

# 3 Pilot Projects





# IFNA

To contribute to the achievement of a sustained improvement in the nutritional status of all African people across the life cycle.

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# IMPROVING NUTRITION IN AFRICA

## What is IFNA?

The Initiative for Food and Nutrition Security in Africa (IFNA) was jointly launched by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) in Nairobi, Kenya in August 2016.

**The Vision** of IFNA is 'To contribute to the achievement of a sustained improvement in the nutritional status of all African people across the life cycle'.

**The Mission** is 'To establish a framework of collaboration to accelerate the implementation of food and nutrition security policies for accelerating and up-scaling actions on nutrition in all African Countries'.



## How IFNA works with countries

IFNA supports countries in translating priority nutrition policies and strategies into specific intervention actions through formulation of the IFNA Country Strategy for Actions, generally referred to as the "ICSA". ICSA is a government led action plan developed in a participatory multi-sectoral manner, to allow concentration of limited resources to the highest priority nutrition actions.

### IFNA Approaches

IFNA promotes the design of contextualized dietary diversification approaches to tackle identified nutrition problems. IFNA's two key approaches to improving nutrition and food security are:

#### a) Multi-Sectoral Approach (MSA):

While IFNA's main focus is on food and agriculture sector for nutrition, the initiative promotes collaboration with other sectors that contribute to nutrition improvement. Through this, IFNA also encourages multistakeholder collaboration at all levels of decision making in regards to policies and programmes.

#### b) Nutrient Focused Approach (NFA):

The Nutrient Focused Approach (NFA) is a food-based nutrition improvement approach that promotes healthy and balanced diet through dietary diversification, focusing more on supply and consumption of foods that are rich in specific nutrients that correspond to key nutrition issues, such as stunting, anemia among others. NFA and its smartphone based application help identify locally adaptable nutrient rich foods to be produced and/or consumed to tackle the specific nutrition issues.

# IMPROVING NUTRITION IN *KENYA*

The Kenya ICSA document prioritized child stunting and iron deficiency anemia as the priority nutrition problems to be addressed by IFNA projects.

## Key facts – IFNA Pilot project

**Pilot project title:** Improving nutrition outcomes through nutrition sensitive agriculture programming in Kitui county, Kenya

**Duration:** March 2021- February 2022

**Donor:** JICA

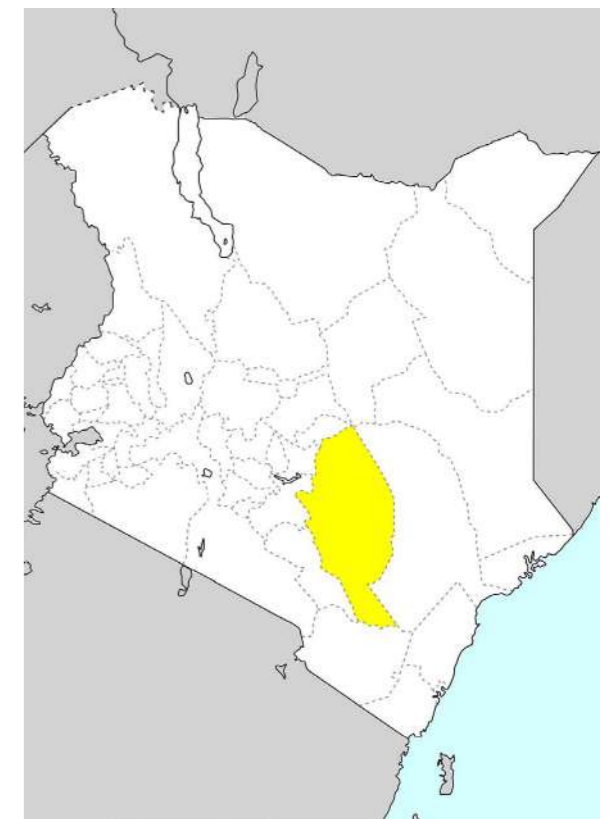
**Partners:** County Government of Kitui, with technical assistance from Ministry of Agriculture, livestock, Fisheries and Cooperatives (national level).

## The overall goal:

To contribute to the reduction of stunting among children under 5 years of age, and reduction of iron deficiency anaemia among children and women of reproductive age in Kitui county.

## The project objectives:

To promote production of locally adapted and diversified vegetables, fruits and small livestock (chicken); To enhance consumption of livestock products, vegetables and fruits in the daily meals of children and women of reproductive age and the target households in general.



