



Implemented by



The Food and Nutrition Security, Enhanced Resilience (FANSER) Project in Zambia

Part of the special initiative “Transformation of Agri-Food Systems” and part of the Agriculture and Food Security Cluster Zambia

Background

In Zambia, 60% of the total population lives below the national poverty line; in rural Zambia this figure stands at depressing 78.8% with total poverty levels being even more severe than urban ones. Hunger and malnutrition have not been cured but have likely increased over the past years and pose two of the greatest challenges to national development.

The majority of the rural population still depends on subsistence agriculture, mostly engaging in the production of maize. Maize is dominating Zambia’s diets and daily food intake. However, this lack of food diversity leads to an insufficient micronutrient intake for the vast majority of the population and is causing serious health problems, especially for pregnant and lactating women and young children, often resulting in irreversible physical and cognitive damage and impaired children’s growth and development (stunting).

According to the 2023 FAO report on the state of food security and nutrition in the world, Zambia ranks among the worst affected countries regarding malnutrition and hunger with a prevalence of undernourishment in the total population of 29.8%, a prevalence of severe food insecurity of 32.1% and a stunting rate 32% ZDHS 2024.

The stunting rates in Eastern and Luapula Provinces are with 36% and 45%, respectively, even higher than the national average. Over 50% of infants in the districts of Katete, Petauke and Sinda in Eastern Province and 27% Mwense, Kawambwa and Mwansabombwe in Luapula Province suffer from diarrhoea, indicating a poor sanitation and hygiene environment (GIZ FUS 2022) although the situation has improved compared to the baseline values at project start (Eastern: 62%, Luapula 52%).

Project name	Food and Nutrition Security, Enhanced Resilience (FANSER) Project in Zambia
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Eastern Province: Petauke, Katete & Sinda Districts; Luapula Province: Kawambwa, Mwense & Mwansabombwe District
Political partner	National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC)
Implementing partners	Catholic Relief Services (CRS), governmental and non-governmental service providers.
Target population	110,000 women of reproductive age (15–49), 33,000 men and 64,000 children under the age of 2 years
Duration	2015 – 2025

Political Framework

FANSER has been initiated by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) as part of the German Special Initiative Transformation of Agri-Food Systems (SI AGER). GIZ has been commissioned to implement the global programme Food and Nutrition Security, Enhanced Resilience (FANSER) in 12 countries in Asia and Africa.

Eradicating hunger and malnutrition among mothers and small children is the most effective investment for their future. It is a priority for the Zambian government, represented through the national First 1,000 Most Critical Days Programme phase two (MCDP II), which is the national implementation of the International Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement. MCDP II was signed in April 2018 and started in 2019. The Zambian government, donors, and partners agreed on (1) principles of collaboration including a minimum service package for all beneficiaries, (2) 90% outreach in the targeted districts, and (3) a geographical division of labour.



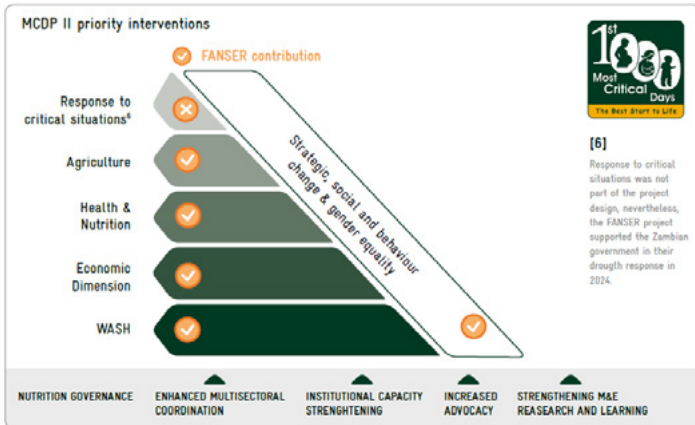
l. to r.: keyhole garden, cooking demonstration, mother with child after participating in dietary diversity training, self-made handwash station

Photos: © GIZ / FANSER

Our approach

The FANSER Project aims to improve the nutritional situation for women of reproductive age and young children in the following five fields of intervention, corresponding to the MCDP minimum service package (except critical situations).

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



Improving knowledge levels of women on nutrition, change attitudes positively



Improving knowledge levels of women on hygiene, change attitudes positively



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



Developing improved strategies for households to manage their household and productive resources



Strengthening nutrition governance at the district, provincial and national level

Furthermore, the project supports national communication initiatives and monitoring of the MCDP phase II under the coordination of the National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC).

In addition to the overarching multisectoral approach, the FANSER Project is stimulating positive change at household level. While poor adoption of new practices is often attributed to a lack

of knowledge, individual attitudes towards new practices are also very important contributing factors. They need to be positively addressed by special behaviour change techniques like positively framed messages and appropriate communication channels like videos, and nutrition-sensitive playful instruments. Since 2015, project implementation focused on the Eastern Province (Katete, Petauke); extended in 2019 to Luapula (Kawambwa, Mwense). Since 2021 the project also covers Sinda and Mwansabombwe districts.

Achievements

- The project has reached more than 125,000 women, 56,800 men, and 64,500 children under the age of 2 (as of June 2023). These households received training in good nutrition and hygiene practices as well as in nutrition-sensitive agriculture, processing, and storage methods. The results include:
 - The innovative Care Group model reaches out to women and men through trainings about nutrition and hygiene – over 99% of them confirmed an increase in their knowledge due to the lessons they have attended (Output Assessment October 2023).
 - The government agriculture extension services were strengthened by supporting the Lead Farmer model. More than 90,000 women and men were trained and supported with legumes (Beans and Cowpeas), vitamin-A-rich orange Maize, and vegetable seeds or orange flesh sweet potato vines in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA).
 - Innovative gardening concepts, including keyhole gardens and the use of treadle pumps have been successfully promoted.
 - More than 44,900 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, the District Nutrition Coordinating Committees (DNCCs) have been formed in six districts and supported to development of annual multisector plans to improve coordination in food and nutrition security programming and implementation.

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