce redundancy, and enable continued usage post-project.
2. Establishing user-friendly, scalable digital monitoring systems from the project's onset, ensuring proper validation, training and regular audits to mitigate inefficiencies and backlogs.
3. Identifying innovative digital alternatives to paper-based monitoring by implementing cost-effective mobile or digital data collection tools for all stakeholders; simplifying those tools and ensuring data relevance.
4. Developing comprehensive Indicator Definition Sheets, standardised assessment criteria and clear methodologies for all monitoring levels.
5. Promoting regular knowledge-sharing forums with stakeholders and similar projects. Using feedback loops, focus group discussions and reviews to continuously refine approaches and address challenges.

The FANSER project's RbM system successfully provided insights for steering, learning, reporting and accountability, demonstrating empirical evidence of its impact at various levels.

Transforming nutrition and WASH behaviors through creative communication: Insights from the FANSER project

Given Liswaniso
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Lusaka

SUMMARY

What makes communication materials key to sustainable behaviour change? This document highlights the role of social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) in the FANSER project and shows how targeted communication materials can support behaviour change in the areas of nutrition and hygiene. From nutrition card games and comic booklets to radio programmes and animated series, creative and culturally appropriate materials have been developed to communicate vital messages in an accessible way.

The materials were introduced in schools, health facilities and over 70,000 households in Zambia in order to achieve sustainable improvements in nutrition and hygiene. The focus was on interactive and entertaining formats to promote knowledge and encourage long-term behavioural change.

The approach was implemented in close cooperation with partners such as the National Food and Nutrition Commission and the Ministry of Health, which enabled the materials to be used in a broad and targeted manner.

The document analyses the development and dissemination of these communication materials, describes successes and challenges, and offers insights into best practices for designing effective SBCC interventions. These findings are not only relevant for practitioners in development cooperation, but for everyone working in behaviour change and communication.

INTRODUCTION

Social Behaviour Change (SBC) strategies in the fight against malnutrition focus on positively influencing individuals' behaviours to improve health outcomes. By targeting dietary practices, caregiving behaviours, and health-seeking actions, effective SBC interventions address the root causes and factors contributing to malnutrition, ultimately leading to better nutritional outcomes. FANSER's SBC communication products include the Nutrition card game as well as a corresponding **app** ↗ in the Google Play Store; and the Let Me Tell You comic booklets, animated series and radio recordings developed for both urban and rural households in Zambia. The episodes are openly accessible on YouTube and include topics such as **Washing Hands** ↗, **The Human Body** ↗, **Protein** ↗, **Iron** ↗, **Omega-3 Fatty Acids** ↗, and **The Fish Value Chain** ↗. The products were further translated into Nyanja and Bemba, targeting the project intervention areas in Eastern and Luapula provinces. They were produced together with Zambian government partners: the National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC), the Ministry of Health (MOH), the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) and the Ministry of Education (MOE). More than 70,000 copies of the card game were printed, as well as more than 4,000 copies of Let Me Tell You comic booklets; while 600 USB sticks uploaded with the video series were distributed to partners. The products were launched together with government partners to generate awareness and to establish a connection with the target audience, as well as develop sustainability and anchor the tools to the government partners. These tools also aim to reinforce nutrition and WASH knowledge and encourage positive attitudes within communities, delivering essential information in an engaging, interactive format. The Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) products of the project were designed to support and reinforce the nutrition and WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) teachings from the **Care Group Model** ↗ by introducing interactive, educational tools. These products helped the target audience, especially children, parents and caregivers, to improve their knowledge, shift attitudes, and adopt positive practices around nutrition and WASH.

THE SBCC TOOLS DEVELOPED BY THE FANSER PROJECT INCLUDE

1. NUTRITION CARD GAMES

These engaging card games educate players on the nutritional value of various locally available foods, allowing participants to learn while having fun. They reinforce knowledge gained in the **Care Group lessons** ↗ by highlighting essential nutrients found in locally available foods. Before the development of the card game, two surveys were conducted to see if the selected respondents welcomed the card game. The research found that over 95% of the respondents played the card game at least once after its introduction, and that mostly the game was played with family, including adolescents, men and women of reproductive age, who showed a high appreciation of the game. As for the mass distribution, **70,000** copies of the card game, in **Bemba, English and Nyanja**, were distributed in Luapula, Lusaka and Eastern Provinces, aiming to reach households, schools and health facilities. Additionally, the game was developed into an **app** ↗ available on the Google Play Store, making it easy for online users to download it onto their phones.

NUTRITION GAME CARDS SHOWING THE LOCALLY AVAILABLE FOODS IN ZAMBIA

PUPILS AT ONE OF THE SCHOOLS IN MWANSABOMBWE DISTRICT IN LUAPULA PLAYING THE NUTRITION CARD GAME

How to play the card game

The game has 42 playing cards providing information about the nutritional values of local foods, while four cards explain the game's background, rules, and the basis of the different nutrition values.

Each playing card represents one type of food (e.g. orange maize, onions, etc.) and provides information about the percentages of nutrient content of carbohydrates, vitamin A, vitamin C, protein, iron, and fat, based on a 100g serving. The percentages for adult women are calculated for a daily diet of 2,200 calories. The game can be played with two to six players, and is suitable for all age groups that have basic reading skills. The game does not aim to explain the benefits of a balanced diet, but functions as a tool to help the target group understand which foods benefit the different nutrient categories. Therefore, the project used the game to accompany training, allowing target groups to gain knowledge about the nutrient values of various locally available foods.

