



Malawi

Summary of the Food Security Intervention

Improving Food Security & Nutrition Policies and Programme Outreach (IFSN)

Italy, July 2015

Introduction: The nutrition-sensitive agriculture project “*Improving Food Security and Nutrition Policies and Programme Outreach (IFSN)*” was implemented in Malawi from 2008–2015. Its objective was to contribute to achieving the Malawian Development Goals (MDGs) by improving the food and nutrition security of vulnerable populations in Mzimba and Kasungu Districts, Malawi with a focus on child nutrition and complementary feeding. The project supported evidence-based policy and programme improvements with the Ministries of Agriculture, Health and Education.

Target population and project area: In two project phases (2008–2011 and 2011–2015), the project targeted a total of twelve Extension Planning Areas (EPAs) in Kasungu and Mzimba Districts. Project activities were designed to benefit households with the following vulnerability criteria: extremely poor; child or female-headed; caring for orphans or caring for people living with HIV/AIDS or other chronic diseases. Additionally, households were targeted with: pregnant women, children less than two years of age, widows and elderly people living on their own. In Phase 1 and 2 the emphasis was on improving food security and nutrition for vulnerable households, while in phase 2 the project also undertook capacity building of Government staff, Lead Farmers through Farmer Field Schools (FFS) and school children through Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS).

Farmer Field Schools and Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools: FFS and JFFLS were specific elements of the food security intervention, which provided new knowledge and practices to groups of farmers and youth on diversified crops production as well as life and business skills. As a result, the project assisted the target population to make informed decisions on daily life and managing their farming activities.

Diversified agriculture: Specialised community-based organisations with 10–15 farmers promoted diversified agriculture to support availability, access and utilisation of the six Malawi food groups:

Malawi Food Groups	Promoted variety of local and seasonal crops and animal source foods
1. Staples	Maize, cassava, yellow orange-fleshed sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes
2. Fruit	Mangoes, papayas, bananas, watermelons, hibiscus (<i>Chidede</i>), guavas, oranges, Mexican apples
3. Vegetables	Leafy greens, onions, tomatoes, mushrooms
4. Legumes and nuts	Cowpeas, kidney beans, pigeon peas, soya
5. Animal source foods	Dairy animals (cows in Phase 1, goats in Phase 2), sheep, pigs, chicken, guinea fowls, rabbits, fish
6. Fats	Avocado, Sunflower

The project provided inputs to vulnerable households to improve consumption of animal source foods at household level and to increase quantity and variety of animal products for sale at local markets:

Animal source food	Input	Pass-on
Dairy cows	63	11
Goats	6 952	1 468
Sheep	244	11
Pigs	2 117	1 342
Chickens	6 000	not applicable
Fish	81 dams and ponds	not applicable

Income-generating activities: Approximately 48 000 food trees such as mango, guava, bananas, orange, avocado pears and Mexican apples were provided to 16 000 farm households and cassava, Irish potatoes and yellow-fleshed sweet potatoes were promoted for sale. The project also promoted bee keeping and mushroom production to diversify farmers' sources of incomes.

Environment, soil and water conservation: The project provided inputs and training to enable the planting of 7 000 000 trees in village community forests for climate change mitigation. Diverse seeds, fertiliser and training on manure making for soil fertility, pit planting, and mulching were provided. The project also promoted irrigation farming through trainings and the distribution of 476 treadle pumps and 140 sprays to farmers in irrigation groups.

Water and sanitation: Thirty boreholes (20 in Kasungu and 10 in Mzimba) were installed and trainings were conducted on the maintenance of 500 water points from a gravity-fed water system to enable more than 2 500 families to access potable water. The project also provided materials for the construction of improved latrines.

Capacity building: Lead Farmers and frontline staff in FFS were trained and reached 4 600 farmers in community-based organisations. Additionally, JFFLS facilitators were trained and reached 3 300 students.



For more information contact:

Nutrition Education and Consumer Awareness Group, FAO headquarters
nutrition-education@fao.org
www.fao.org/nutrition/education/infant-and-young-child-feeding/en/

The IFSN project was supported by FAO Malawi and implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development (MoAIWD) and the Ministry of Health (MoH) with funding from the Government of Flanders.