

# USAID's Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance III Project (FANTA) ANNUAL REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

October 2013–September 2014



Malnutrition is a complex, persistent problem affecting millions of people across the globe. Worldwide, approximately 45 percent of childhood deaths are caused by undernutrition. Even when not resulting in death, undernutrition can have long-term and frequently irreversible effects on growth and cognitive development. To help address these problems, the Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance III Project (FANTA) strives to improve the health and well-being of vulnerable individuals, families, and communities in developing countries by strengthening food security and nutrition policies, programs, and systems.

## Message from the Project Director

Over the past year, FANTA made significant contributions to addressing the complex and multisectoral barriers to food and nutrition security faced by millions of people around the world. From helping governments develop sound nutrition policies and guidelines, to integrating nutrition into health care services, to conducting innovative research, FANTA's work led to measurable, substantial results. This report presents just a few highlights from the work we conducted across the globe during the year.

Moving forward, FANTA will continue to support country-driven efforts to strengthen nutrition

governance and multisectoral collaboration, while improving frontline service providers' capacity in nutrition throughout the health system and at the community level. FANTA will also continue to build evidence to strengthen the implementation and impact of scalable food security and nutrition programs, and enhance the monitoring and evaluation of these programs.

Sandra Remancus  
FANTA Project Director

## Partners

Centre for Counselling,  
Nutrition and Health Care  
Development Alternatives Inc.  
Helen Keller International

Instituto de Nutrición de  
Centro América y Panamá  
International Food Policy  
Research Institute  
Media for Development  
International

Michigan State University  
Micronutrient Initiative  
Tanzania Food and  
Nutrition Centre  
Tufts University

University of California,  
Davis  
University of Tampere  
Washington University  
in St. Louis



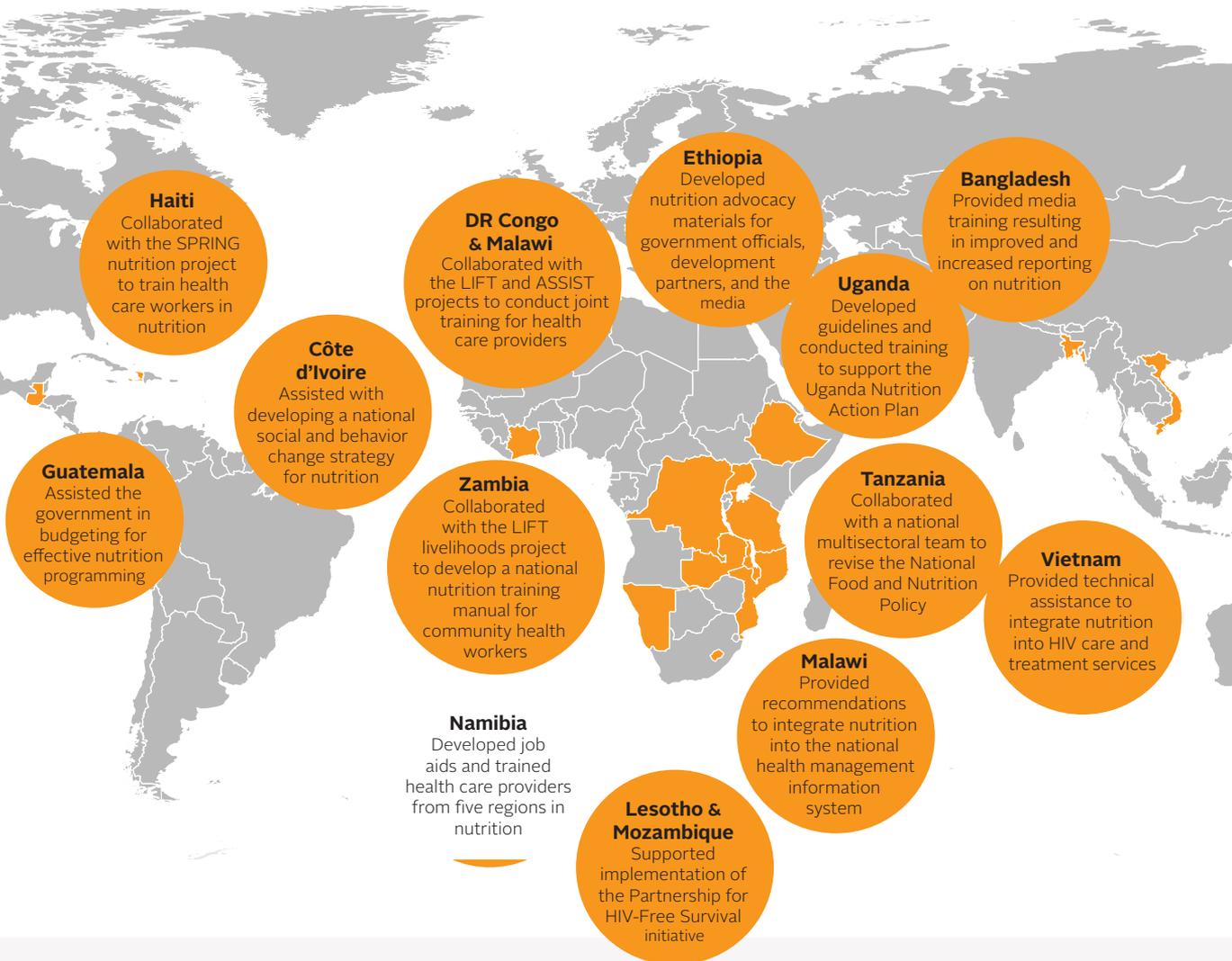
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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

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# COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS

Examples of activities carried out to increase commitment to nutrition and support integrated programming



## IN THE NEWS...

### The Atlantic

A June 2014 article, "The Science of Designing Food for the World's Poor," featured FANTA's work in Guatemala to improve diets.

