In this edition

SUN II UPDATES
Key developments in the first half of 2021

FIELD VISIT IN FOCUS
Highlights of cooperating partners' field visit to Monze, Chipata and Chongwe districts

ELSEWHERE IN SUN
Updates from SUN LE and GIZ FANSER
I am pleased to share the 2nd edition of the SUN II Newsletter. In this issue, we find out more about how the United Nations supported SUN II programme has accelerated implementation at the district level, reaching beneficiaries with different interventions. This period has witnessed the roll out of Nutrition Support Groups – a key body at the community level for service delivery as well as ensuring different interventions converge at households. SUN II has now created a pool of trainers for the establishment of Nutrition Support Groups in SUN II districts.

With increased understanding about the Most Critical Days Phase II Programme being implemented through SUN II at the district level, we have also seen a firm commitment and willingness among the district and provincial leadership to make this programme successful. This is largely due to enhanced coordination by the District Nutrition Support Coordinators (DNSC), technical support visits from national leadership, and programme orientations for the DNCC and concerned sectoral staff. In this period, 17 district briefs on mapping and gap analysis for nutrition were completed and following this, DNCCs led the development of harmonized district workplans. This period also witnessed a donor field mission to three districts, where the cooperating partners interacted with the district staff as well as beneficiaries and appreciated the progress made and areas for improvement under the programme.

With support from NGO implementing partners at the district level, it is expected that implementation will be accelerated in the second half of 2021.

Zambia is going through challenging times with shrinking fiscal space as well as increasing socioeconomic and other vulnerabilities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This SUN II programme is expected to enhance the resilience of vulnerable populations in terms of food and nutrition security, with implementation of the multi-sectoral package of nutrition-specific as well as nutrition-sensitive interventions. SUN II has started to conduct beneficiary registration, which will enhance targeting and reaching out to the right beneficiaries with appropriate interventions. This has been complemented with work in capacity building, SBCC strategy and toolkit development, and the establishment of M&E and web-based information management systems.

On behalf of NFNC, I commend the evolving partnership with the line ministries, UN agencies and NGO partners to support the DNCCs and district government staff to move this programme forward in achieving the desired results for children, adolescents and women in this country.

As I close, let me also take this opportunity to welcome our newest partner, Irish Aid, who have joined other key partners of Zambia in supporting this life-saving programme.

J.MOFU
In preparation for the two rounds of Child Health Week, WHO in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and UNICEF, District health offices with support from district nutrition units conducted Four Master Training of Trainers sessions. UNICEF, in collaboration with NFNC and the Ministry of Health, with technical leadership from CRS, finalised and adopted a Zambian specific Nutrition Support Group (NSG) Guideline and training package.

Four Master Training of Trainers sessions were conducted between 17 May 2021 and 12 June 2021, creating a pool of 87 NSG trainers of trainers, enabling the establishment of NSGs via localised teams in all 17 districts. Creating NSGs in all communities of the SUN II districts will accelerate the convergence of multi-sectoral activities and community linkages between to ensure holistic delivery of interventions and tracking of efforts.

This will help initiate Severe Acute Malnutrition Management and build competency in emergencies such as COVID-19 in 10 general hospitals in the 17 districts.

District health offices with support from district nutrition support coordinators in Lusaka, Chongwe and Choma trained 142 health workers and 15 trainers in Growth Monitoring and Promotion. This training has increased the pool of service providers with updated knowledge and skills, including routine length and height measurements, which were lacking before.

WHO in collaboration with Ministry of Health and UNICEF, updated new training modules on Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative and In-Patient management of Severe Acute Malnutrition. The adapted training materials were pre-tested in Mpika with 20 technical officers oriented.

UNICEF, through the district health offices, supported the distribution of 50,000 children’s Clinic Cards, 22,000 brochures each on breastfeeding and complementary feeding along with training materials for Growth Monitoring and Promotion and Maternal, Adolescent, Infant and Young Child Nutrition (MAIYCN) in all the 17 districts. In addition, the district health offices trained 336 health workers and 230 community health workers; and 400 community based volunteers were mentored on MAIYCN Counselling. This ensured 4,701 women were reached with MAIYCN messages resulting in a 7 per cent increase in MAIYCN counselling in the first quarter of 2021 compared to same period in 2020.

In preparation for the two rounds of Child Health Week in 2021, UNICEF supplied 5,995,500 Vitamin A capsules (200,000 IU) and 748,500 Vitamin A capsules (100,000 IU) to the Ministry of Health for the countrywide exercise which includes the 17 SUN II districts.

