Malawi: Food and Nutrition Security

**In Malawi, maternal and child malnutrition are still widespread. Food and nutrition security, dietary diversity as well as adequate hygiene and sanitation practices are central to maternal and child health.**

The challenge



In sub-Saharan Africa, improvements in adult and child malnutrition are slow, and multiple forms of malnutrition are prevalent in the region. At least a third of Malawian women in reproductive age are anaemic and 45% of children under 5 years are stunted1.

The first 1,000 days, from conception to a child’s second birthday, are crucial for physical and cognitive development with long-term effects in later life. Household food and nutrition security are central to deliver adequate food quality and quantity supportive of early child development.

Our approach

In Malawi, the Food and Nutrition Security Programme (FNSP) supports community groups and governmental service providers in the districts Dedza and Salima to address malnutrition especially among children and women. The programme aims at improving food and nutrition security for generations to come. FNSP interventions focuses on:

* **Behavioural change**: improving knowledge, attitudes and practices on nutrition and hygiene
* **Resilience**: strengthening the resilience of households and communities to nutrition insecurity;
* **Decentralised nutrition governance:** strengthening the planning and coordination of nutrition-sensitive measures; and
* **Integrating/upscaling of good practices**: strengthening planning and the coordination of national actors for a nutrition-sensitive policy framework.

1 National Statistical Office (NSO) [Malawi] and ICF. 2017. Malawi Demographic and Health Survey 2015-16. Zomba, Malawi, and Rockville, Maryland, USA. NSO and ICF..

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Project name** | **Food and Nutrition Security Programme (FNSP)** |
| **Commissioned by** | **German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)** |
| **Implementing organisation** | Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) |
| **Project region** | Malawi’s Districts of Dedza and Salima |
| **Lead executing agency** | Department of Nutrition, HIV and AIDS (DNHA) of the Ministry of Health (MoH) |
| **Duration** | 01.02.2015 – 31.03.2025 |

**ONE WORLD – No Hunger: a global programme**

Under the special initiative ONE WORLD – No Hunger, commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the programme ‘Food and Nutrition Security, Enhanced Resilience’ is or has been being implemented in 12 countries in Africa and Asia: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Togo, Yemen and Zambia.

The objective of the programme is to improve the diets of women in childbearing age and young children.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Results in figures ...  Since it was launched in 2015, the Food and Nutrition Security Programme has reached 43,956 households directly in Dedza and Salima. Almost 450 basic service providers have been trained to deliver knowledge on nutrition practices, hygiene and sanitation as well as sustainable agricultural practices. Mothers have reported enhanced knowledge on dietary diversity, child feeding practices, water, hygiene and santiation as well as signs and prevention of malnutrition. Through the efforts of active nutrition counselling, women’s dietary diversity and children’s diets are improving steadily in both districts. Most beneficiaries participate in care groups and a quarter of them take on active roles within their community. The trainings in agriculture practices are supported by the distribution of vegetable seeds, tree seedlings and livestock through our implementing partners. To increase access to professional advice on nutrition issues, the project distributed 357 solar radios to the communities in Dedza through the Care Group Model.  Generally, we support bottom-up planning from village to district level. By facilitating community involvement this approach tailors to the community’s needs and enhances empowerment in nutrition-related topics. **Village Savings and Loans groups** are intended to empower women and enable nutrition-sensitive decisionmaking. Beneficiaries invest their additional income in dietary diversification, education and hygiene items. Responding to severe economic impacts of the 2016/17 El Niño drought, **cash transfers** benefitted 50,000 Malawians. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the project supported 41 health facilities with **COVID-related supplies** as well as hand washing facilities. As part of capacity building to the health sector, 1021 extension workers (719 males, 302 females) were oriented on **COVID preventive measures** so that the messages are cascaded down to the community. Nationwide, a **health service hotline** (‘Chipatala Cha Pa Foni’ – English ‘Hospital by Phone’) supported by FNSP advises up to 3,300 people monthly on adequate nutrition. The programme supports the two established District Nutrition Coordination Committees in **planning, coordinating and monitoring of nutrition programmes** in Dedza and Salima. | ... and in stories  Care groups are an essential way of spreading knowledge and information in the villages. In the programme’s districts, there are families such as Stella and Bauti Innocent’s family who attend care group meetings every two weeks. They are proud parents of a one-year old boy, Dan. In their household, they have a latrine built with grass mats behind the house and a hand washing facility with soap constructed next to it.  Stella is a cluster leader in Khwakhwa village in the district of Dedza. She regulary meets with other 10 to 15 cluster leaders and FNSP field staff to get information on topics that concern good nutrition and health in everyday life. The cluster leaders’ task is to assist on improving families’ well-being in the direct neighbourhood. They give handy advice on nutrition and hygiene practices such as healthy diets for mothers and children, how to grow vegetables in home gardens and how to avoid common diseases like diarrhoea. Cluster leaders often act as role models.  In addition to supporting fellow community members in their nutrition needs, Stella and Bauti grow different kinds of legumes, vegetables, vitamin A-rich oranges and fleshed sweet potatoes. They also have fruit trees like mango or papaya that grow well in Malawi’s warm climate.  Trainings for care groups also include the handling of small animals. Stella and Bauti have a small wooden stable on poles, where they keep their goat safe. Dung falls out on the ground below and can be used as fertilizer.  Overall, care groups are especially helpful to reach a wide range of the population through peer support within a shared nvironment and along the local needs. They empower women and communities, work on a voluntary basis and are supported by the Government of Malawi. |