



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



USAID SCALING UP NUTRITION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Annual Report

January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020

Submission Date: January 29, 2021

Contract Number: 72061119C000002

Contract Period: February 18, 2019 – February 17, 2023

COR Name: [REDACTED]

ACOR Name: [REDACTED]

Submitted: [REDACTED], Chief of Party

USAID SUN TA
[REDACTED]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS.....	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	5
Key Highlights by Technical Area	6
SUN TA RESULTS.....	9
Agriculture & Livelihoods	9
Nutrition & Health	12
WASH.....	14
Cross-cutting	18
MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING.....	20
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION.....	22
PROGRAM AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	23
ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE.....	25
KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES	26
ANNEXES	27
Annex A: Indicator Performance Tracking Table.....	27
Annex B: Success Stories	29

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AMELP	Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan
BF	Breastfeeding
C&A	Communications and Advocacy
CBV	Community-Based Volunteer
CF	Community Facilitators
CIYCF	Community Infant and Young Child Feeding
CLTS	Community-Led Total Sanitation
DING	Direct Implementation and Non-Grants Fund
DNCC	District Nutrition Coordination Committee
DQA	Data Quality Assessment
D-WASHE	District Water and Sanitation Health Education
EBF	Exclusive Breastfeeding
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EHT	Environmental Health Technician
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
FP	Family Planning
GMP	Growth Monitoring and Promotion
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
HH	Household
HMIS	Health Management Information Systems
IECD	Integrated Early Child Development
IYCF	Infant and Young Child Feeding
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

MCDP	I,000 Most Critical Days Program
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MOH	Ministry of Health
MWDSEP	Ministry of Water Development, Sanitation and Environmental Protection
NFNC	National Food and Nutrition Commission
ODF	Open Defecation-Free
PNCC	Provincial Nutrition Coordination Committee
SAG	Sanitation Action Group
SBC	Social and Behavior Change
SLG	Savings and Loan Group
SMSG	SUN Mothers Support Groups
STTA	Short-Term Technical Assistance
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition
TA	Technical Assistance
TWG	Technical Working Group
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
VSLA	Village Saving and Lending Associations
V-WASHE	Village Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Education
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WNCC	Ward Nutrition Coordination Committee

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the second annual report for the USAID Scaling Up Nutrition Technical Assistance (SUN TA) covering activities implemented from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020. The USAID SUN TA is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to reduce stunting among children under two years of age in Zambia through implementation of the Government of the Republic of Zambia's (GRZ) 1,000 Most Critical Days Program (MCDP II).

This is part of a cross-ministry and multi-donor Scaling Up Nutrition program. SUN TA is implementing this project in 13 districts of Central Province (Kabwe, Mumbwa, Chibombo, Kapiri Mposhi), Copperbelt Province (Ndola, Kitwe), Luapula Province (Mansa, Samfya, Nchelenge), and Northern Province (Kasama, Mbala, Kaputa, Luwingu).

SUN TA targets women of reproductive age 15 - 49 with at least one child under 2 years of age, and/or a pregnant woman. Also, the project is targeting the SUN Program's most vulnerable households (a household that includes one or more of the following: a teenage pregnant woman, a pregnant woman with low MUAC (<21.0 cm), a woman with an infant under 6 months of age with recorded low birth weight, or a maternal mortality with surviving infant of under 6 months of age). To achieve the goal of this project, USAID has identified two main objectives that address stunting:



Adequate Quantity and Quality of Dietary Intake Among Target Groups



Adequate Health Conditions for Biological Utilization of Nutrients

The SUN TA Project began 2020 with ambitious plans to scale operations, outreach and technical activities across all 13 target districts. By March 2020, it became clear that COVID-19 was a fast-moving, global pandemic that would soon affect all countries, all economies, all businesses, all individuals—sparing no one. While always of critical mission, the COVID-19 pandemic created an even greater urgency for the SUN TA team to pivot quickly and adapt both operations and scale-up of activities to ensure Zambians, especially the youngest and most vulnerable, received proper nutrition and mothers of young children received support to create new or expand existing income-generating opportunities that would in turn help feed their families in the midst of a halted economy.

While we cannot ignore the challenges the pandemic created, in addition to rising inflation and insecurity in several focus districts, the confluence of issues illuminated numerous opportunities for innovation and collaboration, and pushed the team harder to establish critical, foundational structures to reach more beneficiaries, faster and more holistically. For example, train-the-trainer workshops onboarded 886 health professionals who in turn trained 3,960 community-based volunteers resulting in 5,687 SUN Mother Support Groups formed. SUN Mother Groups are an important, supportive platform to share information on health and nutrition, food preparation, and essential hygiene behaviors to name a few. Ultimately, the cascade of training reached 77,500 pregnant women and mothers of children aged 0 – 24 months from SUN households, improving adoption of key behaviors, such as regular antenatal care visits and growth monitoring. Further, the project leveraged COVID-19 messaging on hygiene and sanitation practices (proper handwashing guidance, hand sanitization) as part of WASH behavior change. Finally, SUN TA found new ways to showcase the project's work through virtual field visits—a first for USAID. While there are always logistical hurdles to overcome in more rural settings, SUN TA proved it was possible, meaningful and reproduceable, all the while cutting costs, reducing exposure, and allowing more people to join and facilitating. It has since become a model employed on many other USAID projects.

In short, despite the pandemic, SUN TA found ways to mitigate challenges and press forward with the important work at hand. The project continued to support these objectives using the SUN Minimum Package of High Impact Interventions, household targeting strategy and public service delivery mechanisms (MCDP II Pyramid), all of which built on the strong foundation of integrated nutrition services through its service delivery structures.

Given the multisectoral nature of SUN TA, the project's collaboration with the National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC) and Government line ministries not only proved critical for outreach in communities, but also long-term buy-in and sustainability. For example, SUN TA worked closely with GRZ, NFNC, private seed companies and SUN TA-trained farmers throughout 2020 on such things as the promotion and scale-up of quick maturing vegetables (Amaranthus, Rape/Kale, sweet potato leaves) to boost nutrition, immunity and overall food security.

Lastly, the SUN TA's WASH component ramped up considerably in 2020. Without safe, clean drinking water and proper sanitation and hygiene behaviors, bacteria and parasites that cause diarrheal diseases can prevent the uptake of essential nutrients from otherwise healthy foods. In response, the project not only strengthened hygiene promotion supplies and messaging, like frequent and correct handwashing with soap and water, and challenged communities to be Open Defecation Free, but it moved aggressively on infrastructure activities, specifically borehole construction and rehabilitation. Much of the work in 2020 focused on hiring key project staff, procuring the services of three Architectural and Engineering firms (Baba Drilling, Zambezi Drilling, and Living Water International) to drill or rehabilitate 65 boreholes, conducting an assessment of 91 boreholes to determine new borehole sites and the functionality of existing boreholes, training Area Pump Menders to service and maintain the boreholes, sampling and testing water sites and rehabilitating three boreholes before the close of the year. The foundation is well-laid for full ramp up in 2021, with the end goal of sustained access to safe water.

Following is a snapshot of other highlights covering the reporting period and by technical area followed by project results.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS BY TECHNICAL AREA

In 2020, the project worked with the key implementing line ministries and the NFNC to deliver a range of activities across its technical focus areas, all aimed at the reduction in stunting among children under the age of two. Below is the summary of results:

Agriculture & Livelihoods

- Supported 17,344 SUN most vulnerable households with agriculture starter packs such as Amaranthus, carrots, spinach, and biofortified Mbereshi beans.
- Established 118 health facility gardens to provide increased access to nutritious vegetables for pregnant and lactating mothers from targeted communities. Further, the gardens are used as a learning point for mothers that visit health facilities.
- Trained 898 Lead Farmers and reached out to 13,500 Follower Farmers engaged in various improved agricultural practices that are contributing to the production of diverse nutritious vegetables and legumes.
- Engaged six seeds companies to directly deal with farmers by providing inputs and technical support. Further, the seed companies are supporting demonstration sites through the provision of free seed, while others are offering training materials or both as a marketing strategy.

- Signed MoU with Good Nature Agro (GNA) resulting in 77 Private Extension Agents (PEAs) being trained, and 37,350 kg of soybean seed delivered to the districts (Chibombo, Kabwe, Kapiri Mposhi, Ndola, Kitwe, Mansa and Kasama) in 25 kg bags. So far, farmers have paid for 19,175 kg at 50 percent with a total value of [REDACTED] reaching 734 farmers.
- Established 588 savings groups with a total membership of 10,856 and cumulative savings totaling [REDACTED]. Also, the project enlisted 26 private service providers in 13 districts who produced and supplied 600 cashboxes valued at [REDACTED]. Demand for the cashboxes is growing as more savings groups get established in the supported communities.
- Established 100 new micro enterprises through loans acquired from the saving groups ranging from vegetable selling, poultry, farming, selling beans, caterpillar and dry fish selling, and grocery selling helping to diversify household income.



Nutrition & Health

- Trained 886 health professionals as trainers to roll-out the SUN Mother Support Groups (169 trained at the district level and 717 trained at catchment area level to train and supervise CBVs who are working with the SMSGs at community level). In addition, SUN TA trained 3,960 CBVs at the sub-district level (3,960 CBVs in formation and implementation of SMSG, 591 of which are also community-based distributors for family planning services).
- Reached 17,778 clients through community-based distributors with family planning (FP) services from ten of 13 districts. Trainings are yet to be conducted in three districts to facilitate FP services in the community.
- Formed 5,687 SUN Mother Support Groups reaching 77,500 pregnant and mothers of children aged 0 – 24 months from SUN households with health and nutrition talks, cooking demonstrations, learning about essential hygiene behaviors, and participation in savings groups.

