

NaNA

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“Working With Communities For Better Health & Nutrition”

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SUN Academia and Research Consultative Group

Editorial

Tribute to Dr Momodou Kalilu Darboe, Fondly Called Dr Darboe.

By Dr Amat Bah, Deputy Executive Director, NaNA

"Momad Daabo" as I like to call him when I intend to 'pull his leg', is a dear friend of the National Nutrition Agency (NaNA) where every person knows him and can remember a thing or two about him. To manifest this, one of the last works Dr Darboe did with NaNA before his demise was to contribute a fantastic article on climate change and nutrition in the NaNA Newsletter. For me, Dr Darboe is not only a friend but a colleague, a confidant and a brother to the extent of being family. Of recent, if you know me, you know Dr Darboe and the reverse is also true.

As a Senior Scientific Officer of MRCG at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who have spent about 3 decades of your life in research at Keneba, you have achieved a lot. I will leave your academic prowess and the number of countless scientific publications you have been involved in, to your colleagues at MRCG at LSHTM. However, in all the years that I have lived with you, I have always made it known to you that I am an ardent admirer of your academic qualifications and will always impress on you that, from having bagged not only a Master's Degree from the London School but also a PhD from the same University, you definitely have it all.



Dr Darboe (left) and Mustapha Joof in Pakalinding at the end of HIGH party

Dr Darboe, your friendship was a blessing to me as I spent years in Keneba and Fajara studying. You were always there to brighten up my day whenever the chips are down. You always know what to say and what to do with respect and humility when things are not working. I had you around me when I needed you. I have always told friends that if you see Dr Darboe in a fighting mode, he is defending the right of a junior staff.

Your passing away was captured on social media for the whole world to see. When my daughter sent me the images and asked me, Daddy is this Uncle Dr Darboe? I cried! and said to myself, here is a gentleman who will always shy away from the limelight to an extent that during meetings, he will simply introduce himself as Momodou Darboe and you will most of the time remind the audience that he is Dr Momodou Darboe – a Senior Scientist at MRCG at LSHTM.



Dr Darboe and Mustapha Joof at my bedside taking care of me in Keneba - how caring

There isn't a day that goes by that you have not crossed my thoughts; I therefore pray for you to rest in eternal peace till we meet again. To Aji and the children; remain brave and strong; all shall be fine, InsaAllah.

Personnel Biographies

Mr Alieu Kujabi



Mr Kujabi is a trained Public Health Officer who obtained a WAHEB Diploma in Public and Environmental Health Science from The Gambia College School of Public Health, a Certificate in Nutrition Education and Communication, Certificate in Information Management in Food and Nutrition Security at the International Agricultural Centre (IAC), Wageningen, the Netherlands and a Bachelor's degree in Public and Environmental Science from the University of The Gambia. Mr Kujabi is currently holding the position of Principal Programme Officer at NaNA.

Mr Alpha Mballow



Mr Alpha Mballow is the Nutrition Field Officer (NFO) for the North Bank Region West (NBW). Alpha worked as a qualified Community Health Nurse (CHN) from September 1991 with the then Ministry of Health and Social Welfare until 2005 when he was re-assigned to the National Nutrition Agency (NaNA) as a NFO. He received a lot of on the job trainings including Research, Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF), Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition (IMAM), Community Mobilization (CM), Social and Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC), Counselling, and Basic Nutrition to name a few. He also participated in various national surveys.

Ms Aminata Trawally



Ms Aminata Trawally is a Public Health Nutritionist who is working with the Agency as a Nutrition Program Officer for the past three (3) years. She holds a Master's degree in Public Health Nutrition from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and a Bachelor's Degree in Public Health from the University of Washington, USA.

Mr Buba Jatta



Mr Buba Jatta is the Nutrition Field Officer for Western One Health Region. He holds a Certificate in Community Ophthalmic Nursing and a General Certificate in Community Health Nursing. Mr. Jatta had 23 years work experience with the Ministry of Health before moving to NaNA as a Nutrition Field Officer (NFO).

Mr Fabakary Bass



Mr Fabakary Bass holds a Certificate in Community Health from the School for Enrolled Community Health Nurses, a Diploma and Advanced Diploma in General Management from Management Development Institute (MDI) and currently pursuing MSc in Healthcare Management through the University of South Wales. He has over 16 years experience in public health nutrition in The Gambia and currently holds the position of Field Coordinator.

Ms Haddy Crookes



Ms Haddy Crookes is a Dietician Nutritionist who joined the Agency in 2015. For the past six (6) years she has been involved in the implementation of different programs at the Agency. Haddy studied Dietetics from the School of Allied Health Sciences in Rabat, Morocco, followed by a Professional Degree in Agribusiness and Food Technology, from the Faculté Polydisciplinaire de Larache; Abdelmalek Essadi University, Morocco. She also pursued a Master's degree in Public Health Nutrition, at the Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar.

