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USAID SUN TA

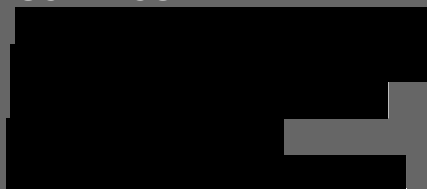


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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AMELP	Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan
CBV	Community-Based Volunteer
CC	Community Champions
CLTS	Community-led Total Sanitation
CSLG	Community Savings and Loan Group
DNCC	District Nutrition Coordination Committee
D-WASHE	District Water Sanitation and Health Education
EHT	Environmental Health Technician
FP	Family Planning
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
IYCF	Infant and Young Child Feeding
MCDP II	1,000 Most Critical Days Program II
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MOH	Ministry of Health
MWDS	Ministry of Water Development and Sanitation
NFNC	National Food and Nutrition Commission
ODF	Open Defecation-Free
PEA	Private Extension Agents
PNCC	Provincial Nutrition Coordination Committee
SAG	Sanitation Action Group
SBC	Social and Behavior Change
SMSG	SUN Mothers Support Groups
SUN TA	Scaling Up Nutrition Technical Assistance
TWG	Technical Working Group
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
V-WASHE	Village Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Education
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Scaling Up Nutrition Technical Assistance (SUN TA) Project Quarterly Progress Report (Q1 2022) covers activities implemented from January 1, 2022 to March 31, 2022.

The USAID SUN TA is a four-year (February 18, 2019—February 17, 2023) contract (72061119C00002) with three additional options years for a total of seven (7) years between DAI and USAID. The Scaling Up Nutrition Program is a cross-ministry and multi-donor initiative to reduce stunting in Zambia through implementation of the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) 1,000 Most Critical Days Program. USAID has contracted DAI to implement the USAID SUN TA Project as a way of contributing to the reduction of stunting among children under two years of age in Zambia.

Currently, SUN TA is implemented in 13 selected 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 two years of age, and/or pregnant women. 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 six months of age with recorded low birth weight, or a maternal mortality with surviving infant of under six months of age). To achieve the Project goal, 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

As part of the larger SUN effort, the USAID SUN TA Project provides technical assistance and direct implementation support to sub-national local government departments and staff in the selected districts to plan, implement, coordinate, and monitor integrated nutrition-sensitive and nutrition-specific activities aimed at significantly reducing the rate of stunting among Zambian children under two.

Further, SUN TA focuses implementation efforts using evidence-based interventions to increase access to and availability of safe, diverse, nutritious food; encourage the adoption of better child feeding and household hygiene practices; and increase access and use of improved health, water, and sanitation services. The Project prioritizes sustainability by improving both intra-household joint decision-making as well as capacity-building among local government and stakeholders including private sector to ensure coordination, accountability, social and behavior change, and learning replicating the Scaling Up Nutrition theory of change model.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During Q1 2022, the SUN TA Project made strong progress under each component and in all 13 target districts. Following are the most noteworthy and salient results from the quarter under review:

Agriculture & Livelihoods

SUN TA's Agriculture and Livelihoods component continued to increase access to diverse, nutritious vegetables and biofortified crops and markets, while also supporting agriculture financing and increased access to finance through savings groups. This resulted in 403 Lead Farmer-led community gardens (148 female-led gardens) that are functional, rendering support to approximately 6,045 Follower Farmers in Q1 2022. Mothers can directly purchase garden produce or obtain an array of vegetables during cooking demonstrations held in the community, thereby increasing nutrient intake vital for the reduction of stunting.



During the reporting period, 28,002 farmers (F: 19,713) applied improved management practices or technologies that range from use of certified seed, minimum tillage, crop rotation, and use of integrated pest management leading to 4,586.52 hectares under improved management practices or technologies with U.S. government (USG) assistance. These improved management practices are vital to increased production, productivity, and the quality of crops grown.

Access to financial services (savings, loans, and micro insurance) through individuals participating in USG-assisted group-based savings, micro-finance, or lending programs increased from 36,198 to 40,887 (33,409 female) with 5,621 (F: 4,361) added in the first quarter, bringing the cumulative savings to [REDACTED], up from [REDACTED] at the close of 2021.

SUN TA, in collaboration with the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, is working with smallholder farmers to promote the village chicken value chain as a business. This quarter, 88 GRZ Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock staff from the district village chicken promotion teams were trained across all 13 districts in the Village Chicken Production and Business Model. This led to the selection and establishment of 117 village chicken demonstration farms (centers of excellence or learning hubs) that are now at various levels of functionality and already supported with 48,633 Kuroiler day-old chicks. So far, 399 out of the targeted 1,170 Village Chicken Follower Farmers have been identified with 196 Follower Farmers already verified and supported through these enterprises.

Private sector engagement has increased with 10,707 legume (soybeans, groundnuts, and beans) farmers accessing seed and inoculant from Good Nature Agro (GNA) and SI Gold. There is also increased interaction between farmers and other seed companies like Seed Co Zambia, Afriseed,

Zamseed, and others, bringing the total value of agriculture-related financing accessed because of USG assistance to [REDACTED] in Q1 2022.

Health & Nutrition

More than 300 Community Based Volunteers (CBVs) (M: 146; F: 158) underwent refresher orientations on the SMSG approach. Further, 34 health facility staff in Luwingu and Samfya Districts were oriented in SMSG implementation. Collectively, CBVs formed 1,299 SMSGs across the 13 districts translating into a total membership of 17,423 members this quarter. This total includes 3,561 pregnant women and 13,862 mothers with children aged 0—24 months.

SUN TA trained a total of 455 Community Based Distributors (CBDs) in family planning during the first quarter, bringing the cumulative total of CBDs trained to 2,542. Of these, 1,814 actively reported in Q1 and reached out to 72,250 clients with various family planning (FP) services as follows: 21,262 on injectables (11,575 Depo; and 9,687 Sayana), 12,301 oral contraceptives and 36,092 condoms (F: 2,895; M: 33,197). Additionally, CBDs counselled 65,841 clients and referred 2,595 for other services such as IUDs, which are not handled by CBDs and are only provided by staff at health facility level.

Early Childhood Development (ECD) activities continued across the 13 districts, as well. Currently, 90 health facilities have established ECD corners, compared to 29 at the close of 2021. ECD outreach is being delivered to mothers with children under two years old during both static and outreach growth monitoring promotion (GMP) sessions, and SMSG gatherings with messages



focused on the importance of communication, play, and stimulation. Further, CBVs teach the women how to make age-appropriate toys using locally available materials.

During the period under review, 16,797 SMSG members received health and nutrition talks which are important for improved maternal and childcare practices. They included topics on the importance of early initiation of breastfeeding; exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months of a baby's life; when to start complementary feeding; eating a diverse diet during pregnancy; and the importance of communication and play for a sick or healthy child. Lastly under the Health and Nutrition component, SUN TA trained CBVs conducted a total of 812 cooking demonstration sessions across the 13 districts.

Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH)

The water, sanitation and hygiene component made significant progress in meeting milestones in community-led total sanitation (CLTS) and access to clean, safe water. During the period under review, SUN TA supported 13 District Water and Sanitation Health Education (D-WASHE) committees to hold their 2021 Performance Reviews, 2022 Strategy Development Plans, and Operationalization of Annual Work Plans. The meetings were used to review lessons learned and best practices from 2021 and develop strategies for 2022 that will facilitate attainment of results and their sustainability.

To improve access to basic water supply, 67 borehole reconstructions (BHRs) and 46 new boreholes (NBHs) from 2021 were handed over to communities, benefitting 67,253 people. Further, SUN TA, in partnership with respective D-WASHE committees, conducted routine water quality monitoring on 165 boreholes that had been handed over in 2021. Trained area pump menders (APMs) repaired and serviced 61 boreholes that continue to provide safe, clean water to 39,614 people in the 13 districts, and supported V-WASHE committees to conduct stipulated tasks in the borehole logbooks.



To create sanitation and hygiene demand, SUN TA oriented 69 Sanitation Action Groups (SAGs)—volunteers who supervise the construction of latrines and handwashing stations at the grassroots level and track progress at the village level. Working together with the already trained SAGs, they supervised 84,611 households to build new or upgraded latrines to meet ODF standards, resulting in the provision of basic sanitation for 420,426 people. This led 359 communities to claim ODF and 39 received verification from district level teams. To illustrate, through collaboration with World Vision, Kapiri Mposhi District successfully certified 21 villages as ODF.

Through radio and other gatherings, SUN TA disseminated social and behavior change messages in communities through established groups, like SUN Mother Support Groups, contributing to the 455,415 people across the 390 health facility catchments practicing handwashing with soap in Quarter 1 through the installation of tippy taps, pressure bottles, and other locally innovated handwashing facilities.

Cross-Cutting Activities

During Q1 2022, SUN TA trained facilitators in mobile data collection and reporting platforms and resulted in the Project coming up with a scale-up plan involving the training of Camp Extension Officers, Environmental Health Technologists, and other health facility staff handling WASH, health, and nutrition data

SUN TA participated in the three-day Midline Survey Analysis Approach Workshop to map program indicators to the questionnaire as well as to update the data analysis plan. During sensitization activities for the data collection stage, SUN LE will also ensure collaboration with SUN TA at district and community levels, and SUN TA will be on hand to provide support through the District Nutrition Coordination Committees (DNCCs). Through this process, SUN TA aims to address the challenge of late report submissions from catchment areas and enhance data quality, particularly on timeliness and validity.

The remainder of this Quarterly Progress Report details first quarter achievements and milestones in greater detail, by component and cross-cutting area. It is followed by an overview of Key Issues and Challenges and Planned Activities for Q1 2022. The report concludes with an Annex section including of Annex A: Summary of Results; and Annex B: Success Stories collected during the Q1 2022.