WASH

- Trained 1,179 GRZ staff (district and sub-district - Community Health Assistants and Environmental Health Technologists) and CBVs (Area Pump Menders and Community Champions) to roll-out all WASH activities.
- Formed 2,890 Sanitation Action Groups (SAGs) with 10 members each to oversee and follow-up the construction and use of adequate latrines to attain Open Defecation Free (ODF) status in villages.
- Built new or upgraded existing latrines and installed handwashing stations (tippy taps) that serve 58,003 households (with a population of about 236,280 people) across the 13 SUN TA districts to meet ODF standards.
- Triggered 2,881 villages for CLTS interventions resulting in about 236,280 people accessing basic sanitation services.
- Reached about 236,280 people in communities across the 13 targeted districts with SBC messages aimed at encouraging desired sanitation and hygiene practices such as correct and consistent handwashing with clean water and soap at six critical times, hygienic and safe proper fecal disposal, and correct storage and household water treatment and safe storage.
- Verified 35 villages from three districts, Luwingu, Kasama and Samfya, as ODF and are awaiting ODF certification and follow-up celebrations.
- Established 660 Village Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Education (V-WASHE) committees to enhance community ownership and management of water points in project sites.
- Assessed 91 boreholes for rehabilitation/reconstruction out of the planned 65. SUN TA rehabilitated three in Chibombo District before the close of the year, with the rest earmarked for 2021. Three firms, Baba Drilling, Zambezi Drilling, and Living Water International, have been subcontracted to conduct 65 borehole rehabilitations/reconstructions.
- Increased access to safe, clean drinking water for 11,699 people in Chibombo District as a result of the three newly reconstructed boreholes.
- Subcontracted Rankin Engineering to conduct borehole siting, design, water testing, and construction supervision for 40 new boreholes in Kitwe, Luwingu, Mumbwa, and Nchelenge districts.

- Subcontracted Baba Drilling and Exploration and Geotech to provide borehole drilling and construction in the above named four districts. At the end of 2020, drilling of two new boreholes started in Nchelenge District, which got delayed due to rains and will be completed in 2021.
- Subcontracted Living Waters, Geotech, Baba Drilling and Exploration and Zambezi Drilling and Explorations to provide reconstruction and repairs to existing boreholes across the Kitwe, Luwingu, Mumbwa, and Nchelenge districts.

Cross-cutting

- Developed technological platforms in view of COVID-19 for transmitting key nutrition messages, remote trainings, supportive supervision (virtual meetings and site visits), and messaging for frontline health workers/CBVs.
- Nutrition and health digital messages targeting pregnant women, women who have newly delivered, women with children 0-6 months, and women with children six months and older.
- SMSG digital training messages (gap analysis) distributed to reinforce areas of support after trainings targeting CBVs.
- Supported 380 health facilities to put up 10 handwashing stations with 20-liter capacity water tanks to prevent diseases spread by germs. Further, SUN TA sensitized the health care providers using sanitation and hygiene messages including diarrhea in children under 2 years. SUN TA also distributed 76,000 tablets of soap, 2,262 by 400 ml hand sanitizer bottles and 59,423 bottles of liquid chlorine across the 13 focus districts.
- Hosted USAID's first virtual site visit in Zambia with 40 participants (USAID, SUN TA, GRZ/NFNC) using a video conferencing platform and had project staff join live from the field to showcase the project's activities. This became a model for other development projects as they adapted to the COVID-19 environment.
- In collaboration with USAID, SUN TA presented to the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development (BIFAD) Public Meeting in September. With over 1,000 people attending globally (BIFAD members, policymakers, and nutrition and development practitioners) the project highlighted how it was adapting and supporting Social and Behavior Change in view of COVID-19.
- USAID provided approval to key deliverables for the SUN TA as follows: Environmental Monitoring and Mitigation Plan (EMMP), Water Quality Assurance Plan (WQAP), Safer Use Action Plan (SUAP), Monitoring, Coordination, and Communication Plan (MCCP), Social and Behavior Change (SBC) Strategy, 2020 Work Plan, and quarterly reports.

SUN TA PROJECT RESULTS

Agriculture & Livelihoods

The agriculture and livelihoods component aims to increase reliable access to safe and nutritious food through nutrition-sensitive agriculture and financial inclusion. To achieve increased access to safe and nutritious foods, SUN TA addresses household food, income and nutrition security through increased production, productivity and profitability of diverse (nutrient-dense) vegetables, legumes, field crops and livestock at community and household levels, using climate smart agricultural (CSA) practices. Financial inclusion is attained through community savings and loans groups (CSLGs) linked with micro, small and medium enterprises development (creating an opportunity for alternative livelihoods) at the community

level. In rolling out these interventions, SUN TA works with the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, Ministry of Commerce and Trade, Ministry of Community Development and Social Services structures from national, district, and community levels.

- **Enhancing capacity of GRZ staff and CBVs:** The project trained different levels of GRZ staff and CBVs in the management of health facility gardens and community gardens; on how to grow nutritious vegetables and biofortified crops like iron-rich beans, orange fleshed sweet potatoes and orange maize; and how to manage community savings and loan groups. The trained CBVs continue outreach efforts to target groups in their respective communities. For instance, the 898 trained Lead Farmers are now providing support on good agriculture practices to 13,500 Follower Farmers who are using the 843 established community gardens as farmer field schools. The 237 Community Facilitators have formed 588 CSLGs with a membership of over 10,000.
- **Establishment of health facility vegetables gardens:** In 2020, SUN TA helped established 118 health centre gardens whose production estimates will get captured beginning in 2021 after Lead Farmers receive monitoring tools. These gardens have been instrumental in teaching women who visit the health facilities for various services like antenatal care, growth monitoring promotion (GMP), and cooking demonstrations, the importance of diverse vegetables and vegetable utilization, how to plant vegetables, and how to ensure household availability all year round. The produce harvested from the gardens are used in cooking demonstrations for mothers, who are encouraged to replicate the production and consumption at household level. Some SUN mothers have started to grow their own vegetables as Follower Farmers. Increased nutrient intake is key to the prevention of malnutrition.
- **Utilization of vegetable gardens:** The 118-health facility and 887 community-led vegetable gardens are bearing fruit as mothers are now accessing and consuming the products. At Musaba Health Centre in Mansa, 17 SUN Mother Support Groups are utilizing the vegetables in the established garden for cooking demonstrations with 266 mothers and 121 under-two-year-old children are benefiting. In Mumbwa at Nangoma Hospital garden, three SUN Mother Support Groups (30 mothers aged 19 – 30) use the gardens to learn the benefits of and how to grow nutritious vegetables at the household level. In Kasama 334 mothers are benefitting from the health facility gardens at Kasama General Hospital (135), Namulundu (113), Tazara (18), Monica (6), Nkolemfumu (32) and Chilubula (30). Some health facility gardens such as Namulundu Health facility and Kasama General Hospital in Kasama and Mantumbusa and Musaba health facilities in Mansa are now selling the vegetables to the surrounding



communities to ensure sustainability of the gardens. The next step will be to examine how these monies are being utilized and reinvested into the community.

- **Developing village chicken value chain:** Ten field staff from Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock in Ndola and Kitwe participated in a chicken production train-the-trainer workshop at the end of 2020. They in turn trained 18 demonstration farmers in village chicken production concepts in the two districts. Agricom, through the Agriculture Technology Development Centre (ATDC) at the University of Zambia, was co-opted to provide supportive tools using video-based training content. This intervention started late in 2020 but will be expanded to all the 13 districts in 2021 with each district identifying and developing nine demonstration Village Chicken Farmers who will each have 10 Follower Farmers.
- **Startup agriculture input support:** To stimulate production and increase access to a greater variety of nutritious food from diversified vegetables and crops, SUN TA supported 17,344 SUN vulnerable households with inputs of different vegetables, biofortified crops as a one-off support.
- **Formation of CSLGs:** To increase the number of individuals participating in USG-assisted group-based savings, micro-finance or lending programs, SUN TA trained 1,362 Community Facilitators in CSLG methodology and supported them with training kits. The CFs went on to form 588 CSLGs that are already saving, bringing the total number of individuals participating in CSLGs to 10,856, with savings worth ██████████ and ██████████ in loans supporting 25¹ micro and small enterprises.
- **SUN TA chairs SaveNet Board:** SUN TA is a member of the Savings Network Zambia (SaveNET), a platform for organizations working to increase access to financial services. At the September 2020 Annual General Meeting, SUN TA's Agriculture and Livelihoods Expert was elected Board Chairperson for one year. SaveNET currently has 40 affiliated member organizations comprising local and international NGOs, private sector, research and training institutions, the Bank of Zambia and Ministry of Community Development and Social Service. SaveNET members share information on resources such as training materials, trends, innovations, and best practices on financial inclusion.
- **Private sector engagement:** The engagement of the private sector is key in building sustainability. By creating direct linkages between private sector players and the project's beneficiaries, a stage is being set for the two entities to trade without the project. In 2020, the following efforts were made to build this interface:
- **Seed companies:** SUN TA engaged six seed companies—Seed Co. Zambia, ZAMSEED, Syngenta, AFRISEED with Amiran, and ATS Zambia Ltd.—who all participated in training sessions for Lead Farmers by providing agronomical insights and an opportunity to purchase seeds directly from the suppliers at wholesale prices. The seed companies have established business linkages and joint demonstration sites with 26 Lead Farmers (Anchor Farmers) through which direct seed sells to 283 (M222, F61) farmers occurred in the year. The seed companies also responded to the engagement as follows:

¹ These enterprises include tailoring, selling of meat products, groceries, vegetable, fish, kapenta, tomatoes, cassava and clothes selling, ordering and reselling maize, buying and selling mopane worms (vinkhubala), restaurants to mention but a few.