To increase access to community water services and promote essential hygiene actions, 17 new boreholes were drilled with 120 non-functional boreholes were rehabilitated through implementing partners. Drilling is underway for an additional 73 boreholes. This has provided over 34,000 people with access to safe water. On the sanitation front, the district health offices trained 366 people on the Community Led Total Sanitation approach: 51 District Water, Sanitation and Health Education members, 100 Environmental Health Technicians and 215 Sanitation Action Group members.

UNICEF and implementing partners supported the screening of a total of 336,841 children under five using Mid Upper Arm Circumference measurements in the SUN II districts. The district health offices trained 198 health workers and 511 community volunteers in Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition for early detection of malnutrition in the communities. A total of 4,864 children aged 6 to 59 months with Severe Acute Malnutrition were admitted and treated in the Outpatient Programme. Of the 4,864 children admitted for treatment in the programme, 76 per cent of them were cured and discharged from the programme, compared to the World Health Organization’s threshold of >75 per cent. This cure rate is slightly above the WHO threshold. UNICEF distributed 500 portable length measurement scales, 1,000 mother/children weighing scales, 1,000 infant weighing scales and 200 weighing trousers.

To promote improved agricultural practices and technologies, WFP trained 466 “lead” farmers and 5,482 “follower” farmers on improved agriculture practices. WFP also trained 8 provincial and 27 district staff on Post-Harvest Management technologies to reduce on loss and maximises profits.

FAO in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry department and Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, successfully conducted orientation workshops for all the 17 the districts on nutrition sensitive agriculture and SUN II program expected outcomes. FAO provided hands on support to the districts in establishment of the centers of excellence for learning.

Under the livestock passing on programme, FAO procured 1,398 chickens and distribution to 318 SUN households. To prevent and protect livestock against common diseases such as New Castle, vaccines were also procured and distributed.
Inspiring Stories from Muchinga and Eastern Provinces
By Mainza Kawanu, Communications Officer (Partnerships and Visibility), UNICEF Zambia

Safe water to scale up nutrition in Zambia

“It does not matter how nutritious the food we give our children and grandchildren - if in the end they wash it down with contaminated water,” said 69-year-old Monica Mumba of Shauli village in Zambia’s Chinsali District. “I am so happy that is no longer the case because of this borehole that was rehabilitated.”

In 2020, UNICEF rehabilitated nearly 100 boreholes in Chinsali and neighbouring Isoka districts benefiting more than 20,000 people. This year, under the Scaling-Up Nutrition Phase II (SUN-II) programme, nearby Mpika District, also in Muchinga Province, is being targeted with a similar intervention.

Monica Mumba is a grandmother and like many Zambians lives in an extended family set-up, with her adult daughter and child, and other grandchildren belonging to her adult sons. Under the SUN programme, Monica’s family is one of those identified as a target ‘SUN II household’ because Monica’s daughter is currently breastfeeding an infant.

The family had been reliant on an old water pump that only provided dirty water, and which finally broke down over a year ago. In the company of her two grandsons (pictured below), Monica recalls the hardships they faced as a community.

“The borehole was giving up and that water was not suitable at all for drinking or cooking. The smell and taste were pungent.”

The water quality was enough to discourage some members of the community from using the borehole, opting instead to source unsafe water from nearby streams or unprotected wells. And yet, all the village were dependent in some way on the borehole. And when it broke the 650 residents of the community were left with a walk of 5km to an old unprotected well.
Improved access to clean water is just one intervention in the SUN II programme, a multi-sectoral programme to improve nutrition in Zambia and end stunting. In Chinsali District, more than a third of children (39 per cent) are stunted, higher than the national average. The district is one of the 17 priority districts supported under the SUN II programme by UNICEF, with additional technical support from WFP, FAO and WHO.

Malita Nguni, a young woman from a neighbouring village, calls out to Monica, referring to her fondly as Ambuya (grandma) even though there is no actual blood relation between them.

“Remember how we had to go back to the old well when this borehole stopped working?” she says. “It was terrible to have to constantly quarrel with people over water. It’s nice to have some peace and quiet.”

Malita shares her own recollection: “We were unable to maintain our vegetable gardens and children started suffering from malnutrition in the villages because of a lack of good food and clean water. The well which was some 5km away was always busy; sometimes we opted to walk a few more metres ahead to the stream for water as there were no queues there.”