Mr Malang Janneh



Mr Malang Janneh is the Nutrition Field Officer for Western 2 Health Region. Mr. Janneh has sixteen (16) years work experience in the field of Public Health Nutrition in The Gambia. After acquiring a Certificate in Community Health Nursing, he further obtained an Advanced Diploma in Management Studies (ADMS) at the Management Development Institute (MDI) Kanifing and a Postgraduate Diploma in Public Administration (PGDPA). In his strive for academic advancement, he is currently pursuing a Master of Science (MSc) Degree in Management with the Supdeco Dakar at the Banjul Campus.

Mr Musa B. Dahaba



Mr Musa B. Dahaba is a trained Community Health Nurse who worked with the Ministry of Health for over 13 years and the National Nutrition Agency for 21 years. Musa is now a Senior Program Officer. He obtained an Advanced Diploma in Community Health from the Africa Medical Research Foundation (AMREF) Moi University in Kenya in 2010.

Mr Yusupha Jawo



Mr Yusupha Jawo is the Nutrition Field Officer for North Bank Region East. Mr Jawo has 18 years work experience in four institutions (Ministry of Health as Clinical Nurse and VHS CHN, Health Promotion and Development Organization (HePDO) as Field Coordinator under their Malaria Project, Medical Research Council MRC Clinical Nurse in the VIDA Project and NaNA starting with the MCNHRP as Field Assistant before being appointed as NFO). He holds an Advanced Diploma in Community Health Nursing from the University of The Gambia, and a Certificate in Community Health Nursing from the School of Enrolled Nurses in Mansakonko.

Mr Mafugi Jawara



Mr Mafugi Jawara is the Nutrition Field Officer posted in the Central River Region. He holds a Higher National Diploma in Developmental Studies from the Rural Development Institute (RDI). Mr. Jawara also holds certificates in Midwifery and in Community Health Nursing, both from the School of Enrolled Community Health Nurses. He has over 19 years work experience. Before joining NaNA as the NFO for Central River Region, he worked in the Ministry of Health, Community Health Nurse in the Village Health Services, and as a Community Health Nurse Midwife at health facility level.

Mr Amadou M. Jallow



Mr Amadou M. Jallow is the Nutrition Field Officer for the Lower River Region (LRR). He holds a Higher Diploma in Development Studies from the Rural Development Institute in Mansakonko, and a Certificate in Community Health Nursing. Mr Jallow has over 30 years work experience. He started work with the Ministry of Health (MoH) as a Community Health Nurse (CHN) until 2005 when he moved to the National Nutrition Agency (NaNA) as a Nutrition Field Officer (NFO). Mr Jallow acquired certificates in Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) from Cornell University, Certificate in Integrated Management of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) and a Certificate in Social and Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC), Entrepreneurship, and Gender-Based Violence.

Mr Saikou Drammeh



Mr Saikou Drammeh joined the National Nutrition Agency (NaNA) in 2005 as a Nutrition Field Officer (NFO) and he is currently posted in the Upper River Region (URR). Mr Drammeh started his Civil Service career as an unqualified teacher, before joining the School of Community Health Nurses in Mansakonko, Lower River Region (LRR) where he qualified as Community Health Nurse (CHN) in 1989. He then served as a CHN/VHS under the Ministry of Health (MoH) for a number of years, before pursuing a CHN Midwifery course in 2001 and completed in 2002.

The Gambia Maternal and Child Nutrition and Health Results Project (MCNHRP)

By

Mr Bakary Jallow and Dr Amat Bah.

The Maternal and Child Nutrition and Health Results Project (P154007) is a Gambia Government project funded by the World Bank. The project aimed at supporting the long-term objectives of reducing maternal and child mortality and undernutrition and thereby contribute to the attainment of the health and nutrition related SDGs and priorities of the National Development Plan (2018 – 2021) as well as the then Program for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE; 2012-2015). These priorities are also reflected in The Gambia Government/World Bank Joint Partnership Strategy which explicitly makes the case to support the Government in achieving improved outcomes in maternal, child health and nutrition.

The Project Development Objective (PDO) of the MCNHRP was to increase the utilization of community nutrition and primary maternal and child health services in selected regions. The MCNHRP was a 21.18 Million US Dollar intervention implemented between May 2014 to June 2020. This project targeted women of reproductive age, including adolescents, and children under five focusing on the community level strategies which build on the integrated Baby Friendly Community Initiative (BFCI) and PHC Strategies of NaNA and the Ministry of Health, respectively. It was implemented in 4 Administrative Regions (Upper River, Central River, Lower River and North Bank Regions). The interventions provided support through Results Based Financing (RBF) arrangements to women, Village Support Groups (VSG), Village

Development Committees (VDC), and health service providers as well as providing (Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) inputs to selected vulnerable households with unconditional cash transfers. Similarly, supervision, guidance and monitoring support were provided to Multi-Disciplinary Facilitation Teams (MDFTs) and Regional Health Directorates (RHDs).

