

Zambia Nutrition Newsletter

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**NATIONAL FOOD AND NUTRITION
COMMISSION**



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Editorial

Dear readers,

These are difficult times we are in particularly with the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, now more than ever before, matters of food and nutrition cannot be ignored or let alone sidelined. Malnutrition and COVID-19 are intrinsically linked: Undernutrition may exacerbate COVID-19 and obesity and diet-related non-communicable diseases are associated with more severe outcomes.

In this issue, we highlight how a broad coalition of actors working with the National Food and Nutrition Commission in the “new normal” advanced food and nutrition actions to reach more people in addressing all forms of malnutrition in Zambia.

The Commission through the First 1000 Most Critical Days programme phase 2, a four-years flagship programme which has an overall objective of reducing stunting in Zambia to 25 percent from 35 percent in children under the age of two by 2022 scaled up high impact nutrition specific and nutrition sensitive interventions using a multi-sectoral approach to maximize impact. High impact interventions including Water, Sanitation, Hygiene, Health, Nutrition, Agriculture and Social protection were advanced.

In a bid to strengthen the legal framework on food and nutrition and facilitate effective implementation of Government's policy on food and nutrition, the Government of Zambia enacted the Food and Nutrition ACT No. 3 of 2020.

Together we have achieved a lot. Nevertheless, more investment in food and nutrition programmes and concerted efforts are needed for Zambia to achieve both the global and national goals on food and nutrition. Enjoy reading.

An overview of the First 1000 Most Critical Days Programme phase 2

By Barbara Hamoonga Ndhlovu

In 2010, the Republic of Zambia became an “Early Riser” by joining the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement which is a global movement led by countries, committed to the understanding that good nutrition is the best investment of the future. The political leaders of SUN countries agree to engage all sectors of central and local governments in efforts to improve nutrition.

Zambia came up with the First 1000 Most Critical Days programme and its first phase (MCDP I) was anchored on the National Food and Nutrition Strategic Plan (2011 – 2015) which was developed by the National Food and Nutrition Commission, the convening body to coordinate action on nutrition in Zambia with participation from multiple sectors and with support from development partners.

The four years programme (2014-2017 with 2018 as a transitional year to phase 2) was one of the most ambitious and well-coordinated multi sectoral responses towards reducing malnutrition; stunting in particular, that this country had ever seen. Its primary focus was to reduce the levels of stunting in children below two years of age from 45% to 35% by the year 2016 because the effects of chronic malnutrition are irreversible beyond the first two years of life. 14 Districts were targeted.

At the end of the first phase, stunting was at 35% (2018 ZDHS).

Nevertheless, by internationally accepted standards, the stunting rate was still high. There are basically four categories of stunting rates; low' (<20%); medium' (20–29%); high' (30– 39%); and very high' (\geq 40%).

This led to the development of the First 1000 Most Critical Days programme phase two, (MCDP II) a five-year flagship programme based on Strategic Direction One: Reduction of Stunting in Children Less than Two Years of Age in the National Food and Nutrition Strategic Plan (NFNSP) 2017–2021.

The development of the MCDP II demonstrates Government's continued commitment to roll out the recommended high impact nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions for the prevention and reduction of stunting in the country.

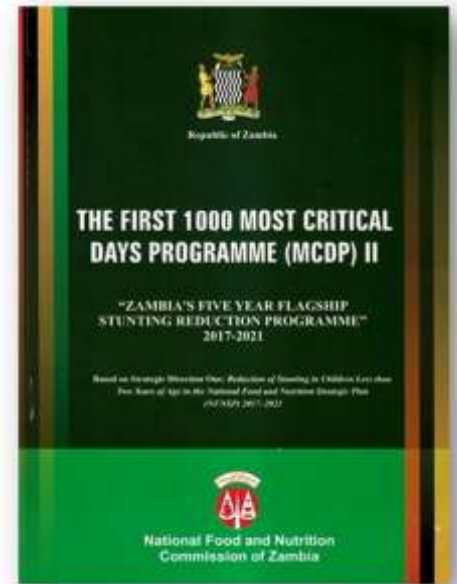
The MCDP II has been informed by lessons learnt from MCDP I, the global priorities and guidelines for action to reduce stunting and the increasing momentum among stakeholders to improve the nutrition landscape in Zambia. The MCDP II becomes the government's blue print to guide strategic programming and action in operationalising Strategic Direction One of the National Food and Nutrition Strategic Plan (NFNSP, 2017 -2021).

This makes the MCDP II fundamental to the realisation of the NFNSP's vision of eliminating all forms of

malnutrition across the Zambian population by 2030. If effectively implemented, the MCDP II is expected to stir collective, collaborative and well harnessed action to accelerate achievement of the 2025 World Health Assembly's (WHA) global target of reducing stunting from the current 40 % to 25% by 2025 in Zambia and target 2.2 of the Sustainable Development Goal on Ending all forms of malnutrition.

To achieve this goal, MCDP II is spinning on three key components, which are:

- Scaling up Cost-Effective, High-Impact Nutrition Interventions that have proven to reduce stunting globally and in Zambia.
- Targeted, Results-Oriented Technical Assistance to the NFNC, key line ministries, SUN Networks and implementing partners (IPs) to ensure effective coordination, management and implementation of nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions directed to community and household level.
- Evidence-Based Programme Implementation, Continuous Learning and Operations



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Research to inform programme management and improvement.

To facilitate well harnessed actions in all the three components, the MCDP II has prioritised six high impact interventions that have demonstrated evidence to reduce stunting if implemented to scale

- i. Promotion of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment;
- ii. Improved Social Behaviour Change Communication Campaign to Reduce Stunting;
- iii. Improved Infant and Young Child Feeding and Caring Practices;
- iv. Improved Maternal and Adolescent Nutrition;
- v. Improved Dietary Diversification through

Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture and

- vi. Improved Access to and Use of Safe Water, Hygiene and Sanitation.

The prioritised high impact interventions will be implemented under five distinct strategic objectives, which are:

- i. Improve Policy, Coordination, Financing and Partnerships;
- ii. Improve Coverage and Quality of Priority High-Impact Nutrition Interventions;
- iii. Improve Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building;
- iv. Improve Advocacy; and
- v. Improve Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, Learning and Adaptive Management.

In terms of target population, MCDP II

prioritizes the high-impact 1000-day window of opportunity, from the conception of a woman's pregnancy to the child's second birthday. Women of reproductive age (15-49 years of age), including adolescent girls (10-19 years of age); Pregnant and lactating women (PLW); and Caregivers of children U' 5 years (0-59 months) of age, with an emphasis on children under 2 years (0-23 months).

MCDP II is being implemented in 42 Districts across the country. 17 Districts are being supported by UNICEF, 13 by USAID Scaling Up Nutrition Technical Assistance (SUN TA), six by German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) and another six by World Food Programme, Care International and Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV).



By Dorothy Chisi

The National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC) in partnership with USAID Scaling Up Nutrition Learning and Evaluation (SUN-LE) has called for improved access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), soap and nutrition among the most vulnerable in Zambia to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

SUN- LE Learning and Evaluation Project, Chief of party, Mathews Onyango said the fast action on promoting hygiene and good nutrition could drastically reduce its impact, especially in vulnerable communities as the COVID-19 pandemic had been unprecedented in its scale and spread in Zambia.

Mr Onyango said such action was especially relevant with the current second wave of COVID -19 pandemic. "We cannot wait any longer. Concerted efforts are needed to expand hygiene and nutrition throughout the country, particularly hand washing with soap and water and promoting diverse diets to reduce

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The Government of Zambia Enacts the Food and Nutrition Act No. 3 of 2020

By Barbara Hamoonga Ndhlovu

In a bid to strengthen the legal framework on food and nutrition and facilitate effective implementation of Government's policy on food and nutrition, the Government of Zambia enacted the Food and Nutrition Act No. 3 of 2020 in October 2020.

In summary, the Act provides for the implementation of a national food and nutrition programme; continues the existence of the National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC) and re-defines its functions; establishes the Board of the Commission and define its functions; re-constitutes the Board of the Commission and re-defines its functions; establishes the Food and Nutrition Coordinating Committee and provides for its functions; repeals and replaces the National Food and Nutrition Commission Act, 1967; and provides for matters connected with, or incidental to, the foregoing.

