

We support the AFRICA DAY 2022 theme: Year of Nutrition

AFRICA DAY is celebrated annually on May 25th. It provides an opportunity to acknowledge the achievements and challenges Africa is facing. For 2022, the theme is: **“The Year of Nutrition.”**

Undernutrition and chronic malnutrition continue to be a challenge in meeting human welfare in sub-Saharan Africa. Major causes of malnutrition in Sub-Saharan Africa are poverty, rising cost of living, and globalization. Overdependence on staples such as grains and tubers at the expense of nutrient-rich foods remains part of the daily struggle. The continental agreements and strategic frameworks responding to nutrition challenges notably the Malabo Declaration and the Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy 2016 – 2025, shows the level of ambition that leaders on the continent have for improving nutrition status for every child.

Investing in nutrition for children, young people and women, must be approached with urgency if sub-Saharan Africa is to meet its Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. African countries must take a keen political and financial interest in prioritising the fight against all forms of malnutrition through, substantially improving children, young people and mothers’ dietary diversity and addressing other effects of poverty which fuel malnutrition.

Africa continues to face economic, environmental and social challenges that are affecting the ongoing efforts that seek to provide nutrition among disadvantaged communities. Just like the rest of the world, the on-going war in Ukraine and the COVID-19 pandemic have seen a sharp increase in food prices making it a challenge to access high nutrient food groups.

Humana People to People through its members is actively engaging people who are negatively impacted by malnutrition in sub-Saharan Africa through strengthening household and community capacity to address nutrition challenges and working towards ensuring good health and well-being. We deliberately formulate nutrition programmes which focus on people and not malnutrition as a disease; we respond to how people live their lives. We believe positive health outcomes rely on people living well; when they drive, build and maintain good health in their communities.

Our nutrition programmes symbolizes our big investments towards nutrition support in developing countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Through our nutrition initiatives, we have contributed to saving lives. We engage and work together with people to improve their nutrition status, change behaviors and other practices amongst

pregnant and lactating women, children under two and adolescent girls. In nutrition groups we promote cooking demonstrations, garden farming, food hygiene and improve the sanitation conditions as part of changing attitudes and equipping people with knowledge and practical skills.

Our member ADPP Mozambique and its partner Planet Aid Inc., with the support of the Mozambican Government implemented a United States Department of Agriculture funded Food For Knowledge project in Maputo province. The project started in 2012 and ended in 2019. Over 90,000 primary school going children received school meals daily. Food for Knowledge project provided 76 million meals to 271 primary schools, more than 25 000 people gained knowledge on nutrition education, 758 school-based water systems were set-up to improve safe water access and sanitation conditions, 8 Home-Grown School Feeding Gardens were established, trained 2 916 primary school teachers and constructed infrastructure for school feeding.

Data gathered from the Provincial Education Department showed an overall school-feeding meals contributing to reduction in dropout rates across the project's four districts. In the primary school grades 1-5 bracket, these fell from 9.1% in 2012 to 5.1% in 2019. In the primary school grades 6-7 range, the dropout rate in project districts fell from 11.8% in 2012 to 5.1% in 2019. In contrast, the percentage of dropout rates in non-project districts remained relatively stable over the same time period.

Secondly, ADPP Mozambique is leading the implementation of Transform Nutrition Project with four other local partners. The project is being funded by USAID. The nutrition project is a 5-year initiative which, started in 2019 and is being carried out in 12 high priority districts of Nampula province. ADPP Mozambique's Transform Nutrition project has a broad set of activities designed to address the complex interactions between food, health, sanitation and hygiene and education and their combined impact on people's nutrition and health. The project aims to improve the nutritional status of 118 000 pregnant and lactating women, 260 000 adolescent girls, and 165 000 children under 2 years, corresponding to 80% in the targeted districts. People are engaged in diversified interventions which help to improve nutritional and sanitation practices, supported with key messages through radio interactive programs.

Thirdly, ADPP Mozambique's Community Nutrition Zambezia project has contributed to the reduction of high levels of malnutrition amongst fisherman communities in Zambezia Province. The project worked together with over 3 100

women organized in 200 groups, 25 Fishermen Associations and 10 community councils of fishermen with about 1 000 members and 20 primary schools which have a combined total of over 1,500 female students. Fishermen, women and youths taking part in the activities have improved their nutritional knowledge. In 2021, it was observed that there was a 14% increase in food diversity among girls, 40% among women in reproductive age and 16% among children under 2 by end of the project.

In Malawi, our member DAPP Malawi's Nutrition Project in Machinga engaged in an active case finding and management of malnutrition through a one year project which undertook screening, provided care and nutrition as it managed severe and moderate malnutrition in children below the age of 2 years. Using the Ministry of Health's approved Community Management of Acute Malnutrition guidelines, DAPP Malawi reached out to 37 354 people especially pregnant and lactating mothers and mothers of children under the age of five with information on how to detect malnutrition.

The important part of the prevention of malnutrition was the trainings on how to prepare a healthy meal for the children and what is a healthy diet. Mothers were encouraged and trained to establish backyard gardens and growing nutritious food.

In Zambia, our member DAPP Zambia has for the past 4 year operated the Farmers' Clubs Nutrition project incorporating diversified agriculture and nutrition by working together with 12,500 farmer families, who are organized in 320 Farmers' Clubs. The project activities train farmers to use improved and diversified farming methods and promotes good nutrition in the homes. This contributes to improving food and nutritional situations for vulnerable communities. In 2021, 1 280 Nutrition Champions were actively training their fellow farmers in exclusive breast feeding, they carried out community growth monitoring with the local health centers using Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) tapes and 279 Farmers' Clubs held cooking demonstrations with a total attendance of 10 935 people among them were 4 273 pregnant and lactating mothers. 10 221 students in 54 schools were reached with nutrition and garden farming education in their Health and Nutrition Clubs and established nutrition gardens at the schools.

In Angola we have our member running a project focusing on promoting access to water, food and nutrition security in the face of continued climatic uncertainty. Two projects, jointly implemented by ADPP Angola and CODESPA, are part of the wider program titled Strengthening of Resilience and Food and Nutrition Security (FRESAN), financed by the EU via Camões Institute. The ADPP Angola and CODESPA projects concentrate on increasing access to water and food, as well as

on improving resilience. One of the projects increases access to and strengthens community management of water in 39 communities, a prerequisite for growing enough nutritious food. Meanwhile, mainly female smallholder farmers are being supported to acquire the knowledge to provide the family with nutritious, healthy food and safe drinking water. More than 1 500 smallholder farmers in Cunene province are adopting. In 2021, the project organized nutrition education, measured MUAC for close to 1,900 children, planted 650 fruit trees, conducted 30 cooking demonstrations, raised awareness on the importance of nutrition to 1000 women and encouraged good practices towards safe consumption of water and milk, all of which contributed to improving household diets.

We remain committed to invest and implement nutrition programmes as part of our contribution to fighting challenges facing nutrition in sub-Saharan Africa. Government support and donor support will all contribute to achieving the Malabo Declaration and the Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy 2016-2025 targets when political will and finance are channeled towards improving nutrition on the continent.