At the closure of the Project, the World Bank in collaboration with the Project Implementation Committee (PIC) commissioned a project Implementation Completion Report (ICR) to determine whether the Project Development Objective had been achieved.

The work was carried out by an independent consultant hired by the World Bank. After finalization and submission of its report to the Bank Management with a Satisfactory outcome, the Bank subjected the report to a peer review by the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG). The reviewers and the Bank agreed to raise the rating of the Project from SATISFACTORY to



HIGHLY SATISFACTORY. This is one of its kind in The Gambia.

The first Task Team Leader of the Project is quoted thus:

“Every project passes through ups and downs, but the challenges that faced the MCNHRP were uniquely tough and required taking risks and giving trust to people as well as outcomes. Errors were made, but more importantly, lessons were learned. Only by doing it together, you were able to overcome such major challenges and turn them into invaluable learning experiences. The achievements in The Gambia on matters of nutrition, food security and primary health care is a manifestation of profound commitment from the team. It is clear and undisputable that The Gambia has one of the strongest multisectoral nutrition programs in the region and I hope that the team can continue to build and create an environment that provides for Gambian children to grow and thrive as productive citizens for which nutrition is key” (Menno Mulder-Sibanda, Senior Nutrition Specialist, The World Bank).

Quarterly Food Fortification and Bio-Fortification Meetings By Mr Ousman Dem



The National Nutrition Agency (NaNA) regularly holds two separate quarterly meetings on issues relating to Food Fortification and Bio Fortification in The Gambia. These are the Food Fortification Technical Working Group (FFTWG) and the National

Alliance for Food Fortification (NAFF) quarterly meetings. The FFTWG serves as a forum for implementing partners of the “Improving Food Security and Nutrition in The Gambia through Food Fortification” project to discuss matters pertaining to the project activities, and to ensure that the National Food Fortification Standards and Regulations are being enforced.



The NAFFs quarterly meetings on the other hand serve as an interface between the government and private (business) sector on how to address micronutrient deficiencies through Food Fortification and Biofortification and to also strategize supportive interventions for the promotion and enforcement of the National Food Fortification Regulations and Standards. As the secretariat to both meetings, NaNA has successfully conducted eleven (11) FFTWG and eight (8) NAFF meetings from 2019 to 2021.

'Nafa' Community Sensitization

By

Mr Ousman Dem

In January 2021, the Regional Technical Advisory Committees (TAC) and the Multidisciplinary Facilitation Teams (MDFTs) in the West Coast Region (WCR), Central River Region (CRR) and Upper River Region (URR) were sensitized on The Gambia Social Safety Net Project (GSSNP). Subsequently, on the 9th February 2021 the central level implementing partners conducted a planning meeting with the regional MDFTs in these regions to conduct a series of community sensitization activity from 10th to 18th February 2021.

During the community sensitization, community members were reminded that The Gambia Government/World Bank has initiated US\$ 31 million Gambia Social Safety Net Project (GSSNP, which has a component called 'Nafa' Program (Cash Transfer and Social and Behavioral Change Communication). The 'Nafa' Program is targeting 15,606 extreme poor households from the 20 poorest districts in the



country with a bi-monthly unconditional Cash Transfer value of D3000 for 18 months. The 'Nafa' Program will be piloted in three (3) districts for a period of six (6) months and subsequently rolled out to the remaining seventeen (17) districts. The purpose of the 'Nafa' Community Sensitization was to develop a work plan for the rolling out of the community sensitization on Component 2 of the GSSNP ('Nafa' Program), orient new MDFT members, and sensitize all the communities within the 20 districts in WCR, CRR and URR. In WCR 169 communities were sensitized, 195 communities in CRR and 193 communities in URR, which totals to 557 communities.

LESSONS LEARNED

The community sensitization has positively changed the mindset of several household heads about the 'Nafa' Program, particularly with regards to the eligibility criteria.

Encouraging household heads to identify women as principal recipients on behalf of the family was a welcome idea by many communities as opposed to the initial reaction.



Sensitization of Communities

Using the MDFTs to carry out the mobilization through the village Alkalos as entry points has significantly increased the attendance of community members during the sensitization meeting.

