

USAID's Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance III Project (FANTA)

# ANNUAL REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

FANTA is committed to supporting USAID's Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy 2014-2025, which aims to **REDUCE CHRONIC MALNUTRITION BY 20% OVER 5 YEARS**. Our strategic objective is to strengthen food security and health policies, programs, and systems for improved nutrition. We meet this objective through **HIGH-QUALITY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE** to scale up evidence-based nutrition interventions in the countries where we work, while conducting research to further build the evidence base for multisectoral approaches. Through this work, we strive to **IMPROVE THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES** in developing countries.

## MESSAGE FROM THE **PROJECT DIRECTOR**

This report presents just a few highlights from the work FANTA conducted across the globe during the year to address the complex and multisectoral barriers to food and nutrition security faced by millions of people around the world. Our work has helped governments develop sound nutrition policies and guidelines, assisted with integrating nutrition into health care services, and resulted in innovative research.

In addition, over the past year FANTA provided quality technical assistance, guidance, and tools to USAID, its priority countries, and implementing partners and other technical groups involved in nutrition and food security programming. In a recent customer satisfaction survey, over 90% of respondents reported that FANTA's technical assistance provided them with useful tools, that FANTA products helped them do their job, and that FANTA staff were knowledgeable and skilled. Our work was repeatedly described in terms such as "eye-opening," "practical," "rigorous," and "highly responsive."

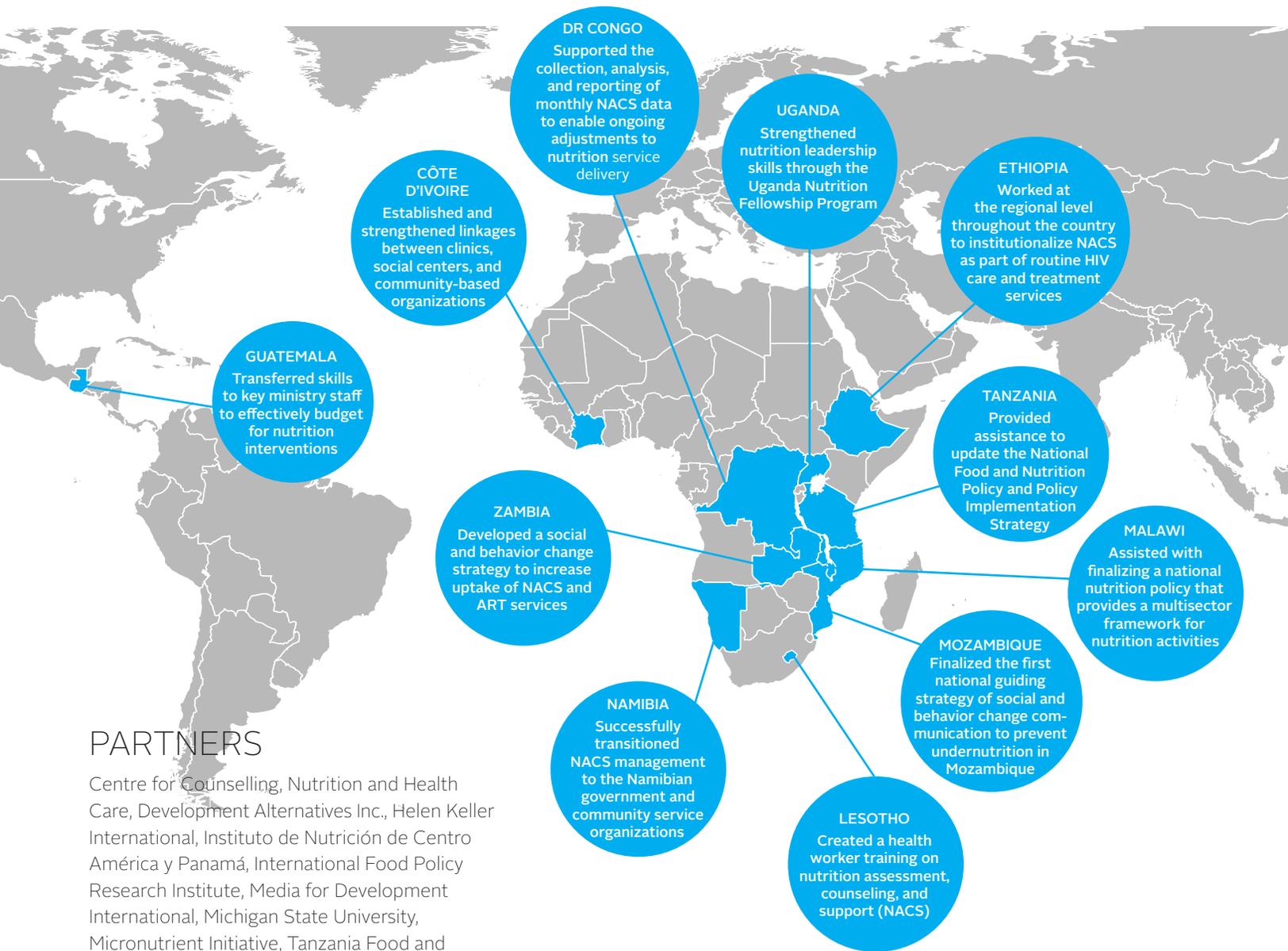
In the next year, we look forward to continuing to provide this high level of support to meet the needs of global partners who are working to improve nutrition and food security among those most in need.