To expand further, under the new Act, the functions of National Food and Nutrition Commission have been extended. The Commission will among others;

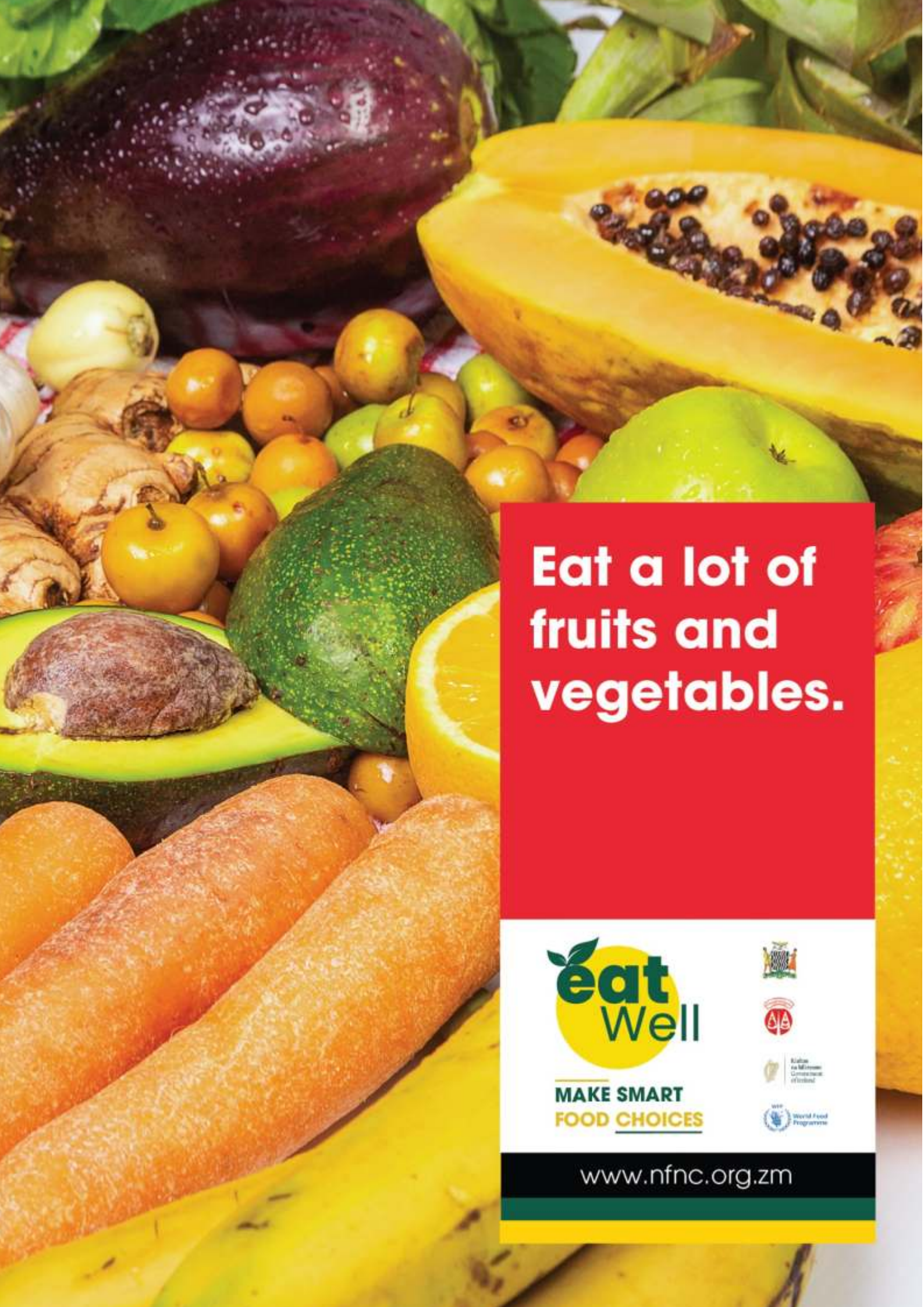
- register nutritionists, except those registered under the Health Professions Act;
- formulate the national food and nutrition programme in

- the Republic;
- coordinate, monitor and evaluate food and nutrition programmes in order to improve delivery and access to food and nutrition services;
- carry out research on food and nutritional matters;
- develop and implement a nutrition surveillance system to monitor the food and nutrition situation in the Republic, particularly for vulnerable groups;
- promote provision of adequate diet in public and private institutions;
- in consultation with the Higher Education Authority, coordinate food and nutrition training, in national food and nutrition programmes;
- register nutrition groups; and
- approve food and nutrition programmes or projects to be undertaken by an institution.

In addition, a Coordinating Committee responsible for the coordination of the multi-sectoral response to food and nutrition programmes in Zambia under

It is envisioned that the new Act will accelerate the achievement of government's aspiration of a well-nourished nation by 2030 as well as international and regional goals on food and nutrition.

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**Eat a lot of
fruits and
vegetables.**



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UNICEF releases funds for borehole rehabilitation in Chinsali District

By Brian Siwisha

UNICEF has released K148,000 to Chinsali Municipal Council in Muchinga Province for rehabilitation of boreholes as part of Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) programme for 2020 budget line.

Chinsali District Municipal Council Water Coordinator, Jephason Kyembe revealed that the released funds were for rehabilitation of 40 boreholes in different wards at a cost of K148,000. He disclosed that the contract was

awarded to China Ghangu Engineering company and the contractor had managed to repair 20 boreholes so far which have since been handed over to the community.

the long-term impact of COVID-19," said Mr Onyango.

He said sustaining such hygiene practices would also contribute to reducing diarrhoea-related diseases that had been linked with high levels of stunting among children under 5 years of age.

And NFNC Acting Executive Director, Musonda Mofu said a recent baseline survey, revealed that vulnerable communities without access to WASH, soap, and proper nutrition were associated with increased risks of contracting COVID-19.

He said that the research further showed that a well-nourished body had a better defence mechanism against diseases.

"I must say that nutrition should also be a front-line defence against COVID-19, as hand washing with water and soap alone is not enough. We need to take a holistic approach to end the COVID-19 pandemic," he stated.

Mr Mofu said the emerging data revealed the importance of nutrition as a mitigation strategy to support immune function amid the COVID-19 pandemic by identifying food groups and key nutrients of importance that may affect the outcomes of respiratory infections.

He said in light of the current COVID-19 pandemic, NFNC and SUN-LE recommended policymakers, civil society organisations, and the private sector to facilitate the provision of safe and clean water, and soap and support interventions to improve nutrition of vulnerable populations.

Mr Mofu also noted that the promotion of hand washing with soap and proper waste disposal with home-based water treatment and safe storage were also key during this time. He also called for the raising of awareness on the construction of recommended pit latrines that adhered to hygiene standards.

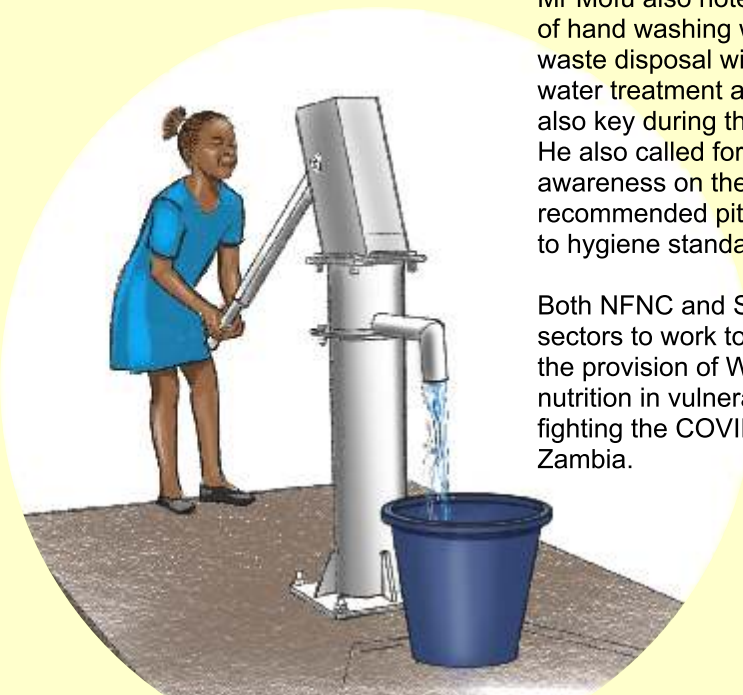
Both NFNC and SUN-LE implored all sectors to work together and prioritise the provision of WASH, soap, and nutrition in vulnerable communities in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic in Zambia.