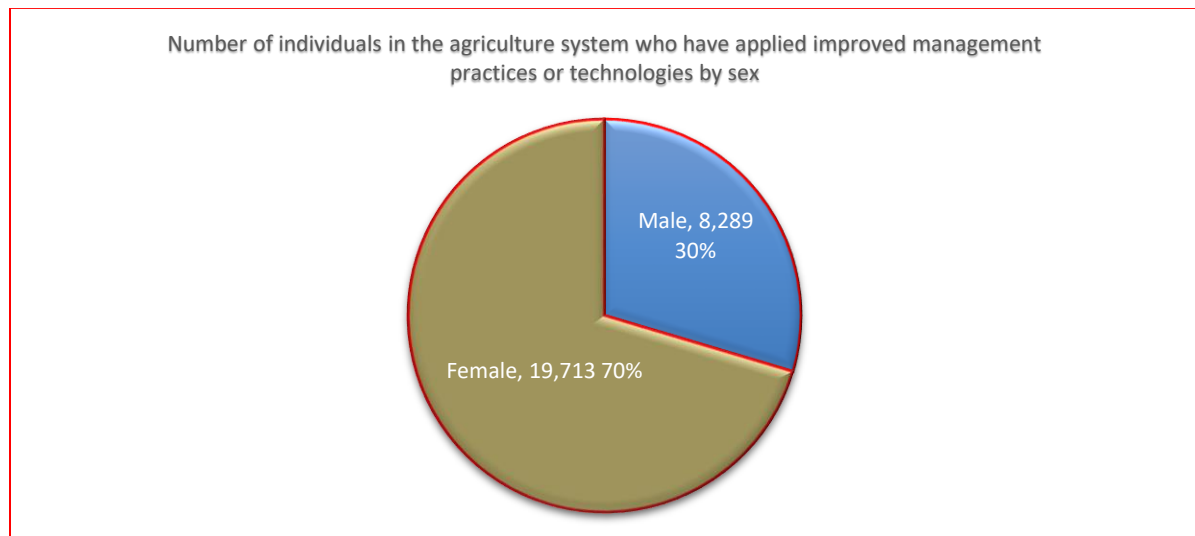
PROJECT RESULTS BY COMPONENT

Agriculture & Livelihoods

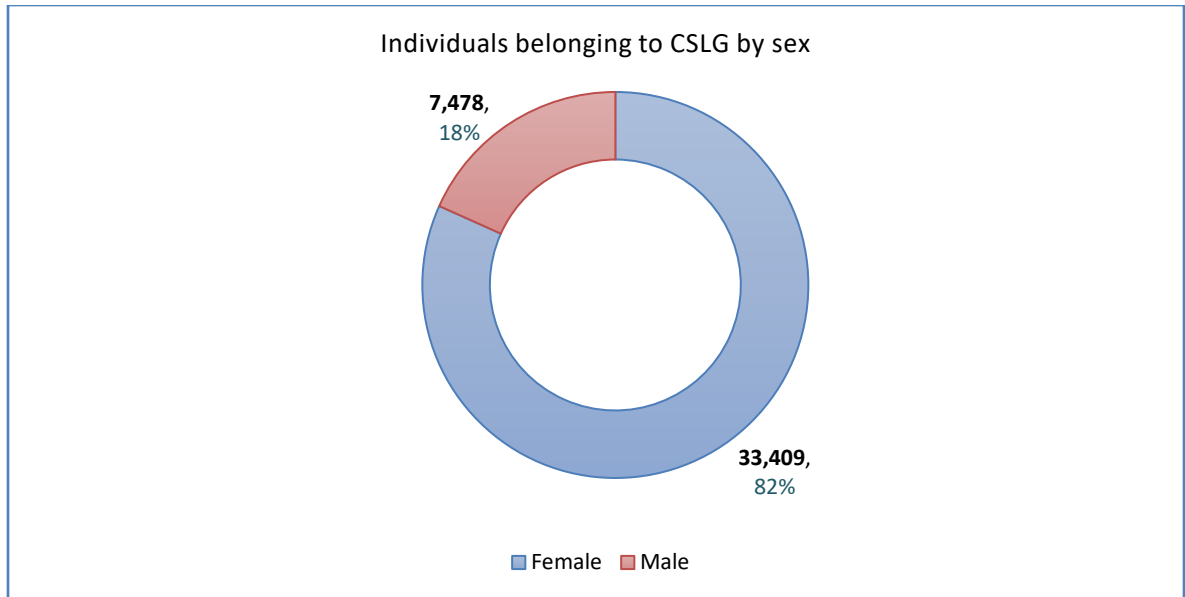
The Agriculture & Livelihoods component aims to increase access to safe and nutritious food through nutrition-sensitive agriculture and financial inclusion. To achieve increased access to safe and nutritious foods, SUN TA addresses household food, income, and nutrition security through increased production, 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 linked with micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) 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, and Ministry of Community Development and Social Services structures at the national, district, and community levels.

- **Access to diverse nutritious foods:** The Project reported 53 active health facility gardens being used as centers of excellence for learning and knowledge sharing in 12 of the 13 districts: Mbala (3), Kaputa (7), Nchelenge (10), Mansa (2), Samfya (12), Kitwe (6), Mumbwa (2), Chibombo (3), Kabwe (3), Kapiri (3) and Ndola (2). Pregnant and lactating mothers accessed the vegetables during their health facility visits and during cooking demonstrations. SUN TA also has 440 community gardens managed by 157 female and 283 male Lead Farmers. The number of active gardens has gone down slightly because of a shift from farming activities to cultivating other field crops.

- Lead Farmer community extension services:** During Q1 2022, 28,002 (F: 19,713) Farmers applied improved management practices or technologies that range from use of certified seed, minimum tillage, crop rotation, intercropping, and use of integrated pest management. This led to 4,586.52 hectares under improved management practices or technologies with USG assistance. SUN TA is applying these practices amid climate variability and risks due to changing rain patterns, temperatures, increase and changes in pests and diseases, and general environmental degradation. These practices are helping to mitigate some of these risks and assist farmers as they work to maintain or increase productivity. The other inclusion factor that has gained momentum is the addition of village chickens. An additional 117 Demonstration Farmers and 196 Follower Farmers have received improved breeds of village chickens, bringing the total number of farmers applying improved management practices or technologies to 28,513.

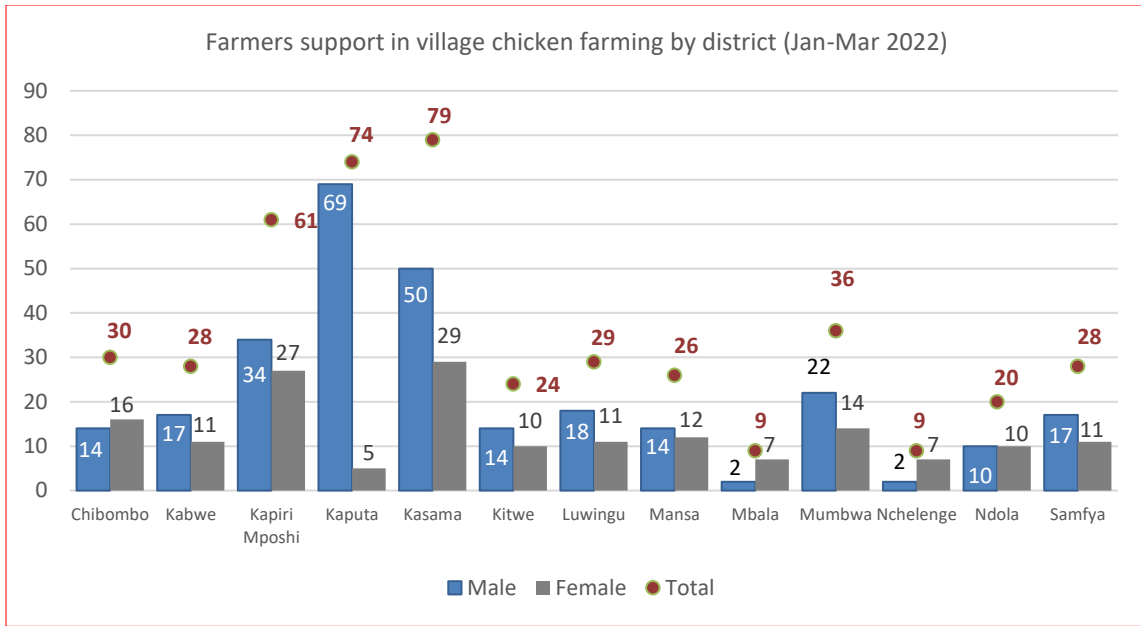


- Increasing access to finance and enterprises:** Access to financial services (savings, loans and micro insurance) continued to be the main game changer for the economic well-being of women through their participation in USG-assisted group-based savings, micro-finance, or lending programs. In total, these programs increased from 35,266 to 40,887 (F: 33,409) with 5,621 (F: 4,361) added in Q1 2022. This brings the cumulative savings to [REDACTED], up from [REDACTED] at the close of 2021. The increase in savings over one quarter is further evidence of the growing interest in CSLGs among targeted groups, underscoring the power of microfinance. To help CSLGs member better utilize their hard-earned savings, SUN TA is in the process of rolling out a financial literacy, business, and entrepreneurship skills training to CSLGs. The Project began with a train-the-trainer workshop for Northern Province GRZ staff, and they are currently training the CSLGs in their province. During the period under review, 69 CSLGs shared out [REDACTED] among 1,154 members (F: 933). Sharing proceeds motivates and energizes CSLGs even further as members see the tangible financial benefits of belonging to the saving schemes. It is such firsthand testimonies that draw others to join, continuing to expand the Project's financial inclusion agenda.



To increase convergency and integration of activities, 305 SMSGs (Mbala 15, Kabwe 98, Luwingu 25, Samfya 32, Ndola 15, Kaputa 23, Kasama 26, Mansa 9, Nchelenge 28, Kitwe 9, and Mumbwa 25) were sensitized on the value and benefits of forming CSLGs which led to 293 additional CSLGs formed. Consequently, SUN TA has seen an increase in mothers with children under two involved in CSLGs grow from 9,975 at the end of 2021 to 11,119 at the end of Q1 2022.

- **Private sector engagement:** With the growing and conducive agriculture market expanding during the 2020/2021 planting seasons, 10,707 legume (soybeans, groundnuts, and beans) farmers have accessed seed from GNA and SI Gold, in tandem with increased interactions between farmers and other seed companies like Seed Co Zambia, Afriseed, and Zamseed, bringing the total value of agriculture-related finance accessed because of USG assistance to [REDACTED]. Commercialization of vegetables to sustain the diversification agenda has also been growing—the total value of vegetables marketed during the reporting period is [REDACTED].
- **Village chicken value chain:** This quarter, SUN TA started building the capacity of 88 GRZ staff from the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock in sustainable production of village chickens, including possible business models, across all 13 target districts. The GRZ staff then led the selection of 117 Demonstration Farms/ers (nine enterprises/entrepreneurs as centers of excellence or learning hubs per district) to direct the training and capacity-building of village chicken Follower Farmers. The Demonstration Farmers were selected using the following criteria: entrepreneurial mindset, growth potential, sustainability, and business capacity to grow and expand the services to more community members. The 117 Demonstration Farmers have received 48,633 Kuroilers day old chicks (Luapula Province received 15,261, Central province received 17,719 and Copperbelt Provinces received 8,952 in three batches, and Northern Province received 6,701 as one batch). Mortality stands at 3.9 percent, which is within acceptable limits, given the distribution mechanisms and remoteness of some of the districts to which the chicks are transported. This quarter, 439 out of the targeted 1,170 village chicken Follower Farmers have been identified with 196 Follower Farmers already verified and supported by the Demonstration Farmers.



The Project has prioritized market linkages (both forward and backward) in its quest to sustain the village chicken value chain. This quarter, 2,610 village chickens were sold through aggregation by Demonstration Farmers raising [REDACTED] in Ndola and Kitwe. “Backward linkages” between farmers and suppliers of day-old chicks, like Zikulu Nkuku and Heartland Best, were notable with seven farmers – three from Kapiri Mposhi, three from Kitwe, and one from Chibombo. These farmers placed direct orders to stock a fourth batch of day-old chicks using their own resources for purposes of expanding their enterprises as well as using them for onward training and distribution to Follower Farmers. Zikulu Nkuku has since delivered a fourth batch to the three farmers in Kapiri Mposhi, while others will be receiving their fourth batches in the weeks ahead. Other linkages are with local agro veterinary dealers who supply other requirements like feed, vaccines, and drugs as needs arise.



- **Strengthening partnerships:** In addition to partnering with the private sector, SUN TA continued partnering with other players in the sector. On increasing access to biofortified crops SUN TA partnered with Harvest Plus who supported all 13 districts with 20,522 bundles of orange fleshed sweet potato (OFSP) vines, 37,429 x 500 grams orange maize, and 1000 x 5kgs high iron beans (Mbereshi). This seed support targeted women in the reproductive age groups, including women in SMSGs, CSLGs, Follower Farmers, and Lead Farmers.
- **Technical supportive field visits:** The Agriculture and Livelihoods team undertook field visits during the quarter. Through monitoring, the team found that those farmers who received visits had increased their use of improved technologies, especially use of certified seed, minimum tillage, composting (especially for vegetables), intercropping and crop rotation, and use of IPM in conformity to utilization of environmentally friendly technologies. This may be attributed to benefits seen during field days last season. During the visits, the technical team engaged with district staff in the Ministry of Agriculture and the DNCCs to encourage regular field monitoring—irregular visit made reporting and regular environmental compliance difficult. To address the reporting issue, increased commitment by DNCC is needed to strengthen WNCC while the Project has also supported increased contact points via joint monthly review meetings. Also, the visits revealed that, as reported above, CSLGs are making a real difference in the lives of their beneficiaries and creating clearer alternative livelihoods.

