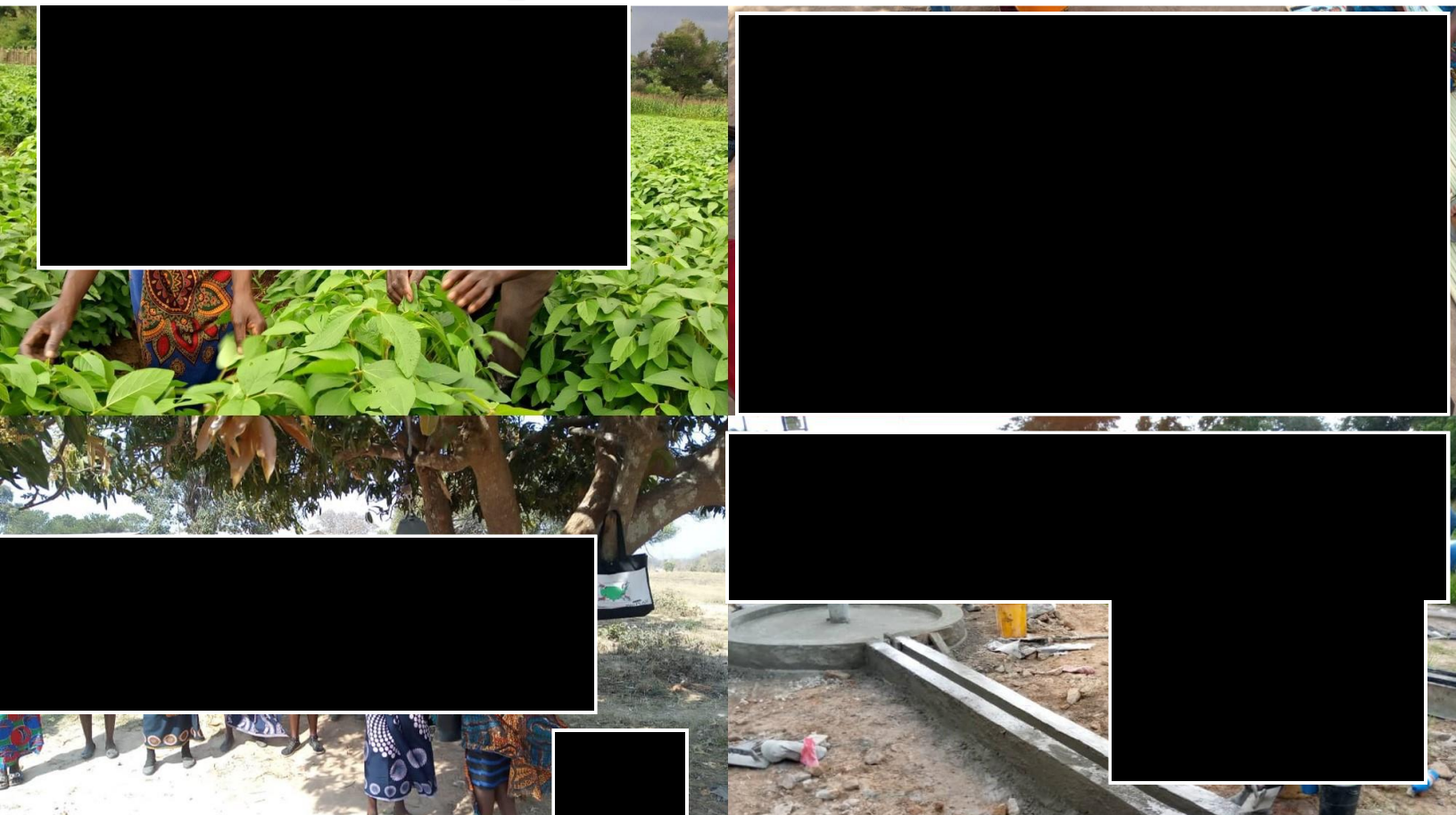




**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



# USAID SCALING UP NUTRITION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Quarterly Progress Report  
January 1 – March 31, 2021

Submission Date: April 30, 2021

Contract Number: 72061119C000002

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

COR Name [REDACTED]

ACOR Name [REDACTED]

Submitted: [REDACTED]

**USAID SUN TA**

[REDACTED]

This document was produced for review and approval by the United States Agency for International Development Mission in Zambia (USAID/Zambia).

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS.....	3
PROJECT OVERVIEW .....	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	5
Agriculture & Livelihoods .....	5
Health & Nutrition .....	6
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH) .....	6
Cross-Cutting Activities.....	7
PROJECT RESULTS BY COMPONENT .....	8
Agriculture & Livelihoods .....	8
Nutrition & Health .....	10
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH).....	12
CROSS-CUTTING.....	14
MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING (MEL) .....	15
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION .....	17
PROGRAM AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT .....	18
ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE.....	19
KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES.....	19
PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT QUARTER.....	21
Annex A: Indicator Performance Tracking Table .....	23
Annex B: Success Stories.....	25

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>AMELP</b>	Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan
<b>CBV</b>	Community-Based Volunteer
<b>CC</b>	Community Champions
<b>CLTS</b>	Community-Led Total Sanitation
<b>CSLG</b>	Community Savings and Loan Group
<b>DNCC</b>	District Nutrition Coordination Committee
<b>D-WASHE</b>	District Water Sanitation and Health Education
<b>EHT</b>	Environmental Health Technician
<b>FP</b>	Family Planning
<b>GRZ</b>	Government of the Republic of Zambia
<b>IYCF</b>	Infant and Young Child Feeding
<b>MCDP II</b>	1,000 Most Critical Days Program II
<b>MEL</b>	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
<b>MOH</b>	Ministry of Health
<b>NFNC</b>	National Food and Nutrition Commission
<b>ODF</b>	Open Defecation-Free
<b>PNCC</b>	Provincial Nutrition Coordination Committee
<b>SAG</b>	Sanitation Action Group
<b>SBC</b>	Social and Behavior Change
<b>SMSG</b>	SUN Mothers Support Groups
<b>SUN TA</b>	Scaling Up Nutrition Technical Assistance
<b>TWG</b>	Technical Working Group
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>V-WASHE</b>	Village Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Education
<b>WASH</b>	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 2021) covers activities implemented from January 1, 2021 to March 31, 2021.

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 Global, LLC and the U.S. Agency for International Development (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 Global, LLC 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 [REDACTED]. SUN TA targets women of reproductive age 15 - 49 with at least one child under 2 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 6 months of age with recorded low birth weight, or a maternal mortality with surviving infant of under 6 months of age). To achieve the goal of this project, USAID has identified two main objectives that address stunting:



Adequate Quantity and Quality of Dietary Intake Among Target Groups



Adequate Health Conditions for Biological Utilization of Nutrients

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 2021, 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

Under the Agriculture component, SUN TA pushed hard to train 996 Lead Farmers who then provided 14,940 Follower Farmers (9,412 Females, 5,528 Males) with extension services such as planting a variety of healthy, nutritious foods as well as improved management practices and technologies including integrated pest management (IPM), minimum tillage, crop rotation, mulching, composting, weed control and farmer managed natural regeneration. This has led to 648 hectares being under improved management practices or technologies, helping SUN TA reach its annual target by 41 percent in the first quarter alone. Further, the Project conducted nutrition-related agriculture training with 3,312 individuals, achieving 217 percent of the annual target and surpassing the life of project goal of 7,253 individuals trained by 121 percent. We envision this momentum will continue in subsequent quarters and years.

Along with these improved agricultural practices, SUN TA focused on soybean production in the first quarter, aiming to improve yields of the protein-rich commodity. Working with smallholder farmers, 468 hectares of soybean were planted, inspected and assessed in [REDACTED] districts where metric tons per hectare (MT/ha) are surpassing expectations resulting in 1.4 MT/ha. The same process is underway in [REDACTED] districts. Most importantly, the smallholder farmers who are producing the soybean crops now have a market. SUN TA facilitated a private sector partnership with Good Nature Agro, and they are committed to buying the entire first soybean harvest.

Critical for SUN Most Vulnerable households, SUN TA provided 2,006 families with agriculture starter packs that included Amaranthus, carrots, spinach and biofortified Mbereshi beans. Further, SUN TA Lead Farmers established 39 new health facility gardens that gives pregnant and lactating mothers increased access to nutritious vegetables. The new health facility gardens were established in 6 of the 13 target districts during Q1 2021 – [REDACTED] – and bring the total to 157, up from 118 at the end of 2020.