Source: JICA Survey team  
Figure 1: Pilot Project Site Map

## Project site and Target group:

The project was implemented in Kitui East sub-county (Endau/Malalani, Voo/Kyamatu wards); and Kitui South sub county (Mutha and Kanziku wards) (Figure 1).

The project targeted 300 small scale farming households with children under two years of age or households with children under 5 years of age enrolled in malnutrition treatment programs or households with women of reproductive age.

## Programme Implementation

### The key project interventions included:

- a) **Production of locally adapted and diversified vegetables, fruits and small livestock:** Capacity building of technical government officers- from agriculture and health sectors on Nutrient Focused Approach and Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture; Support farmers in selection of nutrient-rich crops; Agriculture extension services to assist farming households to set up kitchen gardens and water harvesting structures; Provision of inputs - seeds, seedlings, tools, small stock for home gardening, water tanks; Provision of farmer training on agriculture, food and nutrition.
- b) **Consumption of livestock products, vegetables and fruits in daily meals:** Capacity building of technical government officers - from agriculture and health sectors on nutrition education and complementary feeding, Training target households on nutrition education, including infant and young child feeding; Documentation and dissemination of locally adapted complementary feeding recipes; Regular household or group visits to monitor feeding practices.

## Key Achievements:

- 1- **Nutrition capacity building:** The project developed training modules; and the technical capacities of 30 senior county officers and 24 sub-county and ward officers on Nutrient Focused Approach and multisectoral coordination were improved.
- 2- **Kitchen gardens setup and diversified crop produced:** As a result of the agriculture and nutrition community training (including nutrient focused approach) facilitated by the agriculture officers, farmers were able to set up their own kitchen gardens. They were also able to select 14 varieties of nutrient dense vegetable seeds and start crop production on their own. The 14 varieties of crops included: cow peas, spinach, amaranthus, green grams, pumpkins, spring onions, black nightshade and coriander. Farmers started harvesting in January 2022.



- 3- **Promotion of water conservation:** Water availability is a big challenge in Kitui county. Farmers received training on how to produce crops with minimal and recycled water. The project also provided and installed water tanks for the 300 households.
- 4- **Establishment of coordination mechanisms:** The project facilitated the setup of a national coordination committee made up of various ministries representatives at national and county level. This committee is for IFNA projects and other nutrition sensitive agriculture projects.

## Challenges and Lessons learned



The project faced many challenges mainly caused by the delay of the implementation due to:

- 1) *Restriction in movement and meetings caused by the COVID-19 and;*
- 2) *Limited human resources to implement the project.*

Limited human resources with necessary capacity particularly, led to several lessons learned and recommended actions:

### 1- **Planning for human resources:**

In future, the scope of implementing a project should take into consideration the presence (or absence) of human resources at county and lower levels who would be available to directly support project implementation.

#### **This includes:**

- A full-time, dedicated project coordinator at the county government level, who will be fully responsible to manage the project including roll out of the exit strategy.
- Staff to support community implementation. This project relied on Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) in order to reach households with nutrition messaging. The CHVs support many other government and partner projects, therefore they are stretched with a lot of work, and the long distances and rough terrain between households made their work more difficult.
- At county level, it would be necessary to set up a home economics desk and a trained officer in the same. Home economists are crucial for nutrition in agriculture programming.

### 2- **Planning for appropriate monitoring system:**

The delay in project implementation led to no time left to evaluate the activities at the end of the project. This was also exacerbated by the fact that the activities (especially the crops planted) had not yet matured by the time the project came to an end.

#### **Therefore, in future, it is important to consider:**

- Development of very simple monitoring tools that can be used throughout the project.
- Assignment of an officer in charge of monitoring and evaluation component.

### 3- **For this type of project, it is important to:**

- Consider the geographical area vis-à-vis the amount of time it takes to move from one household to another. Consider the terrain and logistical situation when planning activities.



'The IFNA Pilot project contributed to improvement of food and nutrition in a multisectoral manner. The project brought together the ministries and departments incharge of agriculture, health, water and drought management, who collaborated in the implementation of the project. The country anticipates further promotion of the Nutrient Focused Approach in future nutrition programmes.'