The sound of her grandsons shuffling their feet and chomping on sugar cane draws Monica back to her present surroundings and she smiles warmly when their eyes meet.

“Water is life,” says Monica. “We now have clean water to drink and cook with, and the hours we spent fetching water can now be spent on our gardens and in the field where we can actually make an income to feed our families and even send the little ones to school,” she says.
“The complaints that come in are very useful in disease prevention,” says John. “Some water-related diseases like malaria are provoked by the presence of stagnant water in the environment which encourages infestations of mosquitos. When I am pointed to where mosquitos are breeding, with support from Chinsali Town Council, I can go and spray the areas and show community members how the shallow pools can be covered,” says John.

In Zambia, more than 80 per cent of all diseases are environmental and mostly related to water and sanitation issues. For children especially, poor sanitation is frequently a cause of diarrhoeal diseases which can then cause chronic infections which limit the absorption of nutrients and lead to stunting. Diarrhoea is a leading killer of children globally, accounting for approximately 8 per cent of all deaths among children under five years in 2017.

In maintaining sanitation hygiene, environmental technicians like John discourage use of sanitation facilities that are poorly maintained (to prevent harmful bacteria getting back into the environment through leakages). They also discourage contact with soil contaminated with human waste.

“After I have assessed and identified villages which are willing to adopt a participatory approach in eliminating open defecation, I will provide technical know-how on construction and maintenance of pit-latrines as most leakages come from shallow latrines. I will also help train the builders and support community water and sanitation efforts through the Sanitation Action Groups.”

Under the Scaling Up Nutrition programme (phase II) supported through the United Nations in 17 priority districts of Zambia, the government is taking a multi-sectoral approach to tackle stunting in children, which in 2018 stood at 35 per cent for children under five.
For remote rural communities, health posts form a vital point of contact with the health system.

In neighbouring Isoka District, Ms. Masuzyo Siwale is another Environmental Health Technician based at Lualizi health post. Part of her time is dedicated to supporting the Community-Led Total Sanitation approach, which allows communities to take the lead on improving their own sanitation.

“90% of people have latrines in our catchment area.” “However, we need to keep promoting hygiene and behaviour change by reinforcing messages such as handwashing as this is important in disease prevention after any exposure to contaminated material from the environment.”

“With the onset of COVID-19, the message of handwashing has never been more important than it is now,” says Masuzyo. “What people don’t realize is that hygiene has always a big role in preventing a lot of other diseases such as cholera and dysentery. This is why I screen all the patients who come in to the health post and ensure that the handwashing station is used.”

Much of the work of Environmental Health Technicians comes down to awareness raising and behaviour change. Under the Scaling-Up Nutrition programme, technicians are making use of the Essential Hygiene Actions Toolkit, which identifies priority actions including promotion of open defecation free communities and handwashing with soap at key moments in the day.

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Frontline workers

Name: Bupe Kapambwe
Position: District Nutritionist, Chipata

About my role:

“Every month, I ensure that the health workers and volunteers are supported in monitoring the growth of children and advising mothers on what to do in cases of wasting.

I help equip service providers with knowledge and skills that help them with provision of quality nutrition services at community level.”

What motivates me:

“I love being in the field and making a difference. I take pride in supervising and supporting volunteers to make sure they take children’s measurements correctly such as height and MUAC measurements. Getting these right helps with early detection for underweight and wasting.”

“Once measurements are taken, I give appropriate counselling on the preparation of meals for children in hygienic conditions using foods that are locally available in the community. This ensures that children are frequently fed with nutrient dense meals that will improve their growth. This is how I make a little difference in Zambia’s fight against stunting.”
The MGA exercise took place in September-November 2020. It collected data about nutrition-sensitive and specific interventions for health, agriculture, livestock and fisheries, WASH, and social protection and their delivery, human resources and challenges, priorities and training needs across the 17 SUN II districts.

The ultimate goal for this support is to have a system where districts can input data periodically once or twice a year, which can be integrated into a database that provides live data summaries, dashboards, and reporting tools to guide planning and implementation of activities within districts. This round of MGA data collection and analysis developed 17 district briefs and a data dashboard. District Nutrition Coordination Committees from these districts will use data from their respective briefs to guide appropriate changes to address critical gaps and priority areas during implementation.