SUN TA also demonstrated progress expanding the Community Savings and Loan Groups (CSLGs), which are increasingly becoming a critical catalyst for entrepreneurship and improving overall income for women and their families. In Q1 2021, SUN TA-trained facilitators created 505 new Community Savings and Loan Groups, welcoming 7,843 (F: 6,588, M: 1,255) individuals. This represents 44 percent of the annual target already achieved. Collectively, the groups have saved [REDACTED], and the type of micro-enterprises being established from CSLG loans include vegetable and bean selling, poultry, farming, caterpillar and dry fish selling, and grocery selling helping to diversify household incomes so that they can cover food, shelter, health and education.

## Health & Nutrition

SUN TA saw significant gains in Q1 2021 under its Health & Nutrition component as a result of past and current trainings, particularly with community-based volunteers (CBV), that have allowed the Project to extend its reach beyond initial targets. These upfront investments led to 1,097 SUN Mother Support Groups formed by community-based volunteers, allowing them to reach 22,015 more pregnant and lactating mothers during the quarter under review. This brings the cumulative total number of SUN Mother Support Groups formed to 6,784, allowing CBVs to reach 99,515 women with critical health and nutrition activities and behavior change information. SMSGs continue to be a critical service delivery entry point to reach beneficiaries at the community and household levels for the convergence of nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions (health and nutrition talks, cooking demonstrations, learning about essential hygiene behaviors, and participation in savings groups).

SUN TA's investment in training is also reaping important results in family planning. In Q1 2021, 771 community-based distributors (CBDs) reached 24,609 people with family planning information, referrals and/or services, marking 51 percent of the annual target achieved. SUN TA has also significantly increased the percent of USG-assisted delivery sites providing family planning counselling and services to 66 percent, surpassing the annual target of 55 percent. This means more people, whether SUN TA beneficiaries or not, have increased access to family planning.

Further, 105,572 women have received individual and group counselling on various maternal and child health-related matters across all targeted districts, achieving 88 percent of the annual target and surpassing the LOP target. Lastly, SUN TA-trained CBVs have identified and reached 5,295 pregnant women with high-impact, nutrition-specific interventions, which is 81 percent of the annual target. By overshooting on training targets for CBVs and CBDs, despite an ongoing pandemic, the Project hopes to overshoot on other Health & Nutrition targets, particularly as it relates to nutrition and child-caring information for mothers of young children and family planning counselling and services.

## Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH)

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) component continues to make important strides across component and is poised to deliver on critical targets in the coming months as a result of the investment put in through the last quarter. Of greatest note, the Project jump-started the rehabilitation of non-functioning boreholes and drilling of new ones to increase access to clean water in targeted communities, including schools and health centers. During the quarter under review, SUN TA increased access to safe, clean drinking water for over 34,000 people in [REDACTED] Districts because of the 10 newly reconstructed boreholes at schools, health centres, and communities and established the standard operating procedures to operate and maintain them. The number of boreholes under reconstruction increases by the day and by the end of 2021, SUN TA is slated to complete the rehabilitation of 300 boreholes and drill 150 new ones with a goal of delivering clean, safe water to 250,000 people.

Moving targeted communities toward Open Defecation Free (ODF) status has also been an important focus of the WASH team during Q1 2021. To this end, this quarter saw the formation of 463 Sanitation Action Groups (SAGs) with 10 members each to oversee and follow-up the construction



and use of adequate latrines to attain ODF status at the village level. They oversaw the building of new or upgrading of existing latrines and the installation of handwashing stations (tippy taps) to serve 54,543 households, which is necessary infrastructure required to meet ODF standards. To encourage the adoption of ODF status, 367 villages were triggered with Community-led Total Sanitation (CLTS) interventions, resulting in 278,169 people gaining access to basic sanitation services in [REDACTED] districts. Efforts to verify ODF status also moved forward in the first quarter. In [REDACTED], 119 villages from nine catchment areas were ODF-verified and are awaiting ODF certification, while 188 villages who claimed ODF status are awaiting verification.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect everyone in every corner of the world, the Project continues to leverage its technical expertise to integrate and promote COVID-19 prevention measures throughout its WASH activities. Approximately 478,188 people have been reached in communities across the 13 project districts with SBC messages aimed at encouraging desired sanitation and hygiene practices. These messages include correct and consistent handwashing with clean water and soap at six critical times; hygienic and safe fecal disposal; and household water treatment and safe storage. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect everyone in every corner of the world, this messaging is critical to ensuring increased handwashing for sanitation purposes but also as a prevention measure against the coronavirus while SUN TA beneficiaries await access to vaccines.

## Cross-Cutting Activities

The idea of long-term sustainability is woven into all SUN TA activities. As indicated earlier in the Executive Summary, SUN TA's investments in training that allow us to extend the Project's reach is now paying dividends. Under each component, the Project has exceeded life of project targets and continues to make significant progress on annual targets during this quarter. For Q1 2021, the number of individuals receiving nutrition-related training through USG-supported programs is: 3,312 for Agriculture & Livelihoods (217 percent of annual target achieved); 1,065 for Health & Nutrition (58 percent of annual target); and 1,238 for WASH (69 percent of annual target).

SUN TA believes long-term sustainability is achieved through the creation of coordinating structures that can continue the work beyond the Project. To this end, SUN TA formed/revamped and supported four Provincial Nutrition Coordinating Committees (PNCCs) to supervise 13 District Nutrition Coordinating Committees (DNCCs), enhancing their implementation of the MCDP II at the district level. SUN TA continues to work closely with the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ), particularly at the national and district levels, sharing information and Project progress. To this end, SUN TA hosted its second virtual site visit, where SUN TA staff joined live from the field to showcase Project activities. Over 40 people joined from USAID, SUN TA, and GRZ using a video conferencing platform including senior Government officials led by the Deputy Permanent Secretary (DPS) for Central Province and USAID led by the Mission Director.

The Quarterly Progress report details quarter one 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 Q2 2021. The report is capped off by Annex A: Summary of Results and Annex B: Success Stories collected during the quarter under review.

## 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 (CSLGs) 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, Ministry of Community Development and Social Services structures from national, district, and community levels.

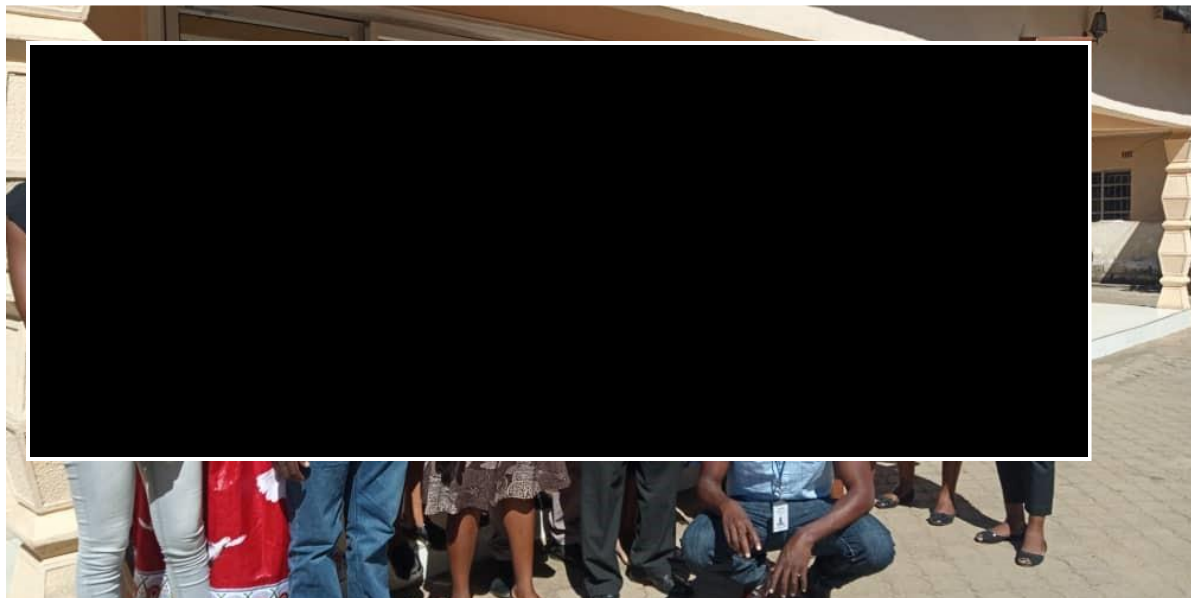
- Access to nutritious foods:** Thirty-nine (39) new health facility gardens in [REDACTED] districts were established, bringing the total to 157, up from 118 at the end of 2020. The gardens increase access to nutritious vegetables for pregnant and lactating mothers. The produce harvested from the gardens is used in cooking demonstrations during SUN Mother Support Group sessions, encouraging increased nutrient intake to prevent malnutrition in both mothers and their children. Additionally, the Project has a total of 231 community gardens managed by 111 Lead Farmers (23 Female, 94 Male).
- Lead Farmer community extension services:** A total of 996 Lead Farmers are now providing extension services, up from 898 at the end of 2020. These Lead Farmers are providing extension services to 14,940 trained Follower Farmers (9,412 Females, 5,528 Males). These farmers have a combined 648 hectares of land under applied improved management practices and technologies such as integrated pest management (IPM), minimum tillage, crop rotation, mulching, composting, weed control and farmer managed natural regeneration. The provision of community-level extension services to Follower Farmers is important in boosting crop production at community and household levels and supplementing the government extension system.
- Village chicken value chain:** To enhance the development of the village chicken value chain, 57 (23 Female, 34 Male) Demonstration Farmers out of the annual target of 90 across all 13 districts were identified, verified and all signed commitment forms for the creation of centers of excellence or hubs in the districts to raise Day Old Chicks (DOC). These centers of excellence or hubs will be accessed by Follower Farmers, with each Demonstration Farmer having ten Follower Farmers that will learn from them and apply the techniques. The overall benefit will be increased supply of local chickens, providing a business opportunity and access to animal protein.
- Increasing access to finance:** Community Facilitators established 505 new CSLGs with a total membership of 7,855 (6,598 females, 1,257 males), bringing the cumulative number of CSLGs to 1,093 and a membership of 18,699, of which 15,717 are females. Of the 15,717, 32