2. ANIMATED SERIES

Comic booklets and radio recordings
(under the brand name Let Me Tell You)

These interactive and visually engaging materials teach the audience about the importance of different project-promoted aspects of nutrition, and the key principles of WASH, nutrition and agriculture. The comic, radio programme and animated series make the information accessible and memorable, particularly for audiences with varying literacy levels.

These SBCC products make learning enjoyable and interactive, reducing barriers to behaviour change by promoting essential practices such as consuming a diverse diet, handwashing after using the toilet, and treating or boiling drinking water. By strengthening household-level teachings, they play a crucial role in fostering healthier practices within the community.

Let Me Tell You animation series

The **Let Me Tell You** animation series was developed by FANSER and the GIZ Fish for Food (F4F) Project in collaboration with NFNC, MOH, MOA and MOE, to promote nutrition, health, and hygiene education. The series is based on the two nutrition card game surveys in which respondents expressed a desire for more visual SBC products. With the growing use of communication technology in Zambia, including mobile phones, radios, and the internet, the series aimed to reach a broad audience with enhanced knowledge on nutrition and its link to health and well-being. The series covers key topics such as the importance of vitamin A, the role of proteins and minerals like iron, and food preparation practices. Building on the pilot episode on handwashing, subsequent episodes were designed to educate about diverse diets, the fish value chain, and WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) practices. The series is available on the **GIZ YouTube** ↗ channel and was broadcasted through national TV stations. It engages the public in an entertaining and informative manner, and supports Zambia's National Nutrition Campaign by advocating for diverse diets, healthy food choices, and positive behaviour change in health and nutrition practices. The episodes can be accessed by clicking the following links: **washing hygiene** ↗, the significance of nutrients such as **vitamin A** ↗, **protein** ↗, **iron** ↗, **omega-3 fatty acids** ↗, and the **fish value chain** ↗.

Currently the series has been aired on the Zambian National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) in three languages, English, Nyanja and Bemba. The national broadcaster has increased viewership on other online platforms such as YouTube, the NFNC website and Facebook. The series has also been shared using FANSER USB sticks together with other FANSER materials.

COVER IMAGE FOR THE LET ME TELL YOU SERIES

Let Me Tell You comic booklets

In addition, the animation series, **Let Me Tell You** was transferred into comic booklets in order to reach a wider audience. The booklets are accessible in three languages, Bemba, Nyanja, and English, and are designed to enhance visual literacy, improve reading comprehension, and engage both children and adults. These booklets cover key topics like handwashing, nutrition, and the importance of various nutrients, and are available on the NFNC website. More than 4,000 copies of the comic booklets have been distributed in health facilities.

COVER PICTURE FOR LET ME TELL YOU COMIC BOOKLETS

Let Me Tell You radio recordings

Radio remains one of the most influential and accessible mass media platforms in Zambia. The **Let Me Tell You** animation series was adapted into radio recordings in Bemba and Nyanja to reach audiences in the regions where these languages are spoken. The radio recordings are aired on the Millennium radio station in collaboration with CSO SUN, as part of a programme titled **What's Cooking**, broadcast every Tuesday and Wednesday from 13:00 to 14:00. The programme includes an open phone-in segment, allowing listeners to share feedback and ask questions about the episodes being aired. The public response has been overwhelmingly positive, with active audience participation. This initiative has proven to be an effective channel for disseminating vital health and nutrition information. Plans are in progress to translate the series into additional local languages to further broaden its reach.

SUCCESS, CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNT

Successes

- The FANSER Project successfully distributed a total of 55,000 Nyanja and 25,000 Bemba Nutrition card games at household level, as well as in selected health facilities and schools in Luapula and Eastern Provinces, where the project is active. To further engage the public, an app for the Nutrition card game was uploaded to the **Google Play Store** ↗, and awareness was raised through various online platforms, including **LinkedIn** ↗, the **National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC)'s website** ↗, and **Facebook** ↗.

- Additionally, the Let Me Tell You animation series was uploaded to the **GIZ YouTube** ↗ channel, making it easily accessible to viewers. The series was also broadcast by the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC), reaching a nationwide audience. Comic booklets were distributed to beneficiaries in selected households and schools, supporting the School Health and Nutrition Unit's educational efforts on nutrition and health topics.

- The series was officially launched with support from the Ministry of Education and NFNC, encouraging its use across the general public. During the launch, comics and videos were provided to learners and schools in Luapula, Lusaka, and Eastern Provinces for use in their libraries. Overall, the communication products have been well received by various stakeholders, including families, teachers, and students.

Challenges

- Despite the successful distribution to households, health facilities and schools by our implementing partner CRS and FANSER of more than 70,000 card games, 4,000 comic booklets and 600 USB sticks uploaded with video series and comic booklets, limited procurement due to budget constraints meant that not all targeted households, beneficiaries, schools and health facilities received the materials.

- The communication products were only translated into three languages; English, Bemba, and Nyanja. This posed challenges for some communities in districts that do not speak or read these languages. Although this affected less than 15% of FANSER beneficiaries, as the majority of them at least understood Bemba and Nyanja in FANSER districts, consideration should be given to translate the products into more languages so as to increase their reach.

- Rather than relying heavily on government structures to distribute communication products, we recognised the need to take a more proactive role in managing distribution, while still collaborating with government partners. Reducing dependence on others enhances the project's capacity to effectively share knowledge and increase its impact.

