



Zambia Civil Society Organisation Scaling Up Nutrition Alliance
Global Day of Action for Nutrition
Report



Introduction

During the Global Week of Action for Nutrition and as part of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement, the Zambia Civil Society Organization Scaling Up Nutrition (CSO-SUN) Alliance committed to supporting and holding the Zambian Government accountable on plans of action to improve nutrition. The Alliance reached out to the rural communities in the country where malnutrition is most prevalent. The Alliance targeted local government leaders, traditional leaders, the church, pregnant women, mothers and care givers, men as well as the media. This event was held at national Level – in Chongwe district, and at the Alliance’s focal point districts - Mumbwa, Lundazi and Samfya Districts.

Chongwe District

On the 8th May 2014 the CSO-SUN Alliance held a high level Global Day of Action for nutrition event, at Katoba Primary School Ground. This event was attended by The Honorable Member of Parliament of Chongwe District, The Department for International Development (DFID) Deputy Director, The National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC) Executive Director, Chongwe District leaders, including traditional leaders, and other key stakeholders in the scaling up nutrition advocacy.

The Alliance hosted a children’s mini sports tournament coupled with drama activities to sensitize the community and its leaders on the role that nutrition plays in saving the lives of women and children in the first 1000 days of life, and to raise demand for good nutrition at household level.

The Guest speaker at this event was Chongwe District Member of Parliament honorable Sylvia Masebo, who emphasized that there is need to give nutrition the much needed attention in Chongwe considering the high levels of under nutrition in the district. She suggested that each village in Chongwe District needs a Community Nutrition Group to continue sensitizing people on the importance of good nutrition.

The Alliance further reinforced her statement by saying that; the first step is ensuring that we all support the implementation of the national nutrition programs. Without concerted and coordinated action across government, progress against malnutrition will be insufficient. The Alliance called upon all leaders to ensure that key ministries, including agriculture, education, health, community development, mother and child health and social protection, include improving nutrition as a key aim of their strategies

The National Food and Nutrition Commission acting Executive Director proposed that the Global Week of Action be made a national event considering the high importance of good nutrition for human development. Representing Cooperating Partners, the UK's DFID Deputy Director said donors have increased funding to Zambia due to the high levels of malnutrition. He mentioned in his speech that donors will commit US\$ 27 million funding to scale up nutrition programs so that together we achieve a prosperous Zambia with no malnutrition.

During these key speeches, Four Chongwe District Council Wards, Lwimba, Manyika, Lukoshi and Nakatindi participated in the sports tournament. Lukoshi ward emerged winner for both soccer and netball games, and was awarded an opportunity to create a community garden (25m x 25m) with the help of their parents and community leaders. This Garden will be used by the Alliance to demonstrate the importance of agricultural diversification and Diet diversification for improved nutritional status of individuals. The Alliance will support this garden by providing seeds, watering cans, organizing manure from the local community, all

for a minimal cost of K700. Land for the garden will be provided by Chongwe Council at no cost to the Alliance. The Alliance also gave each child who participated in the tournament a book and a pen to thank them for their participation and encourage them to focus on their education and reach their full potential.



Photos: (L) William Chilufya and Chongwe Member of Parliament Sylvia Masebo. (R) Children playing soccer in the tournament

Mumbwa District

In Mumbwa on the 9th May 2014, the Alliance spent time sensitizing pregnant women on the importance of nutrition for them and their unborn children. The event was also meant to share with those in attendance the activities of the CSO-SUN in Mumbwa. In attendance were representatives from the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia, Mumbwa Nutrition Group, Concern Worldwide, and the Mumbwa Community Development Mother and Child Health.

Among the issues discussed was the need to encourage diet diversification to ensure adequate nutritional status before, during and after pregnancy, the importance of exclusive breastfeeding in the first 6 months, complementary feeding foods and also the requirements of the clinic during delivery. The women expressed concern for traditional beliefs and taboos

that restrict their intake of certain foods such as eggs. Some of these taboos and customs were discussed and clarified by civil society in collaboration with representatives from the Community Development Mother and Child Health. Women were encouraged to consult their health practitioners for any issues that they were not clear on.