percent (or 5,327 members) are women with children under 2 years and 8 percent (1,326) are pregnant women. The savings grew from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED]. This brings the cumulative savings for the 1,093 CSLGs to [REDACTED]. The increased access to finance/capital for the target beneficiaries, especially women who comprise 84 percent of membership, has resulted in establishment of small and medium businesses that are enabling households to meet their basic requirements such as food, health, education, and shelter. To illustrate, 996 members of the CSLGs have started agriculture-related enterprises, 356 run grocery shops and 1,220 retailing enterprises. Further, 1,254 women savers have been linked to markets with 1,778 women savers accessing seed.

- Churches adopt CSLG methodology:** Resulting from SUN TA-supported radio programs in Ndola that featured staff from the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services discussing the CSLG work, three organizations – Development Aid from People to People (DAPP), the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church, and Reformed Church in Zambia (RCZ) – adopted the CSLG methodology for training their groups in [REDACTED] using the SUN TA-trained Community Facilitators. So far, five CSLGs have been trained in the area.
- Private sector engagement:** SUN TA continued its engagement with GNA in creating direct market linkages between private sector players and the Project’s beneficiaries as part of sustainability efforts. In addition, the Project worked with other seed companies such as Seed Co Zambia Ltd., ZAMSEED, and MRI Syngenta who were marketing their seed varieties to the farmers in the supported districts.
- Soybeans crop assessments:** [REDACTED] completed their soybean crop assessments in Q1 2021, planting 206 hectares and 262 hectares of soybeans fields, respectively. In line with the MoU with SUN TA, Good Nature Agro will buy all the produce from the farmers. Soybean is a high value crop that will benefit farmers financially as well as contribute to availability of protein at the household level. At the close of the quarter, crop assessments to determine potential yields were underway in [REDACTED].
- Dissemination of IAPRI’s horticultural research findings:** SUN TA collaborated with the Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute (IAPRI) in [REDACTED] to disseminate the latter’s research findings on the value of horticulture in reducing poverty through increasing incomes. IAPRI invited SUN TA-supported Lead Farmers to radio programs in the two districts to discuss their experience in vegetable production and how it has benefitted their household financially and nutritionally.
- Entrepreneurship training of GRZ staff:** SUN TA conducted a five-day training-of-trainers (TOT) on entrepreneurship and business development with staff from the Ministries of Agriculture and Community Development in [REDACTED] from March 28 to 3 April 2021. SUN TA teamed up with the Zambia Development Agency, the government body responsible for investment, business promotion, and development and growth of local enterprises, especially the micro, small and medium enterprises, to deliver the TOT workshop. To facilitate long-term sustainability, the TOT workshop positioned GRZ staff so they can offer ongoing support to emerging small businesses, nurturing their growth, and building their skills around agriculture and community savings groups. The trained staff, alongside SUN TA District Technical Officers, will cascade the training to smallholder entrepreneurs including

Lead Farmers, Private Extension Agents, and Community Saving facilitators in SUN TA's 13 target districts. This activity supports SUN TA's objective to increase reliable access to safe and nutritious food through nutrition-sensitive agriculture, helping to prevent stunting among children under two years.



## 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):** SUN TA-trained community-based volunteers formed 1,097 SUN Mother Support Groups across all 13 districts with a total membership of 22,015. SMSGs are a service delivery entry point to reach beneficiaries at the community and household levels for the convergence of nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions. Of this total, 4,225 were pregnant women aged 20+ years, 1,070 were pregnant teenagers below 20 years, and 16,720 were lactating women and mothers of children aged 0-24 months. Further, the Project trained a total of 919 CBVs (581 females and 338 males) to form and establish more SMSGs. The SMSGs are groups of a maximum of 15 mothers each (comprised of pregnant women and teenagers and mothers of children aged 0-24 months) through which health and nutrition activities and behavior change messages are delivered under the supervision of trained CBVs, who are in turn supervised by healthcare workers. CBV-led SMSGs facilitated and promoted social behavior change activities that respond to the improved health outcomes of mothers and children, including, but not limited to:

- ✓ Early attendance of antenatal care visits, supplementation with iron and folate, early initiation of breastfeeding after delivery, promotion of exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of a baby's life, complementary feeding by teaching women how to safely prepare complementary, nutritious foods, supplementation with Vitamin A and deworming.
- ✓ Family planning, group and individual counselling, early childhood development.
- ✓ Keeping a clean environment for the handling of food such as keeping clean surfaces and utensils, protect food preparation areas from insects, pests, and other animals, and safe food storage.
- ✓ Participation in community savings and loans groups to improve financial inclusion, joint decision making and increase household incomes.
- **Integrating SMSGs into agriculture:** A total of 3,631 SMSG mothers were linked to agricultural interventions as recipients of seed and managed to set up gardens at the household level. The mothers will use the knowledge gained from their participation session at health facility gardens to manage their household gardens and will be supported by Lead Farmers in their localities. An additional 2,176 mothers belonging to SMSGs were successfully linked to economic empowerment through community savings.
- **Growth monitoring promotion:** SUN TA implemented community radio programs in [REDACTED] to sensitize the community on the importance of growth monitoring and promotion (GMP) and immunizations, and in [REDACTED] on community interventions that address stunting, and the role of SMSGs.
- **Development of messages:** The Zambian government, through its Ministry of Health, led outbound message development for pregnant women from the first through third trimester. Additionally, outbound recipes were also developed for pregnant and lactating mothers of children aged 6-24 months.
- **Community family planning services:** This quarter, SUN TA trained 180 (79 males, 101 females) as Community-based Distributors (CBDs) in the delivery of community-level family planning services in 13 districts covering a total of 253 health facilities out of 380. The CBDs in turn reached 24,609 clients with the following: 2,841 oral contraceptives, 542 female condoms and 45,059 male condoms, 9,474 injectables and 68 were referred for further management at health facility level. The Project promotes child spacing to improve child survival and health and encourages couples to have fewer children so that they can support them fully, reducing the economic burden on their families and investing in each child's care and future. So far, 146 health facility CBD supervisors (37 males, 109 females) have been oriented in FP supervisory and mentorship roles at the health facility level from all 253 targeted health facilities.
- **Increasing counselling services at community level:** SUN TA has continued to contribute to maternal and child health counselling at individual and group levels through the trained health facility staff at sub-district levels. At the end of this quarter, a total of 105,572 women had received individual or group counselling on various maternal and child health related matters in all the health facilities in the districts contributing 88 percent towards the annual target.

## Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

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

- **Hygiene promotion:** Through the SUN Mother Support Groups (SMSG), SUN TA continued to promote consistent handwashing with soap and clean water at key times and food and environmental hygiene for improved nutrition outcomes, such as proper food preparation and storage, and safe disposal of waste. In addition, the trained Sanitation Action Groups and Community Champions supported the targeted communities in all 13 districts to promote handwashing as a general hygiene practice and as a measure to protect communities and reduce diarrheal diseases among beneficiaries in all catchment areas.
- **Community-led Total Sanitation (CLTS):** During the reporting period, SUN TA focused on social and behavior change while building community capacity to consistently use latrines, practice optimal handwashing at critical moments, take appropriate food safety actions, and properly dispose of adult, child, and animal feces. Also, the project worked with communities to attain ODF status focusing on villages in the health facility catchment areas. Further, SUN TA worked with the MWDSEP to train GRZ staff and CBVs to increase district and community capacity to roll-out CLTS activities.
  - **Formation of SAGs for ODF attainment:** To attain Open Defecation Free status, 463 new Sanitation Action Groups (SAGs) with 10 members each were formed in 11 of 13 districts to oversee and follow-up the construction and use of adequate latrines in target communities. SAGs are community-level structures that spearhead and work with communities to increase sanitation and hygiene standards. This has given the community a sense of ownership that will support the long-term sustainability of the ODF schemes. Further, the inclusion of women integrates gender into SAGs and ensures a gender-sensitive approach to sanitation activities and messaging.
  - **Triggering of villages for ODF:** ODF triggering occurred in 367 villages in eight districts, [REDACTED], with the goal of increasing basic access to sanitation for the targeted communities. CLTS triggering stimulates collective action by raising awareness of the dangers of open defecation and the benefits of improving sanitary conditions at the community level. SUN TA is working with the DWASHEs, Community Champions and traditional leadership to continue ramping up community action to attain ODF.
  - **Access to basic sanitation:** The joint sensitization efforts of DWASHEs, SAGs, Community Champions and traditional leadership continue to bear fruit, resulting in new latrines built and handwashing stations (tippy taps) installed that are serving 54,543 households (with a population of about 278,169 people) across the 13 districts to meet ODF standards. Further, the Project reached 478,188 people in communities across the 13 project districts with SBC messages aimed at encouraging desired sanitation and hygiene practices such as correct and consistent handwashing with clean water and soap at six







- **Commemoration of World Water Day:** SUN TA supported the commemoration of World Water Day in March through sponsorship of radio programs to disseminate information on the commemoration, with a focus on the year’s theme, “What does water mean to you?”. The programs featured staff from the Government line ministries and SUN TA Technical Officers who also used the opportunity to highlight what the Project is doing to increase access to water.

## CROSS-CUTTING

- **Coordination support to NFNC provincial and district structures:** Taking learnings from MCDP I, where provincial level structures were left out in the implementation of the program, SUN TA in this quarter held meetings and orientations to strengthen the PNCCs participation, including the establishment/revamping of subcommittees and technical working groups (TWGs) on communications and advocacy; monitoring and evaluation, and water, sanitation and hygiene, all meant to support implementation and supervise districts. Similarly, SUN TA supported DNCCs to hold review and planning meetings and data review sessions.
- **virtual site visit:** SUN TA built on the first virtual field visit held in June 2020 in [REDACTED], hosting another one in [REDACTED] to showcase activities across all thematic areas. The ‘visitors’ included senior Government officials led by the Deputy Permanent Secretary (DPS) for Central Province and USAID led by the Mission Director. The DPS appreciated the innovation of holding virtual visits during the COVID-19 pandemic, and said the government was keen to integrate the Project’s activities into its financial arrangements.
- **Development of SBC messages for mobile platforms:** SUN TA worked with Viamo, NFNC and the Ministry of Health to develop messages targeted at pregnant women with relevant for the first through third trimesters. Additionally, outbound recipes were also developed for pregnant, lactating and mothers of children aged 6-24 months. Lastly, the Project developed messages on community savings and loans groups.
- **Use of radio for program messaging:** SUN TA-supported radio programs were used by different line ministries to share information on ongoing program activities, with a view to increasing community participation and uptake. Experts from the Ministry of Health in [REDACTED]



██████ used the platform to share information on the importance of Growth Monitoring and Promotion and immunizations, among others, while in ██████ they explained the role of SMSGs in addressing stunting. The Ministry of Agriculture discussed production and consumption of nutrient-rich vegetables, and the role of the household, community, and health facility gardens. The Ministry of Community Development focused on promoting CSLGs and the benefits thereof, while the Ministry of Local Government advanced WASH activities.

- **Newspaper articles on SUN TA's work:** Newspaper articles were published in the Zambia Daily Mail and Times of Zambia highlighting SUN TA thought leadership and Project accomplishments. These included an op-ed to mark International Women's Day, activities of increasing access to finance through savings groups and SUN TA's support to the Copperbelt PNCC.
- **Project visibility and branding:** A new Project logo lock-up (or montage) was developed to encompass USAID, GRZ, NFNC and the MCDP II. The montage will be used on all branding and visibility materials. To increase the visibility and motivate CBVs, draft concepts were designed for the CBVs kit including IDs, reflective vests, and umbrellas. Procurement is underway for the kit that will increase the CBVs identity in the community and, in turn, Project visibility. The Project also embarked on increasing Project visibility in the districts through installation of new signposts.

## 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. ██████

██████ SUN TA builds capacity and strengthens the existing systems.

- **Updated data collection and reporting tools:** In Q1 2021, SUN TA finalized the revision of data collection and reporting tools for the Project. The tools have since been distributed to all the 13 districts and orientations conducted using a cascade approach from national to community levels. The SUN TA national and provincial team oriented the District Nutrition Coordinating Committees, who in turn oriented the structures at the catchment level including health facility staff and agriculture camp extension officers. Government officers at the catchment level-oriented community volunteers. The tools correspond to the Project's technical areas and levels of operation, aggregation and reporting including:
  - ✓ At community level for capturing reach and participation of targeted beneficiaries such members of SMSG, CSLG, V-WASHE and Follower Farmers, e.g., the Lead Farmer Field monitoring book.
  - ✓ At catchment level e.g., health facility and agriculture camps, for aggregating reports from the community level. For example, the WASH EHT/CHA data collection tool aggregates data from the V-WASHE and Community Champions on water access and hygiene practices.
  - ✓ The district level tools have been designed to aggregate data from the catchment level e.g., SMSG District Consolidated Monthly Book.

- ✓ At the national level, SUN TA shared the reporting tools with the NFNC for inclusion in the process of developing the National Nutrition Monitoring and Evaluation Plan that NFNC is overseeing. The tools were also shared with UNICEF who requested for them as an initial step to achieving harmonization of tools, approaches, and systems in measuring the performance of the MCDP II program.
- **Revision of the Activity Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Plan:** The Project completed the revision of the AMELP which began in Q4 2020 and USAID approved the updated plan. The database was similarly updated to include new USAID standard indicators, targets and electronic forms.
- **Outcome monitoring:** Plans to conduct rapid surveys and cohort surveys advanced. A study protocol for the evaluation of the project's SBC interventions was developed and submitted to SUN LE and NFNC for review and alignment to the national research agenda. The study aims to monitor trends on indicators of knowledge, attitudes, practices, and social norms that are key to the adoption of nutrition-direct and nutrition-sensitive behaviors. This will involve conducting a series of rapid surveys using the Project's implementing partner, Viamo, who are specialized in digital and mobile/audio messaging technologies. The study to be done in Q2 2021 targets the following cohorts: women of reproductive age (20-49 years); pregnant women and lactating mothers; small-scale farmers (men, women, and youths); and heads of households.
- **Database migration:** The Project began the process of migrating from ██████████ which is primarily a data collection platform, to ██████████, a more robust and dynamic data management solution which offers more advanced data collection and management features. Some of the features ██████████ offers include:
  - ✓ A comprehensive data management solution based on data warehousing principles and a modular structure which can easily be customized to the different requirements of a management information system, supporting analysis at different levels of the organizational hierarchy.
  - ✓ Data entry tools which can either be in the form of standard lists or tables or can be customized to replicate paper forms.
  - ✓ Different kinds of tools for data validation and improvement of data quality.
  - ✓ Easy to use - one-click reports with charts and tables for selected indicators or summary reports using the design of the data collection tools.
  - ✓ Flexible and dynamic (on-the-fly) data analysis in the analytics modules (i.e., GIS, PivotTables, Data Visualizer, Event reports, etc.).
  - ✓ A user-specific dashboard for quick access to the relevant monitoring and evaluation tools including indicator charts and links to favorite reports, maps, and other key resources in the system.
  - ✓ Easy to use user-interfaces for metadata management e.g., for adding/editing datasets or health facilities