Another K90, 200 meant for the implementation of Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) in Chief Nkweto's chiefdom had also been released. Mr. Kyembe remarked that all was set to undertake the program which will target all villages in Nkweto's Chiefdom.



"WASH being the key component among the six pillars of reducing malnutrition at every household, it is important to sensitise the community members on the need to care for the water points and ensure good sanitation at every household," said Mr Kyembe.

And District Nutrition Coordinating Committee chairperson, Brenda Silwembe thanked UNICEF for the gesture and assured that the money will be used to ensure that Chief Nkweto's chiefdom is triggered according to the guidelines of CLTS.



the direction of the Vice-President will also be established. Membership will be drawn from key line ministries. The Permanent Secretaries of the ministries responsible for health, agriculture, community development, fisheries and livestock, finance, information and broadcasting, local government, chiefs and traditional affairs, gender, national planning and youth and sport will be the members of the committee, with the Secretary to the Cabinet, as Chairperson and the Permanent Secretary of the Office of

the Vice President responsible for policy analysis and coordination, as Vice-Chairperson. The membership is on a part-time basis.

To enhance governance, a Board whose functions are to approve the policy and strategic plan of the Commission, approve the annual budget estimates and audited financial statements of the Commission, monitor and evaluate the performance of the Commission against budgets and plans, and establish and approve

guidelines and standards for the purposes of this Act will be constituted. The Board members will hold office for a period of three years and may be reappointed for one further period of three years.

It is envisioned that the new Act will accelerate the achievement of government's aspiration of a well-nourished nation by 2030 as well as international and regional goals on food and nutrition.



First ever animated nutrition series in Zambia launched

By Dennis Lohmann

History was made in the nutrition sector in Zambia following the launch of the first-ever animated nutrition television series. The animated movie, "LET ME TELL YOU" which premiered on 1st December 2020 has been produced in Nyanja and Bemba.

The movie is part of the 13 animated series that will be used as part of the behaviour change communication

materials to promote health, nutrition and WASH among other issues under the Scaling Up Nutrition/First 1000 Most Critical Day programme phase 2. Each of the series will have different messaging to enhance behaviour change in children. The public can now access and use the Nyanja movie online- <https://youtu.be/sVdIVagRx04>. The movie, "LET ME TELL YOU" was produced by the German Agency for

International Cooperation (GIZ) in collaboration with Ministry of Health, National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC), UNICEF, USAID Scaling Up Nutrition Technical Assistance (SUN TA). The movie can be accessed, further translated and used by all partners under MCDP II. If you are interested, please contact NFNC directly.



Households in Kaputa have constructed tippy taps for handwashing purposes.

Making Kaputa District Open Defecation Free

By Barbara Hamoonga Ndhlovu

Kaputa District in Northern province has made great strides in becoming an open-defecation free Chiefdom. In 2018, Zambia launched the Open Defecation free Zambia strategy 2018-2025 which underscores the Government's commitment to end Open Defecation by ALL paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations by creating a sustained Social Norm of Open Defecation FREE environment at household level, in learning institutions, Health Care Facilities and public spaces fostering public health and nutrition.

It is poised that at least 4.5 million people will need to stop the practice between 2018 and 2030. Nevertheless, 1% of people in urban

areas, with a majority of them living in low income areas and 25% of the rural population are still practicing Open Defecation. The 2018 Zambia Demographic Health Survey reveals that 1 in 10 households have no sanitation facility or openly defecate.

Open defecation is significantly associated with stunting and underweight among children. Diseases like diarrhea associated with poor sanitation can lead to loss of a lot of fluids and lack of appetite for food.

As a result, it gives rise to many cases of malnutrition in children.

Kaputa District is among the three Districts with the highest stunting rate in the country with a figure of 39.5%. Nchelenge and Samfya Districts in Luapula province have 43.1% and 43% respectively.

The Ministry of Water Development, Sanitation and Environmental Protection working with Kaputa Town Council has been implementing sanitation activities of stopping open defecation in Kaputa District specifically in Kaputa and Mukupa Katandula Chiefdoms since 2014 with support from UNICEF.

These activities were centered on Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) which is an innovative methodology for mobilising communities to completely eliminate open defecation. Communities are facilitated to conduct their own appraisal and analysis of open defecation and take their own action to

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SUN TA has trained community champions and handed them bicycles to enable them reach households with sanitation and hygiene messages.

become open defecation free.

Community members in the villages were triggered in order to stop open defecation. In addition, a range of activities were put into action such as training of the Community Champions who are the foot soldiers conducting the actual triggering, orientation of Station Action Groups in Community Led Total Sanitation, District Water, Sanitation and Hygiene orientations and follow ups /monitoring.

In 2019, Kaputa Town Council in collaboration with Scaling Up Nutrition Technical Assistance (SUN TA) increased the intensity of the activities in Kaputa District.

Kaputa Chiefdom benefitted from these activities and currently Kaputa Town Council is conducting a verification exercise before the Chiefdom can be officially declared open defecation free.

Kaputa Chiefdom has a total of 119 villages and all (100%) have been captured with a total population of 74,335 people with 35,414 males representing 47.6% and 37,815 females representing 50.8%. The Chiefdom has 13221 households with 13221 toilets (100%).

CSO-SUN sponsors nutrition awards

By Nsungwe Nchimunya Mulendema



The University of Zambia (UNZA) Department of Food Science and Nutrition held an awards ceremony on November 5th 2020 to celebrate the best performing students in the different fields.

CSO-SUN was in attendance and sponsored the awards for Food Science and Technology, and Human Nutrition.

CSO-SUN has a running memorandum of understanding with the University of Zambia to support the Food Science and Nutrition Department students with advocacy training by providing internship placement to the best performing students.

The top performing students were given smart phones and internship placement at CSO-SUN. The partnership between CSO-SUN and UNZA allows CSO-SUN to groom nutrition advocates equipped with modern and efficient lobby and advocacy skills that will enable them to champion the prioritization of nutrition on the national development agenda.



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Seated, third from left, Central Province Deputy Permanent Secretary with members of the planning team in Mumbwa district.

SUN TA supports multi-sectoral Planning in 13 Districts for 2021

By Reginald Ntomba

As 2020 drew to a close, the 13 districts supported by the Scaling Up Nutrition Technical Assistance (SUN TA) developed their 2021 workplans and budgets.

The National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC) led the planning and budgeting process with District Nutrition Coordinating Committees (DNCCs) comprising Government ministries, while SUN TA provided financial and technical support to the exercise which ran from 2nd to 13th November.

The activities planned for included all the thematic areas supported by SUN TA which are: Health and Nutrition; Water Sanitation and Hygiene

(WASH); Agriculture, Livelihoods and crosscutting issues such as social and behavior change communication, communication and advocacy, and monitoring and evaluation.

The final plans were reviewed by NFNC and SUN TA and were submitted for approval to USAID in December in readiness for implementation in January.

SUN TA is funded by USAID to provide technical assistance to the Government of Zambia in the implementation of the SUN programme.

The project operates in 13 districts across four provinces, namely: Central Province (Chibombo, Mumbwa, Kabwe and Kapiri Mposhi); Copperbelt Province (Ndola and Kitwe), Northern Province (Kasama, Mbala, Luwingu and Kaputa); and Luapula Province (Nchelenge, Mansa and Samfya).



CSO-SUN supports Inter-University National Development Conference

By Nsungwe Nchimunya Mulendema

On 5th November 2020, CSO-SUN and The National Youth Network on SDGs partnered with University of Zambia Development Studies Association (UNZADESA) to host the Inter-University National Conference on Development under the theme "Contemporary Issues Affecting Development in Zambia" which sought to bring to light prevailing issues critical to development.

The conference brought together youths from around Lusaka and experts speaking to different developmental themes such as governance, entrepreneurship and food security. Read more- <https://bit.ly/3ICXIFD>

Cassava

A timely upcoming complementary staple in zambia

Manasseh Manyame

There are a lot of uncertainties in the global Food supplies following the emergence of the Covid 19 Global Pandemic adding to the adverse climate change effects the world is already grappling with. Zambia, like any other developing nation, is likely to suffer Food price crises and Food Insecurity more markedly than the first world countries would in an event that the current trend remains constant.

