

Documenting Lessons Learnt from Four DFNSC's in Zimbabwe



2021



ZIMBABWE

Preface

The Food and Nutrition Council with support from REACH coordinated inter-district learning, to enhance knowledge sharing between some four districts that are implementing the Multi-Sectoral Community Based Approach towards Stunting Reduction project. REACH has been supporting inter-district learning in the 38 MCBM districts and towards the end of 2020, committed support for four districts to be able to conduct these learning visits, though the apparent challenge to the learning visits were the travel restrictions due to COVID -19 lockdown regulations. An innovative approach using a virtual workshop was adopted however to ensure all the targeted districts are engaged.

The four districts that participated in the documentation of lessons learnt were selected based on the years they have been implementing the MCBM approach as well as their functional capacity of the team. Mt Darwin and Tsholotsho are amongst the 15 scale-up districts and at a higher functional level than Shamva and Gwanda. The Mt Darwin and Tsholotsho teams have been very cohesive in terms of multi-sector teamwork and are model teams from which the Gwanda and Shamva DFNSC can learn from.

After agreeing on the tools at national level there was then the rollout to the districts which began with the standardisation workshop to clarify the role of districts in the documentation process as well as the introduction of the tools which included the functionality assessment tool, the knowledge asset as well as the PowerPoint presentation guides. All this preparation was meant to create a launching pad for districts to effectively document their best practices and lessons learnt and for them to benefit and learn from fellow districts. The actual engagement with district begun on the 18th January up until the 22nd of January 2021. A team of 6 officers from each district and three Provincial Food and Nutrition Security Members attended the virtual meetings.

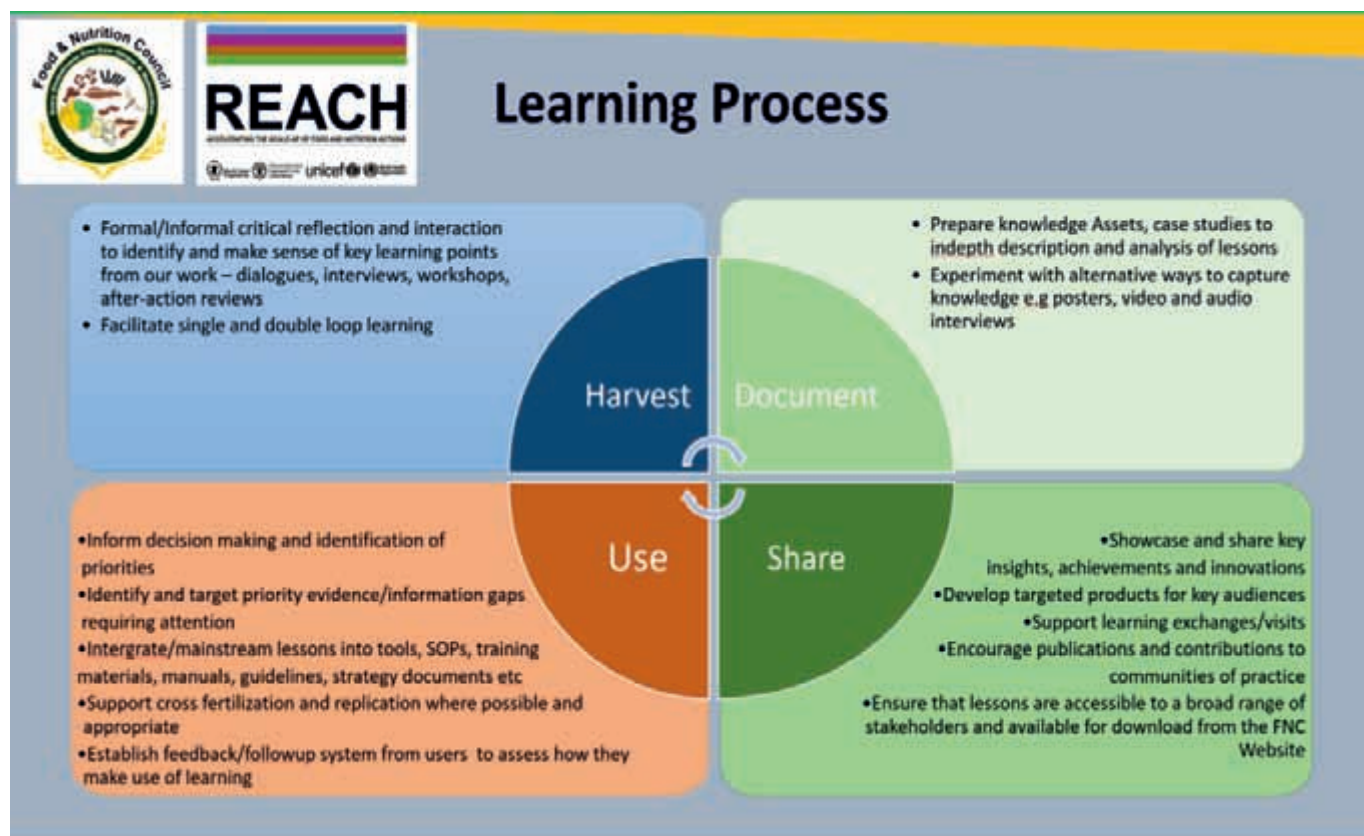
Introduction

This document is a compilation of the four knowledge assets or stories of change from the four districts which participated in the documentation of lessons learnt activity. It summarises the four different outputs that the districts presented during the workshop. The short stories of change from each district bring out the story from the period before district food and nutrition security committees were established, to the description of positive changes attributable to the committees as well as challenges, successes and priorities of committees for the future. The district lessons learnt reports will be presented in this order, Tsholotsho, Mt Darwin, Gwanda and Shamva.