- ✓ Seed Co. Zambia is supporting eight demonstration plots owned by Lead Farmers in four camps of Kapiri Mposhi. The company is also providing seedlings for leafy vegetables and seeds for cucumbers, watermelons, and butternut squash. Through the Ministry of Agriculture, eight Lead Farmers have been identified to host these demonstration plots. In Kitwe, Seed Co. Zambia is facilitating market linkages for vegetable farmers. In Mansa, the company is supporting all 84 Lead Farmer-led community gardens and 16 health facility gardens with demonstration inputs and technical support.



- ✓ AFRISEED is supporting four demonstration plots for Mbereshi beans in Kapiri Mposhi.
 - ✓ In Ndola, ZAMSEED is supporting Lead Farmers with training materials covering all agronomical practices for the various vegetables.
- **Good Nature Agro:** To increase the value of agriculture-related financing accessed as a result of USG assistance, SUN TA signed an MoU with Good Nature Agro (GNA) which led to GNA deploying 7 new staff (one per district), training 29 agriculture staff and 25 Lead Farmers in soybean production, 77 Private Extension Agents (PEAs) trained, and 37,350 kg of soybean seed delivered to the districts (Chibombo, Kabwe, Kapiri Mposhi, Ndola, Kitwe, Mansa and Kasama). At the close of the year, 1,205 farmers had paid for 33,025 kg of seed at 50 percent with a total value of [REDACTED], with a 50 percent balance to be paid after harvest.
 - **PSPs for cashboxes:** In 2020, SUN TA developed 26 Private Service Providers (PSPs) in 13 districts to produce cashboxes used by CSLGs. At the close of the year, 600 cashboxes were sold between [REDACTED] each and the demand is growing. The production of cashboxes is one example of how the private sector can leverage development programming and turn it into an income generator.

Nutrition & Health

SUN TA's Health and Nutrition component aims to improve infant and young child feeding (IYCF), caring practices, and Maternal and Adolescent Nutrition. SUN TA uses nutrition-specific, high-impact interventions (antenatal care, early initiation of breastfeeding, exclusive breast feeding, complementary feeding, and systems strengthening for iron, folate and vitamin A supplementation including ORS/Zinc for treatment of diarrhea) targeting pregnant, breast feeding women, teenage pregnant adolescents and children under two years of age. SUN TA works closely with the Ministry of Health and other related key line ministries through the formation and management of SMSGs to reach beneficiaries at the community and household levels.

- **Capacity-building for GRZ staff and CBVs:** To equip GRZ staff to adequately support implementation, the project facilitated the training of 169 (77 male and 92 female) GRZ staff at the district-level (DNCC) who cascaded training to the 717 (330 male, and 387 female) participants at the subdistrict, facility and community levels. The DNCC is a committee comprised of relevant SUN implementing key line ministries at the district level and the NFNC. The staff were mainly drawn from the MOH as the lead implementer, with others being from Agriculture and Community Development. The trainings were A SUN Mother Support Group (SMSG) session underway in Mansa

government-led and owned with master trainers drawn from the national level, provincial level and district level. The trainings focus on the SMSG model, and family planning. Also, the project trained 3,965 CBVs (1,588 male and 2,377 females, including 493 CBV supervisors - 234 male and 259 female). CBVs are responsible for formation, management and operationalization of SMSGs. The CBVs worked with mothers and conducted sessions including the importance of exclusive breastfeeding, complementary feeding, good hygiene practices, nutrition for pregnant and breastfeeding women, creation of household handwashing stations, use of latrines and proper disposal of faces and garbage, creation of safe play areas, and COVID-19 preventive and protective measures.

- **Establishment of SUN Mother Support Groups (SMSGs):**

The project has established a total of 5,687 SUN Mother Support Groups reaching 77,500 pregnant women and mothers of children under two. Formation of more groups is ongoing as more women become eligible and are registered through the health facility. The SMSGs are groups of a maximum of 15 mothers each (comprised of pregnant women and teenagers and mothers of children aged 0-24 months) through which health and nutrition activities and behavior change messages are delivered under the supervision of trained CBVs. With SMSGs formed in all



13 districts, activities in 2021 will now focus on strengthening SMSGs, more integration with other interventions and delivery of layered interventions. In 2020, SMSGs undertook the following activities that respond to the improved health of mothers and children:

- ✓ **Cooking demonstrations:** In 2020, CBVs used cooking demonstrations to teach mothers how to prepare various locally available foods, often harvested from SUN TA supported gardens, so that they retain their nutritional value. Correct food preparation is essential for the retention of nutrients, which is key to the prevention of stunting. During cooking demonstrations, mothers are encouraged to replicate the practices at home, while CBVs emphasize the same during their SMSG sessions.
- ✓ **Health and Nutrition talks:** Using the knowledge gained during trainings, CBVs taught mothers the importance of attending antenatal care visits, nutrition in pregnancy, IYCF standard practices, importance of early initiation of breastfeeding, exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and complementary feeding thereafter.
- ✓ **Essential hygiene actions:** In 2020, CBVs taught mothers the importance of handwashing with soap at five critical points – before breastfeeding baby, before preparing/handling food, before eating, after using the toilet and after changing baby’s nappy. The WASH team also taught mothers how to set-up handwashing stations using a tippy tap, a demonstration of how thematic areas are converging and complementing each other.
- ✓ **Mothers in CSLGs:** SMSGs are a convergence point for agriculture and livelihoods interventions and act as a platform for sensitizing mothers on how they can be involved in savings and loans groups, as well as how savings and income generation activities are linked to nutrition. Community Facilitators, recruited and trained by the SUN TA Agriculture and Livelihoods team, interacted with the SMSGs and trained them of the CSLG methodology. By

getting Community Facilitators to work with SMSGs, the project is creating linkages with other interventions.

- ✓ Support to fellow mothers: The purpose of SMSGs is not just for mothers to learn under the guidance of the CBV, but also for mothers to provide social support and peer learning to each other. In Q3, SMSGs visited mothers who had missed meetings or those who needed specific attention. Such a practice has potential to make mothers feel cared for and included.

- **Integrating Family Planning services:** In 2020, SUN TA trained 601 (153 males, 448 female) Community-based Distributors (CBDs) in the delivery of community-level family planning services in ten out of the 13 districts covering a total of 72 health facilities. The CBDs in turn reached 17,778 clients with family planning services. These services included 2,096 oral contraceptives, 7,098 injectables, 8,358 male condoms, and 203 female condoms. CBDs counselled another 7,383 clients on general family planning services and 23 were referred to the health facility for services that could not be offered at the community level. In Q1 2021, the project will support the remaining three districts in conducting family planning training. Family planning practices are key to the reduction of stunting, as the size of families and the frequency of pregnancies influences a family's ability to raise healthy children.



WASH

The SUN TA WASH program focuses on increasing access to safe water and reducing exposure to environmental pathogens that cause increased risk of diarrheal diseases and intestinal infections. Throughout 2020, SUN TA worked with the Ministry of Local Government (MLG) and Ministry of Water Development, Sanitation and Environmental Protection (MWDSEP) to increase access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene at household and community levels.

- **Hygiene promotion:** SUN TA supported the Ministry of Health in all 13 districts to promote handwashing in health facilities as a general hygiene practice and as a measure to protect health workers and patients from COVID-19. A total of 3,800 hand washing facilities with stands were procured and handed over to the District Health Offices (under the MCH funding) for further distribution to the health facilities to improve handwashing and reduce diarrheal diseases among beneficiaries in all catchment areas. SUN TA also procured and distributed 76,000 tablets of soap, 59,423 bottles of liquid chlorine and 2,262 bottles of hand sanitizers. The items were meant to support hygiene in health centers especially in high traffic areas and in turn reduce the potential points of bacteria transmission.
- **Community-led Total Sanitation (CLTS):** During the reporting period, SUN TA focused on social and behavior change while building community capacity to consistently use latrines, practice optimal handwashing at critical moments, take appropriate food safety actions, and properly dispose of adult, child, and animal feces. Also, the project worked with communities to attain ODF status focusing on villages in the health facility catchment areas. Further, SUN TA worked with the MWDSEP to train GRZ staff and CBVs to increase district and community capacity to roll-out CLTS activities.