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## Way forward

To ensure sustainability, the pilot project supported the establishment of coordination committees at national level, and IFNA Kitui team at county level. Future projects would ideally be managed by these structures. The extension officers, who had already been equipped with skills could continue working with the farming households supported by the pilot project. Some of the agriculture extension activities could be supported by the regular government work/ programs.

## Examples of interventions and projects that could be complemented by IFNA, particularly through Nutrient Focused Approach:

- 1- Projects that target to address a specific nutritional problem in a community through food-based approaches.
- 2- Projects that promote production of diverse nutrient dense foods.
- 3- Projects that address basic and underlying causes of malnutrition through food security interventions, while incorporating nutrition education.
- 4- Projects that promote multi-sectoral coordination for nutrition.

### References

1. Final Report on the pilot Project Implementation (Kenya), February 2022. (Internal report).
2. FAO. 2016. KORE good practice template. <https://www.fao.org/in-action/kore/good-practices/en/>

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The documentation of the Kenya good practice has been led by Ms Angela Kimani- IFNA regional consultant, under the guidance of Mr Kenjiro Ban and Mr Yuji Inada- IFNA Secretariat.



# IMPROVING NUTRITION IN GHANA

The Ghana ICSA document prioritized iron deficiency anaemia as the priority nutrition problem to be addressed by IFNA projects.

## Key facts – IFNA Pilot project

**Pilot project title:** Addressing iron deficiency anaemia through food based approaches, in Krachi West District, Ghana

**Duration:** April 2021- February 2022

**Donor:** JICA

**Partners:** Led by WIAD (Women in Agricultural Development)- a directorate in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, DAO (Municiple Agriculture Office )and GHS (Ghana Health Service) district offices.

## The goal of the project:

To increase the consumption iron-rich foods and improve the overall diets of beneficiary households, in order to contribute to the reduction of iron deficiency anemia among women of reproductive age and children under five years of age.

## The objectives of the project:

To increase the production and consumption of locally adapted and nutrient-rich vegetables, fruits, and small livestock and promote knowledge sharing within community groups.

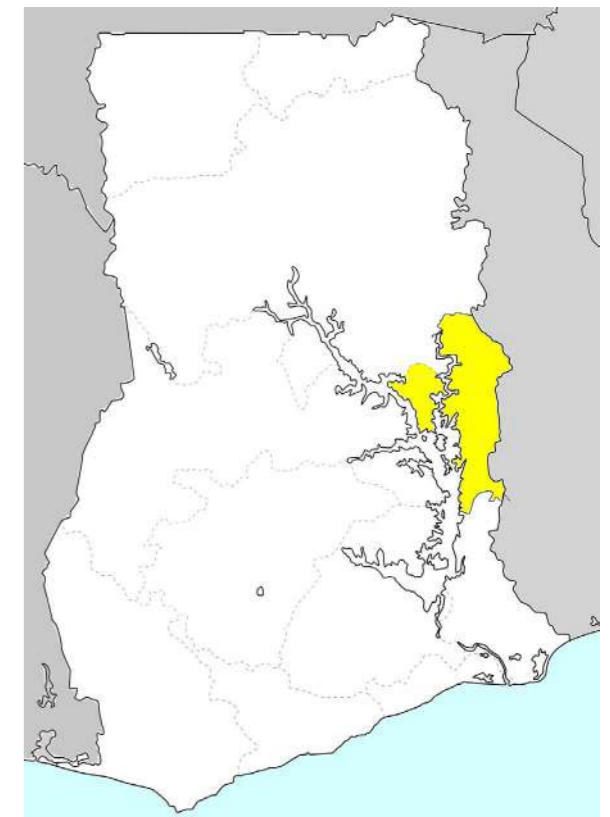


Figure 1: Pilot Project Site Map



## Project Target:

The project targeted to reach 500 households with women of reproductive ages and with children under five years of age.

**Project site:** The project was implemented in nineteen communities in Krachi West district (Figure 1).

## Programme Implementation

### The key project interventions included:

- a) **Production of locally adapted and nutrient rich vegetables, fruits and small livestock:** Training of Agriculture Extension Agents (AEAs), Community Health Nurses (CHNs) and community volunteers on Nutrient Focused Approach (NFA) and Nutrition Agriculture; Supporting communities to select iron rich crops by NFA application; Development of crop calendar with aim of ensuring availability of iron rich foods and vitamin C rich foods all year round; Provision of agricultural inputs (including seeds, poultry, fencing materials).
- b) **Promoting consumption of vegetables, fruits and animal source foods in daily meals of target households:** Training of AEAs and CHNs on nutrition; Facilitating AEAs and CHNs to undertake community nutrition education sessions (including cooking demonstrations); Facilitating AEAs and CHNs to regularly visit project households to support behaviour change and improve food preparation and feeding; Train households on food preservation.