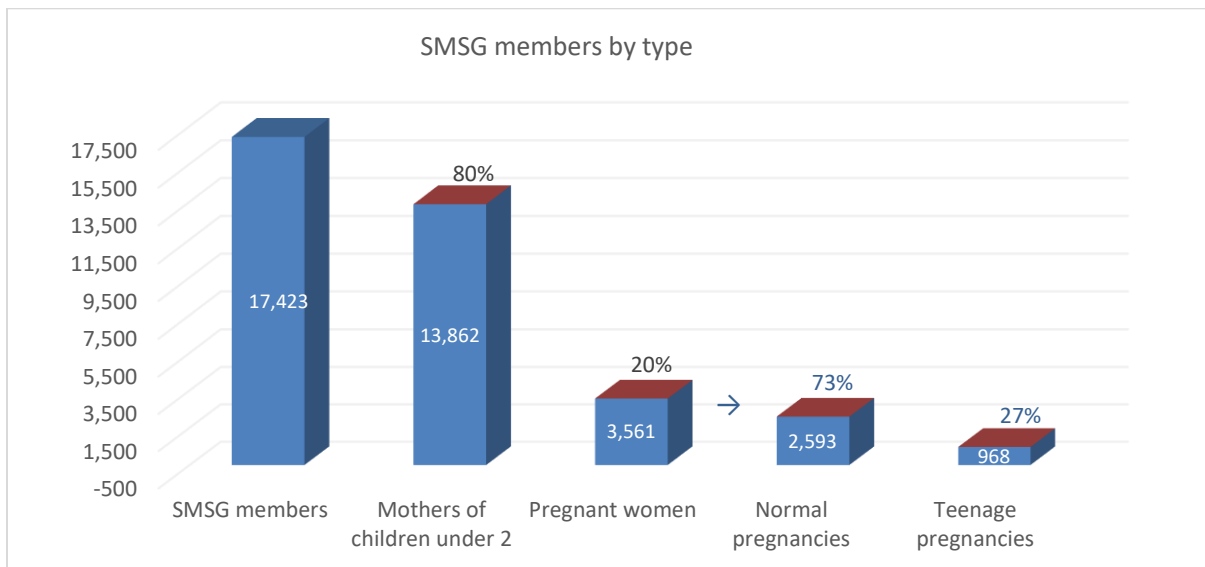
Nutrition & Health

SUN TA's Health & 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 breastfeeding, complementary feeding, and systems strengthening for iron, folate and vitamin A supplementation including ORS/Zinc for treatment of diarrhea) targeting pregnant, breastfeeding 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.

- **SUN Mother Support Groups (SMSGs):** The SMSGs continue to be an important platform for assembling and teaching mothers correct maternal and childcare practices, for monitoring uptake of messages, and assessing the state of mothers. Out of the 17,423 SMSG members who were added in Q1 2022, 3,561 were pregnant women (2,593 were normal pregnancies and 968 were teenage pregnancies). From the number of normal pregnant women, 253 had a mid - upper arm circumference (MUAC) of less than 21 cm, indicating transition to malnutrition (for the mother). As a breakdown of the total number of SMSG members added in Q1:
 - Mothers of children aged 0—24 months = 13,385
 - Mothers of vulnerable (low birthweight) children aged 0—6 months = 425
 - Maternal deaths of 425 vulnerable children = 52
 - Mothers who participated in health education sessions and cooking demos = 16,797

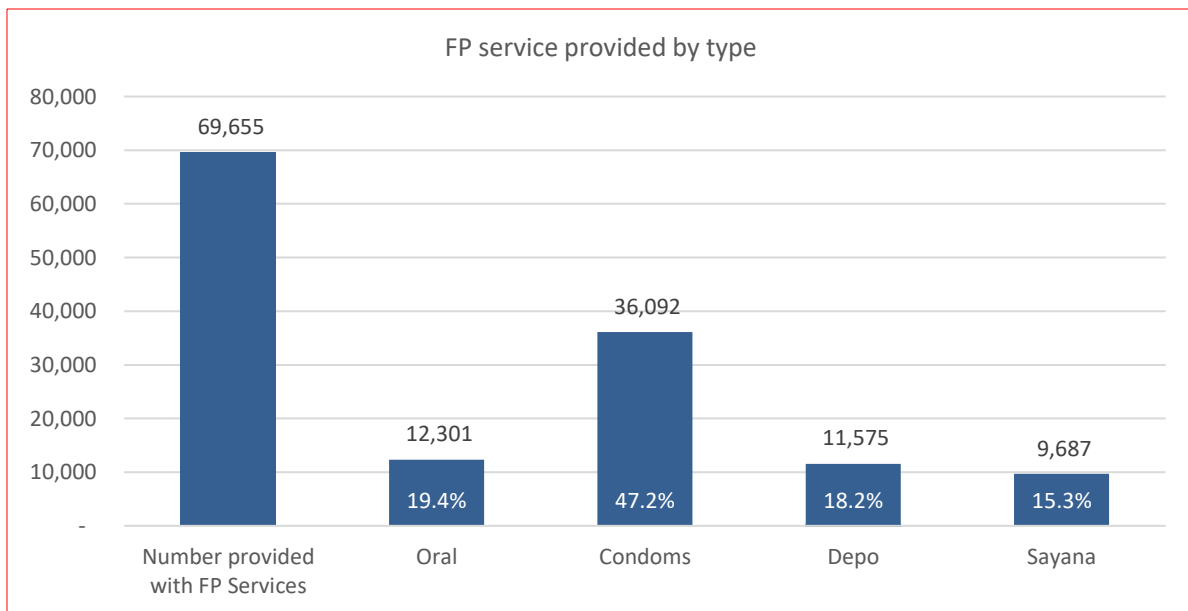


A total of 19,390 SMSG members were linked to agriculture and livelihood activities (disaggregated, 10,089 linked to agriculture and 9,301 linked to CSLGs). As you will note, not all members of SMSGs are linked to agriculture and CSLGs at the time they are enrolled in the SMSG – in short, these linkages can happen at any time. Some 2021 enrolled members were linked to agriculture and CSLGs in Q1 2022 as well as most of those who enrolled this quarter.



Taking maternal and child health services closer to communities: SMSGs are an important convergence point for community level structures used to reach out to mothers in an organized way with various packaged information on nutrition specific topics such as importance of early antenatal attendance and an appropriate nutrient-dense, diversified diet. Through this platform, the Project is improving social behavior change by providing knowledge and life skills to address behavioral barriers that are contributing to stunting in the 13 districts. Some reported benefits from SMSGs include improvements in child feeding practices at the household level as evidenced by the improvements in the nutritional status of children in communities. To sustain and scale-up registration and formation of SMSGs, SUN TA has identified activities in which registration can be an integrated and ongoing activity. For example, while attending antenatal care visits or under-five clinics, all pregnant women and mothers of children aged 0—24 months are asked if they belong to an SMSG group. If not, they are then linked to the CBVs within their catchment area or zone for registration under a relevant SMSG group. For continued sensitization and identification of eligible clients, CBVs trained in the SMSG approach and attached to health facilities register pregnant women during antenatal clinics and mothers during outreach programs such as universal child immunization (UCI), community-based growth monitoring and promotion (GMP), and health facility-based growth monitoring and promotion. Additionally, CBVs also identify and register eligible SMSG members through Community Savings and Loans Groups (CSLG), Lead and Follower Farmer gatherings, and V-WASHE /SAG gatherings.

- Community-level family planning services:** During the period under review, a total of 455 CBVs were trained in the implementation of community family planning services. Cumulatively, 2,542 community-based distributors (CBDs) have been trained in providing family planning services. Of these 1,814 actively reported in Q1 and reached out to 72,250 clients. The services provided included 21,262 injectables (11,575 Depo and 9,687 Sayana), 12,301 oral contraceptives, and 36,092 condoms (F: 2,895; M: 33,197). A total of 65,841 were counselled of which CBDs referred 3,617 for other services such as implants provided at the health facility level. From the total number of the clients reached in Q1, those aged 19 years and under included 588 males and 4,853 females.



- Early Childhood Development (ECD) activities:** SUN TA continued making ECD an integral part of nutrition interventions, given its importance to children's health and growth. All trainings were conducted in 2021 across the 13 districts (762 CBVs and 435 health facility staff). This quarter, 90 health facilities established ECD corners in the 13 districts, up from 29 at the end of 2021. This increase in ECD corners is a result of a joint effort between SUN TA's trained CBVs who are in turn working with local health staff to operationalize the centers. CBVs are also integrating ECD into SMSG activities by delivering messages to both pregnant and mothers with children aged 0-24 months. This is being implemented during static and outreach growth monitoring and promotion (GMP) sessions and during SMSG gatherings where emphasis is placed on the importance of communication, play and stimulation. During SMSG gatherings, trained CBVs teach women the importance of play in a child's growth and how to make age-appropriate toys using locally available materials.
- Technical supportive field visits:** This quarter, the Nutrition team conducted several technical backstopping field visits to Kaputa, Nchelenge, Samfya, and Chibombo Districts. The technical visits focused on activity implementation at the district level, particularly how the CBVs operationalized activities, including triangulating activities from health and nutrition, agriculture and livelihoods, and WASH, and how they imparted that information to beneficiaries. Activities conducted involved interactions with SMSG members to gain a general overview of what knowledge they were gaining from the SMSGs and how they were applying that information at the household level, SMSG cooking demonstrations, observing sessions on CBD/client FP interactions, efforts in initiating ECD activities at health facility and community level, engagement of SMSG members in CSLGs, and Lead Farmer and village chicken Demo Farmer interactions to verify the existence of gardens and demo chicks.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

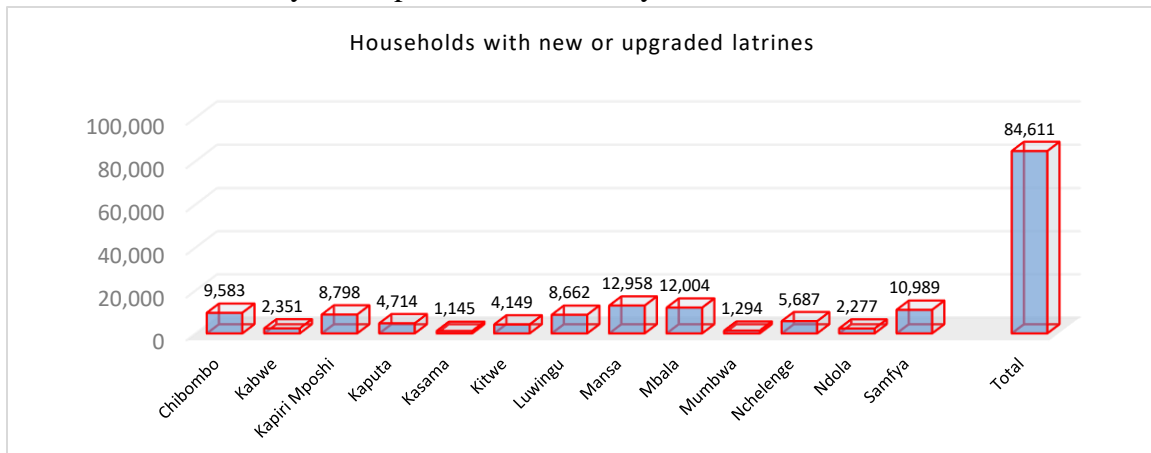
The SUN TA WASH component focuses on increasing access to safe water and reducing exposure to environmental pathogens that cause increased risk of diarrheal diseases and intestinal infections. This quarter, SUN TA worked with the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) and Ministry of Water Development and Sanitation (MWDS) to increase access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene at household and community levels in the following ways.