A nation's Food Security status is principally determined by assessing the adequacy of its staple. For generations maize has, arguably, been the number one staple in Zambia mainly for perceptual rather than founded objective reasons. The staple in question (maize) suffers an unbearable strain due to the competing needs among which it is split. A considerable portion of the maize harvested in Zambia is channeled into production of snacks such as corn puffs, livestock feed manufacturing, and some of it into the alluring Central and East African Market. Maize crop yield in Zambia over the past few years has been seriously

hampered by the unpredictable rainfall patterns due to climate change and the situation could be exacerbated by the coming in on Covid 19. Exploring alternative staple crops becomes an interventional imperative. Cassava has been trailing far behind maize as a number two staple in Zambia despite having a myriad of unsung positive nutritional and economic attributes.

It is undeniably true that Cassava is limiting in certain vitamins and amino acids like Methionine and Cysteine in comparison to staples like wheat and maize. Amino acids are building blocks of proteins and vital functions they play in the human body. Methionine, for instance, is an essential amino acid meaning it cannot be made in the human body and has to be sourced from our diet. Some of its (Methionine's) major functions are the protection of the human liver from damage, cancer prevention, synthesis of Cysteine another important Sulphur containing amino acid, Urinary Tract Infection prevention, enhancing the immune functions, body detoxification and

prevention of heart diseases due to plaque formation in blood vessels.

Cysteine can be converted in to a chief anti-oxidant – very cardinal in cancer prevention. There are, of course, many other benefits such as formation and maintenance of healthy nail, skin and bone tissues due to the Sulphur content in these amino acids.

Cassava, however, is naturally endowed with significantly higher Calcium and phosphorus and vitamin C than maize though a good amount of the C vitamin is lost during the drying of the tuber. As may be widely known, Calcium and Phosphorus are key nutrients in good tooth and bone health.

It must be appreciated that no single starch can be depended upon for proteins, fat and vitamins. A staple dish will always go with an accompanying relish and as such the nutritional shortfall are met for accordingly.

Another possible reason why the adoption of the starch in question

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(cassava) as a staple has been an uphill battle is that some people find the elastic chewiness of cassava unpleasent and just the density of it a bit too filling and heavy for an average stomach. Furthermore, the alcohol-like 'aroma' of cassava flour makes it less palatable to some.

This poses a challenge to Food Scientists and Nutritionists to explore ways of presenting cassava in a form that will be appealing to the taste buds and the gut. One way is to make

cassava noodles – an unexploited but potentially viable option. It will not only enhance the palatability of staple but also make it incomparably less bulky and less filling and more important make up for the critical vitamins and amino acid deficiencies in cassava as eggs are major ingredient in making noodles. Eggs contain histidine, isoleucine, leucine, lysine, methionine, phenylalanine, threonine, tryptophan and valine. These amino acids are present in a pattern that matches very closely the

pattern the human body needs, so the egg is often a standard of measure for other protein foods.

This is certainly a boon in upholding Zambia's campaign to end hunger and ensure all people have access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round in accordance with the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2) to which she is a signatory.



Mumbwa District benefits from Citrus Plantation initiative

By Hope Kavuka

The National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC) and Program Against Malnutrition (PAM) in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture have embarked on a citrus plantation exercise in Mumbwa District of Central Province.

The initiative aims at promoting consumption of citrus fruits which are a rich source of nutrients such as vitamin C, flavonoids and fiber needed for a healthy body. The citrus plantation which is the first of its kind has been designated for Nambala area in chief Moono's chiefdom and the initial 130 plants have been planted.

Mumbwa District National Food and Nutrition Commission Coordinator, Hope Kavuka, said the project is

targeting expectant mothers, lactating women and children below the age of two.

Speaking during the launch of the plantating exercise, Ms Kavuka explained that the variety of plants being planted are expected to start giving the community fruits by next year.

"The project is targeting expectant mothers, lactating women and children below the age of two. The plants are expected to start giving the community some fruits next year," Ms Kavuka said.

Meanwhile, Josiah Soko an Agriculture Extension Officer, said the area consists of 32 farmer groups and once fully actualised the project is

expected to benefit over 900 farmers. Mr Soko said the project is premised on the concept of running agriculture as a business which empowers farmers economically while deriving the nutritional benefits as well.

And speaking on behalf of the beneficiary community, Joseph Moombe, thanked the two institutions for coming up with such an initiative of Citrus tree planting in the area.

Mr Moombe observed that once the project is fully actualized, it will indirectly and directly improve the livelihood of the people in the community economically and health wise.



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for guidance
on diets.**



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Inspiring Stories from Western Province

By Mainza Kawanu, Communications for key Partnerships Consultant, UNICEF Zambia

When her 3-year-old son tugs persistently at the chitenge cloth wrapped around her waist, mother Sholo Bishone picks him up and pacifies him by handing him a wild indigenous fruit known as Mahuluhulu in Lozi or Monkey Orange in English. The juice of this fruit is rich in zinc, iron and vitamin C and because of these properties is used in porridge to increase its nutritional value.

In 2017, single mother Sholo was a beneficiary of the 2013 -2017 Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) phase 1 programme in Kalabo District, Western Province, receiving two goats (male and female) when her son was 7 months old. The goat milk helped nourish her son as she stopped breast feeding, made porridge for him and the family, and has since added meat to their diet as the livestock multiplied.

As Phase 2 (Dec 2019-Jan 2023) of the SUN programme gets underway in her home district, her goats are alive and well, and the family is already on a firmer nutritional footing.

“I was very happy and excited to have received the two goats and six chickens after I heard about the pass-on project through the Ward Nutrition Coordinating Committee,” she said. “Before that, I had no source of income. But through the livestock, I have been able to send my oldest child to school as I was able to sell two goats after they started breeding and raise capital for inputs for my garden which is also flourishing,” she said. Sholo after careful management now has ten goats even after giving away two of them to another beneficiary to sustain the practice in their ward.

The 1000 Most Critical Days Programme Phase 1, through the Scaling Up Nutrition Programme, worked with the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services in the distribution of goats to households who have children below the age of two years, and pregnant and lactating women.

According to Ms. Inonge Nosiku who is Kalabo District SUN Coordinator, SUN phase 1 utilized and enhanced multi-sectoral approach to scale up nutrition in the district. “Including traditional and local leadership really made a significant impact within the communities especially in driving social behavioural change towards nutrition. We look forward to a second phase that will continue to build this coordination and include sub-districts in planning, consultative and feedback processes,” she said.



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Village Banking

In the neighbouring Mongu district, we met Mutumba Kaiwala of Namushakende community who received two goats under SUN Phase 1, and also joined a village banking scheme under the programme. She entered the programme as a grandmother nursing a two-year-old grandson when her adult daughter left for studies. Through SUN, Mutumba was trained in how to prepare various types of foods and porridge enriched with nutrients to ensure proper growth of her grandson.

“After my goats began to reproduce, I joined village banking and got a loan to scale up my business,” she says. “I pumped that money into buying and reselling of fish and this is the fish you can see here today on this table. Our livelihood as a family has really improved as we now have more than one income stream.”

Village banking has many benefits and if managed well and used properly can move people from poverty, reduce undernutrition and

build sustainable livelihoods.

“Grandmothers and mothers are an important driving force in community development,” says Mutumba. “Once they are empowered, even the nutritional status of the community changes. From the help I have received, I am now able to ensure my family has three nutritious meals a day,” she added with a smile on her face.

As we discuss, another member of the village banking initiative, Nyama Kanyela joins the discussion.

“I just want to say that I share her sentiments on empowering the grandmothers in communities. If you go around the villages, you will find that grandmothers are primary caregivers for one reason or another,” she says. Nyama was given two goats which have now increased to 10. When she joined the village banking scheme, she obtained a loan to boost her trade in tomatoes.

Thanks to the work under SUN I in districts such as Mongu and Kalabo, the national prevalence of stunting has fallen to 35% in 2018 for children under 5, and by 29% in Western province.

The Good Food Logo

By Barbara Hamoonga Ndlovu



The Good Food logo seeks to encourage local manufacturers to produce healthier foods for the local population. This will help consumers to make an informed decisions to make healthier food choices and encourage companies to develop or reformulate foods to have a healthier food composition.