- ✓ User management module for passwords, security, and fine-grained access control (user roles).
  - ✓ [REDACTED] to allow for integration with external software such as [REDACTED] for more advanced analytics.
  - ✓ [REDACTED] will facilitate easy access to project data by external stakeholders and importation of data from other [REDACTED] platforms being used in the Ministry of Health. The database was also updated to include new indicators, targets and electronic forms. [REDACTED] will still be used for more advanced analytics and visualization capabilities beyond [REDACTED] core functionality. It will continue to play a key role SUNTA's analytic platform as it will enable data mashups from [REDACTED] and datasets housed in other formats that have been previously used on the project such as [REDACTED].
- **Sharing learning:** Two learning sessions on beneficiary registration and targeting were conducted with UNICEF and Viamo. SUN TA shared on the approach and tools used to capture targeted beneficiaries as well as results and how the registration process has facilitated the Project's identification of beneficiaries targeted for tailor-made and context-specific nutrition interventions. Lessons drawn from the application of the registration process were also shared including what worked well, areas needing improvement and the next steps in addressing any registered challenges. To address some of the challenges identified, an auxiliary registration process was introduced aimed at registering pregnant and lactating women from the health facility, with the application of mobile technology and a shortened registration form with more simplified language. Further, three meetings were held with SUN LE focusing on providing updates on project implementation, research activities and capacity building support to the NFNC.

## 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:** A quarterly review meeting with USAID was held to provide an update on program implementation. USAID provided feedback on how the Project can improve its quality and deliver better results, including demonstrating how the various components of the Project align to impact targeted households. Furthermore, check-in meetings were held where USAID provided strategic direction and SUN TA provided implementation updates, WASH bi-weekly updates, and participation in selection of subcontractors to undertake borehole works. Additionally, the SUN TA regional offices continued interacting with USAID regional staff on a weekly basis to provide updates on implementation status.
- **USG collaboration:** SUN TA held meetings with the USAID Local Impact Governance Activity to explore potential partnerships in [REDACTED]. Also, the Project interacted with [REDACTED] in an early childhood development project called [REDACTED] on the possibility of training GRZ staff and CBVs using their ECD curriculum. Furthermore, SUN TA worked with

USAID Youth Lead Activity to identify and place young professionals as interns in [REDACTED]

- **Coordination with NFNC:** SUN TA held meetings with the NFNC senior leadership to discuss and review collaboration in the 13 districts.
- **Participation in stakeholder platforms:** SUN TA participated in the Communication & Advocacy, and Monitoring and Evaluations Technical Working Groups meetings, as well as in preparations for the second SUN National Conference. Also, SUN TA participated in the UNICEF-led consultations on the development of the National SBC Strategy, whose consultant’s inception report was expected in April.
- **Meeting with UNHCR:** SUN TA had a meeting with UNHCR on March 23, 2021 to discuss enhanced collaboration in [REDACTED] in food security and nutrition programs. Agreed in the meeting that SUN TA to conduct local stakeholder mapping to identify areas of scaling up its interventions focusing on health, livelihoods, agriculture, and WASH.

## PROGRAM AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The Human Resources, Administration, Procurement and Finance teams continued to provide support to the technical departments and district offices to ensure smooth implementation of Project activities. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

In Q1 2021, SUN TA continued using the approved Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EMMP) to monitor all its activities aimed at appropriate environmental mitigation and climate adaptation measures. SUN TA supported the districts focusing on the following: providing onsite support to farmers on how to ensure correct planting and use of appropriate technologies with guidance on safe use of pesticides and value of integrated pest management (IPM); demonstration of organic fertilizers to show other farmers the value and benefits to increase uptake; training of Lead Farmers in the re-use of on-farm waste through composting and promotion of manure teas to improve crop nutrition; and promoted adaptation farming practices and technologies including conservation tillage, liming, legume/maize rotation, cowpea and soybean production, irrigation using low-flow through on-farm demonstrations throughout the Project's life.

Furthermore, SUN TA used the approved Water Quality Assurance Plan to ensure that all water related interventions conformed to local and U.S. government environmental laws and regulations. This quarter, the Project assessed over 237 boreholes for rehabilitations/reconstructions including the collection of water samples for testing. Of the assessed boreholes, 52 of them tested positive for Arsenic and/or Lead in [REDACTED]. Local authorities were all notified with a recommendation that the water points be decommissioned.

## KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- **COVID-19** continued to influence the implementation of the Project as the peak of the second wave occurred during the quarter under review. This affected Project implementation in the following ways:

- **Disruption of Project implementation:** Most districts remained operational and continued to deliver interventions during the second wave of the pandemic while adhering to public health guidelines. [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

- **Adverse weather conditions:** Heavy rains experienced in some districts flooded some of the vegetable demonstration plots established for training of mothers and pregnant women in SMSGs. The floods also affected the Project’s ability to reach some target areas which were cut off as most roads became impassable. In WASH, some households lost their newly constructed toilets to flooding, impacting negatively on the community’s ability to attain ODF. The heavy rains also affected the drilling of boreholes as contractors could not be onsite.

- **Increased workload for women:** The onset of the rainy season meant women had to attend to their fields, thus reducing their participation in the SUN Mother Support Groups (MSG) and the communal gardens.

- [REDACTED]

- **Low water quality and quantity:** A significant number of borehole rehabilitation (BHR) sites are failing to produce acceptable water quality and quantity after jetting, resulting in SUN TA having to continue to test large numbers of replacement sites. Further, limited availability of construction materials (such as correct crushed stone, correct fencing material, etc.) is causing difficulties for some BHR contractors.



## PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT QUARTER

Planned Activities	2021		
	Apr	May	Jun
<b>Project Management</b>			
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
<b>Agriculture &amp; Livelihoods</b>			
Build capacity of Village Chicken Demonstration Farmers and Anchor Farmers & set up demonstration sites	X	X	
Establish or form community savings and loan groups	X	X	X
Hold Agriculture and Livelihoods Technical Review Meeting			X
Support field days for the farmers in the supported districts	X		
Commence operations of the local chicken and soybeans value chains	X	X	X
<b>Nutrition &amp; Health</b>			
Accelerate the integration of Early Childhood Development activities at community level and within the SMSGs	X	X	X
Triggering and formation of SMSGs	X	X	X
Health and Nutrition technical review meeting			X
Supervisory and mentorship support to SMSGs implementation at community level.	X	X	X
<b>WASH</b>			
CLTS (handwashing with soap and latrine) triggering of villages	X	X	X
Formation and orientation of SAGs in their roles and responsibilities	X	X	X
Formation and training of V-WASHE committees in their roles and responsibilities	X	X	X
Set up and orient ODF district and provincial task forces	X	X	X
Engagement of the Architectural and Engineering Firm and contractor for borehole siting, designing, water quality analysis and supervision of borehole drilling and equipping with handpumps and submersible pumps		X	
Undertake rehabilitation of non-functional boreholes with related water quality analysis in health facilities, schools, and communities	X	X	X
Drill and construct new boreholes	X	X	X
Mass ODF Verifications and certifications		X	X
WASH technical review meeting			X
<b>Cross-Cutting</b>			
Support rollout of SBC Strategy in all 13 districts		X	X
Undertake orientation of media institutions on the MCDP II		X	
Identification and orientation of nutrition champions		X	X
Integrate dissemination of COVID-19 messages in ongoing activities through radio and public address system	X	X	X
<b>M&amp;E</b>			
Conduct intervention-based registration of beneficiary households (on-going).	X	X	X
Support and strengthen the process of DNCC, WNCC, and CBVs data collection and collation at health facility and community levels.	X	X	X

Planned Activities	2021		
	Apr	May	Jun
Collaborate with SUN LE in support of the Learning Agenda.	X	X	X
Finalize and pre-test SUN TA mobile quarterly survey	X	X	
Conduct the SUN TA quarterly mobile surveys			X