- **Capacity-building:** SUN TA collaborated with GRZ technical staff and local authorities to train provincial, district (D-WASHE committee members), village (V-WASHE committee members) and sub-district staff (Environmental Health Technicians and Community Champions) in CLTS.
 - ✓ **District Training of Trainers:** In 2020, SUN TA trained 84 district CLTS train-the- trainers (TOTs) in Kasama (8), Mbala (5), Kaputa (5), Mumbwa (8), Samfya (6) and Mansa (6), as well as three provincial staff each from Northern and Luapula Provinces. In Central and Copperbelt Provinces, the following received training: Kitwe (5), Ndola (5), Kapiri (5), Kabwe (8), Chibombo (6), Luwingu (6) and Nchelenge (5). To ensure quality delivery and adherence to best practices, the National CLTS Coaches who facilitated the TOTs and supported the district training of the EHTs/CHAs and Community Champions, continued coaching and mentoring activities in their respective districts. The capacity and skills built at the district level were a new addition as the 13 districts which had no previous CLTS trainers conversant newer WASH developments.
 - ✓ **Training EHTs and CHAs:** Following the training of the district TOTs, the trainings cascaded down. As a result, 380 (233 males and 147 females) Environmental Health Technologists (EHTs) and Community Health Assistants (CHAs) received CLTS training in an effort to increase access to sanitation and hygiene at the community level: Kasama (42), Mbala (24), Kaputa (21), Luwingu (17), Nchelenge (20), Mansa (68), Samfya (21), Kitwe (26), Kapiri (36), Ndola (12), Kabwe (25), Chibombo (40), and Mumbwa (28). This cadre of trained subdistrict staff are now overseeing the CLTS activities including supervising Community Champions, triggering villages and ensuring all households construct or improve their latrines to meet all four parameters of adequacy, and practice satisfactory levels of hygiene.
 - ✓ **Training Community Champions:** To fulfill the mandate of reaching out to 6,789 villages/communities covered by the project across 13 districts, SUN TA trained 725 Community Champions out of the targeted 760, translating to 95.4 percent coverage. Of the total number of Community Champions trained, 24.4 percent (177) were female while the remaining 75.6 percent (548) were male. The number trained per district varied based on the size of the district and the number of health facility catchment areas., and is distributed as follows: Kasama (79), Mbala (48), Kaputa (44), Luwingu (34), Nchelenge (36), Mansa (104), Samfya (44), Kitwe (50), Kapiri (72), Ndola (30), Kabwe (33), Chibombo (80) and Mumbwa (71). The trained Community Champions supported triggering of villages in their respective catchment areas and ensured that SAGs formed in each of the triggered villages.
- **Sanitation Action Group formation and orientation:** SUN TA supported the formation 2,890 Sanitation Action Groups (SAGs) out of which 906 were oriented in all 13 districts. Each SAG has 10 members drawn from the respective village. Therefore, a total of 9,060 members received training to spearhead ODF attainment. The orientation included the roles and responsibilities of EHTs/CHAs/CCs. A SAG is a village-level committee formed after a village has been triggered and takes full control of the implementation of the agreed action plan to ensure the village attains ODF status by meeting all parameters of an adequate latrine. The CLTS methodology has been well-received in communities with the formed SAGs, and Community Champions and headmen actively participate and oversee construction of toilets and placement of handwashing stations. Headmen are using their traditional authority to influence adherence to CLTS principles, while SAGs and Community Champions are supporting households with the technical know-how of constructing latrines and setting-up tippy-taps/handwashing stations.
- **Triggering villages:** Out of the 6,789 villages in the 13 districts, SUN TA supported the triggering of 2,881 villages with an estimated population of 236,280. Of that, 58,003 people had by the end of the year constructed standard latrines with handwashing stations. CLTS triggering stimulates collective action by raising awareness of the dangers of open defecation and the benefits of improving

sanitary conditions at the community level. Teams comprising EHTs/CHAs, CCs and village headmen presided over the activity.

- **Open Defecation Free (ODF) status:** Following the ODF claims by Mutwewankoko, Monga and Mibenge catchments in Mansa District, Chikunyu catchment in Samfya District and Chanda Mukulu, Mulobola, Musa, Nkolemfumu and Ntumpa catchments in Kasama District, ODF Task Forces in the three districts verified the claims confirming the following ODF coverage status of each community: Mutwewankoko at 47.1 percent, Monga at 55.95 percent, Mibenge at 60.15 percent, Chikunyu at 91.2 percent, Chanda Mukulu at 67 percent, Nkolemfumu at 49 percent, Mulobola at 57 percent, Musa at 46 percent and Ntumpa at 40 percent. Verification is ongoing by D-WASHE Committees and certification will follow by the national CLTS coaches when the District ODF task forces for respective districts are satisfied with findings in respective catchment areas.
- **Access to safe water:** SUN TA worked with GRZ staff to conduct water assessments for new boreholes and borehole rehabilitations/reconstructions. In addition, the project worked with district and community level staff to build their capacity to deliver and sustain clean water in the targeted communities.
- **Capacity-building:** SUN TA collaborated with GRZ technical staff and local authorities to train provincial, district (D-WASHE committee members), village (V-WASHE committee members) and sub-district staff (Environmental Health Technicians and Community Health Assistants) in water access and management.
 - ✓ Training of D-WASHE Members in Water Needs Assessments: To enhance the capacity of the districts' ability to assess areas for new water points and identify boreholes for rehabilitation, SUN TA facilitated the training of 43 D-WASHE members (three for each of the 13 districts plus four provincial staff from Northern and Central Provinces) in this area. SUN TA WASH District Technical Officers from the 13 districts participated in the training. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for water needs assessments and borehole rehabilitation were developed and provided to the districts to guide them on the identification of communities in need of new boreholes, water scheme reticulation systems and water points requiring rehabilitation. Post-training, the D-WASHE members conducted water needs assessments in all 13 districts and identified beneficiary villages for boreholes and community water schemes. The water needs assessment reports from the 13 districts are guiding the ongoing rehabilitations and installation of new water points.
 - ✓ Training of Area Pump Menders: In 2020, SUN TA trained 336 Area Pump Menders (APM) across 12 districts in sustainable water production and supply in their catchment areas as follows: Mbala (24), Luwingu (17), Mansa (54), Kasama (43), Samfya (19), Nchelenge (24), Ndola (8), Kitwe (10), Kapiri Mposhi (37), Kabwe (28), Chibombo (15), and Mumbwa (16). Due to COVID-19, APM training in Kaputa has been pushed to 2021. The training aims to (a) improve on the functionality of water points by equipping APMs on how to prevent issues at water points; (b) reduce on down time of the water facilities; and (c) train/advise V-WASHE committees on good hygienic practices.

- ✓ Training of GRZ staff in water sampling and quality analysis: To enhance the ability of the district to conduct water sampling and quality analysis, SUN TA through the National Institute for Scientific and Industrial Research (NISIR), trained a total of 163 GRZ staff (62 females and 101 males) comprising Laboratory Technologists, Environmental Health Technologists, Environmental



Health Officers and Public Health Officers in water sampling and quality analysis as follows: Chibombo (10), Kaputa (12), Kitwe (15), Mbala (12), Mumbwa (13), Kabwe (15), Ndola (12), Kapiri Mposhi (10), Samfya (13), Kasama (13), Mansa (14), Luwingu (12) and Nchelenge (12). SUN TA conducted the training to improve on water quality monitoring and ensure that communities are provided with safe water. The trained officers then led the assessment of boreholes and collection of water samples from existing boreholes to increase community access to clean and safe water.

- **Formation of V-WASHE Committees:** EHTs/CHAs spearheaded the organization of 660 V-WASHE committees, which translates to 6,600 members (each committee has 10 members). Kitwe (10), Chibombo (10), Mumbwa (68), Mbala (73), Kasama (77), Luwingu (60), Kaputa (168), Samfya (166), Nchelenge (28). Of the 660 committees, 289 received an orientation and developed constitutions guiding the management of the water points, understanding that their responsibility is to promote community ownership and management of waterpoints. However, the orientation of the others was discontinued due to the expectations arising from the exercise. The trained committees mobilized their community financial contribution and began demanding water supply from the local and central governments. It has now been decided that orientation will be conducted a month before waterpoints becomes functional.
- **A&E and Drilling firms:** The project invested considerable energy and time developing and working in close collaboration with USAID on a comprehensive strategic plan for the siting, design, water testing and construction supervision and drilling of new boreholes. SUN TA brought on an infrastructure expert along with new local WASH staff to support the efforts. The short term assistance evolved into a long term role as Director, Infrastructure Development to see through the construction work into 2021 along with with the added intention to train, coach, and mentor staff to eventually take over the management of the entire borehole construction and rehabilitation project cycle; from the procurement stage to the execution and delivery of the boreholes. Through an aggressive recruitment in the fall of 2020, SUN TA awarded three subcontracts to conduct 1) siting, design, water testing, supervision and 2) construction of 40 new boreholes. Site are located in the Luwingu and Nchelenge Districts in the Northern and Luapula Provinces (Lot #1) and in Mumbwa and Kitwe Districts of Central and Copperbelt Provinces (Lot #2). A contract was executed to Rankin as the A&E firm and to Geotech and Baba Drilling and Exploration for the drilling. By the close of the year, Rankin had completed its siting and began to focus on supervision of drilling with three drilling site underway with permits obtained. Two drilling attempts were made in Nchelenge District—one attempt in Kaseka village with a population of 8,629 people and the second attempt in Sanga village with a population of 501 people. However, drilling was paused due to lithological challenges in conjunction with excessive rains.

- Assessment and rehabilitation of boreholes:** To increase access to water in target communities, SUN TA supported district staff to undertake a physical assessment of the water points earmarked for rehabilitation near schools and health facilities and determine their functionality. Boreholes at schools and health centers serve the larger surrounding communities and repairing them is expected to ease water problems and support vegetable gardens at health facilities. A total of ninety-one (91) boreholes were physically assessed. At each water point, the hand pump was dismantled and inspected to ascertain the condition of each part, static water levels and the open hole depth were measured, and the type of casing pipes and their size were documented. Further, teams collected three water samples to test for fecal coliforms and nitrates at MOH district laboratories and for Iron, Lead,



Fluoride and Arsenic at Alfred Knight lab in Kitwe.

Towards the end of 2020, SUN TA recruited and contracted four construction firms to support the borehole reconstruction efforts. The firms were ready to mobilize just as the rain season in Zambia began but before years end, three water points in Chibombo District were rehabilitated at Kapopo Rural Health Centre, Mboshya Rural Health Centre, Kalala Primary School.