The Good Food Logo will be implemented in partnership with the National Food and Nutrition Commission of Zambia, Zambia Bureau of Standards, Scaling Up Nutrition Business Network, United Nations World Food Programme and other partners.

SUN TA supports District Communication and Advocacy Technical Working Groups



By Reginald Ntomba

In October 2020, the Scaling Up Nutrition Technical Assistance (SUN TA) supported the National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC) to form and orient District Communication and Advocacy Technical Working Groups (C&A TWGs) in the 13 SUN TA-supported districts.

The TWGs are important in the implementation of communication, advocacy and social and behavior

change (SBC) activities to improve nutrition behaviors and consequently reduce stunting among children under two in line with the overall objective of Phase Two of the First 1000 Most Critical Days Programme (MCDP II).

The TWGs comprise representatives from government ministries, civil society, faith-based organizations and other implementing agencies in

respective districts. The orientation included presentations on the overall Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN)/MCDP II programme in Zambia, the role of SUN TA in supporting the SUN, the terms of reference for the TWGs, and the key SBC issues to be addressed based on the 2019 SUN baseline data and the SUN TA SBC Strategy recently approved by USAID, the funders of SUN TA. The TWGs are sub-committees of the District Nutrition Coordinating Committee (DNCC) and will therefore work closely with implementing line ministries. The immediate task of the TWGs was to plan for communication, advocacy and SBC activities to be implemented in 2021.

The districts covered were Kasama, Mbala, Luwingu, Kaputa, Nchelenge, Mansa, Samfya, Mumbwa, Chibombo, Kabwe and Kapiri Mposhi, Ndola and Kitwe.



Members of Mbala District Communication and Advocacy Technical Working Groups pose for a photo with Facilitators from NFNC and SUN TA

Voices from the field



NFNC Coordinator with SUN beneficiaries showcasing oranges

by Kalumba Chishipula

Mervis Litwayi of Kakoma ward in Mwinilunga District aged 36-year-old is a mother of 5 children. She tells her story of how she has benefited from the Household Citrus Production initiative under the First 1000 Most Critical Days programme. The initiative aims to demonstrate that household citrus production can increase micronutrient (for example, vitamins) accessibility among pregnant and breastfeeding mothers living in the most remote places of Zambia.

“In 2015, the Ministry of Agriculture taught us about the nutritional value of citrus plants and how to manage them at household level. In 2016, I received an orange seedling and planted it near my house for easy accessibility. I am very delighted to have harvested eight buckets of oranges within a period of two years, five buckets for home consumption and the other three for sale. The plant has really changed my life in that my children are able to consume the fruits which are good for health and the income generated from the sales is used to pay for their school fees”.

Mrs Litwayi is one of the 127 beneficiaries targeted under the Household Citrus Production initiative in Kakoma ward.

Another beneficiary in Kakoma ward is Swana Fidess. The 28-year-old mother of four children tells her story: “In 2016, I received banana suckers from the SUN programme and planted in my backyard for easy accessibility. I have really benefited from this initiative as I have harvested more than 6 bunches of

bananas within a period of 2 years and have never sold anything because the fruits are sweet and my children enjoy eating them”. In 2016, the Ministry of Agriculture under the Scaling Up Nutrition Fund Support empowered the targeted population in Mwinilunga with 1000 varieties of across the 6 chiefdoms as one way of promoting food diversification in increasing micronutrient accessibility in the district. The Ministry of agriculture targeted beneficiaries who received initial training in citrus production in 2015.

Kakoma Ward in particular received a total number of 127 plants (60 Orange Seedlings, 34 Banana suckers and 33 Guava Plants).

Kakoma Ward is among the 19 scaling up nutrition wards implementing the First 1000 Most Critical Days Programme in Mwinilunga District. It is one of the farthest wards in the district located about 197 Kilometers away from the Central Business District (CBD).



SUN beneficiary, Swana Fidess from Kakoma Ward showcasing her banana field



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to stay
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SUN LE project facilitates use of data in workplan development

By John Manda



District Officers conducting a Data Interpretation session in Mumbwa District

USAID funds the Scaling Up Nutrition Learning and Evaluation (SUN LE) project in Zambia to generate evidence and support overall learning and adaptive management by providing survey, research, evaluation, and dissemination services to the GRZ's SUN programme. The SUN LE project aims to contribute to improved nutrition through generating the evidence needed to design high impact interventions aiming at reducing stunting.

In 2020, SUN LE conducted data dissemination and use workshops across the SUN programme's 30 priority districts. During these workshops, districts developed annual workplans based on the data (i.e., SUN LE data, national surveys, programme reports, etc) and used the findings to identify priority interventions and target audiences. A total of 529 officers participated in the workshops.

Participants included staff from

relevant government line ministries (Health; Water Development, Sanitation, and Environmental Protection; Agriculture; Fisheries and Livestock; Community Development and Social Services; Chiefs and Traditional Affairs), Local Government, General Education, and implementing partners (SUN Technical Assistance Project (SUN TA), GIZ and UNICEF). SUN LE and all SUN stakeholders believe that implementing evidence-based interventions will enhance the SUN programme outcomes by helping to improve behaviors, practices, and infrastructural development necessary to reduce stunting at the household level.

In 2021, the SUN LE project will continue to work with implementing partners and other stakeholders to track how workplans and interventions developed based on the data have helped to improve SUN programming and nutrition outcomes (for households) in the 30 priority districts.

SUN TA set to increase access to water

By Reginald Ntomba

In a bid to increase access to clean and safe water to target communities, Scaling Up Nutrition Technical Assistance (SUN TA), working with the government, has started rehabilitating broken down boreholes and drilling new ones.

Provision of clean and safe water is key to preventing diarrheal diseases, which are a leading cause of malnutrition in Zambia. The boreholes will benefit health centres, schools and communities.

Once all the works are complete, the water will be tested for safety before the boreholes are officially commissioned and handed over to the communities for use.

Ahead of the drilling and rehabilitation, SUN TA worked with the Ministry of Water Development, Sanitation and Environment Protection to train government staff in water quality monitoring and testing.





“Take advantage of native fruits, veggies”

By Dorothy Chisi

The National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC) has called for more uptake of local nutritious foods in fighting all forms of malnutrition in Zambia particularly with the onset of the rainy season.

NFNC Acting Executive Director Musonda Mofu said good nutrition was a human right.

Mr Mofu observed that in Zambia only 23 per cent of children received an adequately diverse diet.

“Consequently, 12 per cent of children are underweight, four per cent acutely malnourished and nine per cent are born underweight,” said Mr Mofu in a press statement.

He said the rainy season offered the country access to a variety of seasonal foods which were nutritious

in addressing all forms of malnutrition which was a health concern.

Mr Mofu said the NFNC therefore recommends the establishment of vegetable gardens which would provide families with healthy vegetables such as 'chibwabwa, katapa, bondwe, impwa, lumanda and kalembula'.

He said at national level, nutrition had been prioritized in the Seventh National Development Plan (SNDP) which clearly outlines nutrition as a key contributor to human development in order to have a productive workforce and healthy population.

“In line with the 7th National Development plan, we are implementing the Scaling Up Nutrition programme in line with the broader

government framework of ensuring Universal Coverage of health and nutrition services. This programme is aimed at addressing stunting and other forms of malnutrition in Zambia,” he said.

Mr Mofu has since implored the local population to increase uptake of local nutritious foods in alleviating all forms of malnutrition in Zambia in order to attain governments' aspiration of having a well-nourished population by the year 2030.

He noted that better nutrition was related to improved infant, child, maternal and community health, stronger immune systems, safer pregnancy and childbirth, lower risk of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease and longevity.

Community volunteers for improved nutrition

By Mainza Kawanu

Part of the work set-up in SUN Phase 1, which continues in Phase 2, is the training and support of community nutrition volunteers who play a key role in Care Groups. Care Groups are volunteer cadres under the Ministry of Health, who ultimately report to healthy facility staff or a community health assistant. In Mongu District, we meet Lubasi Mukelebai, who was assigned a community volunteer, Marjory Sililo, when an antenatal visit picked up that she was expecting twins.