- There was not sufficient systematic partner engagement in the dissemination of products. Although the FANSER project participated in national platforms such as the Communication and Advocacy Technical Working Group (C&A TWG) and the National Food and Nutrition Technical Committee under NFNC, the communication products were not fully disseminated through GRZ channels. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with NFNC served as a key framework for partner coordination. At the same time, the experience highlighted the importance of maintaining close alignment and proactive follow-up throughout the process to ensure maximum reach and impact. These reflections provide valuable insights for strengthening future collaboration and achieving shared goals more effectively.

- Finally, some beneficiaries experienced difficulty accessing the Let Me Tell You videos online due to a lack of smartphones, computers and access to internet in the project implementation sites (rural areas), which led us to consider whether this may have been the wrong medium for the target group.

Lessons learnt

1. A clear dissemination strategy is essential for maximising the reach of communication products. While opportunities such as the official launch and the NFNC website were effectively leveraged, a more structured approach would have allowed for broader dissemination. The launch event showcased all products and was positively received by learners and Ministry of Education officials, highlighting the potential of such events for generating visibility and engagement.

2. The positive feedback on the comic booklets and Nutrition card games from schools indicates a need for increased printing and distribution to further engage the educational sector. These materials were particularly appreciated as effective, interactive educational tools.

3. Efforts to enhance the ownership and sustainability of communication products (such as the Let Me Tell You animation series, comic booklets, radio recordings, and Nutrition card game) by government partners, including NFNC, MOH, MOA, and MOE, should be intensified. This can be achieved through the upcoming GIZ FANSER+ project, which will start implementation in selected districts of Eastern and Luapula Provinces in 2025, cascading implementation from the national to provincial, district, and ward levels. Furthermore, given the high interest of scholars in the Nutrition card game, comic booklets and video series, the collaboration with MOE should be intensified through partnerships between the Nutrition Coordinating Committee and the NNCC, PNCC and DNCC, in order to reach out to more schools.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & MATERIAL

CARD GAME APP

2024 (60 pages)
English, Bemba and Nyanja
Developed by: GIZ FANSER

LET ME TELL YOU SERIES THE HUMAN BODY

2024 (60 pages)
English, Bemba and Nyanja
Developed by: NFNC, GIZ-FANSER, F4F, Coperating partners

LET ME TELL YOU SERIES PROTEIN

2024 (60 pages)
English, Bemba and Nyanja
Developed by: NFNC, GIZ FANSER, F4F, Coperating partners

LET ME TELL YOU SERIES IRON

2024 (60 pages)
English, Bemba and Nyanja
Developed by: NFNC, GIZ-FANSER, F4F, Coperating partners

LET ME TELL YOU SERIES OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS

2024 (60 pages)
English, Bemba and Nyanja
Developed by: NFNC, GIZ FANSER, F4F, Coperating partners

LET ME TELL YOU SERIES WASHING HANDS

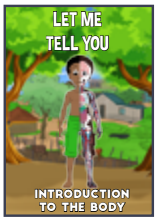
2024 (60 pages)
English, Bemba and Nyanja
Developed by: NFNC, GIZ-FANSER, F4F, Coperating partners

LET ME TELL YOU SERIES THE FISH VALUE CHAIN

2024 (60 pages)
English, Bemba and Nyanja
Developed by: NFNC, GIZ-FANSER, F4F, Coperating partners

COMIC BOOKLET VITAMIN A

2017 (118 pages)
English
Developed by: NFNC



COMIC BOOKLET INTRODUCTION TO THE BODY

2017 (118 pages)
English
Developed by: NFNC

COMIC BOOKLET IRON

2017 (118 pages)
English
Developed by: NFNC

COMIC BOOKLET WASHING HANDS

2017 (118 pages)
English
Developed by: NFNC

CHAPTER 07

CONLUSION

Reflections from the FANSER team: Key insights and lessons learnt

Behind every successful project is a dedicated team whose experiences, perspectives and expertise are integral to its progress and impact. Over the course of the decade-long project, implemented from 2015 to 2025 as a German technical contribution to the national Scaling-up Nutrition programme, the FANSER team has not only implemented measures, but also tackled challenges, developed innovative solutions and gained a wealth of learnings from both successes and setbacks. These learnings were reflected within the team, and with colleagues and partners. The outcome of these reflections forms this concluding chapter of the FANSER knowledge map. Not only can it inform future projects in Zambia, but it can also contribute to global strategies for addressing food insecurity in a sustainable manner.

> **Despite the challenges FANSER faced during ten years of implementation, its main successes lie in the implementation at micro and meso level; it lies with the people: the target group that benefitted from the care group model and economic empowerment and who carries these benefits over to other family and community members; the many intermediaries, nutrition volunteers, promoters, government frontline staff at numerous health facilities and agricultural and livestock extension workers who work towards better nutrition every day; the ward and district nutrition coordination committee members, who advance, bit by bit, the nutrition governance in their immediate area; and last, but not least, the fantastic FANSER team that made it all happen over all those years.**
>
> Dr. Heike Hoeffler, FANSER project coordinator, Lusaka

A central achievement of the FANSER project lies in its demonstration that long-term, multisectoral interventions can yield significant results. By prioritising local ownership of nutrition-sensitive and nutrition-specific initiatives, mainstreaming gender equality, and integrating financial literacy, the project has significantly enhanced food and nutrition security in target populations. Moving forward, these lessons underline the importance of continued collaboration, adaptive management, and a steadfast focus on empowering communities to build a more secure and resilient future for all.