Cross-cutting

- Development of 2021 Workplans:** SUN TA cooperated with the NFNC, national-level ministries, PNCCs and the 13 DNCCs to develop workplans and budgets for 2021. NFNC unveiled a new planning and budgeting template that all SUN districts used. Although the template was pre-loaded with activities and formulas, some districts struggled to use it and they required more time to gain guidance on how to navigate the form. NFNC shared the SUN baseline to help the districts prioritize activities using the baseline information. SUN TA submitted the district workplans alongside its main Annual Workplan.
- Formation and orientation of Communication and Advocacy TWGs:** SUN TA supported the NFNC to form and orient Communications and Advocacy Technical Working Groups in all the 13 districts. The TWGs include implementing line ministries, the media, faith-based organizations and NGOs. The mandate of each TWG is to oversee all communication, advocacy and SBC activities in their respective districts. Following TWG formation, they planned for communication and advocacy activities which were incorporated in the 2021 District MCDP II Workplans.
- Development of the SBC Strategy:** SUN TA developed an SBC Strategy anchored on four pillars in the accordance with the project's four core interventions. The strategy identified key behaviors,

attitudes, knowledge, and practices that either need to be reinforced or advocated against. USAID approved the strategy and implementation will start in 2021, with SUN TA recruiting an SBC Specialist to lead the work.

- **SUN TA hosts virtual site visit:** SUN TA led the first-ever virtual site visit in 2020, an adaptation to the new normal of operating in COVID times. Via a livestream, SUN TA showcased its work in health and nutrition; agriculture and livelihoods; and water, sanitation and hygiene in different locations of Kasama District, while Government and USAID representatives followed the proceedings from their offices. The ‘visitors’ saw gardens providing households with a variety of nutritious vegetables, CBVs and groups of mothers learning about better childcare practices, new infrastructures contributing to improved sanitation and hygiene, and the community. USAID staff from four offices (Economic Development, Program Office, Health Office, and Office of Acquisition and Assistance) interacted with Project beneficiaries including Lead Farmers, Community Champions, Community Facilitators and SUN mother support group members through the digital platform.
- **Integrating COVID-19 response:** The project supported GRZ in their efforts to respond to the global pandemic. SUN TA contributed to public sensitization through the procurement of a set of PA systems for project and NFNC vehicles as well as through radio programs. As detailed in the WASH section, the project also provided health facilities with various materials to support prevention measures.
- **BIFAD Meeting:** With the support of USAID, SUN TA presented to the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development (BIFAD) Public Meeting with over 1,000 people attending globally (BIFAD members, policymakers, and nutrition and development practitioners). The presentation highlighted how the project adapted to support social and behavior change in view of COVID-19.
- **Use of digital platforms:** In light of COVID-19, SUN TA developed technological platforms to

Age*	Listeners	%Listeners
Under 18	45,135	29%
18 - 24 Years	70,082	45%
25 - 34 Years	23,693	15%
35 - 44 Years	9,474	6%
Above 44 Years	6,534	4%
	154,918	100%

transmit key nutrition messages, remote trainings, supportive supervision (virtual meetings and site visits), and messaging for frontline health workers/CBVs, such as nutrition and health messages targeting pregnant women, women who have newly delivered, women with children 0-6 months, women with children 6 months and older.

- ✓ **Dissemination of nutrition content:** In Q2 2020, SUN TA launched nutrition content, which is readily available on-demand by any MTN subscriber in the SUN TA districts. The content was jointly developed with MoH and NFNC. The content includes nutrition for pregnant women, under-five clinics, and healthy recipes for children. In 2020, a total of 154,918 unique listeners accessed SUN TA content and the data shows that most listeners are those of reproductive age (15-49 years) and are female, the high number of female listeners has potential to result in better feeding habits for infant and young child feeding.
- ✓ **Launch of agriculture content:** Content on agriculture and financial inclusion was developed on the 667-information service. Farmers with an MTN number can call and receive general and specific information on seasonal vegetables. The purpose of the content is to contribute to behavioral change by providing information to families on better agriculture practices. In December 2020, the uptake of messages on vegetable gardens saw a sharp increase of 57.42 percent among unique listeners. This can be attributed to the promotion of

vegetable crops during the pre-testing of the soy and Amaranthus curriculum during that period, as well as an SMS campaign that was also kick-started during this same period. Regarding the gender distribution, 65.4 percent of the listeners were women compared to 34.6 percent men— an indication that women are becoming more interested in agricultural content and starting to play a vital role in deciding what is grown and eaten in their homes. Further, Viamo, TechnoServe and DAI jointly developed new content on soy and Amaranthus based on the seed distribution that was planned for the year by DAI. The content will be launched in January 2021.

- ✓ **ZICTA turns down SMS campaign:** An SMS campaign was designed to cover all technical areas of the project – WASH, Agriculture and Livelihoods, and Health and Nutrition. NFNC approved the content and subsequently wrote to ZICTA to approve the campaign as a public service in furtherance of the government’s health agenda. However, ZICTA turned down the request on grounds that it fell under unsolicited messages to subscribers. To ensure that the activity was implemented, Viamo utilized its 667 database to disseminate the SMS’s to over 100,000 contacts with key nutritional messages. The 6-6-7 Service is a toll-free, automated hotline in partnership with MTN Zambia that delivers information on a wide range of development topics in English, Nyanja, Bemba, Tonga, and Lozi and can be sent to even the simplest phones using interactive voice response (IVR) and USSD.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING (MEL)

MEL is a critical component of the project, enabling design of the monitoring plan, tools, and tracking of results. SUN TA’s M&E system draws on and uses the existing government district and sub-district reporting structures and systems. Where there are capacity gaps and system weaknesses, SUN TA builds capacity and strengthens the existing systems.

- **Updating AMELP:** The AMELP is the principal guiding document on the project’s M&E activities. During the reporting year, SUN TA revised and resubmitted the AMELP to USAID for approval in Quarter 1 and in Quarter 4. The revision included the list of indicators, establishing targets, designing data flowchart; clearly defined roles and responsibilities of various officers in charge of data management from the district to national level; and adjustments to the PIRS and revisions to the learning agenda inclusive of additional questions to stimulate learning across all the thematic project areas.
- **Development of data collection tools and database:** The development of data collection instruments was completed and followed by the development and improvement of the database model. SUN TA developed and deployed a relational data model to provide the infrastructure for near real-time data reporting, for both internal and external purposes. Using the data model, views were developed for summation and quality control of household registration data. Data visualizations and analyses were also developed and deployed.
- **Needs assessment and review of data collection tools:** The MEL team conducted a desk review of all processes to identify capacity gaps and inform the M&E needs in all 13 districts, identifying three key needs:
 - Enhancing the understanding of the M&E processes for all SUN TA staff and government partners.
 - Harmonizing SUN TA data collection instruments with national instruments.
 - Completing all paper-based data collection instruments and digitizing paper-based instruments on DAI Collect, and DAI’s Kobo Toolbox-based data collection platform.

- **Capacity-building for SUN TA staff and partners:** SUN TA trained SUN TA staff (72), community-based volunteers/Lead Farmers (89), and front-line government staff (303) on the MEL system and utilization of data collection instruments. . The training covered both paper-based and electronic data collection instruments for WASH, health and nutrition, agriculture, and livelihoods, data quality management and its processes, data management schedule for data collection timelines, feedback loops, and data reporting deadlines. The training also covered the revised strategy on household registration and the identification of SUN-eligible households for the delivery of goods and services to beneficiaries.
- **SUN households verification and Registration:** SUN TA revised the household registration tools following a review of the first phase registration process, and trained 2,914 CBVs, 780 (two per facility) staff from 390 health facilities and 43 SUN TA staff on how to use the new tools. Following the formation of more SMSGs, the SUN TA household registration continued throughout the reporting year. The continuous registration of mothers to form SMSGs is an ongoing exercise meant to capture new mothers who become eligible in accordance with SUN TA's target audience criteria. The project printed and dispatched 170,000 household registration data collection forms and 163,000 household registration cards to the districts for use in the ongoing registration of households.
- **Staffing and Recruitment:** At the national level, SUN TA hired a Data Management Specialist, M&E Manager and MEL Director. At the provincial level, SUN TA recruited and hired for its seven additional district offices that opened in January 2020. Four Provincial MEL Officers were hired and deployed each to the four provincial capitals to work with their respective districts and coordinate the data management continuum. SUN TA recruited 13 Data Associates (one for each district) who are responsible for the whole continuum of data flow and management – from capturing, processing, storage, retrieval, and usage.
- **Adoption of SAVIX:** The Agriculture and Livelihoods team adopted the use of the SAVIX system to facilitate the collection of savings group data from the communities working with SUN TA. SAVIX is a Savings Group Management Information System (MIS) which enables implementers of Savings Group projects to monitor and assess the performance of group staff and projects. With the growing number of SMSGs across 13 districts, SUN TA expects to contribute considerable to the SAVIX in 2021 and onward.
- **Data Quality Assessment:** The project conducted two data quality assessments during 2020. DQA #1 covered all 13 districts for Quarter 1 and 2 but with less scope while DQA #2 covered four districts for activities conducted in the Quarter 3 and 4 and with a more expansive scope. The internal DQA revealed that while the projects MEL system has been well-developed, it has not been completely operationalized. Not all tools earlier developed had been printed and distributed to all districts, catchment areas and CBVs. Data collection as a result has lagged. The same was true for data entry, which was lagging behind data collection. COVID-19 restrictions compounded these challenges, for example, the project could not pilot the tools or conduct community level orientations on how to use the tools. Accessing data through government structures also proved challenging considering much of the reporting depends on government partners, e.g., Agriculture Camp Officers, Environmental Health Technologists. The common reason given for this is the workload that government officers endure owing to human resource constraints in their institutions.