## Key Achievements:

At the beginning of the project, a baseline survey was undertaken targeting 13 communities; while an end-line survey was done at the end of the project targeting the same 13 communities. The key results include:

- a) **Women Dietary Diversity Score (WDDS):** There has been a 121 percent increase in dietary diversity among women by the beneficiary households consuming between 6 to 9 food groups per day.

Diet Diversity Score	Beneficiaries		
	Baseline	End-line	% Change
High (Score: 6-9)	51	113	121.6%
Medium (Score: 4-5)	125	100	-20.0%
Low (Score: 1-3)	52	15	-71.2%
Grand Total	228	228	

- b) **Consumption of specific nutrient rich foods by women of reproductive age (project beneficiaries):** There was a significant increase in consumption of foods promoted by the project ranging from 83 percent to 123 percent increase, as shown below:

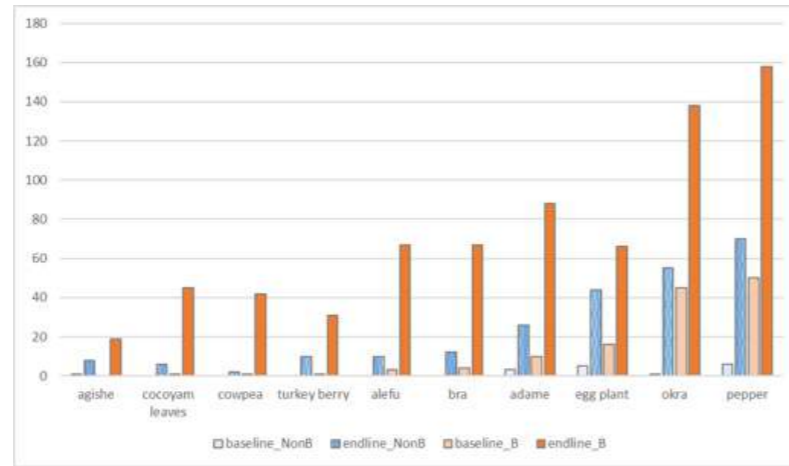
Food group	No. of Beneficiaries (N=228)		
	Baseline	End-line	% Change
Dark Green Leafy Vegetables	65	145	123.1%
Eggs	49	90	83.7%
Legumes, nuts and seeds	74	143	93.2%

Figure 3: Consumption of specific iron rich foods.

- c) **Increased egg production:** By the end of the project, there was an increase in beneficiary households who collected more than one egg per week from 87 households to 209 households.
- d) **Kitchen gardens setup:** At the end of the project, 95 percent of project beneficiaries had kitchen gardens, compared to 24 percent at the beginning of the project. The 12 priority vegetables were: cowpea leaves, cowpea dried, Amaranth leaves, Eggplant leaves, Jute (Bush Okra/ Ayoyo), Cocoyam leaves, Pepper chilli, Melon seeds (Agushie), Green beans, Okra fruit, Hibiscus cannabinus (Bra) and Turkish Berry.



While both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries cultivated the top five crops, it is noted that the project beneficiaries started cultivating other five iron-rich crops more than the non-beneficiaries (Fig 3).



- e) **Recipe book development:** After the completion of the cooking demonstrations, the draft recipes were revised and compiled into a recipe book and distributed to project beneficiaries for their use.

## Lessons learned

- Multisectoral collaboration:**
  - The project enhanced collaboration between DAO- who were in charge of agriculture production; and GHS- who were responsible for nutrition education. Community visits were done together by the AEAs and CHNs. The survey undertaken among the AEAs and CHNs showed that they generally worked together and undertook project activities together and frequently.
  - There was collaborative decision making between the WIAD, MOFA teams at national level and district level; as well as with JICA team.
- Hands on/ practical learning:**

The AEAs and CHNs highlighted that they also improved their skills on how to conduct community education (mostly on kitchen gardening and cooking demonstrations) as the mode of learning was practical and not theoretical. Therefore the pilot project benefited both the trainers and the target communities.
- Complementarity of agriculture and nutrition activities:**

There was a lot of appreciation of combining vegetable production through kitchen garden, with cooking demonstrations. This focused on dietary diversity, and more so, how to prepare the different vegetables cultivated and combine in different meals. This had a double positive effect.