> **I have really enjoyed the great team spirit in the sense of 'One FANSER' GIZ and CRS teams – we are all working towards the same goal and vision. I have learned to remain optimistic and embrace positivity, even in difficult times of multiple crises, like we are facing now.**
>
> Ulrike Rippke, advisor for sustainability and monitoring and evaluation, Lusaka

The following list of key lessons learnt during the FANSER project captures overarching experiences, strategies and insights gained. For a deeper understanding, each lesson is explained in greater detail in the following sections:

1. Holistic and integrated approaches yield larger impacts for multisectoral nutrition.
2. Strong collaboration with the government and other stakeholders is key to scalability and impact.
3. Community ownership and participation are essential for the sustainable anchoring of activities.
4. Women's empowerment and gender-sensitive measures need high attention to achieve nutrition results.
5. Capacity building and learning at all levels are key to long-term success.
6. Nutrition and resilience need rigorous monitoring and adaptive management to react to monitoring results.
7. A flexible response to crisis and emergency situations has to be built into the project in order to increase food and nutrition security and to enhance resilience amidst vulnerable target groups, like Zambia's rural poor.
8. Sustainability measures have to be anchored in the project right from the start.

As this chapter outlines the overarching key lessons learned from the project, it also highlights the personal narratives and reflections of the team. These insights, grounded in real-world experiences, provide a comprehensive understanding of what it takes to tackle complex food security challenges sustainably and inclusively. By combining technical achievements with human stories, it aims to offer valuable insights for future programmes in Zambia and similar contexts worldwide.

> "The FANSER project has been through it all! Over the last decade its implementation was disrupted by country-wide mob violence, cholera epidemics, the COVID-19 pandemic, austerity measures and budget constraints, dry spells, and, currently, the disastrous drought. Knowing what I know now, I would incorporate efforts of response to crisis to complement our efforts to enhance resilience from the onset.
>
> Christopher Bupe Mulenga, FANSER regional coordinator, Luapula Province

1 HOLISTIC AND INTEGRATED APPROACHES YIELD LARGER IMPACTS FOR MULTISECTORAL NUTRITION.

One of the most significant lessons from the FANSER project is the importance of adopting a holistic, multisectoral approach when addressing food and nutrition security. Rather than focusing on isolated interventions, combining activities across sectors such as agriculture, nutrition, climate adaptation and livelihoods created synergies that amplified impact. By bringing together diverse sectors, such as sustainable agricultural practices, nutrition education, and gender empowerment, the project was able to strengthen community resilience in a more meaningful and lasting way. This cross-sectoral integration not only expanded the reach of the benefits but also helped to ensure long-term sustainability of the project's impacts.

> Recognising the importance of a multi-sector approach in addressing food and nutrition insecurity is the first crucial step towards building enhanced resilience.

Bwalya Musa, junior advisor for nutrition and governance, Luapula Province

> The establishment of multi-sectoral structures at the district and sub-district levels has brought together various sectors onto a single platform, allowing them to address common nutrition issues. As a result, each sector was aware of the activities being carried out by others at any given time. This created an opportunity for the government to work as a unified entity in the fight against malnutrition at the district level.

Xavier Tembo, technical advisor for multi-sector coordination and organisational development, Eastern Province

> Working with diverse sectors and stakeholders, such as government ministries, NGOs and community leaders, highlighted how a multi-sectoral approach can broaden reach and minimise duplication of efforts. Flexibility in adjusting strategies based on feedback was crucial for ensuring that interventions remained relevant and effective. The expertise of the FANSER team played a key role in building capacity, fostering resilience, and encouraging continuous learning. Finally, clear and consistent communication among stakeholders – through regular updates and open dialogue – was essential for aligning goals, managing expectations, and effectively addressing challenges.

Patrick Chikomba, advisor for nutrition-sensitive agriculture, Eastern Province

> Amidst the severe drought in 2024, I believe it is evident that we see the resilience of the FANSER target group being higher than the control groups. This notwithstanding, FANSER did focus on improving the nutrition quality without sufficiently factoring in the structural seasonal undernutrition during the annual lean season; we did not address structural hunger through nutrition-sensitive and drought-resilient staple food production. I believe that this was the biggest conceptual omission and should be counter-weighted in any future programme.

Dr. Heike Hoeffler, FANSER project coordinator, Lusaka

2 STRONG COLLABORATION WITH GOVERNMENT AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS IS KEY TO SCALABILITY AND IMPACT.

Collaboration and strategic engagement with diverse stakeholders, including government, NGOs and consultants, were key factors in the project's success, as each brought unique strengths. Partnerships with the Zambian government and other cooperating partners ensured better alignment of project activities with national policies and strategies on food security and nutrition, enabling the scaling up of successful interventions and integrating lessons learnt into national programmes. NGOs provided local expertise, and consultants contributed specialised skills.

To maximise the impact on future projects in Zambia, cross-sectoral collaboration must be intentional and explicit from the onset, guided by a comprehensive stakeholder engagement strategy. Such a strategy should include an effective division of labour amidst shrinking financial resources for food and nutrition security in future, and an explicit communication framework, ensuring all partners understand their roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, identifying and involving key offices and personnel at critical moments is essential to streamline processes, avoid delays, and enhance overall project effectiveness.

