

Food and nutrition security in Zambia - FANSER



Context

Despite its political stability and past economic growth, Zambia is still characterised by high levels of poverty and unemployment. Rural areas are particularly affected, with 75 percent of the population considered to be living in poverty. The agricultural sector primarily consists of small (up to 5 ha) and medium-sized (up to 20 ha) farms that mostly engage in the production of maize. Clearly not enough emphasis is placed on the production of diverse, nutritious foods or on local added value. Impoverished households are strongly affected by

the lack of a varied diet and live mainly on maize. This affects the children above all, as is evident in the prevalence of stunting (low height for a given age). With a stunting rate of 40 percent among children under 5 years of age, Zambia is one of the world's hardest hit countries. Food and nutrition insecurity is particularly grave during the period prior to the next harvest, i.e. between December and March, as during that time rural households have used up their own harvests and must purchase food in the marketplace.

Activities in Zambia

- The FANSER project aims to establish and implement food and nutrition committees at the district level. In the Katete and Petauke Districts, these committees will implement the 'First 1,000 Most Critical Days' Programme which is supported by the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) initiative.
- At a different level, the FANSER project aims at directly improving the hygiene and food and nutrition situation of women and young children. Food processing, for example, ensures that people have access to sufficient food even in difficult times. This includes the correct processing and storage of products, such as tomatoes. In this context, particular emphasis is placed on dietary diversification.

- A further objective of the FANSER project is to make successful approaches a permanent feature in the country. Positive experiences are conveyed to governmental and non-governmental institutions. To this end, much emphasis is placed on cooperation with partners in the SUN initiative and other donors. Publications as well as a follow-up are being prepared to ensure that this successful approach will continue to be taken beyond the end of the project.

Our objective

The project's aim is to ensure that food and nutrition insecure people in Zambia's Katete and Petauke Districts, and in particular women of childbearing age and young children, have access to sufficient and healthy food at all times, including times of food crises.



Region(s)

Katete and Petauke Districts in Zambia's Eastern Province

Duration

7/2015 – 12/2019

Budget

EUR 5.5 million

Implementation partners

Catholic Relief Services in Petauke and CARE International in Katete

Lead executing agency

National Food and Nutrition Commission

Target group

17,250 women of childbearing age, pregnant women and 13,500 children under two years of age



How we work

Maize is the central staple food in Zambia, as it provides high yields and is affordable to most of the population. This means, however, that the Zambian population's diet is dominated by maize throughout the year. As a result of insufficient food diversity, the daily requirement for micronutrients is mostly not met. Health problems, growth and development disorders are the consequences. To combat malnutrition, measures are being implemented with the non-governmental organizations *Catholic Relief Service* (CRS) and *CARE*. District committees have been jointly set up in order to increase food and nutrition security in the long term. Their members include representatives of ministries with their respective subdivisions as well as representatives of civil society organizations and of private companies.

The committees improve the coordination of activities of all stakeholders in the nutrition sector in order to achieve sustainable results. At the same time, the project cooperates directly with the target group, women and children. Nutritional knowledge about the cultivation, hygienic preparation and storage of healthy and nutritious food is provided to them. Special attention is given to good hygienic practices so mothers are able to care for their children comprehensively.



Results

A database containing relevant information about the target group has been established. It shows exactly which households have already participated in trainings and how they have been supported in addition. A total of 7,794 children under two years, 7,398 breastfeeding and 1,745 pregnant women were registered. More than 9,000 households have been visited by volunteers who have explained them relevant nutritional issues. The database makes it possible to use training in a more target group-oriented, more efficient and more appropriate way.

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