**SANDRA REMANCUS**  
FANTA PROJECT DIRECTOR

# COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS

Examples of activities carried out to increase commitment to nutrition and support integrated programming



## PARTNERS

Centre for Counselling, Nutrition and Health Care, Development Alternatives Inc., Helen Keller International, Instituto de Nutrición de Centro América y Panamá, International Food Policy Research Institute, Media for Development International, Michigan State University, Micronutrient Initiative, Tanzania Food and Nutrition Centre, Tufts University, University of California, Davis, University of Tampere, Washington University in St. Louis

## JOURNAL ARTICLES

Our study to investigate the extent to which adverse birth outcomes can be reduced through provision of lipid-based nutrition supplements or multiple micronutrient supplementation during pregnancy resulted in published articles in five high impact peer-reviewed journals.

### December 2014

The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition: "The impact of lipid-based nutrient supplement provision to pregnant women on newborn size in rural Malawi: A randomised controlled trial"

### May 2015

Malaria Journal: "The impact of lipid-based nutrient supplementation on anti-malarial antibodies in pregnant women in a randomized controlled trial"

# KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

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## Costing Approach Raises Awareness of Malnutrition in Guatemala

The Government of Guatemala has made addressing chronic malnutrition a priority and is committed to reducing chronic malnutrition by 24% by 2021. In collaboration with the Central American Institute of Fiscal Studies, we supported the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Finance to conduct a costing exercise, which showed the extent of underfunding of nutrition programs in Guatemala and where the gaps were most severe. The results are helping to raise awareness among key government stakeholders of the human and financial resources needed to address the problem in the country.

## Expansion of Nutrition Advocacy Tool

We use the PROFILES tool to estimate the consequences of malnutrition and benefits of improved nutrition on preventable maternal and child deaths, economic productivity, and education. Recognizing the rising demand for evidence to aid decision making, particularly in countries that are part of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement, we created two new PROFILES models: one that links stunting to losses in learning mediated through poor cognitive development and illustrates the potential impact on a country's human capital, and one that links suboptimal breastfeeding practices to child deaths.

## Towards Sustainability of Nutrition Programming in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, we're supporting the Federal Ministry of Health to build capacity to foster sustainable nutrition service delivery systems to enhance the lives of people living with HIV and those who have been orphaned by the disease. Our work encompasses strengthening national-level nutrition guidelines, training for health care workers, supportive supervision at health facilities, and monitoring and reporting on indicators for the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

## Integration of Family Planning into Nutrition and Food Security Programming

Family planning has been prioritized in the USAID Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy 2014–2025 as a nutrition-sensitive intervention that addresses the underlying and systemic causes of malnutrition. To provide information on how to best integrate family planning into nutrition and food security programming, we published a review of programmatic experiences, which includes several case studies and lessons learned. The findings have been widely disseminated in order to reach those working in family planning and nutrition and food security programming.