> **"I think the involvement of government line ministries from the start of project inception is very important in terms of creating ownership. It is also important to note that traditional leadership is key in supporting implementation of the project activities and its success.**
>
> Richard Lilamono, advisor for nutrition-sensitive agriculture, Eastern Province

> **"When working with government partners, it is crucial to recognise that the multisectoral nature of nutrition demands building strong connections with those who are key to the successful and sustainable implementation of interventions. Engaging relevant government bodies, such as the Ministry of Health, as well as other national-level partners and stakeholders from the very beginning, is essential.**
>
> Gladys Chirwa Kabaghe, senior advisor for food security and nutrition, Lusaka

> **"Consultancies play a crucial role in the project, as they significantly enhance the pace at which interventions are carried out. However, I also learned that government partners do not always fully appreciate consultancies. As technical advisors on projects, it is our responsibility to find ways to not only help government partners recognise the value of consultancies but also to encourage them to actively promote and engage with consultancies, even on their own projects. This shift in mindset would lead to more collaborative and sustainable outcomes.**
>
> Dean Mpande, advisor for nutrition-sensitive agriculture, Luapula Province

3 COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION ARE ESSENTIAL FOR SUSTAINABLE ANCHORING OF ACTIVITIES.

The project's success was largely driven by its focus on community-led initiatives, which ensured that interventions were contextually relevant and fostered local ownership. By actively involving local communities, the project nurtured a sense of responsibility and commitment, increasing the likelihood that improvements would be sustained beyond its lifespan. Empowering local stakeholders, particularly women, who played a central role in ensuring food security, helped strengthen social capital and built a foundation for long-term resilience.

One key lesson learned was the importance of tailoring interventions to the realities and needs of the target group. This included translating training materials into local languages to ensure accessibility, addressing literacy levels to promote inclusivity, and considering broader factors such as resource access, time constraints, and cultural norms.

Additionally, the project recognised the potential of involving traditional leaders more actively in the implementation and monitoring processes. Although this was not fully utilised, it highlighted the opportunity to transform the role of traditional leaders from a barrier to an enabler of success. Developing a clear strategy to involve these leaders is essential for maximising the impact of future interventions and securing broader community buy-in.

> **"It is just so impressive to see how engaged community members are in volunteer work. When I look at the FANSER project, a very big part of our achievements is based on the committed work of the community volunteers.**
>
> Dr. Heike Hoeffler, FANSER project coordinator, Lusaka

> **"The FANSER project addressed a very large target group and based many of its interventions on the collaboration and workforce of community-based volunteers – this is a great opportunity but also holds challenges when it comes to maintaining high quality and consistency of lesson delivery.**
>
> Ulrike Rippke, advisor for sustainability and monitoring and evaluation, Lusaka

> **"It was very important for us to develop materials that can be used by volunteers in local languages with adequate illustrations to support the understanding of our target group, and according to their education level. We also made sure that trainings were always implemented in an engaging and participatory manner. The training materials were designed in such a way that they provide the content and the methodology of implementation to support and orient the facilitators.**
>
> Dr. Annette Roth, FANSER regional coordinator, Eastern Province

4 WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER-SENSITIVE MEASURES NEED HIGH ATTENTION TO ACHIEVE NUTRITION RESULTS

Another crucial lesson drawn from the project was the transformative role of gender activities in improving food and nutrition security outcomes. Women's empowerment initiatives and the explicit engagement of men, particularly in agriculture and nutrition, were found to have a significant impact on both household and community resilience and nutrition. By strengthening women's decision-making power, providing them with access to resources, and offering targeted training, the project enabled women to become active agents of change. This empowerment was pivotal in enhancing food security at the household level, ensuring more consistent access to nutritious food, and improving overall family health.

Additionally, the benefits extended beyond individual households, as empowered women played a critical role in fostering broader community well-being. Their contributions helped create more resilient and sustainable communities, highlighting the importance of integrating gender equity into development strategies.

However, for future reference, we have learned that the logic of targeting women of childbearing age and children under two is somewhat excluding men, and that this should be avoided. To enhance nutrition and resilience, men should be addressed, using gender-transformative approaches, from the start of any project to strengthen their roles and responsibilities with regard to better nutrition at household and community level.

> **"From the beginning, involving men in the project proved to be challenging because many perceived it as primarily focused on women. As a result, their participation remained minimal, even though the project made deliberate efforts to include them. Another difficulty was that men were often not at home when lessons or surveys were conducted, as they typically spent much of their time away from the household. To address this, the team had to actively schedule appointments and request their participation in advance to ensure their involvement in the project's various activities.**
>
> Grace Tembo, advisor for monitoring and evaluation, Luapula Province

> **"Despite the successes of the FANSER project, gaining the active involvement of men, especially those not engaged from the start, was a significant challenge. Many men perceived nutrition as solely a woman's responsibility. Changing this mindset and helping them understand their important role in supporting their families' nutrition required persistent effort and targeted engagement strategies.**
>
> Mwazanji Phiri Thornicroft, advisor for monitoring and evaluation, Eastern Province

KNOWLEDGE MAP

> The promotion of gender equality was high on the agenda in the project because of its high influence on the impact of better nutrition. A recent study has shown that this effort has borne fruit. Couples from FANSER households have a greater feeling of togetherness and are working more as a team than before FANSER started to implement. Women are more often part of important household decisions; their opinion and ideas are appreciated by their husbands. Males are increasingly helping women with their tasks in the household and child caring. It is important to include the family as a whole and promote teamwork and understanding. This also helps to empower women.

Ulrike Rippke, advisor for sustainability and monitoring and evaluation, Lusaka

5 CAPACITY BUILDING AND LEARNING AT ALL LEVELS ARE KEY TO LONG-TERM SUCCESS.

Investing in capacity building for local communities, farmers, agriculture and livestock extension workers, health workers and government officials was a cornerstone of the project's strategy. By providing training, resources and support, this focus on strengthening local capacities has played a pivotal role in empowering stakeholders. It has ensured that communities are not only more resilient in the face of challenges, but also better equipped to maintain and build on the progress made, fostering long-term sustainability and self-reliance. This investment has had a lasting impact, enabling local actors to lead initiatives, adapt to changing circumstances, and continue their development independently.