Today we meet Lubasi at the Mother and Child Clinic at Sefula Health

Centre, where she's come for a regular growth monitoring check-up. “I gave birth to them prematurely at 7 months,” says Lubasi. “My counsellor [Marjory] who had been with me from the time I was pregnant taught me on the importance of infant and young child feeding practices including the importance of exclusive breastfeeding for my babies. I learned how this helps in the prevention of diarrhoea, abdominal pains and cramps which can cause a lot of restlessness and distress for them. Because of her care and consistency in home care visits, my children were never undernourished and have never been

admitted to hospital for any illness since the time we were discharged at birth,” says Lubasi.

The SUN programme collaborates closely with health facilities, community health workers and community volunteers to deliver appropriate maternal nutritional assessment, counselling and effective referral services. These services connect women to essential community and facility-based health and nutrition services and ensure follow-up care and counselling within the household.

Report on the recipe for success: how policy-makers can integrate water, sanitation and hygiene into actions to end malnutrition.

By **Barbara Hamoonga Ndhlovu**

The report analyses the approaches governments (ten countries were included: Cambodia, Chad, Ethiopia, Ghana, Laos, Mali, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria and Zimbabwe) and donors are taking to cross-integrate nutrition and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) within their nutrition and WASH national policies and plans. The report aims to provide a 'recipe', or toolkit, to stimulate debate and discussion of the options and opportunities to bring together WASH and nutrition policies and programmes.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a transformative agenda. To achieve them will require links between goals and aspects of sustainable development, and between domestic and international actions.

Multi-sectoral interventions are essential to address each of the underlying determinants of malnutrition, which include: WASH; agriculture; care practices; health; education; social protection; and other socio-economic factors. Improving any one of these underlying determinants in isolation is unlikely to significantly reduce stunting and wasting if other direct and underlying determinants are not also improved.

“Nutrition specific actions have a potential for reducing up to 20% of the under-five stunting. The remaining 80% should be tackled by nutrition sensitive actions. One of the most important of these 'nutrition sensitive' interventions is WASH – water, sanitation and hygiene.” European Commission, water and sanitation policy 7.”

The report recommends:
National governments should:

- Establish effective cross-ministerial coordination mechanisms championed at the

highest level by heads of state, to support the sharing of information and joint planning and implementation of policies.

- Ensure cross-ministerial coordination structures incorporate the meaningful participation of, and consultation with, civil society and affected communities.
- Ensure up-to-date national WASH and nutrition plans and progress reports are easily accessible online, to allow civil society to monitor progress and hold governments to account.

Nutrition policy-makers and practitioners should:

- Prioritise nutrition-sensitive WASH interventions and include specific objectives to improve WASH within their nutrition plans and policies. Clear entry points to integrate WASH and nutrition include: behaviour change promotion; improving provision of WASH in healthcare facilities and schools; and co-locating interventions to areas with lowest WASH access and highest prevalence of undernutrition.

WASH policy-makers and practitioners should:

- Increase the 'nutrition-sensitivity' of policies and programmes, including by: targeting geographical areas where undernutrition is most prevalent; prioritising women and children; and including

nutrition-relevant interventions, such as improving WASH in health and nutrition centres.

- Donor agencies should: Promote and fund multi-sectoral approaches, and incentivise more effective WASH and nutrition integration in humanitarian and development contexts.
- Prioritise flexible financing, capacity-building and convening power to support national governments to bring ministries and stakeholders together to develop joint nutrition and WASH programmes.
- Make financial commitments to nutrition-sensitive WASH a key priority of global and regional nutrition initiatives, including the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition, the Nutrition for Growth commitment-making process, and the forthcoming African Development Bank multi-sectoral nutrition action plan.
- Work with countries and institutions, and other sectoral teams internally, to document and share experiences to strengthen the evidence base to enable the scaling up of successful approaches.

Technical partners, civil society and global partnerships should:

- Support government-led efforts, and champion a learning-focused approach that incentivises governments to exchange challenges and successes.
- Support policy formulation, budget allocation and strengthening of the accountability loop, especially by civil society.

Attribution-

https://washmatters.wateraid.org/sites/g/files/jkxoof256/files/The_recipe_for_success_English.pdf

Ministry of Community Development and Social Services commemorates World Food Day

By Wilbroad Zimba

Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS) was among different stakeholders that attended the World Food Day commemoration organized by Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture. The commemoration was held at Pamodzi Hotel in Lusaka on 16th October, 2020 under the theme "Grow, Nourish, Sustain. Together; Our Actions Are Our Future".

As part of the build up to the event, the Ministry showcased various products and services provided to the vulnerable members of the communities through the National Agriculture and Information Services recordings. In addition, radio and television documentaries earmarked for community radios and televisions in various parts of the country were made.

Furthermore, the Ministry scheduled television interviews with the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) where the Director- Community Development, Mr Cosmas Lukupulo was invited to add a voice in interpreting the theme based on the Ministry's mandate of integrating nutrition intervention in social protection programmes.

The interview sessions highlighted the role that good nutrition plays in alleviating poverty. Beneficiaries of empowerment programmes such as Social Cash Transfer as well as Food Security Pack also gave testimonies on how their lives had been transformed in terms of food and nutrition security.

The climax of the World Food Day commemoration was earmarked with exhibitions of seed varieties of cereals, legumes and other crops as well as fertilizers that promote conservation farming which are given to vulnerable yet viable farmers in line with activities being undertaken to enhance Household food Security.

The World Food Day commemoration attracted various stakeholders such as the seed companies and farmers who exhibited their products. Some of the farmers were awarded with farming In-Puts for their contribution in the fight against vulnerability and poverty.

The participation in the commemoration of the World Food Day by the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services was of great importance especially that it contributes to one of the Pillars of the Seventh National Development Plan of Poverty (7NDP), the Vulnerability Reduction Cluster.

The Health Diet campaign



By Barbara Hamoonga Ndhlovu

The Health Diet Campaign aims to create demand for healthier food and equip people with knowledge to make the right food choices by raising awareness on the importance of a healthy diet, increasing the consumption of nutritious, diverse and locally available foods, increasing the availability nutritious products and supporting the private sector to invest in nutrition.

The campaign will be conducted in partnership with the National Food and Nutrition Commission of Zambia, Zambia Bureau of Standards, Scaling Up Nutrition Business Network, United Nations World Food Programme and other partners.





GLZ sponsors Show me your Keyhole Garden Award Ceremony 2020

By Dennis Lohmann

On the 11th November and 12th November 2020, the District Agriculture Coordinators' (DACO) offices of Petauke and Katete Districts respectively in cooperation with the FANSER project, implemented by German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development hosted the award ceremony for the Show me your Keyhole Garden competition 2020. The competition concluded a successful Local Subsidy between FANSER and the DACOs offices in Katete and Petauke Districts.

and beneficiaries and increase the visibility of the concept in the regions. During the award ceremony four exceptionally constructed and managed Keyhole Gardens per district were awarded in two categories:

- First, second and third place for Lead Farmers in a single competition
- First place for the Senior Lead Farmer and the Lead Farmers under her/his supervision in a group competition



During the cooperation, more than 6.000 households were trained on the construction and management of Keyhole Gardens as well as around 14.000 households on sustainable cowpea production. To ensure the sustainability of all FANSER activities, the trainings were planned, organized and conducted together with the Ministry of Agriculture in the districts. As a delivery model, the governmental extension services with Block and Camp Extension Officers, Senior Lead Farmers and Lead Farmers were trained as intermediaries.

The event was concluded by a joint field visit of members of the Ministry of Agriculture in Lusaka, Chipata and the Districts, GIZ employees, representatives from National Food and Nutrition Commission and District Administrations.

The Show me your Keyhole Garden Competition was planned to strengthen the training activities, support team-building aspects between project staff, intermediaries



Winners in Petauke District with representatives from the District Agriculture Coordinators Offices - Ministry of Agriculture and GIZ

Pass on initiative successful in Zambezi District

By Frank Luya

In a bid to enhance nutrition security in Zambezi District, the National Food and Nutrition Commission working with the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock introduced the small livestock pass on initiative in Zambezi District in 2016 under the Scaling Up Nutrition programme.

The pass on initiative of goats aims to increase consumption of high-quality protein among pregnant women, lactating women and children under the age of 5 in rural communities of Zambezi District in addressing malnutrition.