- Hygiene promotion:** Community Champions (CCs) and Sanitation Action Groups disseminated social and behavioral change messages in communities targeting established groups like SMSGs and other gatherings. The information disseminated included motivating each household to have a pit latrine and importance of consistently using the latrine, practicing proper handwashing at critical moments, taking appropriate food safety actions, and properly disposing of adult, child, and animal fecal matter. These interventions resulted in 455,415 people across the 390 health facility catchments gaining access to improved handwashing with soap through the installation of tippy taps, pressure bottles, and other locally innovated handwashing facilities.
- Community-led Total Sanitation (CLTS):** The Ministry of Water Development and Sanitation developed national guidelines for CLTS, to be used for verification and certification of Open Defecation Free (ODF). For a community to be certified as ODF the following characteristics must exist in the community at the time of the assessment for certification:

- No visible signs of human excreta within the community (this means there should be a total absence of fecal matter that is visible and can be accessed by houseflies. This includes feces in toilet facilities, chamber pots, surrounding bushes/shrubs, refuse dumps, etc.
- All community members, including children, dispose of their fecal matter in an acceptable manner that does not perpetuate fecal-oral transmission. This does not necessarily mean that everybody should have a latrine.



- **Capacity-building:** To increase the capacity of GRZ staff to implement and monitor CLTS, SUN TA has been building the capacity of staff who transferred to other health facilities after the initial CLTS trainings. This activity targeted staff who succeeded the transfer, demonstrated a lack of commitment, or completely new and never trained on the CLTS model. In addition, the Project continued increasing community capacity for sanitation and hygiene with the formation of 307 SAGs, out of which 69 groups received orientations on their roles and responsibilities. SAGs are comprised of volunteers (five men and five women) who supervise the construction of latrines and handwashing stations at the grassroots level and track progress in their village. The SAG orientations are aimed to help them oversee and follow-up the construction and use of adequate latrines to attain Open Defecation Free (ODF) status.
- **Access to basic sanitation:** SUN TA used participatory approaches to create sanitation demand, which contributed to acceptance, support, and sustainability of newly adopted behaviors. The Project provided support to district and sub-district structures by undertaking CLTS activities through triggering, post-triggering and routine monitoring by SAGs and Community Champions at community level. As a result, 84,611 households



built new or upgraded latrines meeting ODF standard thus providing access to basic sanitation for 420,426 people. It is anticipated that this improved hygiene (handwashing), and sanitation (latrines) will impact the quality on health outcomes, specifically reductions in diarrheal diseases, parasitic infections, morbidity, and mortality, as well as increases in child growth.

- **Open Defecation Free (ODF) status:** In Q1 2022, 403 communities claimed ODF status and 39 were subsequently verified by the district level teams, and with support from SUN TA's partner, World Vision. Kapiri Mposhi District, alone, successfully certified 21 villages as ODF. The claims and verifications are a positive trend that communities are committed to the ODF guidelines which include subsidy-free rural sanitation. It is also an indication that, with vigorous monitoring and timely, high-quality technical support from SAGs, CCs, traditional and natural leaders, and government structures, sanitation and hygiene improvements can be accelerated considerably even in the rainy season, shortening the lag time between triggering and achievement of ODF status. The remaining communities will be verified for ODF certification in Q2 2022.
- **Promote WASH social and behavior change (SBC):** To ensure adoption of good behaviors and practices while also promoting the technical durability of WASH facilities, participatory approaches to promote safe hygiene practices, establish community-based management systems for the WASH facilities, create up-front demand, and encourage community participation and ownership were implemented through radio, community gatherings, and drama. Treatment of drinking water, environmental hygiene (clean play environments for children), handwashing with soap, and food hygiene promotion have also been integrated into the CLTS program to directly enhance social and behavior change. As a result, 455,415 people gained access to improved handwashing with soap through the



installation of tippy taps, pressure bottles, and other locally innovated handwashing facilities. Line ministries will continue to promote and monitor the adoption of key WASH behaviors among households with a focus on household hygiene, handwashing with soap, and toilet usage.

- **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. Access to safe, reliable, and a continuous supply of water is necessary for adequate hygiene practices and reducing diarrhea in children. The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified the importance of access to water (and hand hygiene) to contain the spread of the virus.
 - **District WASH plans and district water needs assessments:** In the period under review, the 13 D-WASHE (District Water and Sanitation Health Education) committees held their 2021 Performance Review, and 2022 Strategy Development and Operationalization of Annual Work Plan. A total of 143 (F: 65; M: 78) D-WASHE members were in attendance. Key areas covered during the meetings included: 2021 work plan review, challenges, and strategies to apply in 2022, improving convergence, reach and targeting, and 2022 operations plan review and adoption. In the same meetings, the D-WASHE members identified inadequate monitoring of sanitation activities as a huge contributor to low achievement in ODF status. Therefore, it was agreed that D-WASHE, through sub-district structures, will intensify monitoring visits in 2022 and do more sensitization meetings at community level. Staff from the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development were also given opportunities to detail processes related to access to the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) for different community development initiatives.

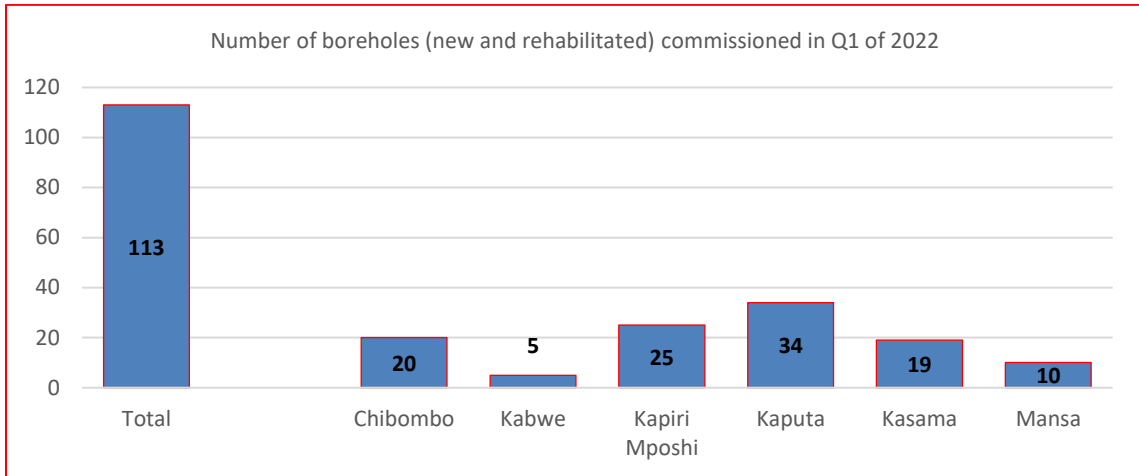
All 13 districts completed their 2022 DWNAs (District Water Needs Assessments) and completed all 2022 NBH recommendations. Working with D-WASHE Committees and community structures to encourage community ownership waterpoint facilities, the development of 2022 DWNAs was initiated in 2021 by identifying the communities in need of clean, safe water. The full process will be completed and ready for submission to USAID in Q2 2022.

- **Borehole rehabilitation/reconstruction:** Water point assessments, water quality sampling and testing of the proposed 2022 BHRs is on-going. Expected completion is set for Q2 2022. There are several reasons why these boreholes are recommended for reconstruction including equipment failure, depletion of the aquifer, contamination, corrosive qualities of the water, and improper design and construction. A total of 27 out of the 446 tests carried out failed for Lead, Nitrates and Arsenic. These boreholes will not be considered for rehabilitation. The 2022 water point rehabilitations are expected to commence in the Q2. By the end of Q1, 67 BHRs completed in 2021 have been handed over for use to the beneficiary communities providing 49,615 people access to basic drinking water services.

As part of the Water Quality Assurance Plan (WQAP) requirement, the D-WASHE committees conducted routine water quality monitoring on 165 boreholes that were handed over in 2021. Samples were collected for microbial analysis which is done in respective district laboratories. There was a total of eight boreholes that exceeded the limit for coliforms, presumably due to flooding/rainwater run-off. These boreholes are to be

chlorinated with granular chlorine and retested. On-site investigations of possible sources of contamination are in progress.

- New boreholes:** It is imperative that people have access to safe and readily available water to prevent stunting, whether it is used for drinking, domestic use, food production, or recreational purposes. Improved water supplies and sanitation, and better management of water resources can boost communities' nutritional outcomes and by extension contribute to poverty reduction. By end of Q1, 46 2021 NBHs were handed over for use to beneficiary communities, providing water to 29,898 people. The Project also supported the D-WASHE in identifying and assessing communities earmarked for 2022 new borehole construction.



- Water Reticulation Schemes (WRSs):** Sites were identified for the purpose of constructing Water Reticulation Schemes as follows:

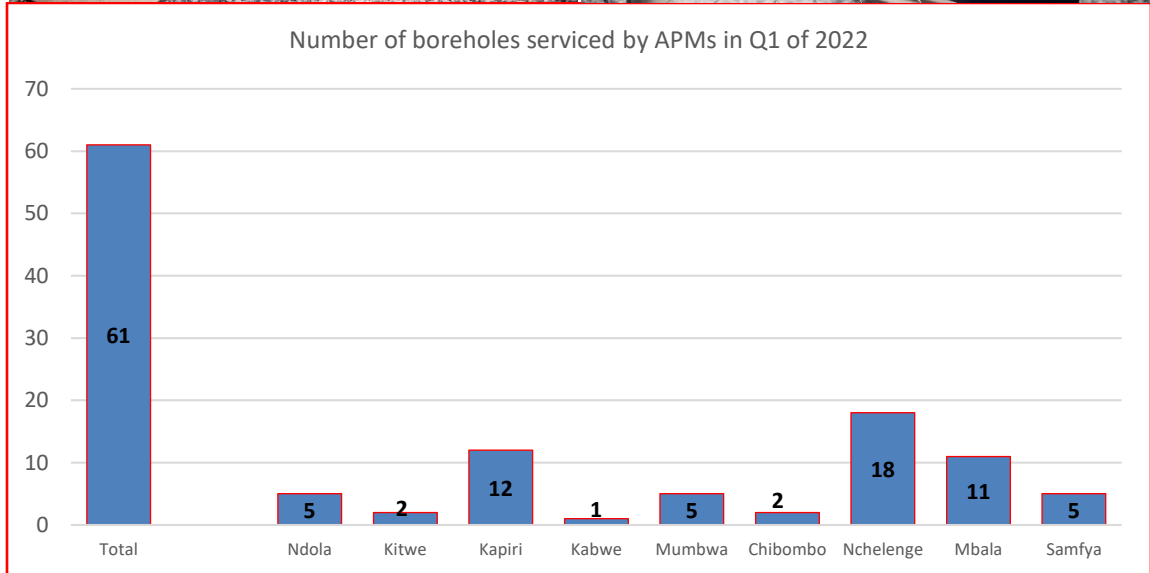
1. Kaputa: Namusesha, Mulutula
2. Nchelenge: Kabeke, Mukeya,
3. Kitwe: Chankalamu A
4. Mumbwa: Naluvwi Central
5. Kasama: Chintashika,
6. Kabwe: Makoka A
7. Ndola: Mwenye Settlement
8. Samfya: Mabo Kunda

The would-be beneficiary communities identified have since paid capital contributions in the amount of ██████████ to local authorities. SUN TA, in collaboration with stakeholders, has completed the design process and released the WRS request for proposal.

“Before this borehole, we used to draw water from Tug Argan Barrack, and we could take over an hour. Sometimes, we could find that there was no water due to load shedding and instead we could go and draw water from the shallow wells within the village. But the water from shallow wells could smell bad due to dead rats and sometimes snakes. Today, we are the happiest people in the village for supporting us with this borehole. Our workload as women will be reduced. Therefore, we are thankful to the government and USAID for this great blessing which we did not expect.”