However, SUN TA identified issues that could be remedied and immediately instituted measures including: (1) the expedited printing and distribution of data capture tools to all districts, catchments and CBVs; (2) identification and engagement of additional short-term but low-cost resources at district level to work with the Data Associates in performing data entry for all pending forms; (3) orientation/re-orientation of all technical staff to the data capture tools and processes; (4)

introduction of community level mobile technology to capture and report data; and 5) increased/improved on-site mentoring and supervision at all levels.

Specific to the Agriculture and Livelihoods program area, the MEL team introduced a revised digital agriculture input distribution form to capture all inputs distributed on one form. The form captures data using mobile devices as inputs are distributed, reducing the time to capture data per household as well as a significant reduction in the potential for data error.

- **Rapid Surveys (Digital Data Collection) and Dashboard Integration:** To support SUN TA's AMELP, Viamo has been tasked with the deployment of rapid surveys using an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) technology. The questions in the surveys are to be derived from the project indicators as captured in the AMELP while the household's responses will assist the project in understanding whether project high impact interventions are yielding necessary results on women's level of involvement in decision making on the sale and consumption of crops and livestock, utilization of improved agriculture practices and technologies, understanding of birth control methods for child spacing and knowledge on nutrition specific approaches . During the year under review, Viamo conducted fieldwork to fully understand the challenges and barriers among community health workers and informed the development of the Mobile Remote Training for community health workers.
- **Collaboration with SUN LE:** To strengthen SUN TA's MEL approach, SUN LE and SUN TA collaborated in areas of research and evaluation. In 2020, SUN TA and SUN LE developed learning questions around health and nutrition (e.g., to answer the reported increases in diarrheal cases in Kitwe, Ndola, and Chibombo Districts) to be answered through research studies scheduled for 2021. SUN LE also disseminated key results from the baseline study which were used to update the July-December district workplans. SUN TA also participated in SUN LE led review meetings which focused on the Common Results Framework, the impact of COVID-19 on household food security and nutrition, the draft policy brief on food security and nutrition and the harmonization of the MCDP II M&E systems and indicators.
- **M&E review and planning meeting:** The project conducted an internal review and planning meeting with a focus on understanding the layered approach and convergence; MEL approaches, data flow and a detailed look at the data collection and reporting tools and review of what has so far worked/not worked; data quality assessment results focusing on the development of performance improvement plan; and troubleshooting database issues and brainstorming outcome monitoring. The meeting was attended by MEL staff from the district, provincial and national levels and facilitated by SUN TA technical experts, finance, administration and human resources units.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

In 2020, SUN TA played an active role in the nutrition space and actively participated in meetings convened by the government and SUN Technical Working Groups, as well as other stakeholders.

- **Meetings with USAID:** SUN TA participated in a co-creation meeting in January 2020 with USAID, NFNC, SUN partners, and GRZ to discuss program changes resulting from delays with the SUN Fund Manager. Following the co-creation workshop, USAID made adjustments to the contract to reflect the project's pivot to direct implementation in 13 targeted districts. At the request of USAID, SUN TA also adjusted its MEL plan, including targets and indicators. Additionally, SUN TA held periodic meetings with USAID to provide updates on implementation and obtain feedback. The meetings provided strategic direction to the project on how best to meet targets. At the August meeting, the project shared with USAID the operational challenges due to COVID and developed a plan for implementation of critical activities while ensuring the safety and well-being of the team. The

September meeting focused on sharing project approaches with a new member of the USAID Mission. UNICEF joined the November meeting where the SUN TA project shared its SBC Strategy to assist UNICEF as they prepare the national strategy. The December meeting focused on the selection of boreholes sites..

- **Participation in stakeholder platforms:** SUN TA participated in SUN stakeholder platforms with a view of contributing to discussions, sharing implementation updates and obtaining sector updates from NFNC and other implementing partners. The platforms included the M&E TWG and the Communications and Advocacy TWG. At district and provincial levels, SUN TA took part in various meetings called by government and USAID Regional Offices to share and obtain updates.
- **Coordination with NFNC:** A document called Principles of Collaboration was drafted to guide SUN TA's engagement with the NFNC at national, provincial and district levels. At the close of the year, the document was awaiting the signature of the NFNC Executive Director.

PROGRAM AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

In 2020, the team dedicated significant energy to develop and enforce strict guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19, protecting both SUN TA staff and the project's supported communities. A Risk Assessment Tool was developed and considered at various stages of the pandemic and project management implemented gradual safeguards and adaptive management practices. Through coordination with GRZ, support and implementation of technical activities and travel within the districts continued, albeit at a slower pace. For example, an important point of collaboration occurred on travel permits, allowing SUN TA staff to travel during lockdown (March-May) and push forward on mission critical work. SUN TA implemented strict safety protocols for all staff within the offices and while in the field. This included adjustment to office layouts, enabling remote access for staff through enhanced IT measures and the use of more vehicles to maintaining implementation while allowing for social distancing among staff.

SUN TA and DAI home office in Bethesda, MD also revisited subcontracting agreements in light of a more expansive social and behavior change (SBC) plan. After careful and deliberate re-examination, SUN TA's review concluded that subcontractor EXP Media could no longer meet the expectations laid out in the approved SBC plan, and in turn, received a stop order letter. While unfortunate, SUN TA continued forward with the other subcontractors after collaboration on 2020 work plans and provided oversight to them in conjunction with other technical activities.

Finance

- **Exploration of new payment system:** The project started exploring a mobile payment system to mitigate the risk exposure for SUN TA staff of making cash payments at community level to participants such as the CBVs. This is in line with DAI and USAID policies to facilitate mobile payment. The team is reviewing available options to facilitate this mechanism given the challenges of network coverage in the rural focus districts.
- **Payment of GRZ staff during and after workshops/trainings:** The workflow from collecting attendance sheets to verification and payment of DSA for GRZ staff via bank transfers from Lusaka is now done faster but still requires adjustments. The collection of all the GRZ staff's bank details, the simplification of the process of payment allowed better turnaround time but we still experience bounce back payments when inaccurate bank details are provided to SUN TA and sometimes, discrepancies in the attendance sheets.

Procurements: In 2020, the project executed numerous procurements to support project implementation as follows:

- For general outreach, the project purchased and deployed seven (7) Toyota Land Cruisers to Luwingu, Nchelenge, Kabwe, Ndola, Kitwe, Chibombo and Kapiri-Mposhi Districts.
- Under Agriculture and Livelihoods, SUN TA procured and distributed various projects goods to the focus districts. These include: 30,000 packets of Amaranthus, carrot, Impwa, Rape, spinach and kale seeds; 1,200 sprayers; 11,900 bags of soy, orange maize and Mbereshi beans; and 3,000 bags of agricultural lime, 50 percent of which was sent to the districts and the remaining bags are expected to be dispatched in Q1 2021. The project also procured and distributed 850 rolls of game fencing wire for 425 community and health facility gardens; 780 heavy duty bicycles for CBVs, Community Champions, and Lead Farmers, 11,700 nursery trays and 1,200 community savings kits for CSLG trainings.
- Under Health and Nutrition, SUN TA procured and distributed 8,000 child and 5,000 adult MUAC tapes. Further, 25 vehicle PA systems, 3,800 handwashing stations, 100,000 bottles of chlorine solution, 76,000 hygienic soap bars, 3,000 x 400mls bottles of hand sanitizers and 800 x 70 ml bottles of hand sanitizers. The foregoing WASH materials are for use in health facilities to promote frequent handwashing with water and soap as part of the COVID prevention response. The chlorine is for distribution to SUN most vulnerable households to support home-based water treatment.
- Under the WASH component, the project procured: 13 generators and 13x100m poly pipes for use during the water point rehabilitation needs assessments; Additionally, SUN TA procured, a total of 375 Indian Mark II UPVC and 45 Indian Mark III Stainless Steel and 150 Afridev pumps. Task Orders were successfully issued to (3) borehole drilling companies: Zambezi Drilling and Exploration Ltd, Living Water International and Baba Drilling and Exploration Company to commence drilling and rehabilitation activities.

Human Resources: In 2020, the number of staff grew from 54 at the close of 2019 to 135 at the end of 2020. This increase reflects the operationalizing of the seven remaining districts for a total of 13 early in 2020. The project expanded its staff in all of the technical units, as well as M&E, Administration and Finance.

- In 2020, DAI reaffirmed its commitments to USAID's journey to self-reliance and the importance of identifying and fostering local talent. As outlined in the project's recruitment efforts.
- As a result of COVID-19 pandemic, SUN TA recruitment of vacant positions was limited or delayed in response to the initial outbreak of the pandemic in March and later in August 2020 when Lusaka and district office staff were asked to self-quarantine and work remotely.
- The WASH Expert position became vacant in August and while recruitment is still ongoing we anticipate filling the position at the beginning of 2021. In the interim SUN TA brought on additional WASH and short-term infrastructure support in response to the critical need to begin the borehole construction activities.
- SUN TA built upon its short-term infrastructure assignment and brought in a senior Director, Infrastructure Development to continue the push to implement access to water activities. This position will not only oversee the construction work but will train, coach, and mentor staff to effectively take over the management of the entire borehole construction and rehabilitation project cycle; from the procurement stage to siting, design, construction and rehabilitation management oversight, quality assurance to construction and rehabilitation completion.

- Recruitment for the M&E Director position that became vacant in January 2020 was expansive and conducted with urgency. The project ultimately held three rounds of recruitment efforts. In the interim, DAI recruited and hired a junior position, M&E Manager and engaged the DAI home office to provide technical support and help strengthen the team while the project continued its recruitment for the Key Personnel position. The project revised the title and scope of work of this position to attract senior level M&E professional and to accurately reflect the caliber of skills and expertise envisaged for this role and filled the position as of November 2020.