# ANNEX A: INDICATOR PERFORMANCE TRACKING TABLE

Indicator Type	Indicator	Quarter I Results Achieved	Annual Target	Cumulative Results	Life of Project Target
		Jan I – Mar 31, 2021	Jan I – Dec 31, 2021	Feb 2019 – Mar 2021	
<b>Objective 1: Adequate Quantity and Quality of Dietary Intake Among Targeted Groups Increased</b>					
<b>IR 1. Increased, reliable access to safe, nutritious food</b>					
EG.3.2-24	Number of individuals in the agriculture system who have applied improved management practices or technologies with USG assistance [IM-level]	1,222 (F768, M454)	100,000	1,222 (F768, M454)	120,000
EG.3.2-27	Value of agriculture-related financing accessed as a result of USG assistance [IM-level]				
EG.3.2-25	Number of hectares under improved management practices or technologies with USG assistance [IM-level]	648	1,562.5 <sup>1</sup>	648	1,875
EG.3-10, -11, -12	Yield of targeted agricultural commodities among program participants with USG assistance [IM-level]	0	Maize=2 MT/ha	0	Maize=2 MT/ha
		1.40	Soybeans=1 MT/ha	1.40	Soybeans=1 MT/ha
		0	Mixed beans=500 kg/ha	0	Mixed beans=500kg/ha
EG.3-2	Number of individuals participating in USG food security programs	109,283	400,000	316,049	1,200,000
EG.4.2-7	Number of individuals participating in USG-assisted group-based savings, micro-finance or lending programs	7,843 (F6,588, M1,255)	18,000	18,699 (F15,707, M2,992)	27,000
<b>Objective 2: Adequate Health Conditions for Biological Utilization of Nutrients Improved</b>					
<b>IR 3. Improved delivery of effective, sustainable health and nutrition services</b>					
HL.9-3b	Number of women receiving individual or group counseling on maternal and/or child nutrition (HL.9-3b)	105,572	120,000	266,761	130,000
HL.9-1e	Number of children under 2 who received treatment for severe acute malnutrition (SAM)	379	N/A	962	N/A
HL.9-1f	Number of children under 2 who were admitted for treatment of moderate acute malnutrition (HL.9-1f)	1,138	N/A	2,598	N/A
HL.7.1-2	Percent of USG-assisted service delivery sites providing family planning counseling and/or services	66%	55%	66%	100%
HL.7.2-2	Number of USG-assisted community health workers (CHWs) providing Family Planning (FP) information, referrals, and/or services during the year	771	1,500	1,372	2,493

<sup>1</sup> Calculated from indicator EG.3.2-24a. Gardens for homestead farmers or follower farmers calculated using a quarter of a lima which is 12.5m x 12.5m

Indicator Type	Indicator	Quarter I Results Achieved	Annual Target	Cumulative Results	Life of Project Target
		Jan 1 – Mar 31, 2021	Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2021	Feb 2019 – Mar 2021	
HL.9-3	Number of pregnant women reached with nutrition-specific interventions through USG-supported programs	5,295	6,500	9,874	25,640
HL.9-2	Number of children under two (0-23 months) reached with community-level nutrition interventions through USG-supported programs [IM-level]	16,720	123,000	106,203	130,000
<b>IR 4. Healthier, cleaner environment</b>					
HL.8.1-1	Number of people gaining access to basic drinking water services as a result of USG assistance	34,000	112,500	34,000	250,000
HL.8.1-3	Number of people receiving improved service quality from an existing basic drinking or safely managed water service as a result of USG assistance (HL.8.1-3)	2,500	75,000	2,500	175,000
HL.8.1-4	Number of institutional settings gaining access to a basic drinking water services as a result of USG assistance	10	N/A	10	N/A (only for opportunistic interventions)
HL.8.2-1	Number of communities verified as open defecation free (ODF) as a result of USG assistance	119	1,200	119	2,400
HL.8.2-2	Number of people gaining access to a basic sanitation service as a result of USG assistance	278,169	400,000	278,169	1,200,000
HL.8.2-4	Number of basic sanitation facilities provided in institutional settings as a result of USG assistance	0	N/A	0	N/A (only for opportunistic interventions)
<b>Cross-cutting</b>					
HL.9-4	Number of individuals receiving nutrition-related training through USG-supported programs				
	<b>Agriculture and Livelihoods</b>	3,312 (F2,360, M952)	1,530	8,738 (F5,059, M3,679)	7,253
	<b>Health and Nutrition</b>	1,065 (F690, M375)	1,834	5,564 (F3,160, M2,404)	3,370
	<b>WASH</b>	1,238 (F467, M771)	1,800	5,406 (F2,336, M3,070)	2,227
GNDR-2	Percentage of female participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources [IM-level]	80%	70%	80%	80%
YOUTH-3	Percentage of participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources who are youth (15-29) [IM-level]	20%	30% <sup>2</sup>	15%	30%

<sup>2</sup> The baseline will be determined following analysis of 2020 data. The preliminary target for 2021 is premised on the estimated population of young people 15-29

## ANNEX B: SUCCESS STORIES

### SUN TA DELIVERS CLEAN WATER TO [REDACTED] COMMUNITIES

[REDACTED] has become one of the early beneficiaries of newly rehabilitated boreholes, giving the community access to clean, safe water. The rehabilitations have included the jetting and cleaning of the existing boreholes, replacing old drill casings as needed, recasting concrete aprons and drainage systems, replacing old hand pumps with new ones, and adding fencing for security purposes.

This is a life-changing development for people living in [REDACTED]. A lack of access to clean, safe water combined with poor sanitation and hygiene practices are major contributors of diarrheal diseases, which are a leading cause of malnutrition and death for children under the age of five. Additionally, women typically bear the burden of tracking down water for daily use within their household—for drinking, cooking and cleaning. This takes them away from other important duties, including childcare and income producing activities, which exacerbates an even deeper socio-economic divide between them and men. When safe, clean water is delivered closer to homes, women are free to spend their time elsewhere, diarrheal diseases are either minimized or altogether eliminated, and children, along with their mothers, can thrive.

As [REDACTED], the borehole caretaker at [REDACTED] Health Centre which serves 2,600 people across seven villages, shares, “The water is now clean as the corroded pipes have been replaced by new UPVC pipes. Fencing the borehole and having a well-constructed soakaway will ensure total sanitation at the waterpoint which was compromised before.”

Maintaining waterpoints and ensuring an uninterrupted supply requires community involvement and financial contributions. “We now have a waterpoint committee and a constitution to help us sustain the borehole. Previously there were no contributions from the community, and it was only the health center that bought spares when the borehole broke down,” says [REDACTED].



Borehole at [REDACTED] Health Centre in [REDACTED] District before and after rehabilitation. Photo: SUN TA

“Before SUN TA came, I had to hire tools and that was a challenge. But now the Project has provided us with a toolkit which will make repairs easier,” says [REDACTED] one of the Area Pump Menders the Project identified and trained in [REDACTED]

To achieve the sustainable delivery of clean water to its target communities, SUN TA is working with the Ministry of Local Government, and Ministry of Water Development to build the capacity of officers and reinforce delivery structures to support the rehabilitation, construction and maintenance of waterpoints. All 13 targeted District Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Education (D-WASHE) Committees are in place and trained in water needs assessments, which has empowered them to review their own communities and identify areas that require new water points and borehole rehabilitation. To reduce and mitigate any interruptions in clean water supply, the Project has trained 163 Environmental Health Technologists in water sampling and quality analysis, while 336 Area Pump Menders have been trained to work with Village WASHE committees.

The change witnessed in [REDACTED] Health Centre is just one of many that the Project hopes to deliver across all 13 targeted districts which include: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In 2021, SUN TA will rehabilitate 300 non-functioning boreholes and drill 150 new ones to increase access to clean water in targeted communities, including schools and health centers.

#### *About the Scaling Up Nutrition Technical Assistance (SUN TA) Project*

The mission of the USAID-funded Scaling Up Nutrition Technical Assistance (SUN TA) Project is to address the root causes of stunting in children under two years old. These root causes include malnutrition, either through inadequate quantity or quality of nutritious foods or inadequate health conditions to utilize nutritious foods. The four-year project, implemented by DAI Global, LLC, targets women of reproductive age 15 – 49 with at least one child under two years old, and/or pregnant women across 13 districts in Zambia: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] These women receive evidence-based, high-impact interventions that 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.



## JOINT COMMUNITY EFFORTS IMPROVE SANITATION AND HYGIENE IN [REDACTED]

Located 30 kilometers from the town center of [REDACTED] an area with 424 households and a population of 2,553. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] is one of the areas where the USAID-funded Scaling Up Nutrition Technical Assistance (SUN TA) Project is working to prevent malnutrition in children under two years. One of the Project's activities is the community-wide improvement of sanitation and hygiene. High standards of sanitation and hygiene are important in preventing diarrheal diseases, a leading causing of stunting among children.



[REDACTED] did not have a safe disposal of fecal matter as communities practiced open defecation. Working with the District Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Education (D-WASHE) Committee, health facility staff, village headmen, church and civic leaders, the SUN TA Project engaged the public using the community-led total sanitation (CLTS) methodology. This is a community-driven approach that entails communities conducting their own appraisal and analysis of open defecation and taking action to become an open defecation free (ODF) zone.