– Lizzy Chimbangu of Ndola’s Munkulungwe during the borehole handover

- Borehole repair and maintenance:** Experience demonstrates that a lack of attention to the operation and maintenance of boreholes often leads to their dysfunction or deterioration, resulting in premature replacement of many components and incurring huge costs. As such, even after developing water infrastructure, the water points proved ineffective and therefore remained underutilized. Efficient and effective operation of water supply systems depends on sound village water supply strategies made up of (a) water safety plans to ensure decent quality water, (b) standard operating procedures including who will do what and when, and to identify associated annual expenses and revenues; and (c) service improvement plans to set out future investments to ensure improved, sustainable service delivery. In 2021, APMs were trained in handpump operation and maintenance. APMs in this reporting period repaired and serviced 61 boreholes that are now providing safe, clean water to 23,725 people in the 13 districts. Further, APMs supported the V-WASHE committees to conduct the stipulated tasks in the borehole logbooks.



- Participation in national/global WASH events:** SUN TA supported the MWDS to successfully hold World Water Day commemorations both at the national level and in all the districts. The theme was *Groundwater: Making the Invisible Visible*. Through the various contributions made by stakeholders, information was disseminated on radio, and through print media and drama groups to sensitize the community on what to do to ensure water is good for use, and how to sustain the resource that is becoming more and more scarce. The public received awareness-raising messages through radio discussions and community volunteers

(SAGs and V-WASHE), who conducted community awareness on hygiene and sanitation and the importance of preventing vandalism.

In addition to providing direct technical support to government partners, the Project continued to successfully engage water and sanitation commercial utility companies (CUs). These private sector players are expected to sit on D-WASHE and P-WASHE committees and support WASH demand creation and responsiveness. SUN TA also liaised with other WASH partners like UNICEF, WaterAid, iSanitize, World Vision Zambia, Child Fund, WSUP, SNV, among others through various coordinating platforms to create a bigger impact and share best practices.

- Technical Supportive Field Visits:** During Q1 2022, SUN TA made technical visits to districts which gave the Project an opportunity to gain self-assessed feedback from district stakeholders on 2021 implementation, and what they intend to do differently in 2022. The attendance for these meetings ranged from District Commissioners to Council Secretaries/Town Clerks and from Directors of Public Health to Public Health Officers. GRZ head of departments made commitments to improve their support for the Project. Based on such commitments, it is anticipated that in 2022 there will be more leadership provided by GRZ staff. Visits to health facilities and communities provided anecdotal evidence of reductions in the incidence and prevalence of diarrheal cases, which was suggested by health staff and confirmed by CBVs. With the involvement of more traditional leaders, demand for sanitation and hygiene will be upscaled and management of WASH facilities (like water points) will be more sustainable. This is because traditional leaders facilitate communities to come up with by-laws requiring subjects to construct toilets or contribute toward borehole operations and maintenance, with associated penalties for defaulters. These by-laws are a crucial part of the multi-pronged approach needed to achieve national WASH targets and improve the general well-being of community members.

Cross-Cutting Activities

- Coordination support meetings:** SUN TA facilitated and participated in various planning and coordination meetings at district and provincial levels. During the period under review, the Project strategically worked with the newly appointed Provincial Permanent Secretaries to invigorate senior GRZ staff support for SUN TA Project activities. Some of the issues discussed in the meetings included leadership of the PNCCs and DNCCs, coordination of implementation by line ministries, functionality of the WNCCs, GRZ support toward nutrition programs using the CDF funds, and review and realignment of activities. This was meant to have their buy-in towards the DNCC and PNCC as their roles are very critical for smooth implementation of interventions.
- Social and Behavior Change:** SUN TA continues to implement its social and behavior change strategy aimed at reducing barriers to the adoption and maintenance of behaviors that prevent stunting among children under two. To achieve this, the Project supports GRZ with various interventions under the four pillars, targeting primary and secondary audiences:
 - SUN Happy Home Campaign:** This quarter, SUN TA completed the ‘SUN Happy Home’ campaign design with household and community-level objectives to move the target audiences from awareness about the problem of stunting to acting. Specifically, the

campaign objectives are as follows: 1) promote the adoption of key accelerator behaviors across the 4 pillars; 2) move target audiences along the behavior continuum from ‘awareness’ to ‘doing always’ through to ‘behavior advocate’ encouraging others to adopt behaviors; 3) create an enabling environment for behavior change by tackling negative social norms, practices, beliefs, and introducing positive norms; and 4) engage and support community leaders to drive the campaign and SBC process through agreed actions and influence. Accelerator behaviors to be promoted across the four pillars in the next quarter:

Agriculture	Livelihoods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desired Behavior #1: Women, men, and youth in SUN HHs use certified seed to grow diverse, nutrient-dense vegetables (specifically those rich in vitamin A, vitamin C, and iron) and legumes (Mbereshi and soybeans). ▪ Desired Behavior #2: Women, men, and youth in SUN HHs practice mulching, crop rotation, and minimum tillage in their crop production. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desired Behavior: Women, men, and youth in SUN HHs have micro, small, or medium enterprises (MSMEs) to help them increase household income by participating in community savings and loans groups (i.e., taking out small business loans).
Nutrition & Health	WASH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desired Behavior #1: Pregnant women attend antenatal visits and plan for a skilled delivery; consistently take iron and folic acid; and eat a diversified diet. ▪ Desired Behavior #2: Mothers initiate breastfeeding within the first hour of giving birth and exclusively breastfeed children from birth to six months, giving them no other liquids, foods, or medicines unless medically indicated. ▪ Desired Behavior # 3: Mothers and caregivers feed children between 6-24 months a variety nutrient dense complementary foods 3-5 times a day and continue breastfeeding up to 24 months or beyond. ▪ Desired Behavior # 4: Women within the reproductive age group in SUN households adopt and practice use of modern family planning methods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desired Behavior # 1: Women, men, and youth in SUN HHs wash hands with soap and clean, safe water at critical times. ▪ Desired Behavior #2: Women, men and youth in SUN HHs adopt proper, consistent, and hygienic use of toilets.

- **National Events and Commemorations:** SUN TA leverages platforms created through commemoration events to support the government with efforts to raise awareness and reach target audiences with priority messages. During this year’s commemoration of World Water Day under the theme *Ground Water: Making the Invisible, Visible*, the Project participated and supported the GRZ through the following activities.
 - National level support: The Project supported the commemoration of World Water Day at the national level by providing financial support to facilitate media attendance at the event held on March 22, 2022 at Mwantalasha Secondary School in Chongwe District.
 - Community radio programs: SUN TA supported local efforts to raise awareness on this year’s theme during the commemoration of World Water Day through facilitated radio

programs where the Project's contribution to the reduction of structural barriers such as lack of or limited access to clean, safe water was highlighted. The Project also highlighted efforts aimed at reducing behavioral barriers at the individual and household levels through promotion of hygiene (water treatment at the point of use, handwashing with soap, proper household water treatment and safe storage) using community radio platform.

- **Community outreach:** In Chibombo, Kitwe, Ndola and Kasama, SUN TA support included facilitating and participating in World Water Day satellite activities through community outreach. These included group education sessions in markets, one-on-one sessions with priority audiences such as pregnant women and mothers of children under two, and door to door sensitization in communities. The objective of these activities was to raise awareness on this year's World Water Day theme as well as the importance of accessing and utilizing clean, safe water to prevent diarrheal diseases.

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. The SUN TA MEL system is custom designed to receive data inputs from implementation districts and communities. Where there are capacity gaps and system weaknesses, SUN TA builds capacity and strengthens the existing systems.

- **Formation and Operationalization of the DNCC M&E TWGs:** Luwingu, Kaputa, Kapiri Mposhi and Chibombo Districts operationalized the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Technical Working Groups of the DNCC. The District MEL TWG is the lower structure of the provincial and national level M&E TWG and aims to facilitate a multi-sectoral routine monitoring of program resources, activities and results, and the analysis of district context data to inform the implementation of SUN program activities. This will also enhance targeting, reach and convergence in all planned activities for the thematic areas being implemented in the districts. As with the other district MEL TWGs formed earlier and in line with the program being multi-sectoral, the composition of the TWG includes focal point persons from all the line ministries, Heads of Departments and NGOs including SUN TA. The newly constituted TWGs were also oriented on the MCDP II policy frameworks, strategies and monitoring and evaluation system. The orientations also highlighted the roles and responsibilities of the DNCC M&E TWG members in relation to their contribution to the fight against stunting in Zambia. The National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC) presided over the formation and orientation of the MEL TWGs.

The other districts with MEL TWG earlier formed conducted activities in line with the ToRs of the TWG including coordinated and collaborative data collection, data management, reporting and the conduct of program review meetings. Members of the MEL TWGs are now active during programme review meetings and spearhead joint monitoring visits to the catchment areas to verify availability of data tools, inspect quality of entries in the tools and document challenges to timely submission of data to the district structures and since becoming active, the districts have recorded an improvement in reporting rates. The district MEL TWG will also focus on the formation and activation of Ward Nutrition Coordinating Committees (WNCC).

- **Joint Monitoring:** All provinces and districts conducted joint monitoring visits to the districts, catchments, and communities to meet varying objectives including data collection, verification, document successes, identify challenges and provide on-site coaching and mentoring. This joint activity was improved after the formation and strengthening of provincial and district MEL TWGs.
 - Kaputa District conducted the data collection exercise with the involvement of the Line Ministries of Agriculture, Health and Local Government departments.
 - Chibombo District had a joint PNCC and DNCC monitoring visit to the district catchment areas. The visit was conducted in collaboration with PNCC provincial head of departments and district GRZ Line Ministries.
 - Mumbwa DNCC leadership visited selected health facilities during which they reviewed the WASH, SUN Mother Support Groups and family planning data and provided on-site mentoring on reporting requirements.
 - Mansa District monitored the involvement of officers from MOH, Fisheries and Livestock, Local Government and Agriculture in the catchment areas.
 - Copperbelt PNCC conducted a joint monitoring visit to four catchments of Kitwe i.e. Luangwa, Kamfinsa, Bulangililo, and Chamboli. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to assess and document the successes and gaps in convergence of interventions, coordination, environmental compliance and data collection and reporting
 - In Ndola District, the Environmental Health Technologist from Mushili Clinic and households from Kaniki Health Facility catchment reported reductions in non-bloody diarrhoea cases and attributed this to the boreholes newly installed and reconstructed which has facilitated access to clean and safe water.

“The facility also has a WASH program with SUN TA that is promoting proper toilets and safe water through the borehole that was sank at the facility and community. The program has been promoting having lids on the latrines so that flies don’t have access in and out of the toilet hence no access to food. Handwashing has also been so helpful in hygiene promotion in the catchment. Even diarrheal diseases have reduced in the catchment” Environmental Health Technologist, Mushili Health Centre, Ndola

- **Program and Data Review Meetings:** All districts managed to hold monthly and quarterly program and data review meetings with the key highlight being the review of monthly and quarterly performance on custom and standard indicators as well as identification of challenges and measures to address them. The focus for this year has been the involvement of the District MEL TWG who are now called upon to spearhead the meetings while the project has begun to take a backseat. The following are examples of the DNCC TWG involvement and confirmation of value addition to the goals of the MCDP II goals:
 - Ndola District: PNCC M&E TWG Chairperson and DNCC members attended the meetings. Key observation was that provincial and district level coordination has improved as different line ministries are able to come together and plan on how best to implement and track the results.