> To me the greatest success of FANSER has been the capacity building we have done for the intermediaries/project volunteers. For all fields of action, there has been so much investment that has gone to the community intermediaries, and this will definitely help sustain all the successes that the project has achieved in the communities.

Mwazanji Phiri Thornicroft, advisor for monitoring and evaluation, Eastern Province

> Looking back, one of FANSER's key successes has been improving beneficiaries' knowledge and practices on crop diversification, which significantly enhanced food and nutrition security at the household level.

Richard Lilamono, advisor for nutrition-sensitive agriculture, Eastern Province

> **Regular and systematic capacity building at all levels, with a focus on intermediaries like facilitators and community leaders, is essential for effective implementation and bridging the gap between project objectives and community engagement.**
>
> Patrick Chikomba, advisor for nutrition-sensitive agriculture, Eastern Province

6 NUTRITION AND RESILIENCE NEED RIGOROUS MONITORING AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT TO REACT TO MONITORING RESULTS.

The importance of robust monitoring, evaluation and adaptive management emerged as a critical factor throughout the lifespan of the project. The project had a baseline, follow up surveys at outcome level every two years, as well as an endline, all of which were implemented by international consultants. Moreover, the monitoring team conducted yearly output assessments to track progress, and towards the end of the project an evaluative study was done. The continuous data collection and systematic analysis not only allowed the team to track progress, but also helped identify areas requiring improvement. These processes enabled timely adjustments to strategies, ensuring that interventions remained relevant and effective in addressing emerging challenges and opportunities. Future initiatives will benefit from embedding flexible and responsive M&E systems to guide decision-making in real time.

> **As an M&E advisor, I conducted numerous assessments that revealed significant improvements, particularly in nutrition and hygiene. These results were driven by the project's effective strategies, ongoing mentorship provided by project volunteers, and the regular monitoring through project assessments which continuously informed our programming.**
>
> Mwazanji Phiri Thornicroft, advisor for monitoring and evaluation, Eastern Province

> **FANSER has carefully evaluated its monitoring data and has thus already learnt lessons and made improvements while implementing, e.g. to step up efforts on gender-specific nutrition activities and to include men in the communication on household nutrition.**
>
> Dr. Heike Hoeffler, FANSER project coordinator, Lusaka

> **Initially, the reporting channels and project indicators were not aligned with the government system. However, through collaboration with government partners, the project worked to harmonise these reporting channels, ensuring greater alignment and efficiency.**
>
> Patrick Kolala, advisor for food and nutrition security, Luapula Province

7 A FLEXIBLE RESPONSE TO CRISIS AND EMERGENCY SITUATIONS HAS TO BE BUILT INTO THE PROJECT TO INCREASE FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY AND TO ENHANCE RESILIENCE AMIDST VULNERABLE TARGET GROUPS, LIKE ZAMBIA'S RURAL POOR.

One of the key lessons learned during the implementation of the FANSER project was the importance of including preparedness and response strategies for critical shocks, such as droughts, floods, epidemics and pandemics in the project design from the outset. These lessons have broad and significant implications for future programming, highlighting the need for flexibility and adaptability in addressing unforeseen challenges. The impact of climate change, including prolonged droughts and frequent flooding, significantly exacerbated food insecurity and rural poverty in Zambia during the FANSER implementation period, creating urgent and complex challenges for local communities. As a result, strategies such as introducing climate-smart agriculture, diversifying crop production and strengthening early warning systems became pivotal in building community resilience. These interventions helped communities better prepare for and respond to climate-related shocks, ultimately contributing to improved food security, even in the face of adversity.

> **"The first major challenge FANSER had to face was the COVID-19 pandemic: The project embarked on sensitisation of partners and beneficiaries to the pandemic, reduced the implementation of project activities, especially in the field, and distributed masks for intermediaries and participants during trainings. Virtual meetings among project staff and with partners became common. The second one was the current drought situation and its impact: The project addressed it by supporting beneficiaries with drought tolerant seeds (cowpeas and sorghum) to improve food and nutrition security.**
>
> Richard Lilamono, advisor for nutrition-sensitive agriculture, Eastern Province

> **"The drought in 2024 was disastrous for rural households. Harvests dropped by around 60% for most households, some even up to 80%. People had already begun reducing the number of meals during the lean season as they waited for the harvest, which ultimately proved insufficient to provide families with a balanced diet. This situation not only severely affected food availability and diversity, but also significantly reduced small incomes and the availability of seeds for the next planting season. To mitigate these effects, we decided to deliver legume seeds to all FANSER households for the 2024/2025 planting season. Additionally, we piloted the promotion of sorghum, a crop that is both more drought-tolerant than maize and far more nutritious.**
>
> Dr. Annette Roth, FANSER regional coordinator, Eastern Province

8 SUSTAINABILITY MEASURES HAVE TO BE ANCHORED IN THE PROJECT RIGHT FROM THE START.

An important lesson from the project was the necessity of embedding sustainability into the project design and implementation strategies from the very beginning. Designing interventions with a focus on long-term impact ensures that the benefits do not fade once the project has ended. This includes building the capacity of local stakeholders, strengthening community structures, and promoting practices that can be maintained independently. Encouraging local ownership, integrating interventions into existing systems, and fostering partnerships with government and community leaders are key to creating lasting change.

