

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

ANNUAL REPORT HIGHLIGHTS



Photo credit: Jessica Scranton, FHI 360

After many years of collaborative efforts among key stakeholders in nutrition, agriculture, and health, there is cause for optimism in the fight against malnutrition. The key findings of the recent Global Nutrition Report (2016) paint a picture of important progress: Many countries are on track to meet the global targets for under-5 stunting and wasting. In addition, current global goals and initiatives, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Feed the Future, and the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement, continue to provide the unprecedented attention and sharp focus necessary to maintain the momentum of improving nutrition.

As a partner in these efforts, the USAID FANTA project continues its commitment to strengthening food security and health policies, programs, and systems to improve the health and nutrition of vulnerable populations facing nutrition challenges. We achieve this by providing 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—all in line with USAID's Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy 2014–2015. Through our on-the-ground work, we endeavor to improve the health and well-being of vulnerable individuals, families, and communities in developing countries.

MESSAGE FROM THE PROJECT DIRECTOR

During the past year, FANTA worked across the globe to continue the momentum to improve the evidence base for effective nutrition interventions, and to strengthen political commitment, capacity, and resources to implement sustainable multisectoral nutrition programs. It was a year of many notable achievements. We developed a number of nutrition assessment tools that make health service providers' jobs easier, completed a beneficiary-based survey sampling guide that will improve the quality of survey data for program monitoring, and published results from multiple FANTA studies. We also made advances in using distance learning to institutionalize nutrition capacity strengthening through national universities and providing in-service training during normal work hours. Finally, we made important contributions to our collective understanding of what makes food-security program benefits sustainable.

When the El Niño-induced drought took hold in several countries in Southern Africa, it brought into sharp relief the importance of FANTA's support of USAID's efforts to mitigate the disaster. Past FANTA work to strengthen capacity, data collection, supply management, and the application of quality improvement approaches to prevent and address acute malnutrition proved critical for a quick scale-up and intensification in the face of quickly deteriorating nutrition situations and increasing need.

FANTA is committed to collaborating with partners to strengthen food security and health policies, programs, and systems. We look forward to continuing to provide a high level of support to improve nutrition and food security among those most in need.