- Kitwe District: M&E Technical Working Group members and the participants appreciated SUN TA support to the district and how it has made implementation and monitoring of activities easy. The team further appreciated the standardization of district data collection tools also noted that, the indicators are simple and fit well into the line ministries key performance indicators.
 - Kasama District: Line Ministries were represented in the program review meetings, and this has resulted in improved reporting rates especially under Health and Nutrition and WASH. Also, there is a marked improvement among the line ministries in the understanding of the program and indicators being tracked.
 - Chibombo District: DNCC successfully held the monthly data review meetings with active participation of members. This was followed by increased support to the routine data collection and verification function across all thematic areas.
 - Mumbwa District: The district held monthly program meetings, as well as a more comprehensive two-day Progress Review Meeting with key staff from 27 health facilities responsible for reporting health and WASH data. During the meeting, data collection tools and reporting rates were reviewed and discussed and there was a general appreciation of the challenges experienced around the quality of reporting including timeliness.
- **Scaling-up the Digitalization of Data Capture:** The Project began the roll-out of the digital platform for data collection and reporting following the procurement of mobile phones and their accessories. During the quarter under review, the *Training of Facilitators* in mobile data collection and reporting platforms was conducted and resulted in the project coming up with a scale-up plan involving training of Camp Extension Officers, Environmental Health Technologists and other health facility staff handling WASH and health and nutrition data. These officers will also receive a mobile phone for use in inputting data to the dhis2 and the smart phones have since been distributed to the districts in readiness for the scale-up. The *Training of Facilitators* apart from orienting the district facilitators also provided an opportunity to further pilot the digital platform in different settings of urban and remote areas, developed steps for scaling up the digital platform, constituted provincial facilitating teams, identified government officers to be part of the operationalization of the platform, developed guidelines for use of the mobile phone, drafted the district training program, came up with the facilitators toolkit and identified resources to enable the smooth scale-up. Once fully implemented in the coming quarter, this will address the challenge of late submission of reports being experienced from the catchment level thereby enhancing data quality particularly on timeliness and validity.
 - **Demonstrating Project Impact:** During the quarter under review, SUN TA implemented a few activities to document the Project's movement toward achieving impact, sustainability, and convergence.
 - The Project conducted focus group discussions on convergence with beneficiaries in Chibombo, Ndola, Mansa and Mbala districts. In each district, 10-12 beneficiaries participated in the discussions to establish their perception on benefits of participating in SMSGs, CSLGs, agriculture input support, and WASH related activities. The focus group participants were able to associate involvement with Project supported interventions to positive outcomes including improved knowledge levels on food preparation, feeding

practices, financial literacy and hygiene; improved food security, enhanced decision making on household purchases and reduction in water-borne diseases

“They teach us what to feed our children, the types of food....in the past we didn’t know what to feed children... In the past I didn’t know when to start feeding the child solid food but now I know at what age to commence” SMSG & CSLG member and recipient of agric input and WASH SBC, Lubende catchment, Mansa

“There are things that I need to buy for the home, but my husband would not allow. This helps me to buy what is needed” SMSG & CSLG member and recipient of agric input and WASH SBC, Lubende catchment, Mansa

“When we harvest soyabeans, we use it to prepare porridge as taught at the SUN Mother Support Group.....we mix it with Orange Maize.” SMSG & CSLG member and recipient of agric input and WASH SBC, Katito catchment, Mbala

“The savings help...for example in situations where you are about to give birth and my husband didn’t have money, the money from the savings group helped to cover maternity costs” SMSG & CSLG member and recipient of agric input and WASH SBC, Lubende catchment, Mansa

- Benefits derived from convergence of interventions were generally associated with linkages such as learning about improved agriculture practices and hygiene during a SUN Mother Support Group session, receiving agriculture inputs through the SMSG and sensitization and mobilization participation in community savings groups through a community-based volunteers.

“Through the SUN Mother Support Group, we received seed to help us grow nutritious crops such as beans and orange maize...we wouldn’t have managed on our own...we have a lead farmer who comes to teach us at the SUN Mother Support Group.” SMSG & CSLG member and recipient of agric input and WASH SBC, Lubende catchment, Mansa

“We were taught on farming by the lead farmer. We have home gardens where kalembula, chibwabwa, impwa and Mbereshi beans have been planted...we are also rearing chickens...from the chickens, we get some eggs that we use to feed our children for nutritional purposes.” SMSG member, Kaniki Kamalasha, Ndola

“The lead farmer introduced me to the idea of community savings and we met to form a group” SMSG & CSLG member and recipient of agric input and WASH SBC, Lubende catchment, Mansa

- On the benefits of converging nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions at the household level, this varied to include reduction in diseases particularly diarrhea at household level, ability to own a business, knowledge of what to feed children and children growing up “well.” Generally, there was a clear gap in knowledge on the linkage to ultimate nutrition outcomes and it is a gap that the Happy Home Campaign has been designed to address.

“When I have all these, I will reduce on diseases because I will have food and capacity to buy food and because of hygiene, there will be reduction in diseases.” SMSG & CSLG member and recipient of agric input and WASH SBC, Katito Catchment, Mbala

- **Mini-Survey:** The consultancy firm to conduct a mini survey of the Project intermediate outcome and outcome results was hired following a bidding process. The consultancy firm has since submitted an inception report, developed and pre-tested the tools, identified and trained data collectors and submitted the research protocol to the Research Ethics Board for ethical clearance. The study will collect data on standard outcome indicators as well investigate other program parameters such as reach, knowledge levels, behaviors, and convergence.
- **Qualitative Study:** The process to engage a consultancy firm to conduct qualitative studies reached an advanced stage with proposals from prospective bidders received and reviewed. The study will focus on investigating convergence, optimal mix of interventions, sustainability and value perception of project interventions, women and youth participation and access to project supported services/products, and private sector engagement.
- **Sustainability:** SUN TA documented early signs of sustainability with various examples coming from the districts. In Ndola District, the DNCC made an appeal to the Ministry of Green Economy to donate potted guava seedlings to SUN households and a donation of 2000 seedlings was made and distributed to 1,000 SUN households from 13 health catchment areas. The Permanent Secretary (through the DPS) and in addressing the PNCC for Copperbelt Province emphasized the need for continued coordination and collaboration in reducing stunting and underscored the need for GRZ to embrace the SUN program as it is a government program. During the same meeting, the Ndola District Commissioner pledged full support to the SUN program and announced that he will start conducting joint monitoring visits to the project sites as well as holding quarterly meetings with Heads of Departments to review the progress made in the implementation of the program. In addition, the project envisions the creation of private led financial services (savings, loans, and micro insurance) that has seen over [REDACTED] invested in various enterprises expanding the private sector as key to sustainability. Also, there has been increased investment by private sector in the certified seed distribution system which has seen over 10,000 farmers linked to private seed companies and sales of over [REDACTED] already done.
- **Collaboration with SUN LE:** The collaboration with SUN LE has been upheld. Apart from holding monthly meetings to provide technical updates related to research, monitoring and evaluation, key areas of collaboration were also identified and, in most cases, actioned:
 - For the SUN Mid-Term Evaluation, SUN TA has been an active member of the design and study implementation activities. SUN TA participated in the 3-day *Midline Survey Analysis Approach Workshop* to map program indicators to the questionnaire as well as to update the data analysis plan initially developed. During sensitization activities for the data collection stage, SUN LE will also ensure collaboration with SUNTA at district and community level and SUN TA will be on hand to provide support through the DNCCs.

- SUN LE and SUN TA are exploring the possibility of measuring sustainability of the programme through already planned SUN LE research activities and the forthcoming performance assessment was identified as such an avenue.
- SUN LE is conducting the Economic Analysis on program outcomes and expenditure and the project provided input to the Data Availability Assessment template on program indicator and expenditure data. The project will provide further support as the activity progresses to the next level of protocol development and data collection
- SUN LE is developing learning products to summarize lessons from implementation as well as research outputs and once these have been drafted, SUN TA experts will be invited to take part in the review of the information products and learning briefs.
- SUN TA will share with SUN LE the study protocols and tools for the project rapid quantitative and qualitative studies.
- SUN TA will also identify areas for research, compile these into a research agenda and share with SUN LE for consideration going into 2023.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

SUN TA continued to be actively involved in the SUN space and participated in several meetings and platforms called by USAID, NFNC, and other stakeholders as follows:

- **Meetings with USAID:** This quarter, check-in meetings were held where USAID provided strategic direction and SUN TA provided implementation updates, WASH monthly updates, and participation in WRS design reviews. The SUN TA regional offices continued interacting with USAID regional staff on a weekly basis to provide updates on implementation status. Additionally, SUN TA made a presentation to the USAID/Zambia Mission Director and her senior team members. The Project highlighted its successes for 2021, the strategies used to achieve the results, and priority areas for 2022.
- **Meeting with NFNC:** SUN TA, alongside UNICEF, participated in a meeting called by NFNC to discuss policy, programming, and coordination issues. NFNC provided updates which included the meeting they held with the Vice President to brief her on the MCDP II and nutrition issues in general, and that Statutory Instruments (SIs) to operationalize the National Food and Nutrition Act enacted in 2020 were being developed. NFNC proposed reorganizing the various TWGs so that they could be better structured, speak to their mandate, and avoid overlap. They also urged implementing partners to share lessons learned to enrich each other's experiences, and that NFNC had assigned Desk Officers for easy coordination with implementation partners and line ministries. SUN TA and UNICEF requested NFNC to help coordinate and improve the participation of line ministries in SUN platforms as the ministries. SUN TA and UNICEF both pledged to continue collaborating and sharing lessons in implementation across their various districts.
- **SUN Cooperating Partners' Meeting:** During this quarter, SUN TA continued its participation in the monthly meetings as one of implementing partners of the SUN 2.0 Program. Meetings discussed various SUN issues including implementation challenges across

the SUN 2.0 districts, and steering committee role and future handling of such meetings among the many issues.

- **USG collaboration:** SUN TA continued working with other USAID-funded projects as follows:
 - SUN TA met with Chemonics to discuss FP commodity supply chain issues. During the quarter, MSL released essential drugs, FP commodities and other health items. The project is monitoring whether the previous FP commodity supply chain challenges have been resolved.
 - SUN TA met with both EKNA and Expanding WASH to provide information and lessons learned on water access. The Project shared its water access documents with EKNA. Further, we have been giving meeting room space to Expanding WASH to facilitate their start up.
 - SUN TA is working with the USAID Local Impact Governance Activity Project to encourage close coordination between Ward Development Committees (WDCs) and Ward Nutrition Coordinating Committees (WNCCs).
- **SUN TA WASH Coordination:** SUN TA has been an active member of different national WASH coordination structures to tap into the wealth of relevant knowledge and experience from other WASH implementing partners. This is to make the project's work more impactful, sustainable, and viable over the long-term. Through MWDS, the project has been a critical member of the local organizing committee for the International Sanitation Summit which will be held alongside the World Toilet Association 6th General Assembly and 12th Board of Directors Meeting in the last quarter of 2022.
- **Partnership meetings:** SUN TA continued engagement with various stakeholders as follows:
 - Amatheon Agric, private sector dealing with out-grower schemes for chilly among other crops that SUN TA beneficiaries are expected to be linked in Mumbwa District. In the next quarter, SUN TA will be engaging Amatheon Agric to identify beneficiaries for support.
 - SNV SUN, the project participated in the dissemination meeting to garner lessons learned that could be adapted to its SUN TA districts.
 - UNICEF, the project had a meeting to discuss WASH, shared notes on experiences with drillers, current plans, current driller contracts, collaboration with the Ministry of Water Development and Sanitation.