SUN TA [REDACTED] Technical Officer for WASH, [REDACTED] interviewing community champion, [REDACTED], on his involvement in the CLTS activity that led to ending open defecation in [REDACTED]  
Picture: SUN TA Project

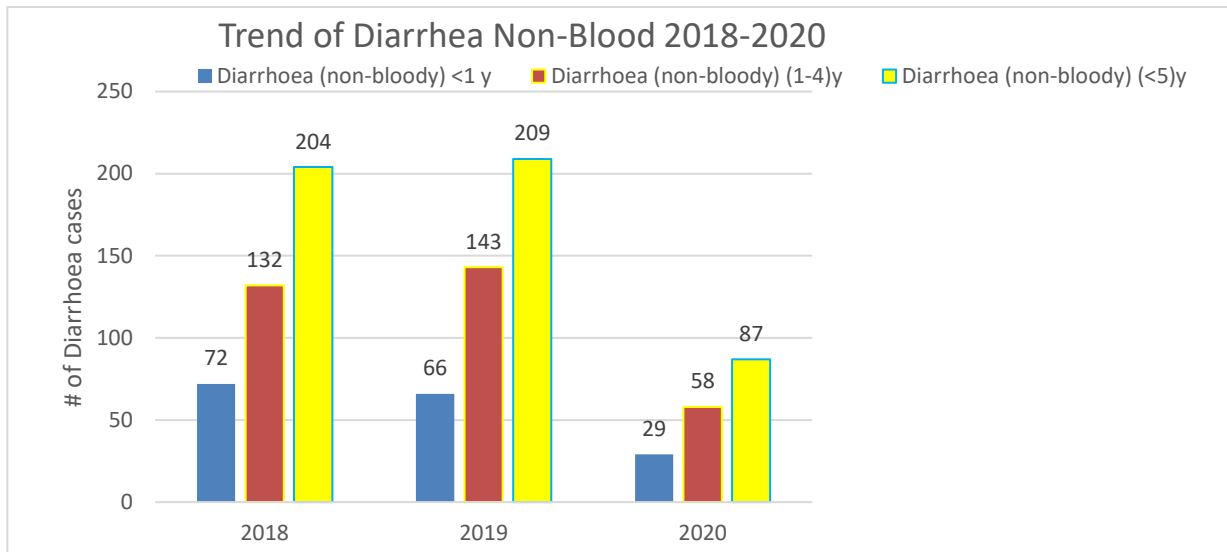
“As you can see, we live near the lake, which is our main source of water. With open defecation in the past, all the waste was washed into the lake,” says [REDACTED] a community volunteer whose role is to educate households on improved sanitation and hygiene, including construction of latrine and handwashing stations. “We were consuming water with our own waste. With the introduction of CLTS and with SUN TA support, there is a change in our village. Every household now has a latrine meeting ODF standards and this will make us live healthier lives with far fewer diseases.”

To drive change and mobilize the people toward action, a Sanitation Action Group (SAG) was formed and trained. The traditional leadership also played an influential role in social and behavior change.

“I worked with the Community Health Assistant at [REDACTED] Health Post, the Community Champions and the Sanitation Action Group (SAG) members trained by SUN TA in CLTS. Together with the people, we built latrines meeting ODF standards across the village. Where people had relocated for fishing, we built latrines and they found them when they returned; then we told them ‘no more open defecation’,” says headwoman [REDACTED]

The community volunteers conducted door-to-door sensitization and follow ups, monthly village inspections, and helped the vulnerable (the aged and physically challenged) members of the community to construct latrines and handwashing facilities using local resources.

The headwoman is proud that “today you can walk around the village, you will not find feces anywhere. We are now an ODF village and we have, as a result, seen reduced diarrheal cases among our children.”



Statistics from the health center appear to back the headwoman’s theory. Before the introduction of CLTS activities in the area, the health facility had been recording over 200 diarrhea cases among children under five years of age. After the intervention, those numbers began to decline significantly, as shown in the graph above.

All the households now practice good sanitation and hygiene by safe disposal of fecal matter in latrines meeting ODF standards (properly enclosed for privacy and to prevent flies), and handwashing with soap and running water.

The change recorded in [redacted] is evidence that when informed and mobilized for change, communities can take actionable steps to improve their own living conditions.



SUN TA Provincial M&E Office [redacted] interviewing headwoman [redacted] on the efforts made to end open defecation in her village. Picture: SUN TA Project

## ██████████ DISTRICT MOVES TOWARD OPEN DEFECATION FREE STATUS

Open defecation, a practice common in most parts of rural Zambia, poses a great danger to human health, promoting the spread of diarrheal diseases such as cholera, dysentery, typhoid, and bilharzia as well as facilitating the spread of various parasites. Diarrheal diseases are a major cause of stunting in children under the age of two.

According to the 2019 Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Baseline Survey, ██████████ in the ██████████ reported that 57.4 percent of children had diarrhea two weeks preceding the survey.

The USAID-funded Scaling Up Nutrition Technical Assistance (SUN TA) Project is working with the Zambian Government, chiefs and headmen, community volunteers and households to improve sanitation and hygiene by eliminating open defecation through construction of toilets with accompanying handwashing stations.

Using the community-led total sanitation (CLTS) approach which entails people taking steps to improve their sanitary conditions, the Project has supported the formation and training of delivery structures such as the District Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Education (D-WASHE) Committees, Sanitation Action Groups, and community based volunteers to mobilize communities to adopt positive behaviors through construction of toilets and handwashing facilities, ensuring safe disposal of fecal matter and reducing the transmission of bacteria that causes diarrheal diseases.

The traditional authority is enforcing compliance of the directive for households to build toilets and put up handwashing stations through household inspections by headmen. “Achieving Open Defecation Free (ODF) will mean an end to diseases and I am very happy that we are working with the Council to achieve this,” said ██████████



*A community member cleaning the surroundings of their toilet during the ODF verification exercise in ██████████ catchment area.*



“Working as a Community Champion in ██████████ today has become easier compared to before. We now frequently see the involvement of the chief, headmen, Sanitation Action Groups, households and government workers, leading to higher acceptance of the



program. With the coming in of SUN TA we have seen improvements in trainings, reporting systems and assistance with mobility, with donated bicycles which enable us to reach more households,” said [REDACTED] a community-based volunteer. “Some villages are as far as 15 km away from health centers and before receiving bicycles we faced challenges in submitting monthly reports on time.”

The municipality chairs the D-WASHE Committee which is comprised of government ministries and has been instrumental in spearheading the activity with SUN TA’s support. “From our team of community champions, headmen, the chieftainess, the Council, SUN TA, and Ministry of Health, we are working as a team to achieve ODF and the results from the field are very encouraging. We are making it!” said Council Secretary [REDACTED]

The Ministry of Health is keen to see an end to open defecation. “Open defecation is detrimental to the health of the people as it propagates diarrheal diseases, thereby increasing the burden on the health care system. It is essential for us to attain ODF status to reach our desired goal of reduced stunting in children under two years in addition to the general community health benefits,” says [REDACTED] Health Office.

The results of all this work is that five catchments, [REDACTED], comprising 113 villages and a combined population of 72,523 have obtained a 100 percent ODF status, with households having built toilets and installed handwashing facilities. The benefits have already started to show as health authorities in Kaputa have not reported any cholera cases during the 2020/2021 rainy season, a huge difference from the past where cases of the diarrheal disease were prevalent.

SUN TA and the D-WASHE continue to collaborate to ensure the whole district is open defecation free, thereby contributing to a disease-free environment in which children can grow up healthy. When mothers spend less or no time nursing sick children, they can focus on productive activities that contribute to their family’s well-being.

The USAID SUN TA Project is supporting Zambia’s vision for the water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) sector focusing on clean, accessible, safe water and sanitation for all by 2030. This is in line with USAID global goal of saving lives and advancing development through improvements in WASH programs, and the sound management and use of water for food security.



## SUN TA, GNA PARTNER TO IMPROVE SOYBEAN PRODUCTIVITY, PROFITABILITY AND CONSUMPTION FOR SMALLHOLDER FARMERS

Soybean smallholder farmers have faced several challenges in their quest to derive economic value from the crop. Poor access to good quality seed, lack of extension services, poor access to markets and lack of knowledge on good soybean production practices have compounded the smallholder farmers' plight. This has resulted in low incomes among farmers despite intensive labor.