> **The biggest lesson that I personally have learned is that sustainability should start from the beginning of the project. When we start a new project, we have to look at it as a bigger picture and focus on implementing ideas in a way that is integrated within the existing systems without creating parallel systems. This would contribute to the sustainability of the interventions and also ensures easy transitioning and anchorage once the project comes to an end.**
>
> Grace Tembo, advisor for monitoring and evaluation, Luapula Province

> **Although FANSER developed a thorough sustainability strategy with a strong emphasis on participatory prioritisation together with important government sectors, I feel that the project set-up did not plan sufficiently for anchorage of approaches and best practices in the partner system – sustainability needs to be considered from the project onset. Once the team-internal sustainability task force was formed in 2022, active sustainability gained higher prominence and yielded good results, such as the appreciation roadshows with Circus Zambia.**
>
> Ulrike Rippke, advisor for sustainability and monitoring and evaluation, Lusaka

> **In future projects, we should focus on creating a sustainability roadmap from the start, as it's crucial for long-term impact. Capacity building will remain key to achieving targets and ensuring sustainability. Engaging stakeholders early on is also essential, as it amplifies the reach and effectiveness of the project.**
>
> Zungukanji Nachilongo, advisor for nutrition-sensitive agriculture, Luapula Province

> **Looking back, I would recommend expanding the strategies for distributing communication products, as this would not only strengthen knowledge among beneficiaries but also contribute to the sustainability of project outcomes by ensuring that key information continues to reach and resonate with the community long after the project's conclusion.**
>
> Given Liswaniso, advisor for nutrition communication, Lusaka

ONE FANSER: The team

MANAGEMENT

DR. HEIKE HOEFFLER

FANSER PROJECT COORDINATOR

"My personal highlight was the FANSER Sustainability Summit in February 2024: the meeting brought together nutrition practitioners from six districts who were committed to improve the nutrition situation in the country and who expressed, against the background of their day-to-day experience, their demands to the national government representatives. I am confident that the intensive and early-initiated sustainability process – together with appreciation roadshows for the nutrition volunteers and the knowledge continuity process with NFNC – has left enough traces and tracks to be followed by future government and non-government implemented nutrition programmes to continue the work.

CHRISTOPHER BUPE MULENGA

FANSER REGIONAL COORDINATOR, LUAPULA PROVINCE

"My personal highlight in the FANSER project was the implementation of the keyhole garden under the nutrition-sensitive agriculture output in 2020, working closely with the Ministry of Agriculture, intermediaries and beneficiaries in Eastern Province. Another highlight was organising a 2023 provincial learning event in Luapula, bringing together implementers of the First 1000 Most Critical Days programme and senior government officials, including the Permanent Secretary.

"I learned that everything is possible in Zambia! Even in a very short period the impossible can be made possible, with high commitment, a great organisational expertise and high motivation! I have seen this several times.

DR. ANNETTE ROTH

FANSER REGIONAL COORDINATOR, EASTERN PROVINCE

LUSAKA TEAM

GLADYS CHIRWA KABAGHE

SENIOR ADVISOR FOR FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

"My personal highlight was when I was appointed the gender focal point for the FANSER project. Not only did the evolution of the FANSER project from being gender sensitive to gender transformative educate and empower me, but also being part of the sector network Rural Development Africa Gender Transformative Approaches Working Group, and having gender platforms for interaction at both GIZ cluster and country level. All these experiences have made me a gender focal point who can contribute effectively to the FANSER project in terms of gender and gender transformative approaches. I have enjoyed and I am still enjoying it up to now, as it also has opened other ways of contributing to this great portfolio!

ULRIKE RIPPKE

ADVISOR FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND MONITORING AND EVALUATION

"My FANSER highlight were the creative appreciation roadshows that we implemented with Circus Zambia, CRS and MoH to recognise and motivate the volunteers in the communities as well as the health facility staff – the events were full of action, laughter and positive energy – unforgettable memories!

GIVEN LISWANISO

ADVISOR FOR NUTRITION COMMUNICATION

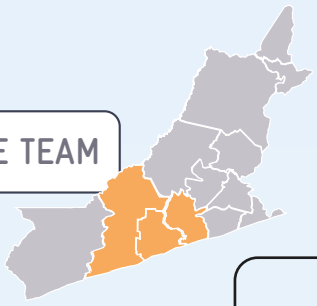
"My personal highlight were the appreciation roadshows, because they showed me the commitment and the cooperation between the FANSER project and the cooperating partners as well as the government. It also showed the commitment of the communities, including intermediaries and traditional leaders as well as beneficiaries.

ANNICKA LAUDENBERG

INTERN

"Apart from the appreciation roadshows (which were definitely one of my highlights as well), I was deeply impressed by the collaboration with the whole FANSER team. Being part of such a dedicated and interdisciplinary team, where every perspective was valued, was truly inspiring. It not only brought great joy but also demonstrated how essential diverse perspectives are for achieving sustainable success.

EASTERN PROVINCE TEAM



MWAZANJI PHIRI THORNICROFT

ADVISOR FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION

"My personal FANSER highlight was witnessing the expansion to four districts and becoming part of the SUN movement. This meant working very closely with the government and other partners on the SUN programme and being recognised as an important partner, which was very fulfilling.

"My personal highlight was seeing beneficiary households gain enhanced knowledge about nutrition through counselling sessions and improving their dietary diversity thanks to training and seed support.

RICHARD LILAMONO

ADVISOR FOR NUTRITION-SENSITIVE AGRICULTURE

PATRICK CHIKOMBA

ADVISOR FOR NUTRITION-SENSITIVE AGRICULTURE

"My key highlight is the high number of intermediaries trained and beneficiaries reached with various trainings, particularly nutrition-sensitive agriculture. Capacity building of senior lead farmers and lead farmers, and the provision of appropriate training materials have contributed to improving their ability to pass on knowledge on nutrition-sensitive agriculture to beneficiaries.