PROGRAM AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The SUN TA Human Resources, Administration, Procurement and Finance teams continued to provide operational support to the technical departments and district offices to ensure smooth implementation of Project activities. In view of low COVID-19 numbers, SUN TA offices were opened to all staff based in Lusaka with an emphasis on maintaining hygiene practices. The Project moved to new offices at Stand No. 548, Aflife Properties, Corner of Nasser & Ituna Roads, Rhodes Park, Lusaka effective March 11, 2022. Next quarter, the Project will place identification on the fence as well as at the entrance.

- **Human Resources:** SUN TA has a total of 143 staff as of March 31, 2022. Six new staff were recruited in Q1 (Senior Ethics Advisor, Operations Manager, Fleet and Transport Coordinator, Regional Accounting Officer, Zone 1, Regional Program Assistant, Zone 2, and Mumbwa District MEL Officer).
- **Procurement:** During the period under review, the Procurement Department sourced various goods and services. Major procurements included the purchase of the following: 295 Indian Mark II handpumps; 1,000 stainless steel pipes; 19 winches and bull bars on SUN TA vehicles meant to protect vehicles in an even of an accident; and 17 monitors and 17 docking stations. Other services included cleaning services for all SUN TA offices; Lusaka Office security services; sourcing of various conference package services for family planning meetings in the districts; printing of various data tools and manuals cutting across Health and Nutrition, WASH, Finance and Procurement; and Office furniture for the new Lusaka Office space. The department continues to support the Project through the procurement of various services and goods needed for implementation in the field.
- **Finance & Compliance:** This quarter, the Director Finance and Administration resigned. DAI immediately brought in an Acting Director for continuous operations leadership. In addition, the SUN TA compliance visits continued taking place across districts and departments, and management is taking corrective action, where necessary. SUN TA continues to prioritize internal control and systems to improve efficiency and payment turnaround times for both CBVs and GRZ staff. Also, management is adopting and rolling out a risk-based management approach to monitor and address risks within the Project.
- **Information Technology:** On March 11, 2022, the Lusaka-based staff moved to a new office location that required a movement of IT infrastructure. The IT infrastructure was successfully installed at the new office building and all new equipment, including the new internet connection, is 889B compliant. The new Lusaka Office has significantly more space (1423m² in comparison to the 495 m²) and with all 48 Lusaka-based staff returning to the office setting, there is a need of increased internet bandwidth and additional printers. The Project is in the process of procuring four new printers and acquired a 25Mbps internet connection, an increase from 10Mbps. SUN TA also procured and received 17 new laptops in March that have been configured and issued to Project staff.
- **SUN TA Small Grants:** During Q1 2022, the Request for Application was approved by DAI Home Office for SUN TA to advertise in the print and electronic media in Q2 2022. The Project anticipates selection of recipients by May 2022. All grants will have a maximum amount of [REDACTED].

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

SUN TA ensured that each of the respective Project's interventions complied with the approved Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EMMP) to avoid/minimize the negative environmental consequences.

- **Agriculture:** The Project promoted technologies that support climate smart agriculture technologies including conservation tillage, liming, rotation of legumes and maize,

soybean production and on farm demonstration safe use of herbicides (mostly for soybeans), use of certified seed and general crop diversification. Demonstration Farmers of village chickens were further trained on the use of disinfectants, vaccines/drugs, as well as their disposal of disinfectants and vaccines. The districts covered included Ndola, Kitwe, Mbala, Kasama, Kaputa, Luwingu, Mansa, Kapiri Mposhi, Kabwe and Chibombo.

- **Health & Nutrition:** The CBVs and CBDs continued sensitizing community members on the importance of proper disposal of waste generated from cooking demonstrations as well as safe disposal of used FP by-products, like syringes and needles. Individually, FP clients are taught appropriate disposal of used condoms and empty oral contraceptive packets in pit latrines, while CBDs who use syringes and needles in providing this service are instructed to place them in sharp boxes which are then taken to the nearby health facility for safe disposal by health facility staff. Although still a new area, CBVs are also sensitizing and promoting the use of alternative cooking methods to SMSG members.
- **WASH:** The Project has mainstreamed environmental mitigation obligations in monitoring systems, orienting PNCC and DNCC members on environmental management and mitigation measures to apply during their routine monitoring. It is envisaged that these coordination structures will also incorporate environmental mitigation measures as part of their routine monitoring. Of 446 water tests that were conducted in the quarter under review, 27 exceeded safety standards: 13 failed for elevated levels Nitrates (> 10mg/l), 13 failed tests for Lead (> 0.01mg/l) and one failed for Arsenic (> 0.01mg/l).

KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- **Late and non-submission of reports:** Late and non-submission of reports by CBVs is still a huge challenge which eventually affect benchmarking, decision-making, and problem solving. To address this, the DNCC facilitated WNCC meetings to strengthen their mandates, i.e., routine field monitoring visits, supervisory works, timely collection of field data, and reporting. Furthermore, through the DNCC, quarterly review meetings with field staff, together with their district supervisors under each key line ministry, will be promoted. It is envisaged that this will also enhance ownership and accountability among the GRZ staff.
- **Prolonged rain season:** A protracted rainy season has affected construction of pit latrines to enhance hygiene and sanitation in communities, and several latrines have collapsed. In addition, heavy rains in the northern parts of the country continue to hamper the resumption of borehole drilling and borehole rehabilitation works as well as access to some water points earmarked for rehabilitation.
- **Delays in water quality test results:** The Project experienced delays to receive water test results due to a two-week breakdown of water testing equipment at Alfred Knight Laboratory. This delayed 10 percent of the confirmatory water testing results which have led to delayed handovers of completed and approved boreholes.
- **Turnover of GRZ staff:** Implementation of activities continued to be impacted negatively by transfers of government staff both at district and sub-district levels. This negatively affected the supervision and monitoring of interventions at field level. Many of the government staff

that have been trained by and worked with SUN TA in the implementation of the Project keep being moved. This continues to create capacity gaps and slows down activity implementation.

- **Lack of GRZ transport:** In all 13 districts, transport difficulties have proved a major impediment, inhibiting GRZ staff to implement and monitor activities. This has become a common bottleneck, slowing the pace at which GRZ takes over SUN TA led activities. The inadequate transport reduces regular contact with sub-district and community structures ultimately hampering proper post-training follow-ups and cascading activities.



PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT QUARTER

Planned Activities	2022		
	Apr	May	Jun
Project Management			
Key staff meet with USAID for Project implementation updates	X	X	X
Prepare and submit quarterly progress report	X		
Conduct consultative meetings with relevant GRZ structures	X	X	X
Procurement of Project equipment, supplies, and materials	X	X	X
Agriculture & Livelihoods			
Continue sensitization of SMSG, Farmers and V-WASHE on the value and benefits of forming or belonging to CSLGs	X	X	X
Continue supporting adoption of improved technologies through Field Days, Farmer Exchange Visits and Learning tours and private sector engagements	X	X	X
Continue building capacity, mentoring, and coaching of Demonstration Farmers so that they can select, train, mentor, and coach Follower Farmer to create a viable and commercialized village chicken enterprise	X	X	X
Intensify establishment and formation of savings groups	X	X	X
Finalize delivery of day-old chicks and feed to the demonstration farmers in Northern Province	X	X	X
Conduct training in financial literacy starting with GRZ TOTs and roll-out to CSLG and other community groups	X	X	X
Conduct monthly Agriculture and Livelihoods technical review meetings	X	X	X
Nutrition & Health			
Increase convergence, reach, coverage, and linkages of eligible clients within H&N and across other thematic areas	X	X	X
Continue with the establishment of ECD corners at health facility and promotion of communication and play for sick and well children while teaching women on toy making	X	X	X
Continue registration of pregnant and mothers of children aged 0-24 months into SMSGs (formation of SMSGs)	X	X	X
Improve H&N data quality through continuous monitoring, mentoring, and coaching of CBVs (SMSGs, ECD, FP)	X	X	X
Conduct orientation of CBVs in implementation of SMSG and ECD	X	X	X
Promote age-appropriate messages on feeding practices through SMSGs	X	X	X
Provide TA and support during Child Health Week, Breastfeeding weeks	X	X	X
Facilitate exchange visits and learning tours for CBVs and HF coordinators within and outside catchment areas: documenting successes and best practices	X	X	X
Conduct district technical field visits	X	X	X
WASH			
Drill, test and construct new water points	X	X	X
Rehabilitate, test, and equip selected non-functional water points	X	X	X
Promote household water treatment and safe storage (HWTSS)	X	X	X
Conduct routine water quality monitoring and treatment for community and institutional water sources		X	X
Promote key hygiene messages through care groups / SMSGs /SAGs and advocate for changes in hygiene practices/behaviors	X	X	X

Planned Activities	2022		
	Apr	May	Jun
Train Community Champions and SAGs on CLTS approach and monitoring	X	X	X
Conduct ODF mass verification and certification process to confirm ODF status		X	X
Carry out CLTS progress monitoring at sub-district and district levels	X	X	X
Cross-Cutting			
Continue SBC rollout and capacity-building for SUN TA staff and GRZ staff	X	X	X
Engage NFNC for input into the Happy Home Campaign strategy through Communications and Advocacy Technical Working Group	X	X	
Orientation of CBVs on Happy Home Campaign, identification, and mentorship of Happy Homes in pilot districts as well as engagement of community leaders as advocates	X	X	X
Engagement and orientation of creative agency, CSO/NGO to support production of SBC materials and NGO/CSO to support community theatre		X	
Recruit SBC Consultant to support Happy Home Campaign	X		
Review, pre-test, and adapt targeted campaign resources	X	X	X
Documentation of best practices and success stories	X	X	X
M&E			
Scale-up of digital data collection and monitoring use in all project districts	X	X	X
Data collection and dissemination of the mini survey results	X	X	X
Data collection and dissemination for the qualitative study	X	X	X
Facilitate joint monitoring to the districts and catchments spearheaded by the PNCC and the DNCC	X	X	X
Facilitate program review meetings with the leadership of the DNCCs	X	X	X
Data collection and analysis of stunting, wasting, underweight and other outcome/impact indicators	X	X	X

ANNEX A: INDICATOR PERFORMANCE TRACKING TABLE

Indicator	2022 Target (Jan-Dec 2022)	Quarterly Achievement (Jan-Mar 2022)	Life of Project Target (Feb 2019- Feb 2023)	Cumulative Achievement (Feb 2019-Mar 2022)
	Agriculture and Livelihoods			
EG.3.2-24: Number of individuals in the agriculture system who have applied improved management practices or technologies with USG assistance [IM-level]	100,000	28,002	213,000	66,759
EG.3.2-27: Value of agriculture-related financing accessed as a result of USG assistance (\$)				
EG.3-10-11-12: Yield of targeted agricultural commodities among program participants with USG assistance [IM-level]	See below breakdown	See below breakdown	See below breakdown	See below breakdown
1.1 Maize	2 MT	Awaiting 2022 crop forecasting data	2.5 MT	2.5
1.2 Mixed Beans	500 kg	Awaiting 2022 crop forecasting data	600 kg	500
1.3 Soya Beans	1 MT	Awaiting 2022 crop forecasting data	1.4 MT	1.4
EG.3.2-25: Number of hectares under improved management practices or technologies with USG assistance [IM-level]	10,000	4,586.52	21,300	11,366
EG, 3.2: Number of individuals participating in USG food security programs	1,100,000	420,426	2,500,000	1,984,094
EG.4.2-7: Number of individuals participating in USG-assisted group-based savings, micro-finance or lending programs [IM-level]	27,000	5,621	62,000	40,887
GNDR-2: Percentage of female participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources [IM-level] [%]	85%	82%	85%	82%
Youth-3: Percentage of participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources who are youth (15-29) [IM-level] [%]	30%	20%	30%	20%
Health and Nutrition				
HL.9-2: Number of children under two (0-23 months) reached with community-level nutrition interventions through USG-supported programs [IM-Level]	130,000	13,862	290,000	133,088