Kitchen gardens increased household production and consumption of a wide variety of vegetables promoted through NFA. Empowered with knowledge and skills, all beneficiary households were keen to continue with their kitchen gardens, on their own, even after the project.



‘One of the values that the project brought is the multiplier effect evidenced by the requests from adjoining districts to emulate the interventions. A lot more community gardens can be established by communities themselves. The project has also generated the need for a local seed garden for local vegetables thus promoting the consumption of local crop varieties. There is need to further harness in-country potential for own food production. The Nutrient Focused Approach is a good methodology that has a multisectoral dimension’.

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## Way forward

As a government initiative to enhance sustainability of the activities, the Krachi West Municipal Agriculture Office and Ghana Health Service integrated support of current project activities in their 2022 annual budget plans. The project implementation team also led an advocacy session with the Municipal executives, disseminating the successful outcomes of the project (including the recipe book). There was enthusiasm and potential support to have some government budget allocation for the activities.

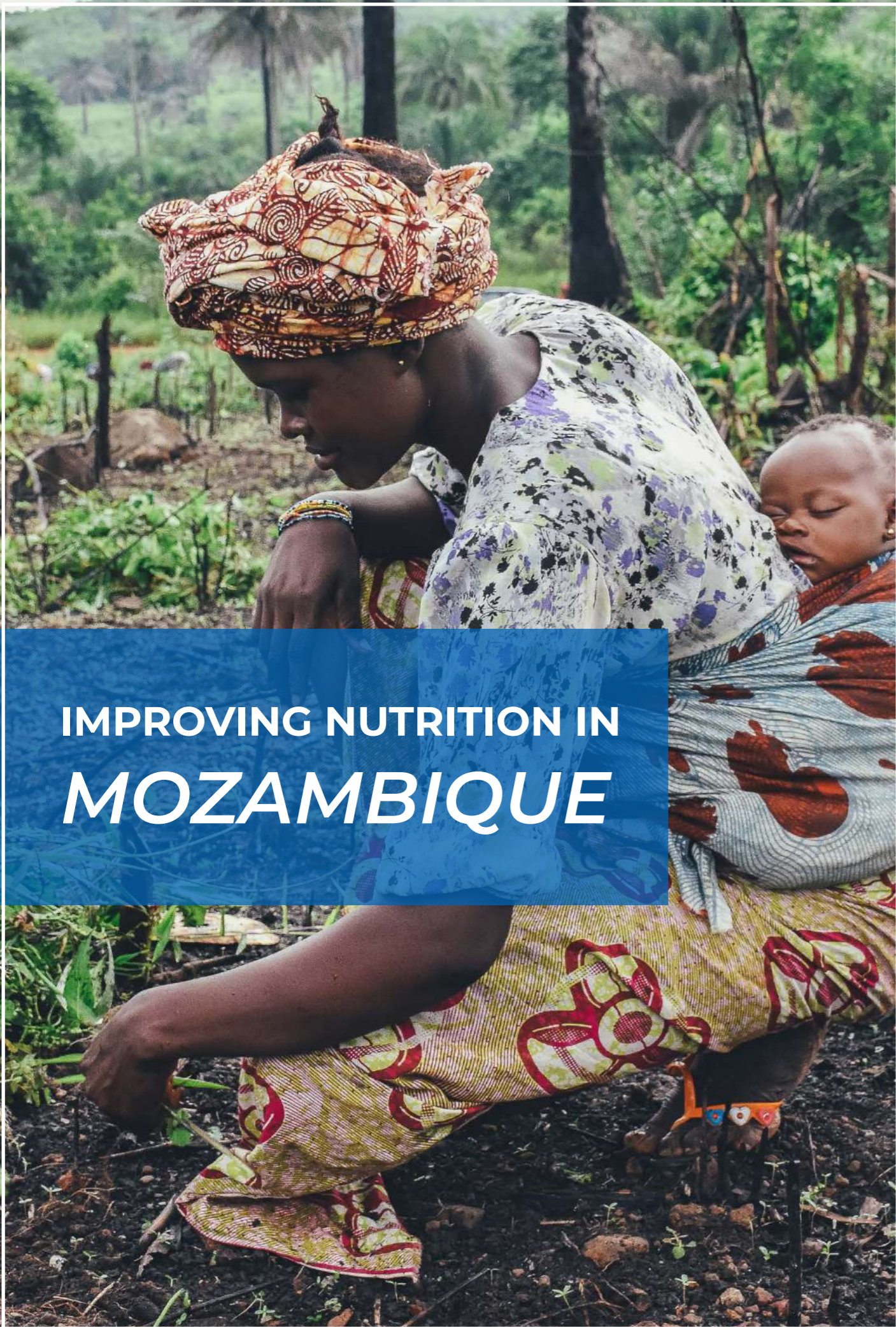
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# IMPROVING NUTRITION IN MOZAMBIQUE