Sensitization of The National Assembly Select Committee on Health on the 'Nafa' Program

By

Mr Abdou Aziz Ceesay

The National Nutrition Agency (NaNA) in collaboration with the Department of Community Development and the Directorate of Social Welfare organized a sensitization workshop for the members of the National Assembly Select Committee on Health from the 2nd to the 3rd February, 2021 at Mansakonko Area Council Conference Hall, Lower River Region. The Nafa Program is a component of the Social Safety Net Project (SSNP) which includes an 18 months cash transfer to beneficiary households accompanied with social and behavioural change activities.



Figure 1: Sensitization of the National Assembly Members



Figure 2: Opening ceremony of the NAM sensitization



Figure 3 Presentation by the Project Facilitator

The purpose of the two days' workshop was to sensitize the NAM Select Committee on Health on the GSSNP with specific attention on the 'Nafa' Program implementation. The implementing partners realized the need for the NAM to understand the GSSNP for their political commitment and support, as well as to perform their oversight functions effectively. One of the recommendations made by the Committee was to organize a similar sensitization for all the NAMs.

NaNA signs MoU with Global Youth Parliament Gambia Chapter

**By
Mr Abdou Aziz Ceesay**

The Global Youth Parliament (GYP) Gambia Chapter is a global youth body interested in the promotion of good governance, youth and women empowerment and environmental sustainability in order to complement the efforts of global and national stakeholders in the drive to sustainable development for all. Realizing how complex and intricate it is to address global developmental issues, GYP-Gambia deemed it prudent and indispensable to establish sustainable partnership with relevant stakeholders for the smooth implementation of its projects and programmes.

In light of this, the Global Youth Parliament Gambia Chapter signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with NaNA, in which the Agency will support in capacity building and supervision of the GYP Gambia Chapter during their community engagement programs. The signing ceremony was held on the 9th April 2021 at the NaNA Conference Hall. The MoU will last for 6 months with the aim to contribute to strengthening maternal health care through advocacy and sensitization.



Pictures at the signing ceremony



Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI)

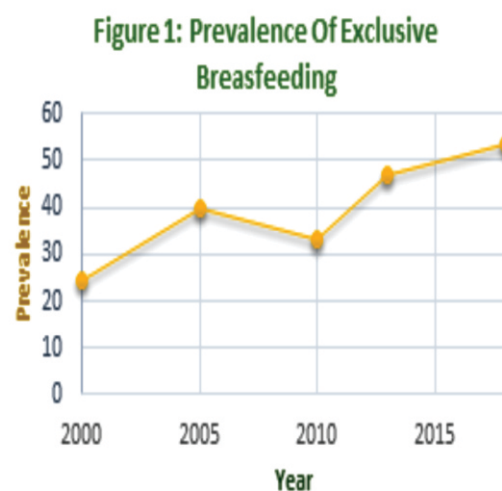
By
Ms Haddy Crookes

Adopting optimal Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices is fundamental to a child's survival, growth and development. Breastfeeding as part of optimal feeding practices should ideally be initiated within one hour of birth, exclusively for the first 6 months of life and continued for up to 2 years of age or beyond. Starting at 6 months, breastfeeding should be combined with safe, age-appropriate foods. In The Gambia, breastfeeding is a culturally accepted practice, Gambian mothers generally breastfeed their children for 18-24 months.

According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2018, the proportion of mothers practicing early initiation of breastfeeding was at 47.5%. The Gambia Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS) 2019-2020 reported a slightly lower prevalence of 36%.

On the practice of exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months, from the period of 2000-2018, there has been a notable increase in its prevalence from 24.6% to 53.3% (MICS 2000-2018) (Figure 1). Recent survey results of exclusive breastfeeding (GDHS 2019-2020) also reports a similar prevalence of 54%.

Efforts to improve Infant and Young Child Feeding practices including breastfeeding and appropriate complementary feeding practices have been a priority for NaNA since the elaboration of its first National Nutrition Policy in 2000 to the most recent of 2021- 2025. This has led to the Gambia adopting and piloting the WHO/UNICEF Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative in 1993 in four health facilities at Basse, Bansang, Banjul and Essau. Based on the 10 steps to successful breastfeeding, an assessment of the four facilities was done but none was qualified to be designated as being Baby Friendly. This was primarily due to the inability to meet the 10th step of the BFHI: Establishment of breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to them on discharge from the hospital. With the success registered in all the other nine steps, implementation of the BFHI was expanded between 1998 - 2000 to 16 other health facilities across the country, bringing the total number of facilities implementing the initiative to 20. It was also deemed necessary to create community support groups/structures known as Village Support Groups (VSGs) in order to improve on the 10th Step of the Initiative. This informed the creation of the Baby Friendly Community Initiative (BFCI) in The Gambia.