Indicator	2022 Target (Jan-Dec 2022)	Quarterly Achievement	Life of Project Target (Feb 2019- Feb 2023)	Cumulative Achievement (Feb 2019-Mar 2022)
		(Jan-Mar 2022)		
HL.9-3: Number of pregnant women reached with nutrition-specific interventions through USG-supported programs [IM-level]	15,000.00	3,561	60,000	46,348
HL 7-1-2: Percent of USG-assisted service delivery sites providing family planning counseling and/or services	75%	83%	100%	83%
HL 7-2-2: Number of USG-assisted community health workers (CHWs) providing Family Planning (FP) information, referrals, and/or services during the year	2,537	1,487	2,537	1,487
HL 7.3-2: Number of individuals in the target population exposed to USG funded Family Planning (FP) messages through/on radio, television, electronic platforms, community group dialogue, interpersonal communication or in print (by channel/# of channels)	810,000	72,250	810,000	72,250
Interpersonal Communication	144,000	72,250	144,000	72,250
Community Dialogue	130,000	17,423	130,000	17,423
Mass Media (Radio)	810,000	Media campaign yet to be launched	810,000	Media campaign yet to be launched
Water Sanitation and Hygiene				
HL. 8.1-1: Number of people gaining access to basic drinking water services as a result of USG assistance	163,500	67,253	250,000	180,253
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	83,750	39,614	175,000	128,864
HL. 8.1-4: Number of institutional settings gaining access to a basic drinking water services as a result of USG assistance	13	5	25	17
HL.8.2-2: Number of people gaining access to a basic sanitation service as a result of USG assistance [IM-level]	1,100,000	420,426	2,500,000	2,013,608
HL. 8.2-1: Number of communities verified as open defecation free (ODF) as a result of USG assistance	1,500	0	2,400.00	885

ANNEX B: SUCCESS STORIES

FINANCIAL LOANS ACCELERATE ██████████'S BUSINESS VENTURES

Financial institutions are typically concentrated in urban centers, making it difficult for people living in rural areas, especially women, to access finance options. Further, women are discriminated against as being uncreditworthy and locked out from financial services, unable to advance their livelihoods.

One way the government of Zambia is addressing this challenge is to bring affordable financial service to rural communities. The USAID Scaling Up Nutrition Technical Assistance (SUN TA) Project is supporting the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services to increase access to finance to improve livelihoods, particularly among rural women, and generate income so households can purchase nutritious food and other basic needs.

Through USAID's support, the Ministry has trained hundreds of community facilitators who in turn have trained and organized rural mothers using proven community savings and loans group (CSLGs) methodology.

Mothers meet regularly to save and borrow.

By providing low-interest loans within communities, savings groups are increasingly proving to be a gamechanger for women like ██████████.



██████████ is a community-based health promoter who covers Mungule Rural Health Centre in Chibombo District. She joined Bukale Bubotu (Good Living) savings group in September 2020 and was among 17 women in her village trained in the methodology. During the saving cycle which ran from September 2020 to June 2021, ██████████ borrowed different amounts, the highest being

██████████, which she used for fertilizer, seeds, and pesticides for her tomato, maize, and soybeans fields.

In addition to accessing loans, ██████ received an additional ████████████████████ when her group shared out their savings in June 2021, which she used to construct a poultry house. From her vegetable sales, Ivy bought bricks and roofing sheets to complete the family house.

“Through the saving group, I have learned to make my own money and I am able to provide food for my family and education for my children. The savings group helped me buy the seeds and chemicals for my garden which gave enough profit for me to invest in other things.”

A wife and mother of five, ██████ is sharing her knowledge with other mothers and demonstrating how savings groups work, encouraging them to join. She even offered new participants her vegetable produce at wholesale prices so they could resale at a profit and raise money to start saving.

“Savings groups are helping us improve our lives and we women now have the confidence to stand on our own financially.”



Chibombo District has over 120 community savings and loan groups with a total membership of 1,915 (1,575 females, 340 males), and coordinated by 82 trained community facilitators.

TEN MINUTE WALK TO CLEAN, SAFE WATER FOR 4 MILES COMMUNITY

Poor hygiene and limited access to clean drinking water causes diseases such as diarrhea and cholera. Those living in informal settlements are most affected, especially women and girls, who carry the burden of fetching water.

██████████ is a 19-year-old mother and a resident of the 4 Miles community, a settlement in the northern part of Kabwe District. The settlement has a population of over 800. Mary earns her living through gardening and selling vegetables at the local market.

“Life in 4 Miles was not easy as we lacked access to clean water. We used to rely on unprotected wells which dried up in the dry season,” recalls Mary. “We would ask some people to dig the wells further hoping to get a bit more water.”



██████████ with her seven months old baby boy.

4 Miles is one of the areas where the USAID Scaling Up Nutrition Technical Assistance (SUN TA) Project is supporting the Government of Zambia to provide access to clean and safe water.

Working with the District Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Education (D-WASHE) committee which includes several government departments, SUN TA undertook a water needs assessment to identify communities in the Kabwe District in most need of clean, safe water. From there, the Project supported the rehabilitation of old boreholes and construction of new ones. “To have a borehole that is giving us access to clean water is a dream come true. I do not have to worry about our wells drying up anymore and my child getting infected because of unsafe water.”



Before: ██████████ demonstrates how she use to access water from a shallow well. *After:* ██████████ now accesses clean, safe water from a new borehole constructed with support for the USAID SUN TA Project.

Before the construction of the new borehole, [REDACTED] and her peers would walk long distances to fetch water. Now she can get clean and safe water in a ten-minute walk and as a result she has more time to focus on her garden and increase her income.

Consumption of unclean water is a major cause of diarrheal diseases, which in turn causes stunting in children under the age of two. By working together to deliver clean and safe water to communities, the USAID SUN TA Project and the Zambian government are contributing to the reduction of diarrheal diseases in communities and the healthy growth of children.

KABWE FARMERS SHOWCASE NUTRITIOUS OPTIONS AT FOOD FAIR

Helping farmers increase the production and consumption of diverse and locally available food is one of the goals of the Government’s First 1000 Most Critical Days Program (MCDP II). This, in turn, helps household increase their intake of nutrients—and important way the Government of Zambia and its partners are working prevent and reduce stunting among children.

The USAID Scaling Up Nutrition Technical Assistance (SUN TA) Project works with Zambia’s Ministry of Agriculture to support households across 13 target districts to grow and consume a variety of foods.

Several Kabwe-based farmers who are supported by SUN TA recently participated in a food fair organized by the Ministry. They showcased a variety of foods grown in and consumed by local communities, and shared knowledge on how to prepare nutritious recipes.

Lead Farmers who were trained by the Project contributed 100 kilograms of orange maize and orange fleshed sweet potatoes rich in Vitamin A.



Kabwe farmers supported by SUN TA showing off their produce.

██████████ the facilitator for the Waya Agricultural Camp Nutrition Group, shared his experience.

“We have started to appreciate orange maize and orange fleshed sweet potatoes because they mature earlier than other varieties and are very nutritious. I have learned a lot from the sessions we received on food production, preservation, and preparation.”

Some of the food that was prepared using the orange fleshed sweet potatoes included porridge, fritters, scones, cakes, nshima, and a local fermented brew called munkoyo. The Project supports soybean farmers for both nutritional and commercial purposes, as well, so products such as soymilk, soy sausage, soy coffee, soy scones, and soy mince were also on display.

The fair also gave participants an opportunity to underscore the message that good nutrition does not mean expensive or exotic foods, but rather produce that is locally available.



Mothers of children two years and younger took part in the food fair to share their knowledge on preparation of various nutritious foods for themselves and their children.

██████████ a mother of a 12-month-old baby boy, is a member of a SUN Mother Group (SMSG)—a community platform that SUN TA and the Ministry of Health uses to share better childcare practices with pregnant and lactating mothers. She shares that because of what she has learned from the group, her baby’s weight has increased significantly.

REHABILITATED BOREHOLE RELIEVES STUDENTS OF EARLY MORNING CHORE

Mwatishi Primary School in Nchelenge District is situated 13 miles (21 kilometers) from the town's center and has a surrounding population of nearly 700 people including teachers, students, and the general community.

The school had water problems after the only borehole at the institution broke down in December 2020.

“As school authorities, we had to send pupils to a village a kilometer away to fetch water before they started classes. This resulted in less concentration by students as they were already tired by the time they got to class,” recalls school head teacher, Donald Chanda.

With support from the USAID Scaling Up Nutrition Technical Assistance (SUN TA) Project, the District Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Education (D-WASHE) Committee undertook a water needs assessment across the district to identify communities and institutions in need of waterpoints. The borehole at Mwatishi school was one of those identified and listed for rehabilitation in November 2021.

With the borehole at the school now rehabilitated, no pupil is tired or missing out on class on account of fetching water. The school head predicts this will also contribute to improved class performance among his pupils.

“We are very grateful for this gesture from the USAID SUN TA Project which worked with our government to repair our borehole,” says Chanda.



School head teacher of Mwatishi Primary School, [REDACTED] receives handover of rehabilitated borehole near the campus from SUN TA staff.

The supply of clean, safe water to Mwatishi Primary School will both improve hygiene at the institution and the surrounding community, as well as reduce diarrheal diseases—a leading cause of stunting among children under two years.

The SUN TA Project supports the Government of Zambia to implement the First 1000 Most Critical Days Program (MCDP II) to reduce stunting among children under two years. The provision of clean, safe water through the construction of new boreholes and rehabilitation of old ones is a sizeable component of the program.

COMMUNITY HEALTH PROMOTERS ON THE FRONTLINE TO REDUCE STUNTING

Delivering quality health services goes beyond the formal health system of medical staff employed by the government. Community health volunteers play an important, integral role in reaching households with health services. It is for this reason that the national health system recognizes and values the efforts of community volunteers in mobilizing and educating communities for better health.

In supporting adoption of improved childcare practices under the government's First 1000 Most Critical Days Program (MCDP II), Zambia's Ministry of Health, with support from the USAID Scaling Up Nutrition Technical Assistance (SUN TA) Project, has trained nearly 3,000 community health volunteers spread across the 13 districts where the project works. Collectively, these volunteers deliver health and nutrition information, family planning counselling and services, and support early childhood development.



teaching mothers on the use of the feeding bowl during the cooking demonstration with Twampane SUN Mother Support Group.

is a 50-year-old mother of four from Bulaya village in Nchelenge District. She is one of the community health volunteers the Ministry trained in the SUN Mother Support Group (SMSG) model. The model is a community-based, integrated approach to combat stunting among children under two years old.

's work entails meeting mothers in the community to promote maternal, infant, and young child feeding, growth monitoring and promotion, and family planning. She also teaches mothers the importance of early antenatal bookings to protect the unborn child and gain access to folic acid supplements, ferrous sulphate, and deworming tablets. She also identifies malnourished children in the community and refers them to the health center for treatment.

"I formed my first group called Twampane SUN Mother Support Group which had 14 members in May 2020. Most of the mothers back then were not willing to be in the SMSG. But after seeing pregnant women delivering healthy babies and other mothers being able to prepare healthy meals using locally available foods with minimal resources, more women came. Men also encouraged their wives to join," says .

An active growth promoter, TB treatment supporter, and HIV counsellor, [REDACTED] also conducts cooking demonstrations with the SMSGs regularly using the complementary feeding books and feeding bowls that SUN TA procured and handed over to the Ministry of Health.

Improving knowledge on childcare among mothers helps them adopt the correct practices and contributes to raising healthy children. When children are healthy, mothers spend less time seeking treatment at hospitals and they can then focus on other productive ventures to improve their livelihoods, and kids perform better in school setting them on a path to a brighter future.



[REDACTED] watches over SMSG member as she dishes out porridge during a cooking demonstration.