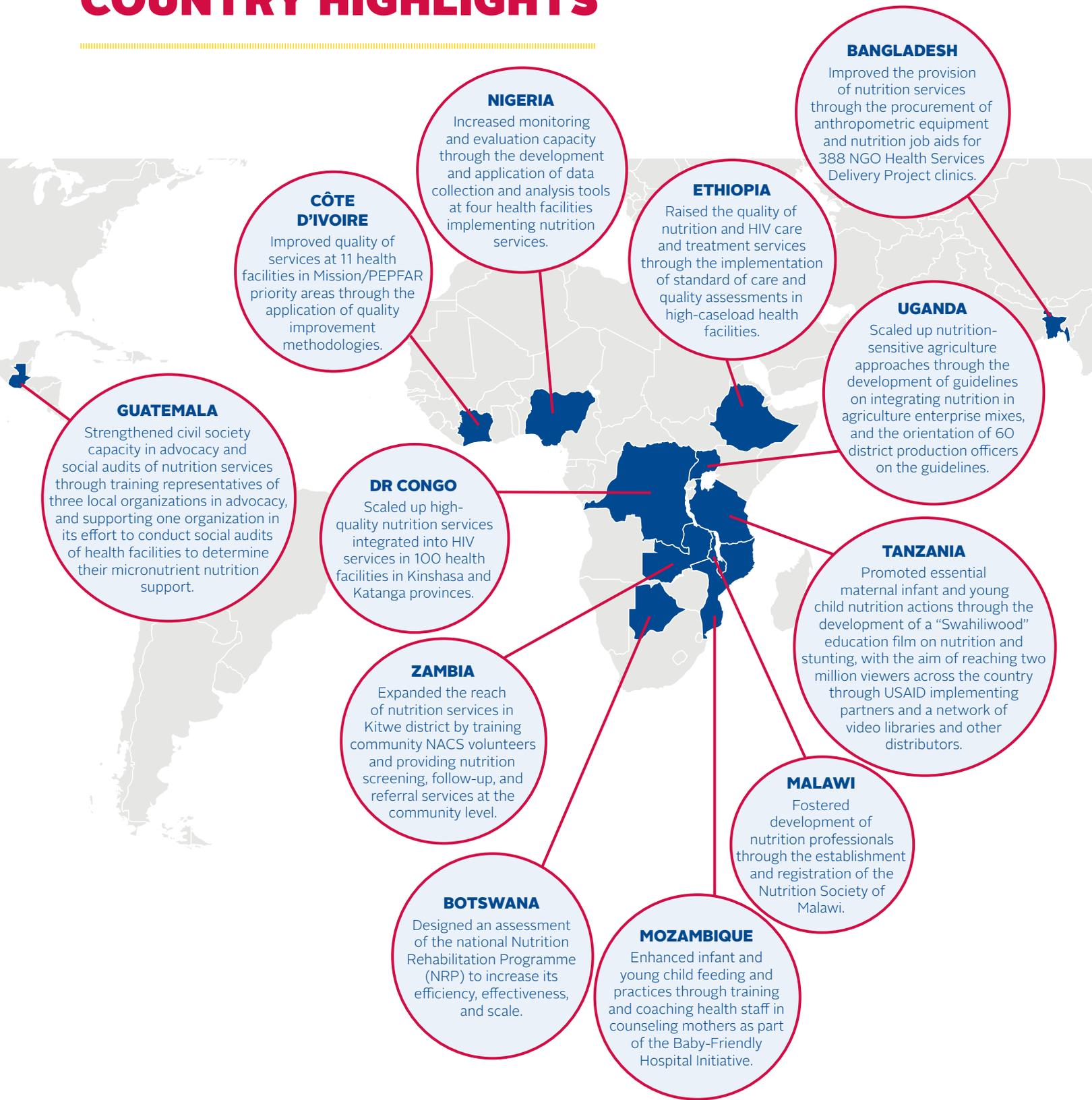
Sandra Remancus
FANTA Project Director

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

FANTA III
FOOD AND NUTRITION
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

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THE SCIENCE OF IMPROVING LIVES

COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Adopting Best Practices for Measuring Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women

Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women: A Guide to Measurement provides users of the Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women (MDD-W) indicator with detailed guidance on its use and application in its intended settings, along with advice on common pitfalls. The MDD-W measures whether a woman 15–49 years of age has consumed at least five out of ten defined food groups the previous day or night. The indicator is intended for use at the population-level and can be used as a proxy for consumption of a diet higher in micronutrient adequacy—an important dimension of diet quality. We developed the guide in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and FANTA partner University of California, Davis.

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Achieving Lasting Benefits for USAID’s Food for Peace Development Food Assistance Projects

Ensuring that country capacity development, systems strengthening, and approaches to nutrition improvements are sustainable over time is one of the guiding principles of the USAID Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy. While this has been a persistent challenge of development projects, up until now there has been little evidence on the effectiveness of different strategies. The Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, a FANTA partner, conducted reviews of the exit strategies and processes that were put into place during the life of development food assistance projects supported by USAID’s Office of Food for Peace (FFP) in Kenya, Honduras, Bolivia, and India, and observed their effects on the sustainability of project activities and benefits after the projects ended. The findings, which identified three factors critical to sustainability, provide guidance to future FFP projects on how to achieve lasting project benefits.

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Increasing Access to Innovative Tools Improves Nutritional Assessments



Health workers in Cote d'Ivoire using new BMI wheels. (Photo by Aimee Nibagwire, FANTA/FHI 360)

Determining one’s body mass index (BMI) is an inexpensive and reliable method for health workers to identify malnutrition in children over 5 years of age, adolescents, and non-pregnant, non-lactating adults. FANTA and the Boston Children’s Hospital created a BMI wheel to help health care workers in developing countries quickly calculate BMI and BMI-for-age. This simple tool not only makes body mass index measurements more accurate, but service providers have reported that it saves them time because they don’t have to do multiple calculations and cross-check against various reference charts. During the past year, we printed and distributed over 28,000 BMI wheels to facility-based service providers in Côte d’Ivoire, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.

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Attending Distance-Learning Course in Guatemala Enhances Maternal and Child Nutrition Services

To strengthen the capacity of frontline health workers to support nutrition services for mothers and children during the first 1,000 days, FANTA developed the Spanish-language distance-learning course Diplomado Nutrición Materno-Infantil en los Primeros 1,000 Días de Vida in collaboration with partner Instituto de Nutrición de Centro América y Panamá (INCAP) and the USAID/Nutri-Salud Project. Equally important to this effort was ensuring its continued use for capacity strengthening, and so we institutionalized the course as a Ministry of Health resource for pre-service training and self-training, and the Ministry added it to its e-learning platform.