THULASON MTONGA

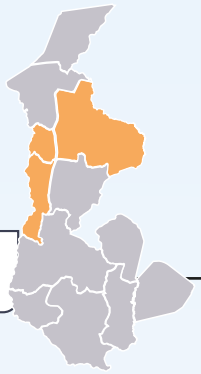
ADVISOR FOR AGRO-ECONOMIC CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

"My personal highlight was the coordination of all the outputs and the activities targeting the same households. This ensured that households were well equipped with different knowledge that contributed to improving their food and nutrition security. I am also glad that my personal ideas were integrated into the project, such as the improved village chicken approach. The feeling of having contributed to ensuring households have this knowledge and capacities is definitely a highlight.

XAVIER TEMBO

TECHNICAL ADVISOR FOR MULTI-SECTOR COORDINATION AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

"The establishment of multi-sector structures at the district and sub-district levels has brought together various sectors onto a single platform, allowing them to address common nutrition issues. As a result, each sector was aware of the activities being carried out by others at any given time. This created an opportunity for the government to work as a unified entity in the fight against malnutrition at the district level.



LUAPULA PROVINCE TEAM

DEAN MPANDE

ADVISOR FOR NUTRITION-SENSITIVE AGRICULTURE

"A personal highlight as a team member was FANSER's remarkable agility. The project successfully expanded the promotion of consumption and production of Mbereshi beans across all intervention districts in Luapula, a significant shift from the initial scope. Furthermore, in ensuring food security, the project proactively started addressing emerging challenges such as implementing interventions to mitigate the impact of cassava brown streak disease in Luapula. This agile approach proved beneficial for the project's success in Luapula.

PATRICK KOLALA

ADVISOR FOR FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

"My key highlight was the successful anchorage of nutrition and hygiene interventions in already existing government structures. This will undoubtedly promote the sustainability of these interventions long after the project concludes.

GRACE TEMBO

ADVISOR FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION

"My personal highlight was when we did our Follow Up Survey in 2022 after implementing two years in Luapula. We saw a lot of improvement regarding our indicators compared to the baseline survey, especially the hygiene indicators, which were originally very low. Seeing that their hard work was actually leading to good results really motivated the team.

BWALYA MUSA

JUNIOR ADVISOR FOR NUTRITION AND GOVERNANCE

"In June 2024, there was training on gender responsive planning for DNCCs. The objective of the training was to equip the respective sector members in the DNCC from Kawambwa, Mwansabombwe and Mwense with knowledge, skills and approaches to gender responsive planning, in order to enable them to integrate gender-related components in their plans. This was very important for me because it is a step towards SDG 5 of Gender Equality.

ZUNGUKANJI NACHILONGO

ADVISOR FOR NUTRITION-SENSITIVE AGRICULTURE

"My personal highlight has been the huge improvement in home gardens by beneficiaries, something that was close to non-existent for households in Luapula. This was largely achieved through the engagements with local leaders, who addressed the challenges of livestock destruction of home gardens by seeing to it that livestock was placed in restricted areas and not left to roam free.

CRS faith. action. results.
CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES

BARBARA CHISANGANO BENSAIA,

PROJECT DIRECTOR FANSER & STRONG PROJECTS

"I have been quite fortunate to be part of FANSER because I have experienced firsthand the possibility of mobilising community members to take action. One of my most treasured moments has been repeatedly witnessing the transformation of countless mothers who joined the project as volunteers. They came to the project as mothers but were transformed into community leaders and agents of change, fully capable and confident in supporting other community members to change their nutrition behaviours, thereby improving nutrition outcomes.

LEVYSON BANDA

PROGRAM MANAGER GIZ FANSER PROJECT, LUAPULA PROVINCE

"My personal highlight over the past ten years was the integration of innovations in the transition of Care Group activities to the Ministry of Health, such as the appreciation roadshows, the awarding of certificates to project intermediaries, and the murals at health facilities. These innovations made the transition process more effective, colourful, and impactful. The branding of murals at health facilities is a significant mark and legacy that the project has left in the communities, serving as a reminder to continue and sustain Care Group activities.

"A personal highlight has been the significant behaviour change among beneficiaries. Seeing thriving backyard gardens, functional toilets, dish racks, and tippy taps was truly inspiring. Key achievements include improved nutrition in children under two and reduced cases of malnutrition and diarrhoea in health facilities across Sinda, Petauke, and Katete. Another standout has been the dedication of volunteers, whose tireless efforts ensured essential messages reached beneficiaries through the Care Group Model, playing a vital role in the project's success.

PEGGY PHIRI

PROGRAM MANAGER GIZ FANSER PROJECT, EASTERN PROVINCE

THE GIZ FANSER TEAM

3ND ROW (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT)

MWAZANJI PHIRI, HEIKE HOEFFLER, CHRISTOPHER MULENGA, PATRICK CHIKOMBA, GIVEN LISWANISO, BWALYA MUSA, MOSES KABWE

2ND ROW (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT)

XAVIER TEMBO, GLADYS KABAGHE, RICHARD LILAMONO, PATRICK KOLALA, ZUNGUKANJI NACHILONGO, THULASON MTONGA, ANNETTE ROTH

1ST ROW (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT)

DEAN MPANDE, ULRIKE RIPPKE, GRACE TEMBO

ONE FANSER