Mr. and Mrs. [REDACTED] follower farmers of [REDACTED] Agriculture Camp, [REDACTED], checking on their soybean crop. Photo: SUN TA Project

In response to these challenges, the USAID-funded Scaling Up Nutrition Technical Assistance (SUN TA) Project, whose aim is to reduce stunting among children under two years, has partnered with Good Nature Agro (GNA), a seed company that works with smallholder farmers to move them out of poverty and transform them into emergent farmers.

GNA, along with its network of growers, produces soybean, beans, groundnuts, and cowpeas as seed for the local and export markets, with a focus on building local farmers into qualified Private Extension Agents (PEAs) who oversee and train other farmers and organize inputs for them to increase yields and access premium markets.

SUN TA and GNA have signed a Memorandum of Understanding that provides for the establishment of an input supply system for an estimated 6,500 smallholder farmers, providing technical support through PEAs.

To actualize the MOU, GNA has employed Field Supervisors to manage seed supply and farmer training programs in [REDACTED] districts where SUN TA is working with SUN households to diversify household production and consumption.

In the first (2020/2021) season, GNA selected and trained 77 PEAs, recruited, and trained 1,205 farmers and sold 31 metric tons of high-quality soybean seed (Kafue variety) upon receiving an upfront payment of [REDACTED]. Through collaboration with both Ministry of Agriculture and SUN TA staff, a system of farmer support has been established.



██████████ in his soybean field with Agriculture  
Camp Extension Officer, ██████████. Photo: SUN TA Project.

“The coming in of SUN TA and GNA has helped us access quality inputs and information to help our production of soybeans,” says ██████████ a farmer in ██████████ Agriculture Camp in ██████████ who intends to use his flourishing farm to host a field day and showcase his production and productivity to other farmers.

Soybean is a highly nutritious crop used for various purposes. Growing it will not only increase household incomes, but also provide a rich source of plant protein especially for children under two. Soybean can be processed into soy milk, soy chunks, soy meal, soy sausage and can be pounded into porridge meal. Further, it is one of the foods that mothers attending the SUN Mother Support Groups are taught to prepare for their children. Growing it among target households therefore increases its availability.

SUN TA’s private sector engagement aims to create linkages where service providers such as GNA interact directly with farmers without the Project, thus guaranteeing a regular or sustainable supply of certified inputs, extension services and markets. By engaging over 1200 farmers in soybean production in one season alone, the SUN TA/GNA partnership will contribute to increased soybean production, incomes among farmers and protein for target households under the project.

The SUN TA Project is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Its objectives are to increase reliable access to safe and nutritious food through nutrition-sensitive agriculture, and intake of diverse nutrients to prevent stunting among children under two years. This is in line with USAID vision of a world free from hunger, malnutrition, and extreme poverty.



## TURNING PERSONAL EXPERIENCE INTO COMMUNITY WORK: THE STORY OF

██████████

A personal experience of not having had access to information on family planning has inspired ██████████ to become a community-based distributor of family planning products under the USAID-funded Scaling Up Nutrition Technical Assistance (SUN TA) Project. Pregnant at the age of 15 and thereby dropping out of school, ██████████ did not attend antenatal sessions at the health center and ended up delivering from home.



Now a mother of five, ██████████ ██████████, has taken it upon herself to ensure that other younger women are better informed on available family planning options.

██████████  
*District taking stock of her family planning commodities after attending to clients. Picture: SUN TA Project*

Family planning prevents unplanned pregnancies among women of childbearing age and helps in child-spacing, which allows more time for mothers to care for their children, recover from the previous pregnancy and enables families to manage the number of children they can properly care for with food, shelter, healthcare and education.

“I never went to the clinic for antenatal checkups until I delivered my baby in the village,” said ██████████, adding that the health center was also far.

On one of her visits to the health facility after delivery of her third child, ██████████ was counselled on family planning services.

“I engaged my husband on the need to start family planning and explained to him the benefits for us as a family,” she recalls.

██████████ experience motivated her to become involved in family planning activities, sharing her experience so that other young women might have a different future.

When the Ministry of Health, with support from the SUN TA Project, organized a training on family planning for community-based volunteers, Matilda was one of the 60 individuals trained. The purpose of the training was to increase access of family planning services closer to households.

██████ now holds meetings with other women and men to explain the benefits of family planning and provides counseling sessions using the knowledge from the training and her personal testimony.

The 60 trained volunteers (14 males, 46 females) are each attached to a health center near them and work under the supervision and support of the health center staff, who are responsible for supplying them with the family planning commodities such as oral contraceptives, condoms and injectables, and receiving reports on the volunteers' work in the community. For family planning services that they cannot offer, the volunteers refer clients to the health facility.

By taking family planning services closer to the community and sharing the benefits the Zambian Government and SUN TA are helping to both increase uptake and contribute to the long-term outcome of healthier mothers and children.

The USAID SUN TA Project is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Among USAID SUN TA's objectives is to increase reliable access to safe and nutritious food through nutrition-sensitive agriculture, and intake of diverse nutrients to prevent stunting among children under two years. This is in line with USAID vision of a world free from hunger, malnutrition, and extreme poverty.

## BREAKING GENDER BARRIERS IN DELIVERING CHILDCARE EDUCATION: THE CASE OF

At home and community levels, it is rare to find men involved in childcare, as this is largely considered a women's role. But for [REDACTED], involvement in childcare at the community level is something he has done for a long time. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He was trained in Home Based Care.

When the Scaling Up Nutrition Technical Assistance (SUN TA) Project, also funded by USAID, started working in [REDACTED] in 2020, [REDACTED] was one of the community-based volunteers (CBVs) who was identified and expressed interest in working with the SUN Mother Support Groups (MSG), prior to which he was volunteering as a child health promoter at the health center.

[REDACTED] was oriented in the MSG model, a community-based strategy SUN TA is using for improving coverage and social behavior change with focus on maternal and child health and nutrition. It is used as a service delivery entry point to reach beneficiaries at the community and household levels.

[REDACTED] is attached to [REDACTED] Health Centre, one of the 38 where the SUN TA project is working with Ministry of Health to reach pregnant women and mothers with children under two. He has quickly caught on to the new concept and went on to form four MSGs, each comprised of 15 mothers.

[REDACTED] says before he joined SUN TA, he had little knowledge on nutrition for children under two and especially what stunting meant. "I am more enlightened now," he says. "My desire is that I continue this work and gain more knowledge."

As expected in this unusual cultural setting, some mothers were reluctant to express themselves before a male colleague, but they soon realized that he was their regular facilitator and opened up.

[REDACTED] wants to gain more knowledge especially as a Community Health Worker and as a Family Planning Community Based Distributor. He thanks SUN TA for the support rendered to his community through the MSG model as mothers have improved their childcare practices.



██████████ conducting a learning session with members of the SUN Mother Support Group. Photo: SUN TA

The SUN TA Project is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Among its objectives is to increase reliable access to safe and nutritious food through nutrition-sensitive agriculture, and intake of diverse nutrients to prevent stunting among children under two years. This is in line with USAID vision of a world free from hunger, malnutrition, and extreme poverty.

## SAVINGS GROUPS: EMPOWERING WOMEN, IMPROVING LIVELIHOODS

Lack of access to finance is one of the main reasons women do not engage in productive, financially beneficial business ventures. The USAID SUN TA Project is responding to this challenge by working with the Ministry of Community Development to form and train community savings and loans groups (CSLGs).

The Project has over 1000 savings groups with a total membership of over 19,000 and cumulative savings of [REDACTED] across the 13 districts. Further, the Project trained over 1300 community facilitators who are working with the savings groups.



[REDACTED] in her grocery shop that has benefited from her membership of the savings group. Photo: SUN TA

[REDACTED] is one of the 13 supported by the USAID SUN TA project. The district has 34 savings groups with a membership of 510. One of them is [REDACTED] a mother of six, and a member of [REDACTED] Savings Group since 2020 when the activity was introduced.

“[REDACTED] Savings Group is changing the lives of its members”, says [REDACTED]. “Since I joined the group, I am able to pay the school fees for my children and provide food for my family. I sell scones and ladies shoe, and from my small grocery shop, I am able to save [REDACTED] per month if business is good.”

[REDACTED] says savings groups are not just a forum for saving money but also a place to exchange business ideas and network with fellow women, reflecting a dominantly female membership (84 percent), while youth make up 15 percent.

By increasing access to finance and enabling women to engage in income generating activities, the USAID SUN TA Project is empowering women and setting them on a path to self-sustainability, with long term benefits being that women can meet basic needs of their households, including access to better nutrition.