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Working with Government Leaders to Strengthen Nutrition Governance

The USAID Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy 2014–2015 emphasizes that having a national multisectoral policy reinforces nutrition actions from national institutions to the community, and that the presence of a strong policy foundation signals commitment to strengthening the enabling environment for nutrition. In addition, nutrition policy documents can be a singular mechanism by which governments can be held accountable. During the past year, FANTA worked with government leaders and high-level task forces in Indonesia, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia to strengthen or create 13 new nutrition strategies, policies, and guidelines.

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Strengthening Capacity for Multisectoral Nutrition Programming

Highlights of our work to improve programs and systems that deliver nutrition services

46 tools developed to strengthen capacity in areas such as

- Agriculture and nutrition linkages
- Supportive supervision
- Nutrition assessment, counseling, and support
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Costing
- Advocacy

3,315 health-care providers and managers trained on such topics as

- Nutrition assessment, counseling, and support
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Agriculture and nutrition linkages
- Maternal and child health
- Nutrition and HIV

16 global- and national-level nutrition policies strengthened through technical assistance

Capacity Strengthening, Tool Development, and Quality Improvement Take Hold in Malawi and Mozambique

FANTA expanded and deepened its efforts to strengthen national capacity for addressing acute malnutrition in Malawi and Mozambique. Our work in Malawi included supporting the Ministry of Health in updating its national community-based management of acute malnutrition guidelines and tools, and aligning them with the latest evidence on the management of acute malnutrition as well as the World Health Organization standards. We also launched quality-improvement efforts in seven district hospitals to determine why there is such a high mortality rate among children with SAM who are admitted to inpatient care. In Mozambique, we continued to support the national Nutrition Rehabilitation Program through capacity strengthening, improving data collection and supply management of nutrition products, and applying quality improvement approaches to the program's implementation.

Providing a Roadmap for Beneficiary-Based Survey Sampling

In collaboration with the USAID Bureau for Food Security and Food for Peace, FANTA developed a sampling guide to help USAID program implementers conduct beneficiary-based surveys as a way of collecting data for select Feed the Future agricultural annual-monitoring indicators. Beneficiary-based surveys are typically used to ensure that project implementation is rolling out as expected and that project interventions are on track for achieving their intended outcomes and targets in the direct beneficiary population. The results of such monitoring exercises can be used to inform decisions about project strategies and to make corrections to project components if monitoring data show that they are not on track. The guide focuses specifically on Feed the Future indicators that are considered more challenging in terms of data collection.

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REACH

20

countries in which FANTA provided technical assistance to scale up evidence-based nutrition interventions

48

new FANTA publications posted on www.fantaproject.org

168,529

FANTA webpages viewed

38

presentations given on FANTA work at professional conferences and workshops

27

global- and country-level forums and groups FANTA participated in

JOURNAL ARTICLES

Our strategic research on lipid-based nutrient supplements, eye-tracking, and cognitive function, among many other key study areas, has been published in a number of high-impact, peer-reviewed journals.

NOVEMBER 2015

The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition

Lipid-based nutrient supplements for pregnant women reduce newborn stunting in a cluster-randomized controlled effectiveness trial in Bangladesh

DECEMBER 2015

BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth

Maternal cortisol and stress are associated with birth outcomes, but are not affected by lipid-based nutrient supplements during pregnancy: An analysis of data from a randomized controlled trial in rural Malawi

FEBRUARY 2016

Maternal and Child Nutrition

Adherence to recommendations on lipid-based nutrient supplement and iron and folic acid tablet consumption among pregnant and lactating women participating in a community health programme in northwest Bangladesh

JULY 2016

Archives of Disease in Childhood

Eye-tracking-based assessment of cognitive function in low-resource settings

Journal of Nutrition

Prenatal lipid-based nutrient supplements affect maternal anthropometric indicators only in certain subgroups of rural Bangladeshi women

Journal of Nutrition

Tubaramure, a food-assisted integrated health and nutrition program in Burundi, increases maternal and child hemoglobin concentrations and reduces anemia: A theory-based cluster-randomized controlled intervention trial

AUGUST 2016

BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth

A mixed method study exploring adherence to and acceptability of small quantity lipid-based nutrient supplements (SQ-LNS) among pregnant and lactating women in Ghana and Malawi

Applied Environmental Microbiology

Distinguishing the signals of gingivitis and periodontitis in supragingival plaque: A cross-sectional cohort study in Malawi

PARTNERS





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