Management of Acute Malnutrition (MAM)

By
Mr Dawda Samba (WFP)

The Gambia still suffers from a high burden of malnutrition, which poses a high cost to human capital with intergenerational effects. The recent Gambia Demographic Health Survey revealed that despite recent gains in nutrition, stunting, wasting, and underweight are a major public health problem, exacerbated by poverty levels, food insecurity, limited coverage of nutrition interventions, poor dietary habits, poor sanitation and hygiene, and increased disease burden.

In addressing a critical component of the immediate



causes of undernutrition, inadequate food intake, children 6-59 months with Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) are provided with monthly therapeutic supplementary food. There are 260 Distribution Points (DPs) under the MAM Programme to ensure that caregivers and their children under 5 years do not travel more than 5km to access supplementary feeds. Every MAM child is provided with 6kg of Super Cereal Plus per month following continuous monitoring of their



Mid Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC). This intervention is jointly implemented by the Ministry of Health, National Nutrition Agency and the World Food Programme. The monthly treatment of Moderate Acute Malnutrition resumed after 4 months break for all the four regions (NBR, LRR, CRR and URR). The Community Health Nurses (CHN) and trained mothers are conducting community screening and any child whose MUAC is between 11.5 – 12.4cm is registered and issued a months' worth of food ration. Additionally, nutrition education and counselling is delivered at all the distribution points providing MAM services. In May 2021, the MAM treatment programme reached over 3,000 children, 6-59 months in the rural areas. The therapeutic supplementation programme will be extended to the Foni areas of the West Coast Region in the 3rd quarter of 2021. This is as a result of food and nutrition indicators in the multiple surveys conducted.

The Food Supplementation Programme and Social and Behavioral Change Communication (SBCC) by government and partners contributed substantially to the improvement of the nutrition status of children. However, these gains are fragile and the specific national targets of reducing stunting to 12 percent, underweight to 8.5 percent and wasting to 5 percent is yet to be achieved.

Supporting children's nutrition during the COVID-19 pandemic by The National Nutrition Agency (NaNA) and UNICEF February 2021

By

Mr Yankuba Sawo (UNICEF)



Children bear the consequences of poverty which leave them vulnerable to multiple developmental risks due to external factors, like sustained poverty and malnutrition, and illness, as well as structural factors, such as limited access to health and educational and social services (Skinner et al., 2006). A lack of sufficient food and not consuming a variety of food are causing several deficiencies as well as early deaths among children.

The short and long-term effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on food and nutrition have been hypothesized by researchers to roll back gains made in the fight against hunger and malnutrition in low-income countries like The Gambia. Premised on this, the National Nutrition Agency and UNICEF mobilized funds to support malnourished children in the North Bank Region through direct cash transfers, which aimed at cushioning the impact of Covid-19 on social needs for women and children, especially on food and nutrition.

The program targeted malnourished children identified during the routine Nutrition Surveillance which was conducted in the lean period (August to September) of 2020. A total number of 17,264 children under the age of 5 years were assessed in North Bank East and West health regions during the NS and 958 children were identified to be malnourished, representing 5.5% percent.

A total amount of GMD 4000 was transferred to each surviving child under the program. The cash transfer was accompanied by a behavioral change communication on a topic related to; preparation and consumption of healthy food, good breastfeeding practices, good hygiene practices, safe environment, and utilization of child health services focusing on immunization, vitamin A supplementation, and Deworming. Alongside the behavioral change communication, an assessment of the children's nutritional status was conducted during the cash transfer exercise. The assessment findings will be used as a baseline for comparison against subsequent assessments of the nutrition status of children in this program, thus enhancing understanding of the contributions associated with the cash transfer and the SBCC on improving the nutritional status of these children. A voucher system was developed for the cash transfer to enhance the efficient data management system for the program. All children registered in the program were issued with a barcoded voucher containing the name of the Child, Mother's/Caregiver's name, address, MUAC (NS), and code number.

The program provided GMD 4000 to 909 beneficiaries (460 beneficiaries in North Bank West and 449 in North Bank East). A total of 958 beneficiaries were targeted for the cash transfer and 909 were paid during the exercise, representing 94.9% percent.

Below are the reasons for not being able to pay some of the beneficiaries;

1. Three (3) children in NBE and nine (9) children in NBW died before the actual cash transfer exercise and mothers/caregivers were not given the cash due to the design of the program.
2. In NBE, twelve (12) of the beneficiary names were duplicated.
3. Ten (10) beneficiaries in NBE and eleven (11) beneficiaries in NBW could not be traced with the contact details provided.
4. Two (2) beneficiaries in NBE and two (2) beneficiaries in NBW traveled and could not be reached on the phone.