The guest of honour, the District Commissioner - represented by the Acting District Administration Officer reminded everyone that the need to work together in the fight against malnutrition is a must. He also mentioned that the political arena has joined in this fight and are supporting the efforts of the Alliance to fight the problem of malnutrition.

To ensure a continual nutrition education to mothers, pregnant women and caregivers, the Alliance presented the clinic with a cooking demonstration kit. The Clinical Officer was present to receive this gift on behalf of the Clinic. He expressed gratitude for the gesture and said it will go a long way in improving the nutrition knowledge of mothers.

Samfya District

In Samfya, The Global Day of Action for Nutrition was held on the 10th of May 2014 at Kasoma bangweulu basic school. This event had an attendance of over 400 people. In attendance was His Royal Highness Chief Kasoma Bangweulu, Samfya District Administrative Officer (representing the District Commissioner), representatives from Tisungane Orphanage, Catholic Home Based Care, Samfya Community of Care Providers (SCCP) and the Church.

The District Commissioner Highlighted that, Samfya being one of the target district in the phase one implementation of the National 1000 Days program, has levels of stunting currently at 49% and needs consented efforts from everyone to address the problem.

On this note, His Royal Highness, Chief Kasoma Bangweulu said there is need for Government and Civil Society to create employment for women, as women are more likely to spend money on food which in turn may improve nutrition at household level and reduce the levels of

malnutrition in his chiefdom. His Royal Highness further cautioned leaders and parents in the community to take nutrition matters seriously, and to embrace life training skills like tailoring, farming and carpentry through which they can generate income and become self reliant.

A representative from the Samfya District pastor's fellowship added that churches in Samfya need to understand that malnutrition is a result of the failure to realize people's basic human rights, and addressing it is a matter of justice. The role of the Church has been to intervene through preaching on nutrition and emphasize the importance of taking good care of our bodies which are the temples of the Holy Spirit. As such, The Church ought to stand in support of nutrition and raise awareness of the importance of good nutrition. Time for the Church to turn up the volume on nutrition is now, he added.

Lundazi Districts

On the 10th May 2014, CSO-SUN in Lundazi led on an awareness meeting to raise the profile of nutrition at district and household levels in order to begin tackling food insecurity and malnutrition in the district. The event was attended by the District Administrative Officer (representing the District Commissioner), Multi-sectorial Nutrition Committee secretary, Civil Society and the general public.

Lundazi District Multi-Sectorial Nutrition Committee Secretary observed that malnutrition contributes to more than half of all under five childhood deaths in Lundazi. In Lundazi stunting levels are above the national level which is at 50%. It is for this reason that the District came up with the Multi-sectorial Committee which includes key line ministries, NGOs, and Faith Based Organizations. This committee is tasked to coordinate nutrition activities in the district. She suggested that the Alliance should continue collaborating with the Multi-sectorial Nutrition Committee in order to achieve better results with regards to fighting malnutrition in the district.

Speaking on behalf of the District Commissioner was the District Administration Officer. In her speech she thanked government for its commitment to reduce malnutrition by pledging 20% towards nutrition funding per year. She added that this is an important step that shows leadership in addressing malnutrition in the country, however she mentioned that government has the potential to do more and should remain committed to the decisions made during the Nutrition for Growth meeting on the 8th June 2013.

Conclusion

The year 2014 marks an alignment of several key moments in global nutrition. The 67th meeting of the World Health Assembly takes place the week of May 19-23 in Geneva. This is an opportunity for countries to report on progress in achieving global nutrition targets that were set in 2012. The African Union Summit in June will focus on agriculture, food security, and nutrition. The Second International Conference on Nutrition will be held at the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in November. It is our hope that with these Global day of action activities and interactions with our leaders the messages were communicated and will continue to spread and move government and the general public to act towards a Zambia in which all children can see their rights to adequate nutrition, and full life potential, fulfilled no matter where they are born, or where they live.