- New positions to support the procurement team were also created, namely the Senior Procurement, Contract and Grants Manager, the Contract and Grants Manager, SBC Specialist, as well as, a Procurement Officer position.
- In early December 2020, Philippe LeMay, resigned from the project as COP. Karen Doll was approved by USAID as the Chief of Party and arrived at post on January 8, 2021 to assume the role.

Information Technology: In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the IT team put in place measures to enable staff to work from home with minimal disruption. IT carried out five critical measures as follows: provided all project staff with a training on working remotely with DAI systems; provided home printing and scanning services for critical staff; provided home laptop charging solutions for critical staff; provided home internet solutions for all staff; and setup staff electronic signatures.

Section 889 B Compliance: In compliance with the National Defense Authorization Act, with regard to the use of prohibited equipment under section 889, DAI confirmed that SUN TA does not have prohibited equipment in use or apart of its inventory.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

SUN TA is using the approved Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EMMP) to monitor all its activities and report on implementation during regular project performance reporting, including the annual Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Report (EMMR). During this reporting period, SUN TA submitted its first annual EMMR that highlighted efforts and progress made on the appropriate environmental mitigation and climate adaptation measures for each activity that was indicated in the EMMP (Agriculture, Health, WASH). This included any necessary training or capacity-building done in 2020, and ensured appropriate and effective implementation of all mitigation measures.

In February 2020, USAID held a training on environmental management for SUN TA senior staff. The training exposed the project team to the U.S. government’s environmental laws and regulations in relation to the SUN program interventions.

Furthermore, SUN TA used the approved Water Quality Assurance Plan to ensure that all water related interventions conformed to local and U.S. government environmental laws and regulations. Further, the project assessed 91 boreholes for rehabilitations/reconstructions including the collection of water samples for testing. Three out of the 91 boreholes tested positive for Arsenic and Lead. Local authorities are being notified so that the water points will be decommissioned.

KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- **COVID-19:** The year was largely defined by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic which affected the project as follows:
- **Disruption of project implementation:** Most of the project activities entail gathering people, whether for trainings or other community-based activities. The restrictions of public gatherings greatly affected the implementation of the project.,. However, the project continued to deliver interventions while adhering to public health guidelines. Activities such as trainings continued in a limited capacity as approved by the MOH on a case-by-case basis and took into account the prescribed measures such as provision of handwashing stations with soap, masking up, and social distancing which entailed the project hiring larger venues and additional vehicles.
- **Staff affected by COVID-19:** Over the reporting period, over a dozen staff tested positive for COVID-19, and this resulted in DAI implementing safety protocols which included closing of the physical office space for cleaning, contract tracing, reassessing travel and field interactions, requesting exposed staff to self-quarantine as needed and for all staff to works from home following the parameters outlined in the DAI COVID Risk Assessment Tool.
- **Procurement:** With the ramp up across all 13 districts and implementation of activities, the volume of procurements under SUN TA grew exponentially in 2020. The team faced challenges in meeting those demand with the loss of some procurement staff through the year and with the disruption of global supply chains as a result of COVID-19. In response, SUN TA source locally when they could, engaged home office support to assist in supporting critical procurements and recruited local expertise to build a more expansive procurement department.
- **Staffing within the GRZ departments:** Except for MOH, the rest of the GRZ departments in the districts are viewed as understaffed and existing staff are stretched, participating in more than one project activity, from other implementing partners and their day-to-day responsibilities. This, too, has posed a challenge for implementation of SUN TA activities by slowing down the number and frequency of collaboration meetings (vital for multisectoral collaboration) and pushing out joint training dates are just two examples.



ANNEXES

Annex A: Indicator Performance Tracking Table

Ref #	Indicator	Annual Target	Previous Cumulative Results	Results achieved this period	Cumulative Results
		(Jan 2020 - Dec 2020)	(As of Sept 30, 2020)	(Oct 1 – Dec 31, 2020)	(As of Dec 31, 2020)
Cross-cutting					
CC2 HL.9-4	Number of individuals receiving nutrition-related professional training through USG-supported programs (HL.9-4)				
	Agriculture and Livelihoods	1,721	2,915 (F1,257, M1,658)	2,431 (F1,442, M1,069)	5,426 (F2,699, M2,727)
	Health and Nutrition	2,648	3,907 (F2,145, M1,762)	592 (F325, M267)	4,499 (F2,470, M2,029)
	WASH	1,807	3,258 (F1,537, M1,721)	910 (F332, M578)	4168 (F1,869, M2,299)
Objective 1. Adequate Quantity and Quality of Dietary Intake Among Targeted Groups Increased					
<i>IR 1. Increased, reliable access to safe, nutritious food</i>					
1.9 SUN TA Custom	Number of lead farmers who are providing training and capacity building in good agriculture practices	1,039	900 (F224, M676)	0	898 (F224, M674)
1.10 SUN TA Custom	Number of anchor smallholder commercial farmers who are providing production related services to follower farmers	30	14 (F8, M6)	11 (F1, M13)	28 (F9, M19)
1.11 SUN TA Custom	Number of community gardens established	505	843	44	887
1.12 SUN TA Custom	Number of health facility gardens established	115	106	12	118
1.13 SUN TA Custom	Number of SUN most vulnerable households reached with agricultural input support	8,657	5,532 (F1,932, M3,600)	11,812 (F10,270, M1,542)	17,344 (F12,202, M5,142)
1.14 EG.3-2	Number of individuals participating in USG food security programs	17,314	75,405	131,361	206,766
1.15 SUN TA Custom	Number of community savings and loans groups established	1,363	135	453	588
1.16 EG.4.2-7	Number of individuals participating in USG-assisted group-based savings, micro-finance or lending programs	20,439	2,729 (F2,282, M447)	8,127 (F6,800, M1,327)	10,856 M 1,774 F 9,082
1.17 SUN TA Custom	Cumulative value of savings for community savings and loan groups (ZMW)				
Objective 2. Adequate Health Conditions for Biological Utilization of Nutrients Improved					
<i>IR 3. Improved delivery of effective, sustainable health and nutrition services</i>					
3.6 HL.9-3b	Number of women receiving individual or group counseling on maternal and/or child nutrition (HL.9-3b)	111,242	121,283	39,906	161,189

Ref #	Indicator	Annual Target	Previous Cumulative Results	Results achieved this period	Cumulative Results
		(Jan 2020 - Dec 2020)	(As of Sept 30, 2020)	(Oct 1 – Dec 31, 2020)	(As of Dec 31, 2020)
3.7 HL.9-1e	Number of children under 2 who received treatment for severe acute malnutrition (SAM)	N/A	270	313	583
3.8 HL.9-1f	Number of children under 2 who were admitted for treatment of moderate acute malnutrition (HL.9-1f)	N/A	1,035	425	1,460
3.10 MEASURE	Number of community-based family planning providers trained	993	119 (F71, M48)	482 (F377, M105)	601 (F448, M153)
3.14 SUN TA Custom	Number of SUN Mother's Support Groups established	8,320	2,131	3,556	5,687
3.15 SUN TA Custom	Number of mothers from SUN households who are members of the SUN Mother's Support Groups	124,800	24,970	52,530	77,500
<i>IR 4. Healthier, cleaner environment</i>					
4.7 SUN TA Custom	Number of households with new or upgraded ODF standard latrines	TBD	13,911	44,092	58,003
4.8 SUN TA Custom	Number of sanitation action groups (SAGs) formed	1,230	1,202	1,688	2,890
4.9 SUN TA Custom	Number of Village Water, Sanitation, Hygiene & Education (V-WASHE) Committees newly established	466	540	120	660
4.10 SUN TA Custom	Number of rehabilitated boreholes in target communities	65	0	3	3
4.11 SUN TA Custom	Number of new boreholes installed in target communities	40	0	0	0
4.12 HL.8.1-3	Number of people receiving improved service quality from an existing basic drinking or safely managed water service as a result of USG assistance (HL.8.1-3)	107,450	0	0	0

ANNEX B: SUCCESS STORIES

SUN TA Community Savings and Loans Group Transforms [REDACTED] Small Business...and Life



Entrepreneur and SUN TA CSLG participant, [REDACTED]

Photo:
Praxides Shilunda/SUN TA

[REDACTED] of Nkwazi Township in Zambia’s Ndola District, Copperbelt Province, is a 36-year-old single mother of six — her youngest being just about two years-old. Her family’s main source of income has been the sale of meat pieces at the town’s Main Masala Market. She had been developing her business for five years prior to her involvement with the Scaling Up Nutrition Technical Assistance (SUN TA) Project’s Community Savings and Loan Groups (CSLGs). Before that, [REDACTED] income was falling below average, preventing her from meeting her family’s basic needs and expanding her business.

In 2020, SUN TA introduced Community Savings and Loan Groups following the identification and training of community facilitators, done in collaboration with the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services. Community members hesitated to join and form groups at first because previous experiences with other savings and loan models had many losing their money through theft. After a significant sensitization campaign to educate targeted communities on the SUN TA CSLG model, people understood it was a safe methodology and their money would be protected. What followed was the formation of the Twafweni CLSG in September 2020—the one [REDACTED] joined and has now become an active member.

“Before the training, business was quite difficult which did not enable me to meet basic family needs. My capital was too small to enable me to make a profit. In a week, I could manage to make [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]²) as profit from the sale of offals.”

Through the encouragement of an existing Twafweni CLSG member, [REDACTED] joined, hoping to learn how to improve her business. After attending a five-day training on the CSLG model, including entrepreneurship, [REDACTED] started saving with the group. To begin, [REDACTED] took out a loan three times her savings with ten percent interest and committed to pay it back on a monthly basis. The loan was the break she needed, immediately increasing her weekly income.