**Nutrition Mapping and Gap Analysis:**

**Guiding evidence-based planning for multi-sectoral nutrition interventions**

One of the three key focus areas under SUN II is to enhance evidence-based programme implementation through the scale-up of cost-effective, high impact nutrition interventions to reduce stunting. Planning is a crucial step for ensuring effective implementation. Because stunting has many determinants which span across sectors, it is important that the planning process is based on evidence and district context across these multiple sectors, to effectively address gaps and prioritise activities. As part of strengthening district level multi-sectoral nutrition planning, district staff use data to identify critical gaps in service delivery and prioritise key interventions aligning to the MCDP-II minimum package of interventions. In this effort to institutionalise the evidence-based nutrition planning in line with national planning process, SUN II is utilising Mapping and Gap Analysis (MGA) as the tool to generate insight to inform district-level planning.

The objectives of the MGA project were:

- Establish current intervention availability at sub-district level;
- Assess available human resources already trained and implementing/supporting, government frontline staff and community volunteers;
- Understand the landscape of existing nutrition partners; and
- Generate recommendations to support the rollout at planned coverage levels.

**Nutrition Mapping and Gap Analysis Dashboard**

[Dashboard example image]
In May 2021, NFNC, UN agencies (WFP, FAO, UNICEF) and Cooperating Partners – UK aid, Germany, Sweden and the European Union visited Monze, Chipata and Chongwe districts to discover firsthand about the benefits of packaged interventions through interaction with DNCCs, Ward Nutrition Coordinating Committees (WNCCs), Community Health Workers and volunteers; and testimonials from beneficiaries of the SUN II programme.

Monze

Interaction with lead farmers in Manungu Ward on post-harvest loss management after training received from WFP.

The delegation learned how the beneficiaries for this intervention were selected and the positive impact the training has had on the community.

Chipata

Part of FAO’s technical assistance to SUN II is supporting the pass on of poultry through the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries to the most vulnerable 1,000 days households. Here, Assistant FAO Representative, Geoffrey Chomba, presents live village chickens to pregnant and lactating women of Kanyanja community.

Community volunteers from the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services shared knowledge on food processing and preservation methods, including nutrients found in local foods to promote improved and diversified diets.

Chongwe

The visiting team met the WNCC, which covers eight villages and three zones. They learned how each sector in the committee fits into the broader implementation and planning process of the programme.

A visit to an outreach site under Chongwe Urban Health Clinic that conducts integrated services such as immunizations, GMP and OTP programmes once a month.

To see highlights from the visit, you can watch this short video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_WFNT-d5jA
UN Partner Feature

FAO Orientates Districts on SUN II Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture Outcomes

FAO, through its provision of technical assistance, has made notable progress in laying down requisites for implementing several activities in line with SUN II programme goals. FAO has so far successfully conducted orientation workshops for district staff in the crop, livestock, fisheries, and forestry sub sectors in all 17 targeted districts of the programme.

In its continuous efforts to promote the uptake of diversified crop production with a specific focus on nutritious legumes, green leafy vegetables, fruits and cereals, FAO has successfully provided guidance to the target districts on prioritising the establishment of offseason homestead gardens. Through detailed discussions with the target districts, the concept of community learning centres, called SUN Centres of Excellence for Learning (SCEL), was explored and adopted by the districts. Through detailed discussions with the target districts, the concept of community learning centres, called SUN Centres of Excellence for Learning (SCEL), was explored and adopted by the districts. In addition, feasibility information to guide the actual establishment of the learning centres, including identification of the most suitable locations and the number of SCEL in each district, was sourced. Meetings have been held at ward level on possible site locations of the SCELs.

“We want to learn about how we can achieve high yields using conservation agriculture. The centres of excellence will help us learn more things” Oscar Katenga of Maheba Zone, Sikombwe Ward, Kaoma

“We grow our vegetables organically and we are now able to supply most of Kaoma District with vegetables. We have also diversified our diets from direct consumption of the vegetables - and from the income from selling vegetables, we are able to buy other foods. Our families are now healthier.” Oliver Chinyama - Lead Farmer in Kazabami Zone, Sikombwe Ward, Kaoma

With climate change, which exacerbates crop losses especially among small-scale agricultural holdings, climate smart strategies including agricultural diversification have gained in importance.