The Mozambique ICSA document prioritized, child stunting and iron deficiency anaemia as nutrition issues to be addressed by IFNA projects.

## Key facts – IFNA Pilot project

**Pilot project title:** Improving production and consumption of diverse nutritious foods among nutritionally vulnerable populations in Niassa Province, Mozambique.

**Duration:** July 2021- February 2022

**Donor:** JICA

**Partners:** Technical Secretariat on Food Security and Nutrition (SETSAN), Agriculture, Fisheries, Health and Education and Human Development Sectors- Niassa Province

## The overall objective of the project:

To contribute to the availability and consumption of diverse nutritious foods by pregnant women and children under 5 years of age in Niassa Province.

## The expected outputs of the project:

Increased production of nutrient dense vegetables, fish and chicken. Improved feeding patterns among the nutritionally vulnerable target population.

The project was implemented in the two districts of Mecanhelas and Ngauma, found in Niassa Province (Figure 1). The project targeted 10 communities located in these two provinces.

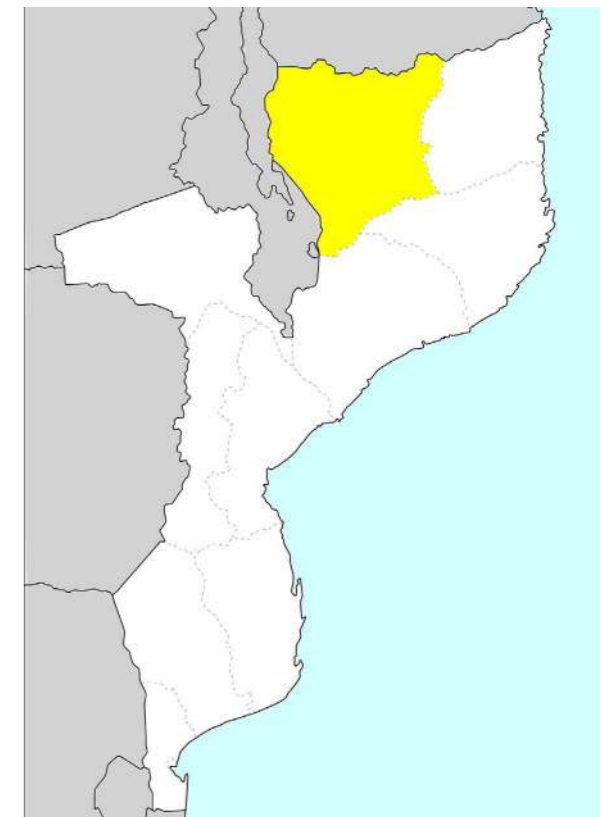


Figure 1: Districts of Niassa province and the project sites

## Target population:

The project reached a total of 289 households who were either practicing fish farming, with pregnant and lactating women, with children under 5 years of age or small scale farmers or in associations.

## Programme Implementation

### The key project interventions included:

- 1) **Production of nutrient dense vegetables, chicken and fish-** This activity targeted 242 households, who are part of 11 agriculture associations. The activities included: Training of agriculture extension workers on Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture and Nutrient Focused Approach; Training farmers on vegetable production; Training fisherfolks on aquaculture production; Provision of inputs (seeds, fingerlings, fertilizers, fish feeds and other production inputs) to farming households; Rehabilitation of 10 sand fishponds; Supporting chicken rearing; Training farmers and fisherfolks on agro-processing and food preservation.
- 2) **Improve feeding patterns of target groups through food and nutrition education:** Training of community health care workers, agriculture extension officers on Nutrient Focused Approach, Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture, Social Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) and complementary feeding; Facilitate food and nutrition education trainings at community level; Undertake food preparation demonstrations with beneficiary groups; Individual household follow-ups on change in nutrition behaviours and practices; Facilitate nutrition community awareness sessions.

