REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
Expansion of Community-Based Smallholder Irrigation Development Project
(**E-COBSI**)
E-COBSI News Letter **No.25, May 2021**

KOT Conducted in all the 6 target provinces!!

Kick-off Training (KOT) which is the first training of COBSI approach, has been conducted in the 6 provinces by 21 May. Provincial CPU members managed the training. On the other hand, Japanese experts and Copperbelt Province CPU members visited all the district model sites in the province for monitoring and conducting some interviews with the farmers on irrigation facilities, water management, cultivation technics as well as nutrition status. Moreover, the handover ceremony for necessary ICT equipment items of the E-COBSI activities was carried out on 26 May. Please enjoy the progress on the E-COBSI activity this month.

2021 Kick-off Trainings (KOTs)

The Provincial CPUs, together with JICA project team, conducted a 5-days KOT for 6 provinces from 26 April to 21 May. In total, 330 MoA staff (district TSB and CEOs) from 6 target provinces participated in the training. In the new target provinces, Copperbelt, Northwestern and Central province, the main topic of the KOT was market-oriented agriculture (SHEP) and small-scale irrigation development. While in the Follow-up provinces, Northern, Muchinga and Luapula province, SHEP approach, water management, operation and maintenance, nutrition improvement were the main topic of the training.

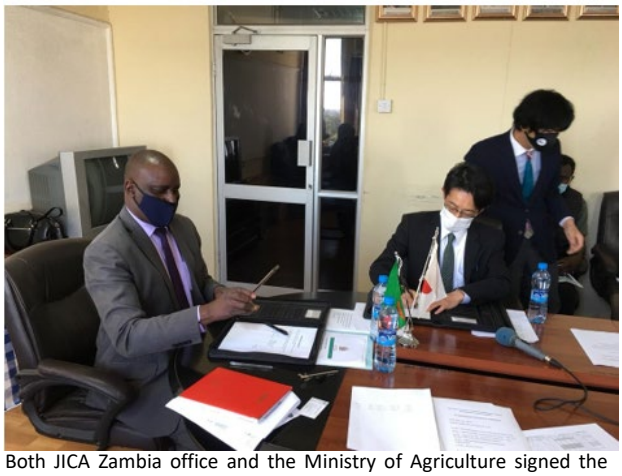
Participants carried out the practical market survey in the module of SHEP in Copperbelt province.

In the new target provinces, the training started with SHEP approach, so that participants conducted the market survey at the nearest market from the training venue. Then, the participants visited a site with a stream for simple weir construction practical training.

Participants learnt how to construct a simple weir, a entry point of small-scale irrigation development in the field.

Handover ceremony of ICT Equipment to accelerate the E-COBSI activity

In order to accelerate the remote monitoring of E-COBSI activity under the COVID-19 situation, office machines such as Laptop PC, TV monitor, printer, and tablet PC were procured by the project following the regulation of JICA Zambia office. The handover ceremony of these machines from the JICA Zambia Office to the Ministry of Agriculture was held on 26th May 2021.



Both JICA Zambia office and the Ministry of Agriculture signed the certificate at the handover ceremony at MoA HQ.

Monitoring of District Model sites in Copperbelt Province

Japanese experts visited all the district model sites with CPU members and district staff to monitor the irrigation facilities, water management, cultivation and nutrition status. Group interviews were conducted to the farmers using a questionnaire prepared in advance by the team. The monitoring results regarding cultivation techniques, pest & disease control and nutrition status are as shown below.

Monitoring for cultivation technics

The diseases caused by filamentous fungi were found in all sites. The farmlands for irrigation agriculture are usually located near the perennial stream. Therefore, the irrigated land is often in a humid environment such as marshland, called "*Dumbo*", which is presumed to

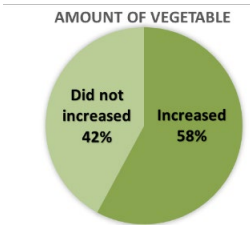
create conditions in which filamentous fungi are likely to occur. The project team advised the farmers to spray a fungicide containing an appropriate active ingredient against pathogens according to the usage and also encouraged the farmers that the affected plants should be taken out of the field as much as possible and disposed-off. Crop rotation is an effective preventive method for the disease, so the team provided advice to the farmers. Another issue facing many farmers is the spike in price for agricultural inputs. This is thought of due to the restriction of the movement as a result the COVID-19. The project recommended making low-cost organic fertilizers such as compost and Bokashi by using local materials and also explained bunker plants and companion plants for the prevention of disease.

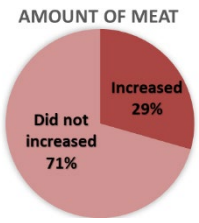
Nutritional Improvement

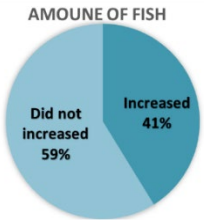
Before starting the nutrition improvement activity at the site, a nutrition survey should be carried out to clarify critical challenges of food and nutrition security and set up the baseline of target communities. Irrigation systems and irrigated agriculture have been disseminated to all the district model sites. Also, the Food nutrition officer (FNO) at district level has conducted some training to farmers regarding awareness creation for nutrition improvement.

The project team carried out the narrative interview to measure the impact of farmer's awareness and behavior change effected by irrigated agriculture. In the interview, we found that farmers have acquired nutrition knowledge from the local clinic and NGOs so far. They have learnt on foods prepare for the children and expectant mothers. From these findings, the nutrition improvement activities by E-COBSI should be a complementary role of the existing knowledge.

Then the team focused on the consumption amount of vegetables, meat, and fish compared between 2018 and now. As a result, half of the farmers increased vegetable intake due to increased self-consumption of vegetables cultivated in the E-COBSI sites. On the other hand, 30%-40% of farmers increased the amount of meat and fish consumed as a result of good income from vegetable selling.







The price of fish and meat has gone up compared to 2018, and it was caused by external economic factors. That is why dietary change is suggested to be affected by economic efficiency. As an excellent example of diet, in the Mufulira district, we found the children who had a well-balanced diet, including vegetables and protein. In addition, the household that has increased their income compared to 2018 purchased some foods like cooking oil, meat, fish, etc. It was suggested that the impacts of the E-COBSI are beginning to appear in some sites.

Child has good balanced diet in Mufulira district

Good Field Activities for Nutrition Improvement in the context of Farming

Imagine your farmers are very much motivated for nutrition improvement. So, what kind of field activities do you plan? Some districts have started to do activities focused on "Food processing and preservation". In Kalulushi district, FNO conducted a cooking demonstration on how to cook vegetable flitters using carrot and cabbage. Also, in Luanshya district, FNO conducted some kinds of cooking demonstrations for porridge made from cassava and soybeans. In addition, they trained how to make peanut butter and peanut sweets for children. These activities are thought to lead to the awareness of farmers and even behavior change.

Establishment of Fish Ponds for Nutrition Improvement

Fish culture is one of the potential activities for nutrition improvement in E-COBSI. Usually, there is excessive water from the weir when farmers are irrigating thus fish ponds can be constructed, and it will contribute to both consumption and income generation. The project team will promote the construction of a fish pond.

4 Fish ponds at Chililabombwe district model site. People consume & sell the fish

CONTACT: ecobsi.zambia@gmail.com

BACKNUMBER:https://www.jica.go.jp/project/zambia/020/newsletter/index.html (JAPANESE SITE)