Figure 1: Beneficiaries on a queue to receive the transfer in Darurilwan

	NBW	NBE	Total
Number Paid	460	449	909
Number of Children that died	9	3	12
Number that could not be reached with the contact details	11	10	23
Number that traveled	2	2	4
Duplicates	0	12	12
Total	482	476	958

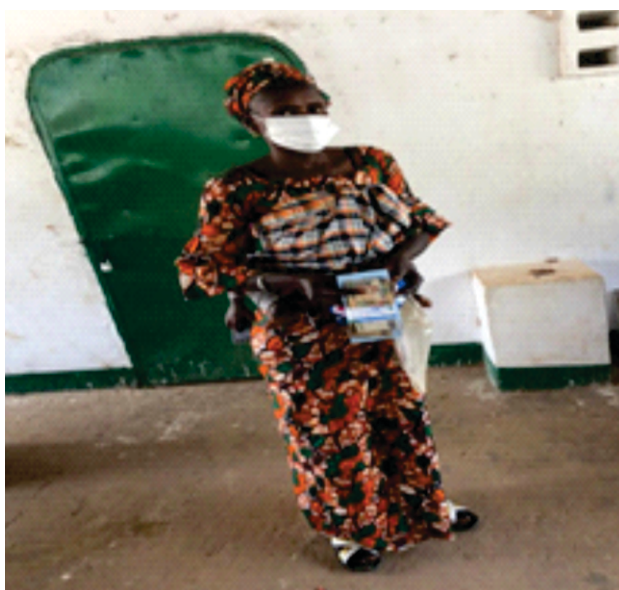


Figure 2: A beneficiaries who received the transfer

Nutritional Assessment

As seen in figure 3 below, all of the children enrolled into the program were malnourished. This assessment was done during the routine bi-annual Nutritional Surveillance conducted by the National Nutrition Agency and partners in the lean period. However, in figure 4 below at least 94.16% of these children had recovered according to the follow-up measurement conducted during the cash transfer exercise. This improvement in the nutritional status of these children is attributable to numerous factors notably; the improved environment, increased food consumption and reduced morbidity. However, key among these factors is the seasonal difference between the first assessment which was in the lean period where food shortages prevailed across the country and the second assessment conducted in the Spring (February) of 2021, where food produces are in good stock.

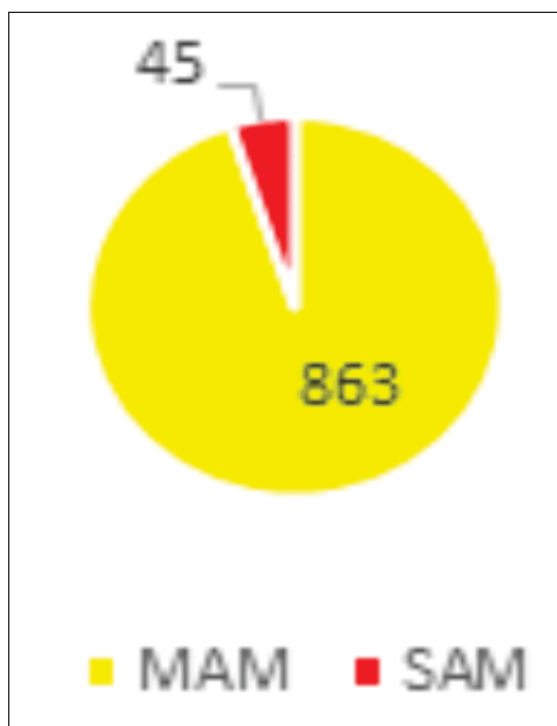


Figure 3: Nutritional Status of children from the Nutritional Surveillance in the lean period in August 2020