## Strengthening Training on Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture Programming

To support Feed the Future programming guidance, we worked with Michigan State University to develop an online training course that introduces the fundamentals of nutrition-sensitive agriculture and provides guidelines for practitioners to use when designing programs that promote access to nutrient-rich foods and dietary diversity. The course is available via USAID University and Agrilinks, and has already become Agrilink's most downloaded tool since inception of the site.

## Eye Tracking to Study Infants' Cognitive Functioning in Rural Malawi

A field test carried out by the University of Tampere with infants in rural Malawi demonstrated that a new method to study infant cognition, based on recording eye movements and visual fixation, is feasible and acceptable to use in similar low-income settings. This new method has the potential to advance nutrition research in important ways, allowing critical aspects of healthy growth in children living in low-income countries to be compared to the most up-to-date body of knowledge on healthy child development. The method also has the potential to radically shorten the duration of follow-up needed in nutrition studies to obtain reliable child cognitive development measures.

### June 2015

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The Journal of Nutrition: "Supplementation of maternal diets during pregnancy and for six months post-partum and infant diets thereafter with small-quantity lipid-based nutrient supplements does not promote child growth by 18 months of age in rural Malawi"

### July 2015

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Maternal & Child Nutrition: "Nutrient supplementation may adversely affect maternal oral health - a randomised controlled trial in rural Malawi"

### August 2015

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Tropical Medicine & International Health: "Association between maternal dental periapical infections and pregnancy outcomes: results from a cross-sectional study in Malawi"

## Speaking Out on Adolescent Girls' Nutrition

FANTA's Technical Adviser on Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition participated in an online panel for *the Guardian* on the topic of "15 Ways to Stop Neglecting Adolescent Girls' Nutrition." Her featured advice included the following...

"Delay adolescent pregnancy and marriage: In a great many developing countries, nearly 50% of adolescent girls begin childbearing during their adolescent years, and this is a result of deeply held social norms that discriminate against women and girls. The consequences of early childbearing are not only the adverse pregnancy outcomes, but also that younger mothers struggle to provide for their children and have far less decision-making power to provide optimum care for their young children."

## A Collaborative Approach to Nutrition Assessment, Counseling, and Support (NACS) in DRC

Nutrition plays a vital role in reducing morbidity and mortality among people living with HIV. A healthy diet can help people living with HIV adhere to treatment and better manage symptoms. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), FANTA and two other USAID projects, LIFT II and ASSIST, collaborated on a three-pronged effort to help the Ministry of Health integrate nutrition into routine HIV care and treatment and connect clients to livelihood services.

Under this collaboration, FANTA provides technical assistance and resources for implementing NACS at health facilities; LIFT helps connect NACS clients to economic strengthening, livelihoods, and food security services in the community for further support; and ASSIST helps facilities improve the quality of NACS implementation. Efforts have resulted in nutrition assessment and counseling being integrated into facility services and improved upon, as well as increased referrals to services such as village savings and loan associations and food assistance.

## Supporting Uganda's District Nutrition Coordination Committees

Oversight for planning and implementing multisectoral nutrition activities in Uganda is managed by District Nutrition Coordination Committees, whose members include representatives from various government sectors. We are working with these committees through a 2-year process to strengthen nutrition leadership and governance at both the national and district level. Our work focuses on three main goals: (1) to strengthen the national oversight and support structure for the committees, (2) to enhance awareness of and commitment to nutrition among local level stakeholders including technical and political leaders, implementing partners, and community members, and (3) to strengthen committee capacity to plan, budget, leverage existing resources, advocate for, and monitor nutrition activities. Lessons that were learned from the first year of the initiative are being applied to the second year of implementation.

## REACH

2,368

Health care providers and managers trained on: nutrition assessment, counseling, and support; monitoring and evaluation; agriculture and nutrition linkages; maternal and child health; nutrition and HIV; and community-based management of acute malnutrition

55

New publications posted on [www.fantaproject.org](http://www.fantaproject.org)

18

Presentations given on FANTA work at professional conferences and workshops

40

Tools developed for: data collection; program design; nutrition assessment, counseling and support; costing; advocacy; and more

11

Global and national level policies strengthened through technical assistance



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