In the east bank of Zambezi district is Mpidi/Kakong'a ward and the west bank is Mwange/ Nyawanda ward, these communities have high poverty levels which make it almost impossible for them to access high-quality protein. It is indicated that, it is rare for the households to include meat or milk in their daily diets. It is however, very important to promote small livestock at household level to improve consumption of animal proteins.

Thanks to Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN)

programme that introduced the pass on initiative in the wards in 2016. 59 goats were given as initial stock to 27 beneficiaries in Kakong'a ward. Each beneficiary received a billy and nanny goat to enhance multiplication.

By December 2020, 256 goats had been produced and 83 households had benefited. Apart from the animals improving the nutrition status of the

beneficiaries, they are also a source of manure to grow vegetables which are rich in vitamins and minerals.

The District is also receiving support Ministry of Community Development and Social Services in uplifting the living standard of the local people through promotion of household food security.



The role of gender equality in fighting malnutrition in Zambia

By Barbara Ndhlovu

Tackling malnutrition requires mainstreaming gender throughout programming in key sectors implementing nutrition activities (FAO, 2013). Adequately addressing gender-based constraints and utilising gender related opportunities across the entire programme cycle contributes to better results in nutrition outcomes including reduction in mortality and stunting.

Higher levels of gender inequality are associated with higher levels of both acute and chronic undernutrition due to the strong linkage between gender and the intervention areas for addressing nutrition problems and the significant influence of gender in the priority sectors of agriculture, health,

education, community development and WASH (FAO, 2012).

Existing global evidence show correlation between women's economic productivity and their empowerment to access and use resources for child and family care (World Development Report Gender Equality and Development, and; Smith, et al, 2000; Webb, et al, 2012; World Bank 2012). It is reported that if women had the same access to resources as men malnutrition could be reduced by up to 17 percent (FAO, 2011).

In Zambia, women's status is affected by a number of factors including intra-

household decision making; access and control over incomes and resources; lack of access to extension services, financial services, technology, inputs, markets and information. Economic empowerment is one of the interventions that have shown to increase women's ability to influence household decisions and resource allocations relating to food, health and care.

In Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) in Zambia, gender sensitive programming has been embraced in all key line ministries and implementing partners in order to adequately harness engagement of both men and women in the programme interventions and to build women's skill in leadership, livelihood interventions, child care practices, decision making and control over resources with support from the male counterparts.

#WorldAIDSDay



NFNC commemorates World AIDS Day.

By Barbara Hamoonga Ndhlovu

National Food and Nutrition Commission calls on decision makers and citizens to rally for “global solidarity” to maintain essential HIV services in commemorating World AIDS Day.

On World AIDS Day celebrated on 1st December 2020, the National Food and Nutrition Commission of Zambia called on decision makers and citizens to rally for “global solidarity” to maintain essential HIV services for a healthy nation.

The global theme for 2020 World AIDS Day was, “Global solidarity, resilient services” which aimed to call to focus on vulnerable groups who are already at risk and expand coverage to children and adolescents.

Zambia has a generalized HIV epidemic fueled by structural factors, gender and social norms, unequal distribution of wealth and unemployment. The Zambia Demographic Health survey (2018) reveals that overall, 11.1% of adults

age 15-49 in Zambia are HIV positive. HIV prevalence is higher among women than men (14.2% versus 7.5%).

A massive effort is needed to cushion the impact of the epidemic, and nutritional care and support should be integral elements of any action taken. The National Food and Nutrition Commission therefore recommended the scaling up of nutrition care and support to people living with HIV/AIDS by; Increasing awareness on recommended nutrition interventions for people living with HIV/AIDS; How to manage interaction between food and drugs used to treat HIV; consumption of a variety of local nutritious foods and recommended nutrition interventions for people living with HIV/AIDS.

National Food and Nutrition Commission Acting Executive Director, Mr. Musonda Mofu said, “People living with HIV have an increased risk of malnutrition because

of reduced food intake, reduced nutrient absorption, and reduced nutrient utilization.

Malnutrition weakens the immune system, which worsens the effects of HIV, which increases the likelihood of malnutrition. Because poor nutrition increases susceptibility to opportunistic infections, it may speed up the progression from HIV to AIDS.

To ensure the wellbeing of people living with HIV, it is cardinal for people living with HIV/AIDS to receive care and support services on nutrition for a healthy body particularly in vulnerable groups including children and adolescents.”

He appealed to a broad coalition of actors including affected communities, local and national governments, religious and social institutions, Non-Governmental Organizations, the private sector and individuals to rise up to the call of global solidarity to maintain essential HIV services for a healthy nation.

Four children die of severe under five malnutrition in Lundazi District

By Brian Siwisha

World Vision Nutrition Coordinator, Ignatius Kaunda in Lundazi Town, Eastern province expressed concern on the growing number of fatal malnutrition cases among under-fives in the area.

Mr Kaunda said his organisation was concerned that due to food insecurity in the area, many parents and guardians where unable to feed their families especially under-fives, adequately.

He said as a result, the Town recorded four deaths of malnutrition cases in under five-year-old children out of the 515 severe acute and moderate malnutrition cases in the last quarter of 2020.

Mr Kaunda has advised parents and guardians in the area to improve on their household food security and feeding practices for malnutrition cases to reduce in the district.

“To reduce these cases parents must learn good feeding practices because under nutrition puts children at great risks of dying from common disease

such as diarrhea,” he said.

He noted that through growth monitoring, signs of malnutrition could be detected early in children, thereby providing therapeutic interventions that help reduce number of severe cases of malnutrition in the district.

“Malnourished children with severe acute malnutrition have a high risk of death, this is why World Vision in partnership with Ministry of Health is implementing a child growth programme,” he said.

According to Lundazi District Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) Chairperson, Mukule Banda, poor nutrition among children due to lack of knowledge of eating a diverse diet remained the major cause of acute malnutrition in under-five children in the district.

Mr Banda stated that most families remain food insecure because they decided to sell all their high value crops. “Most households are food insecure because they have the tendency of selling all their high value crops such as

groundnuts and soya beans that can add nutritional value to their food,” he said.

He also cited the practice of parents introducing children to solid foods too early as another contributor to malnutrition in Lundazi District.

“Another contributing factor for malnourished under-five children is that mothers introduce their babies to complementary solid foods before two months,” he said.

He has since urged parents to ensure they leave enough high value food for consumption and be able to buy diverse food to reduce high malnutrition at house hold level.

Mr Banda observed that the challenge of malnutrition in the district requires coordinated and concerted efforts from stakeholders.

“As a district we have District Nutrition Coordinating Committee (DNCC) with key line ministries that deal with nutrition all this is to approach the problem of malnutrition in a multi-sectoral manner,” he said.

Lundazi District picked for pilot project on integrated nutrition

By Brian Siwisha

National Food and Nutrition Commission with the support from UNICEF has started implementing a single window nutrition project aimed at integrating social protection activities.

Lundazi District in Eastern Province is one of the six pilot districts that have been selected for the project. Lundazi District Commissioner, Janet Palukani said that the piloted single window nutrition project was an initiative aimed at improving coordination and reducing fragmentation in the implementation of social protection programmes.

Ms Palukani mentioned that government through the National Food and Nutrition Commission had recognised nutrition as one of the key elements of social protection hence, the decision to embark on linking nutrition outcomes with social protection programming.

She was speaking in a speech read for her by District Administrative Officer Mukule Banda, during the single window scaling up nutrition II implementation workshop held in December 2020 at the council chamber in Lundazi district.

She said government has since 2014 shown and increased funding to the social protection sector, leading to the scaling up of social protection interventions.

However, she noted that despite such commitment the national social policy linkages were not effectively realised due to fragmented social protection programmes being implemented by state and non-state partners.

“Despite offering a strong ground for a more integrated coordinated and efficient provision of social protection

services in Zambia through linking different pillars and interventions across the lifecycle, the national social linkages were not effectively realised,” she said.

She further stated that government with support from cooperating partners came up with the single window initiative.

He was hopeful that integrating nutrition interventions in social protection programmes will help strengthen development of human capital and well-being.

And speaking at the same function single window National Coordinator, Isaac Bwalya disclosed that the programme will provide a single entry-point into the social protection system, thereby enhancing coordination and coherence in social protection. The 17 Scaling Up Nutrition programme phase 2 (SUN II) II districts being targeted for the single window scale-up are those being funded by UNICEF where SUN II is being implemented.