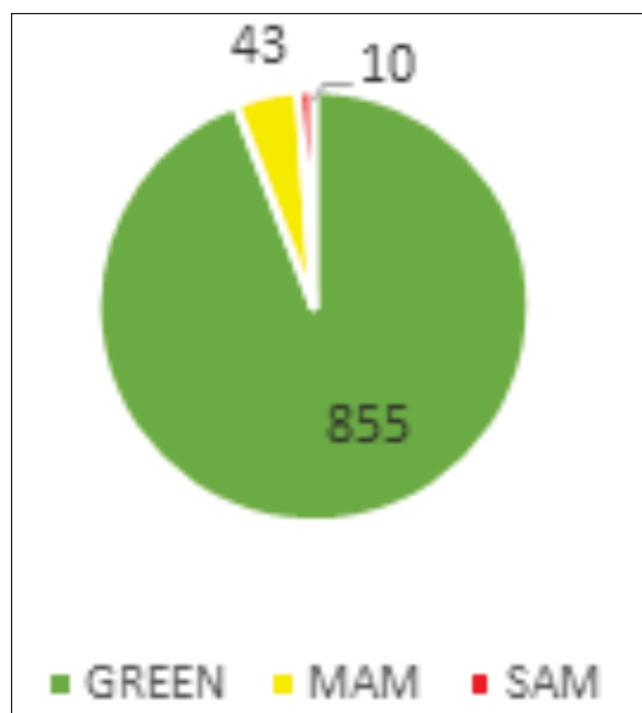
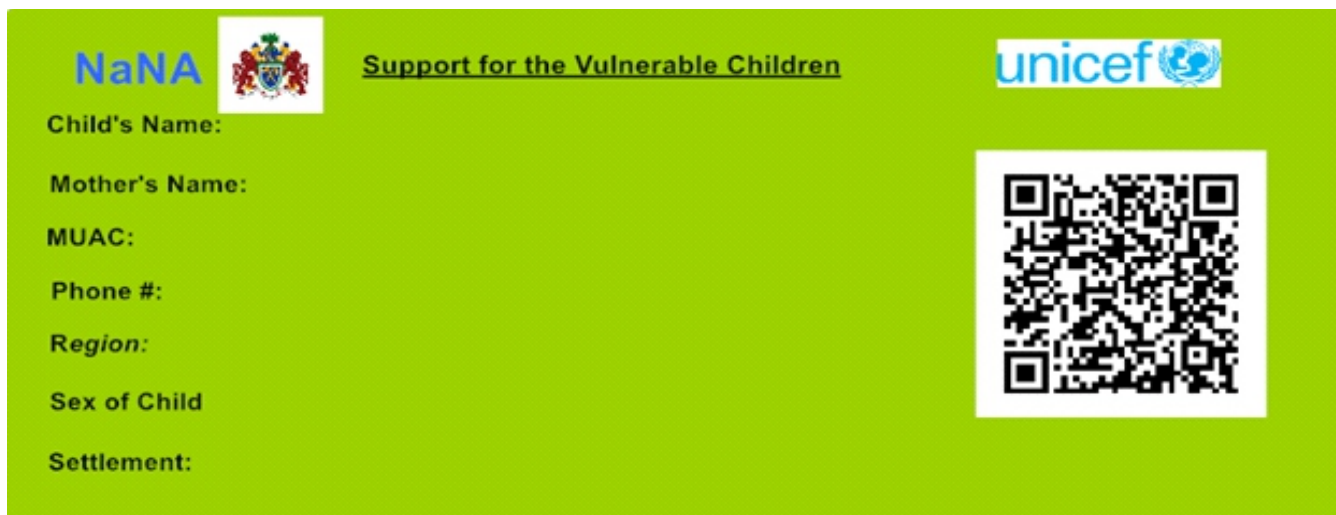




Figure 4: Nutritional Status of children assessed during the Cash Transfer conducted in February 2021.

Although the improvements in the nutritional status of children under this program could not be directly attributed to the cash transfer and the SBCC package, this additional cash support with the behavioral change communication will prevent these children from plunging back to a malnutrition state.

Sample of the Voucher used in the Cash Transfer



NaNA  **Support for the Vulnerable Children** 

Child's Name:

Mother's Name:


MUAC:

Phone #:

Region:

Sex of Child

Settlement:



Capacity Building for Schools Focal Persons and Mother Club Representatives on Basic Nutrition and Health

By
Mr Saikou Drammeh

A two days training of the School Focal Persons and Mother Club representatives was done in Kossamar Village on the 7th and 8th May 2021 at the school premises. Thirty-six (36) participants were drawn from the three benefiting communities of the SOS Community Family Strengthening Project (Fatako, Tabajang and Kossamar) in the Jimara District. The purpose of the training was to build the capacities of the participants with the knowledge and skills on basic food concept and health practices and to prepare them to conduct step down trainings in other schools and communities. This is anticipated to accelerate optimal child feeding practice and maternal nutrition.



Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) through Private Sector Partnership

By

Ms Haddy Crookes



Sun Business Network The Gambia (SBN GAMBIA)

In recognition of the critical need to address the country's malnutrition issues through multi-sector and multi-stakeholder approach; the Scaling up Nutrition Business Network (SBN) was established in The Gambia. The SBN is the SUN Platform for engagement of the private sector. It is co-convened by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) at global level and across SUN countries of which The Gambia launched her network on 19th November 2019. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic the network could not convene. On 19th March 2021, the first convergence of the SBNGambia was held at the National Nutrition Agency. It was an introductory meeting and a work plan development workshop that was attended by 24 of the registered SBN members, of which 9 were males and 15 were females.