### AIDS

"Challenges in Infant and Young Child Nutrition in the Context of HIV," co-authored by a staff expert, ran in a November 2013 special supplement for the journal.

### Journal of Nutrition & Acta Paediatrica

Results from FANTA research on lipid-based nutrient supplements for infants were published in two journals in November 2013 and September 2014.

### Social Media

Blogs featuring FANTA's work were included in USAID's IMPACTblog and Feed the Future's newsletter.

# KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

## New Global Indicator to Measure Women's Dietary Diversity

In July, FANTA and FAO convened a technical meeting to reach consensus on a global dietary diversity indicator for assessing the quality of women's diets. The meeting built on earlier research carried out under FANTA's Women's Dietary Diversity Project and FAO's Women's Dietary Diversity II Project. At the meeting, participants from academia, international research institutes, and United Nations and donor agencies unanimously endorsed the use of a new indicator called Minimum Dietary Diversity – Women. The indicator measures women's consumption of 10 food groups; women consuming foods from five or more of the food groups have a greater likelihood of meeting their micronutrient needs. For next steps, FANTA, FAO, and UC Davis will develop a user manual and advocate for inclusion of the indicator in global monitoring frameworks.

## Overview of Nutrition in Asia

Asia has the highest prevalence of children under 5 years of age who are stunted, wasted, and underweight in the world. To identify priorities to reduce malnutrition, FANTA conducted a critical review of the nutrition situation in 11 countries in Asia. The findings are presented in two regional reports and 11 country nutrition profiles that provide in-depth analysis of the key drivers of malnutrition, nutrition data and trends, nutrition priorities, and recommendations for each region and country.

## Two New PROFILES Models

PROFILES is a nutrition advocacy tool that is used to estimate the benefits of improved nutrition on health and development outcomes in a country. In the past year, FANTA enhanced the tool by developing two new models; one that links nutrition to cognitive development and learning potential, and another that estimates the consequences of suboptimal breastfeeding practices.

## Gender Indicators for Development Food Assistance Projects

To assist Food for Peace development food assistance projects with integrating gender, FANTA developed a suite of indicators to be measured by the projects. Food for Peace adopted six of the proposed gender indicators, which will be collected during the projects' baseline and final evaluations. The six indicators will be piloted in baseline surveys of new awards in four countries (Burundi, Madagascar, Malawi, and Nepal) in 2015. FANTA is supporting the rollout of the indicators by incorporating them into policy, guidance, and workshops for monitoring, evaluation, and reporting of Food for Peace development projects.

## Building Capacity through the Uganda Nutrition Fellowship

To enhance the skills of nutrition graduates in Uganda, FANTA established the Uganda Nutrition Fellowship program, which provides nutritionists with a unique mix of practical experience, professional development, leadership training, knowledge sharing, and mentorship. During the program's first year, eight fellows were mentored and graduated from the program. All of the fellows are now employed in nutrition positions in Uganda.

## Developing Dietary Recommendations in Guatemala

Using a software program called "Optifood," FANTA worked in the Western Highlands of Guatemala to identify nutrients that were not being met by the local food supply and developed dietary recommendations. Results were published in a report and shared with key government and private sector stakeholders in order to promote food fortification programs and expanded micronutrient supplementation to improve intake of nutrients that were found to be lacking.



## Research on Preventing Malnutrition in Children under 2

Does donated food have an effect on children and women's nutritional status? What type and quantities of food are most effective? How long should they be provided for? What role do feeding practices and access to health services play, in addition to food, in reducing malnutrition? FANTA and its partner IFPRI are conducting two cluster-randomized effectiveness studies to answer questions on the impact and cost-effectiveness of the "preventing malnutrition in children under 2 approach," which uses donated food to address malnutrition. The studies are being carried out in the context of USAID/Food for Peace-funded development food assistance projects with CRS in Burundi and Mercy Corps in Guatemala. Preliminary operations research results from this much anticipated 5-year study, which will be completed in 2016, were presented at an event in Washington, DC that was attended by more than 70 stakeholders.

## NACS User's Guide

This popular guide provides practical information on the integration of nutrition assessment, counseling, and support (NACS) into existing clinical services, describes the rationale and components of the approach, and provides links to reference documents and job aids. The first three modules of the guide were published in December 2013 and in February a webinar was held to share the modules and seek user feedback. Additional modules are in development.

## Advocating for Improved Nutrition

To raise awareness of the consequences of malnutrition, FANTA worked in Uganda and Tanzania to develop estimates of the health and economic benefits of investing in and improving nutrition in each country, using the PROFILES tool. In both countries, the estimates of lives that could be saved and potential economic gains will be used to advocate among national and local governments, development partners, civil society, and the media for increased commitment to nutrition.

# REACH

## 4,000

health care providers and managers trained on:

- o nutrition assessment, counseling, and support
- o management of acute malnutrition
- o infant and young child feeding
- o health management information systems
- o prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV

## 80

presentations given by staff experts at international conferences, workshops, meetings, and other events

## 29

new publications posted on [www.fantaproject.org](http://www.fantaproject.org)

## 26

tools developed for:

- o advocacy
- o budgeting
- o data collection
- o monitoring and evaluation
- o nutrition assessment, counseling, and support

## 12

global and national level policies strengthened through technical assistance



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