## Key Achievements:

The technical team at SETSAN, with the assistance of Agriculture and Health departments in Niassa province undertook a baseline survey in October 2021, targeting 285 out of the 289 targeted households. However the endline survey was not carried out due to short project lifetime.

### Below are some of the key outputs of the pilot project:

1. **Agriculture and nutrition capacity building:** Government agriculture and health officers; fisherfolks and farming households received various trainings on agriculture production, family feeding, agroprocessing and food preservation among others. As a result of these trainings, the farming households were able to select specific nutrient rich crops that they would produce. These included: tomato, kale, cabbage, lettuce, carrots, amaranthus and orange-fleshed sweet potato.
2. **Setup of kitchen gardens:** 9 out of 11 beneficiary groups/associations were involved in vegetable production. By the end of the project, atleast 7 of the 9 associations had started harvesting a minimum of 4 crop varieties from their gardens.
3. **Construction and rehabilitation of agricultural production infrastructure:** As a long term strategy to enhance agricultural production:
  - a. The project constructed 4 poultry pavilions and gave 500 chicks to each of the 4 associations. Each poultry pavilion was provided with inputs like drinking fountains, poultry feeds and vaccines.
  - b. The project rehabilitated 8 fish ponds and provided 20,000 fingerlings, and fish feeds to the fisherfolks groups. The fisherfolks received training on fish farming. The groups were also advised to consume atleast 25 percent of the produce.



4. **Community food and nutrition awareness campaigns:**  
In order to increase target households and general community knowledge and skills on food and nutrition, the project undertook:

- a. Food and nutrition education sessions, coupled with 18 cooking demonstration sessions in both districts. Beneficiaries attested to improved knowledge and skills on infant food preparation and feeding, knowledge on importance of breastfeeding, improved hygiene and sanitation etc.
- b. Two health and nutrition community fair events were also held, one in each district.



## Lessons learned

1. **Strengthening multisectoral coordination:**  
The success of the multisectoral project was greatly influenced by the smooth coordination between the agriculture and health departments at provincial and field level; and the flow of information from the national to the field level. The project coordinator played a key role in the project and ensured that information was shared amongst all the stakeholders.
2. **Nutrition Behaviour Change:**  
Changing attitudes and behaviours takes a long period. Since the pilot project period was short, evidence generation on impact of food and nutrition education sessions was limited. In future, it would be recommended to have longer term projects so as to evaluate nutrition behaviour change.
3. **Timing of crop production activities:**  
Training of farmers and provision of farming inputs should be in tandem with the local crop calendar, especially if the communities are heavily dependent on rain-fed agriculture. Furthermore, in order to reduce dependency on rains, in future there may be need to introduce crop irrigation and use of water saving technologies such as zai pits and

4. **Addressing nutrition from different pathways**  
While the project focused on improving nutrition through the production pathway (and directly linked to consumption of diverse diets), most of the farmer associations were selling most of their produce for income. Therefore in future, there would be need to strengthen the role of the income pathway for nutrition improvement and sustainability of activities.
- 5) **Project monitoring and evaluation:**  
Development and testing of simple tools should be done at the beginning of the project. This would enable collection of data and analysis; and completing the learning process.

'The project has contributed to improvement of technical knowledge on planning, implementation and coordination of multisectoral projects. The project has also enabled us to increase food availability and nutrition knowledge among farmers. The hope is to implement larger and longer term food and nutrition projects based on the Nutrient Focused Approach that has already created a basis for multisectoral coordination of interventions.'

**Ms Sandra da Silva- IFNA Focal Point, Mozambique**

## Way forward

The multisectoral coordination team set up in Niassa province would play a critical role in following up of the activities and potentially, lead implementation of future upscaled projects. Further, there would be need to support setup of the provincial food and nutrition security platform, that would coordinate all multisectoral projects at provincial level.

Follow up of project beneficiaries could be covered by the agriculture extension regular work, though Niassa province needs to secure internal budgets for this.

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1. Final Report on the pilot Project Implementation (Mozambique), February 2022. (Internal report).
2. FAO. 2016. KORE good practice template. <https://www.fao.org/in-action/kore/good-practices/en/>

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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