The members also agreed to keep the name SBN Gambia as the official name of the network. SBNGambia members nominated Ms. Fatou Bobb of Mbobanjack Enterprise as the Chairperson and Ms Haddy M. Ceesay of Gambia Horticultural Enterprise (GHE) as the Secretary. Furthermore, the Network agreed to meet quarterly.

In implementation of one of the recommendations from the inaugural meeting, thirty-six participants (24 female and 12 male) from registered businesses of the SBN Gambia Chapter received a two-day capacity building workshop on nutrition, food safety and standards on the 8th and 9th June 2021. The aim of the workshop was to equip the participants with knowledge on the importance of producing/processing safe and nutritious foods, minimize nutrient loss in food processing, food safety and quality and national food standards.

Mr Yasuhiro Tsumura, WFP Representative and Country Director remarked at the opening ceremony of the training that WFP supports the SBN to reduce malnutrition in all its forms by mobilizing businesses to invest and create innovative means to improve the nutrition situation in The Gambia. WFP is an enabler to achieving national nutrition priorities, as well as the broader priorities of the SBN and SUN Movement as a whole. Furthermore, creating resilient food and

nutrition systems in The Gambia requires building different capacities in multiple interlinked sectors. Capacity building is valuable and important because of its many long-term impacts. WFP Gambia places enormous significance to food and nutrition security and as such has dedicated a special strategic outcome in its Country Strategic Plan 2019-2021 with focus on ensuring



Members of the SUN Business Network Gambia

nutritionally vulnerable populations, including children, pregnant and lactating women and girls in targeted areas have improved nutritional status in line with national targets.

This core mandate on Zero Hunger (SDG 2) can only be achieved with your (SBN members) partnership (SDG 17). WFP reiterates our commitment to support the SUN Business Network to achieving Zero Hunger Initiatives.

The statement by the WFP Country Rep was preceded by the National SUN Focal Person, Mr Modou Cheyassin Phall who delved into details about the establishment of the SBN and the significant achievements of the country in terms of Nutrition. Mr. Phall however, passionately appealed for continued efforts by all stakeholders including the private sector in reducing malnutrition rates. Ms. Aji Fatou Bobb, President of SBN during her vote of thanks urged the participants to implement the knowledge gained in their various workplaces.

SUN Academia and Research Consultative Group

The National Nutrition Agency (NaNA) as the coordinator for all SUN activities in the country with funding from the World Food Programme (WFP) organized a one-day consultative meeting with Academia and Research Practitioners on feasible approaches and pathways for engagement and participation in Nutrition. The consultative meeting was held on the 28th April, 2021 at NaNA Conference Hall. The meeting attracted twenty-two participants from the different Schools/Departments of the University of The Gambia, Gambia College, Medical Research Council at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, American International University West Africa and other research and academic institutions.



SUN Academia and Research Consultative Group

Training of Supervisors and Facilitators on Parenting Tools.

By

Mr Ousman Dem and Ms Awa Minteh

The three (3) days training of Supervisors and Facilitators using the playful parenting techniques and approaches was held in Nianija - Central River Region (CRR), North. The World Bank supported capacity building workshop was facilitated by Child Fund under the Social and Behavioral Change Communication (SBCC) intervention of the 'Nafa' Program of The Gambia Social Safety Net Project (SSNP).



It targeted two categories of participants:

1. The Multidisciplinary Facilitation Teams (MDFTs) within Nianija District i.e. the Community Health Nurses (CHNs), Community Development Assistants (CDA), and Social Welfare Officers (SWO) whose role is to provide the supportive supervision, and
2. The Facilitators (community members), who were nominated by their respective communities based on their comparative advantages e.g literacy and prior experience.

The objective of the training was to build the participants capacity for a successful implementation of the piloted playful parenting, which principally targets parents/caregivers of children between the ages of 0 to 3 years old in Nianija District of the CRR.



Cooking Demonstrations with the Department of Food Technology Services (FTS) of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)

By

Ms Fatou Drammeh and Mr Modou Lamin Jobe (FTS)



The Department of Food Technology Services (FTS) of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) with its partners NaNA and School Agriculture, Food Management Unit (SAFMU) with support from FAO embarked on a nine (9) days Training of Trainers (TOT) from the 17th - 26th of August 2021 in North Bank Region (NBR) and Central River Region (CRR) North and South.

The aim of the training is to build the capacities of the chief cooks from the schools on agriculture, kitchen management and basic

nutrition. The training also included cooking demonstrations of bio-fortified food crops that are high in micro-nutrients in order to prevent malnutrition. It brought together seventy (70) participants from the selected schools including Regional Agriculture and MoBSE staff. Three recipes were selected using bio-fortified food crops and these were sweet potato “mbahal”, sweet, potato chips and “palasas. All these efforts are geared towards improving food and nutrition security in The Gambia.



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