“Joining the savings group was a game changer for me, my family and my struggling business. Now, I can make an average of [REDACTED] in weekly profit.”

[REDACTED] states that the significant increase in profits is due to the increase in her orders—a result of her increased capital from the loan she took. Previously, Angela could only order small quantities of meat with her limited capital. After obtaining a loan from the group, [REDACTED] business expanded five-fold.

Lack of adequate income also limited [REDACTED] food choices. With increased weekly earnings and nutrition knowledge, Angela increased the diversity of food for herself and her children.

“I am now able to provide enough nutritious food to my family—as you can see how healthy my child is—and I am now able to provide for my children’s school requirements. I know I can do even more. I am expanding even further and

² [REDACTED]



Members of the Twafweni CSLG counting money during one of their weekly meetings. **Photo: Praxides Shilunda, SUN TA.**

want to venture into another business of buying clothes from Lusaka to sell in Ndola. I am so happy! I encourage other mothers to join the savings groups. I thank SUN TA for introducing these groups in our communities.”

Ndola District is one of 13 districts USAID’s SUN TA Project is supporting. The Community Savings and Loan Groups are intended to work in tandem with other health, nutrition, agriculture, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) interventions to reduce stunting among children under two years of age. By assisting women like [REDACTED] in building their livelihoods, CSLGs aim to increase incomes so they can buy nutritious food for themselves and their children, and aid in weathering both economic and non-economic shocks.

At the end of 2020, SUN TA had identified and trained 38 community facilitators on the SUN CLSG model, covering 12 wards across Ndola District. The community facilitators have gone on to form 72 groups and trained 1,080 members, predominantly women. And cumulatively, the groups had saved [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]), with the value of outstanding loans standing at [REDACTED].

SUN TA Lead Farmer, ██████████, Helps Ndola Residents Improve Vegetable Production and Household Nutrition

Despite her concerted effort and hard work, ██████████ was having a difficult time breaking even with her 2,500 square meters/0.25 hectares vegetable garden located in the Ndola District of Zambia's Copperbelt Province. With inadequate income, this 35-year-old, single mother of four couldn't gain enough profit to expand or diversify production because of the high cost of seedlings, pesticides, fertilizer, and labor—all of which are critical agricultural inputs.



With her baby in tow, ██████████ checks on her cabbage field. **Photo:** ██████████, SUN TA

Further, she had limited knowledge of agricultural practices that could help her increase yields and allow her to start a vegetable nursery. In fact, she was traveling nearly 270 km from her home in Ndola to Sunshine Farm in Chisamba District to buy vegetable seedlings. Adding to the strain, ██████████ lacked the technical know-how to fully utilize existing resources around her farm, like chicken manure to fertilize her garden. Before her engagement with the Scaling Up Nutrition Technical Assistance (SUN TA) Project, ██████████ grew mainly two vegetables—tomatoes and cabbage.

Identified and encouraged by some Ministry of Agriculture staff, ██████████ joined as a Scaling Up Nutrition Technical Assistance (SUN TA) Lead Farmer, hoping that with additional training on improved agricultural techniques and general support, she could boost productivity at her farm. After the four-day vegetable production training at Chalubemba Primary School, ██████████ applied the techniques including double digging, mulching, organic manure use, natural pesticide use, and crop rotation. Her commitment and inherent leadership proved fruitful, not just for herself, but for her community, which has a high prevalence of malnutrition and stunting. As a Lead Farmer, she led the establishment of a central community garden to help showcase best practices and share knowledge with surrounding farmers, also known as SUN Follower Farmers. To date, 15 Follower Farmers have participated in ██████████' training at the community garden and seven of them have adopted and applied the techniques in their gardens.

██████████ has seen an exponential increase in her yields and profits. Prior to her involvement and training with the SUN TA Project in 2019, ██████████ was raising ██████████ and making a net profit of ██████████. Post-training, she raised ██████████ making a net profit of ██████████) in 2020—a 100 percent increase in one year. As she continues to put her newly acquired technical knowledge into practice during the 2021 growing season, ██████████ expects ██████████ in net profit. To achieve this, she plans to start raising and selling vegetable seedlings as a service to surrounding communities, making them accessible and affordable. She is not stopping there—██████████ plans to increase the number of vegetable types that are both nutritious and marketable in

the area, adding the production of more vegetables to her business. These diversified nutrient rich crops include carrots, beans, Amaranthus, eggplant, Swiss Chard, Rape, and Vitamin A orange sweet potatoes. While the vegetables provide nutrients to [REDACTED], her family, and her community, her income enables her buy additional food such as animal-sourced foods like meat, poultry, fish, and eggs to supplement the family's diet.

“The training and support I received really helped me improve my production. Previously, I used to buy vegetable seedlings from very far but now I’m able to raise my own seedlings. I also used to spend a lot of money buying inorganic fertilizers and pesticides. Now I use a lot of organic manure and natural pesticides that I learned about during the training and this has greatly contributed to reducing production expenses and has resulted in improvements in my household.”

At the end of 2020, SUN TA in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, had trained 62 Lead Farmers in 12 wards across the Ndola District: Kabushi, Mushili, Munkulungwe, Kaloko, Kantolomba, Chichele, Kaniki, Pamodzi, Nkwazi, Skyways, Mapalo, and Kawama. With a focus on reducing stunting in children under two years of age, SUN TA provides Lead Farmers, [REDACTED], with training on vegetable production techniques and provides them with start-up materials such as vegetable seeds, organic fertilizers, seedling trays and vegetable reference materials.

Improved Nutrition and Antenatal Care Turns [REDACTED] Pregnancy into a Positive Journey

In the rural village of Nkafika, seven kilometers from Kaputa Boma in Zambia's Kaputa District, lives 23-year-old [REDACTED] who is seven months pregnant with her second child. She stays with her parents who depend on farming as their main source of income. She became pregnant with her first child, [REDACTED], while in grade nine and the father refused to accept responsibility or support her. [REDACTED] is in a similar situation during her second pregnancy.

Regardless, [REDACTED] is taking charge of her life and her children's lives through the support of the USAID Scaling Up Nutrition Technical Assistance (SUN TA) Project.

[REDACTED] has joined other pregnant and lactating women in small information groups called SUN Mother Support Groups or SMSGs. Each SMSG is led by a trained community-based volunteer and includes up to 15 women with a child or children 0-2 years old. The women gather each week to learn something new that will contribute to the health and improved nutrition of themselves and their families. Lessons might include everything from how to ensure both mother and baby are gaining the appropriate amount of weight to cooking demonstrations using a variety of nutritious foods from nearby community gardens. The overarching purpose, though, is to impart practical knowledge and encourage healthy behaviors that will foster better nutrition.

During [REDACTED] first pregnancy and before she was in an SMSG, she had little knowledge of how to take care of herself while also nurturing a developing baby. As a result, [REDACTED] did not gain the proper amount of weight throughout her pregnancy resulting in an underweight child—[REDACTED] was born at 2.2 kg (4.8 lbs.). She has described that she simply did not have adequate knowledge especially about the importance of a diversified diet and how frequently she should have been eating to gain the proper weight.



[REDACTED] seven months pregnant, weighs in at 61.2 kg (137 lbs.) during her fifth antenatal care visit to Kaputa Regional Health Clinic. Photo: SUN TA

[REDACTED], the community-based volunteer who leads the Nkafika Village SMSGs, recruited [REDACTED] to join when she was four months pregnant. Since joining, [REDACTED] has learned about the importance of good nutrition and consumption of clean water during pregnancy, gained knowledge about and access to micronutrient supplements, has improved her own and her family's sanitation and hygiene practices. She takes part in cooking demonstrations using diverse and locally available foods and is putting everything she is learning into her daily routine. For example, [REDACTED] now adds vegetables to porridge to make it more nutritious and has attended five out of the eight recommended antenatal care visits to track her weight gain and will continue through the duration of her pregnancy.

The results from these incremental changes have been quick to show up. At seven months, [REDACTED] has gained 11.3 kg, which is appropriate for where



[REDACTED] SUN Mother, at seven months with her second child. Photo: SUN TA

she is in her pregnancy. According to health educator [REDACTED], who is with Safe Motherhood Action Group and oversees maternal health issues in Kaputa District, [REDACTED] actions during her second pregnancy will help ensure that she and the baby are healthy.

[REDACTED] weight gain in the first pregnancy was poor. But with her regular antenatal care visits that we track with an antenatal card, we were able to attend to some minor bleeding and the issue has been resolved.

Further, [REDACTED] has become an avid advocate for the SUN Mothers Support Groups, encouraging her friends and other pregnant women to join, proudly testifying about her own experience. According to [REDACTED] recruited two other women to join the Nkafika Village SMSG— [REDACTED] who is 24 years old and has two children aged one year and another four months old, and [REDACTED] who has a four-month-old baby. He also relayed that [REDACTED] has become more active in the practical sessions, demonstrating how to prepare more nutritious meals, and in turn, keeping the interest of the other women in the group.

SMSG participant, [REDACTED], said she was inspired by the way [REDACTED] prepares her meals and saw the difference it was making in the health of her children. *I want the same for my children and family—I want them to grow healthy and contribute to their development.*



[REDACTED] preparing porridge using whole maize flour, groundnuts and pounded vegetables. Photo: SUN TA



[REDACTED] her son and other members of family eating the prepared porridge. Photo: SUN TA



[REDACTED] at 3 years 6 months is growing well because of proper nutrition. Photo: SUN TA