“So far the single window project is being piloted in 6 other district and Lundazi is part of the 17 districts where the initiative has been scaled up all this is done to meet the seventh national development plan,” he said.

UNICEF supports multi-sectoral Planning in 17 Districts

By Barbara Hamoonga Ndhlovu

UNICEF supported the National Food and Nutrition Commission with the development of multisectoral plans at District level for the period October to December, 2020 and January to December 2021 in 17 UNICEF funded Districts under SUN/MCDP II in addressing the issue of stunting in the children under the age two.

Specifically, the planning process:

- Reviewed the data sources including the SUN/MCDP II Baseline survey and Map and Gap Analysis findings among others to inform identification of priorities.
- Reviewed lessons learnt from implementation of MCDP II in 2019/2020.
- Selected priorities from the SUN/MCDP II Minimum Package of Priority Interventions (Pyramid) across the strategic objectives in the SUN/MCDP II.
- Generated costed multisectoral SUN/MCDP II plans at district level.

The participants were drawn from the District Nutrition Coordinating Committee which comprises key line ministries, implementing partners and civil society organisations. The outcome of the planning workshop was costed multisectoral SUN/MCDP II plans for 17 Districts. These were Chipata, Lundazi, Chongwe, Lusaka, Choma, Monze, Kaoma, Mongu, Shangombo, Kalabo, Solwezi, Mwinilunga, Zambezi, Chinsali, Isoka, Chiengi and Mpika. The activity took place from 5th October to 12th October 2020.

Petauke District Nutrition Coordinating Committee refurbishes office



By Xavier Tembo

It is true that the cost of coordination in the First 1000 Most Critical Days programme phase 2 (MCDP II) arrangement should not be ignored, and dedicated resources should be allocated for coordination. The Petauke District Nutrition Coordinating Committee (DNCC) organized a Volunteer Day on 17th October 2020.

The aim of this day was to refurbish the office which was just allocated to the DNCC but was in the deplorable state. With support from the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ); the lead implementer of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) or MCDP II in the district, the self-motivated and focused group managed to refurbish the office.

- the office was painted both

inside and outside,

- the ceiling fixed,
- the grill bars fixed to windows and the door
- furnished with a conference table and 10 chairs and
- the infographics put on the wall as a message dissemination strategy

With this initiative and GIZ support funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Petauke DNCC now have a common space to discuss and realise their common objectives, integrated activities and shared resources. Together they will gather and together they will work to end malnutrition in Petauke District.



UNICEF supports District Mapping and Gap Analysis under SUN II

By Mainza Kawanu

Scaling Up Nutrition programme phase 2 (SUN II) has taken a deliberate approach to collaborate with partners implementing in the same 17 districts by conducting district mapping and gap analysis at planning and design phases to ensure coherence and avoid duplication. District mapping collects information on partners and resources and is used as the basis for developing multi-sectoral nutrition work plans. The Mapping and Gap Analysis was conducted to provide information needed for planning nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive priority interventions in the 17 UN supported SUN II districts. The exercise took place from 24 August to 18 September 2020.

The exercise was led by National Food and Nutrition Commission with technical and financial support from UNICEF, in partnership with Food Agriculture Organization, World Health Organization and World Food Programme. A set of comprehensive tools were developed for data collection covering four main sectors at the district level: WASH; Health; Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries; and Social Protection. Data collection was done using Computer Assisted Personal Interviews. The field teams were provided with tablets and internet for them to be able to enter and upload data using Kobo, an android-based application.

Participants included National Food and Nutrition Commission, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, and Ministry of Water Development, Sanitation and Environmental Protection. Provincial Nutrition Coordinating Committees and District Nutrition Coordinating Committees were also critical participants. NGOs included CARE, World Vision, Save the Children and CRS, while SMART Survey Managers from various institutions also

participated in the data collection process. Due to the limitation linked to the COVID-19 travel restrictions, the UN team provided remote

technical support via video calls to orient enumerators on the objectives, methodology and tools and to support during the data collection field work.

Katete District holds a Learning event

By Xavier Tembo

To enhance coordination at District level in the implementation of nutrition actions in Zambia, District Nutrition Coordinating Committees (DNCCs) in 42 Scaling Up Nutrition Districts were established.

Overall, the DNCCs carry out the following tasks: review progress against set targets; identify and develop priority actions to include in community multi sectoral annual work plans; implement the community multi sectoral plans; provide technical support and backstopping to community-based service delivery channels and review resource requirements for result oriented actions from the community based multi sectoral plans delivery structures.

Its membership is drawn from key line ministries that are channels of scaling up nutrition intervention in Zambia. These are Ministry of Water, Development and Environmental Protection, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Fisheries and Fisheries, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Community Development and Community Services, and Ministry of General Education.

On 27th October 2020, the Katete DNCC formed in 2016 with the support

from the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) held a Learning event. Learning events include an exhibition and are spaces for learning and change where members come together to dialogue around certain topics. The event had a goal of exploring linkages in Nutrition—the importance of Soil Care for Improved agricultural production, nutrition and environmental sustainability.

The lead facilitator for the event was Solidaridad; an NGO that engages small farmers in sustainable agriculture practices in Katete District and other areas and helped all participants to appreciate the importance and impact of conducting soil testing.

The outcome of the event was enhanced capacity development of the DNCC members through improving communication, learning and exposure to new people and ideas.



Up-close with National Food and Nutrition Commission's longest serving employee

By Barbara Hamoonga Ndhlovu

Name: Jossy Phiri

Marital status: I am married to Chiseche, a beautiful lass I call Girlfriend. We met in 1993 at a national event she was covering as a journalist. We dated for five years and finally got hitched in 1998.

Number of Children: We have four children - three boys and 1 girl. Taza is a fourth-year student studying civil Engineering in India; Tama, our only princess, is also in India studying Forensics; Taka is in grade 11; and Taba is in grade 5. We make memories together and I love them to bits. They call me Mukulu wa Band because of my love for music – I play 7 different instruments and ensure that each of our kids got formal music tutoring.

Position: Media Officer

When did you join the Commission?

I joined the National Food and Nutrition Commission in April, 1991 as a Radio Programme Organizer. I will be celebrating my 30th work anniversary this year. The interviews were tough and I was thoroughly grilled, but I was glad I made it. Before that, I was working as Public Relations Officer on part-time basis at INDECO in the Marketing and Public Relations Department, where I'd gained my practical journalism experience, including radio production. That time I was producing INDECO hour, a weekly radio show presented by veteran broadcasters Leonard Kantumoya and Field Ruwe (AKA the Man with the Longest Queue in Town).

How do you feel about being the longest serving employee?

It makes me feel like an achiever. I say so because I gave my all in contributing to tackling issues of food and nutrition in Zambia. I Joined the Commission at 23, full of dreams, energy, passion and adrenalin. I used these to help uplift the lives of the local people through my work.

What has kept you all these years?

To be honest with you, there have been opportunities for the proverbial greener pastures, but I stayed put because I found satisfaction in my work – it gave me creative license and no two days were exactly alike. I cringe at routine, but like to do things I love and have passion for- to put a smile on someone's face and make their life better. I really get satisfaction from that. I love travelling and meeting people, and my job has offered me this opportunity. I must admit, I have travelled to all parts of Zambia repeatedly, apart from Chavuma District.

What principles should guide someone at work?

1. Be true to yourself
2. Be professional
3. Work with passion

What is your favorite memory?

(Laughter) I have a gallery of memories. It is so hard to choose the most favorite of them all. Nevertheless, one of the best memories I have had while working at the Commission is being part of the Iodine Deficiency Disorder Control Programme. It had a robust and targeted communication component, using a mixture of social marketing, social mobilization and education. In the end, Zambia was declared Iodine Deficiency-free and I was ecstatic!

Looking back over the years, do you think you could have done somethings differently?

Yes, for instance, I wish I had thought of setting up the audio-video production studio much earlier. It would have been handy in producing high impact audio-visual content on food and nutrition for a longer period that it has been. Nevertheless, I am happy we have the audio-visual booth. In addition, I wish I could have targeted the youth more with food and nutrition messages for a better Zambia. When you change their mind set and win them over, they hit the road running. Young people are passionate trendsetters, movers and shakers, and have a lot more influence than we give them credit for.





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