In this regard, FAO has held fruitful discussions on the feasibility of establishing hydroponics and the integration of aquaculture and agriculture within the SCEL set up. Still in line with agricultural diversification, FAO, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, conducted an appraisal visit with female SUN II beneficiaries in Mongu. The group of 10 pregnant and lactating women had obtained goats and vegetable seeds from the 2020 Quarter 4 SUN II funding. The team was happy with the progress on the ground where all the women had adopted the key-hole garden technology at their homesteads. A communal vegetable nursery was also planted at the lead farmer’s farm and will be shared among the women when ready. The women were happy that vegetables, which in the past they would buy elsewhere, were now more readily available. There was high awareness of the nutritional importance of diversifying diets among the women.

Meeting with Ward Nutrition Coordinating Committee in Sikombwe Ward, Kaoma
“Our lives have improved because now we readily have available a variety of vegetables within the homestead. The vegetables are important for giving us Vitamin A which is good also for our children.” Ms Wamunima Likezo – Lead Farmer in Mbekise Ward, Mongu

Considering that women contribute not less than 80% to agricultural production and productivity in sub-Saharan Africa, the success of all SUN II activities weighs heavily on the integration of gender responsiveness. FAO plans to implement gender transformative approaches through encouraging ownership and control of the SCEL centres by the women. This will strengthen the capacity of the SCELs, and in essence the farmer extension service in the target districts.

In Choma, Southern Province, SUN II is collaborating with the FAO Forest and Farm Facility (FFF) project on the utilisation of non-wood forest products for enhanced income generation and food diversification. The FFF project is supporting the Choma Forest Nursery Association to produce a wide variety of trees. The two projects intend to upscale this initiative to other SUN II districts. Specifically, SUN II will support the production of Moringa trees which will be planted at the SCELs for propagation, processing and utilisation through demonstrations to farmers. In addition to Moringa, demonstrations involving other plants of great nutritional value are under consideration. Further, promoting the utilisation of other already existing forest foods such as Baobab fruit, Palm oils, Mungongo oil/nuts and devils craw, will be promoted, and processing demonstrations at the SCELs are planned for roll out as soon as the SCELs are established.

FAO plans to roll out the various activities and initiatives to the remaining provinces for greater impact in contributing to food and nutritional security in the region.
Scaling Up Nutrition
Partner Feature

GIZ Donation to NFNC of Conferecing Facilities and IEC Materials
February 2021

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development in Germany in February 2021 donated conferencing facilities and information education communication materials worth 24,540 Euros to the National Food and Nutrition Commission.

The donation included a video conferencing unit, projector and projector screen; nutrition card game and animated video on nutrition; and printer. While some of the items will enhance communication and behavioural change in relation to the Scaling Up Nutrition programme which has an overall objective of reducing stunting in Zambia, the video conferencing system will support NFNC’s capacity to operate under the ‘new normal’.

Food and Nutrition Security Enhanced Resilience (FANSER) Project Coordinator, Julia Kirya reiterated the project’s commitment to using communication to enhance food and nutrition security and improve the livelihood of people in Petauke, Katete, Mwense and Kawambwa districts.
About SUN II

Scaling Up Nutrition Phase II (SUN II) is a four-year programme (2019-2023) supported by the United Nations (UNICEF, WHO, WFP, FAO) and funded by the European Union (EU), the Federal Republic of Germany through the KfW Development Bank, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), Irish Aid and UK aid from the British people. UNICEF works in support of the government line ministries and the National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC), as well as with non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

SUN II delivers a multi-sectoral package of nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions, adopting coordinated approaches for service delivery to achieve impact on stunting by focusing on households with adolescent girls, pregnant women, breastfeeding women, children under 2 years of age, and women of reproductive age. SUN II aims to reduce stunting in children under two by 7 per cent with focus on these ‘1,000 Days Households’.

Zambia joined the SUN movement in 2010 and in 2013 launched the first 1,000 Most Critical Days Programme (MCDP I) as its flagship programme for reducing stunting. The first phase of SUN supported MCDP I from 2013-2017, with an interim period in 2018 and 2019.

Under MCDP II, the Government of the Republic Zambia is building on national momentum around stunting reduction in 36 high priority districts. Other Scaling Up Nutrition partners also support MCDP II: USAID in 13 districts through SUN TA, the Federal Republic of Germany in 6 districts through GIZ’s Food and Nutrition Security, Enhanced Resilience (FANSER) programme.
SUN in Pictures
All photos: (c)UNICEF/Zambia/2021/Mulikita
For more information on SUN Phase II, visit: unicef.org/zambia/sun-phase-ii