Objectives for the Inter-district learning and documentation of lessons learnt.

1. To Identify key lessons and innovations from the Food and Nutrition Security Committees experience to improve the future of their work;
2. To introduce a documentation framework at national and subnational level and support cross-district learning and foster a culture of reflective practice;
3. To standardise the inter-district learning during the COVID-19 context.
4. To produce 4 knowledge assets and interdistrict learning reports documenting key lessons from the DFNSCs and to support uptake of lessons and innovations.

Fig .1 THE LEARNING PROCESS SUMMARISED



The flow chart above highlights the concept behind the documentation of lessons learnt and associated links to the sharing and utilisation of such knowledge which leads to ultimate improvement in programming. This cycle was the guidance compass that was emphasized during the workshop.

Fig 2 Highlight of the participant’s feedback



Fig 2 The above shows responses came from participants’ feedback of what they learned during the sharing of lessons learnt.

TSHOLOTSHO DFNSC LESSONS LEARNT REPORT

January
2021

1. Brief History

Each department was operating in isolation before formation of the committee, there was no combined efforts, planning of the activities were done as departments even though each department was serving the same community resulting in less efficient use of resources, double beneficiaries and less noted, shared progress. There was minimum coordination between stakeholders. The departments were only concerned about their departmental activities; sectors didn't know that they needed each other in their working activities for example agriculture had great concern about production but with little emphasis on the nutritional aspects of the crops produced. There were no meetings conducted to discuss the food and nutrition issues. Furthermore, there was no integrated monitoring activities.

2. Current Situation

After setting up of the district food and nutrition security committee Monthly and quarterly meetings are planned and conducted consistently. Communication can now be easily done through meetings, emails, written memos and WhatsApp group platform. Sectors are no longer planning in silos but together in a multisector approach. District major events for example food fairs are being combined with breastfeeding events, and WASH activities through sharing itineraries for sector activities to create all-encompassing visibility for sectors at major events all for the sake of addressing food and nutrition insecurity.

With a functional committee, monitoring visits are more integrated and selection of beneficiaries eg for food aid is now more transparent to all sector as well as the community. Emergency preparedness and response has been enhanced through the functioning of the committee.

The use of evidence to guide decisions in the committee has greatly improved and various sources of data/information are used for example ,the food and Nutrition Policy, ZIMVAC Report, Crop assessments reports , Nutrition survey reports, MICS report, Partner assessments reports (base line, evaluation reports) among other district specific reporting tools.

3. What Worked Well

There was good monitoring of different sector activities as a collective by the committee.

There was efficient use of resources, through combining planning and implementing of activities as a committee. Beneficiary targeting is more efficient as all sector have their input. Quarterly reporting was done consistently.

4. What Did Not Work Well

Meetings were not conducted as planned and attendance was normally poor.

12 wards were not trained in MSCBM.

ZimVAC reports data was not district aggregated for easy use in planning activities for the district.

5. Major Challenges

Not all committee members have been trained in the food and nutrition security committee mandate. Staff turnovers have left, gaps in the continuity of the committee activities and resource limitations like stationary, fuel, lunch allowances and communication allowances are still not readily available to the team thus limiting fruitful committee interactions and stifling their motivation.

5. Areas to Improve

Refresher training for DFNSC member as the majority are not trained.

Train all wards on MSCBM for uniformity and progress.

Resource mobilization for the DFNSC.



MOUNT DARWIN DFNSC LESSONS LEARNT REPORT

January
2021

1. Brief History

Mt Darwin district first constituted its District Food and Nutrition Security Committee in 2013 following the training of 15 district stakeholders by the National Food and Nutrition Security council. This led to the facilitate the establishment of the district level, ward and village level structures to coordinate the multi sectoral implementation of the food and nutrition security programmes in the district.

Before the establishment of the DFNSC the district did not have any specific structure to coordinate Food and Nutrition Security programmes and interventions. The only structure in the district was the District Drought Relief Committee whose primary focus was distribution of food relief to vulnerable members of the community.

There was lack of coordination and the silo approach to programme implementation which resulted in line ministry's, government department and non-governmental organisation duplicating of roles and efforts. There was no systematic resource mobilisation for targeted food and nutrition interventions. Furthermore, it was very difficult to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of programme interventions.

2. Current Situation

The district currently holds regular monthly and quarterly meetings and other ad hoc meetings called upon to discuss urgent pressing Food and Nutrition Security issues in the district. Communication is mainly via meetings and digital platform such as WhatsApp or email.

For decision making the DFNSC uses evidence from ZimVAC reports, Crop and Livestock Assessment Survey, baseline surveys, Food and Nutrition Security Policy, National Development Strategy, Zimbabwe Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys reports, reports from the ministry of health and drought relief committee

3. What Worked Well

3.1 Trainings, regular meetings and digital information sharing platforms have created an awareness on the multi sectoral nature of food and security interventions resulting in greater coordination and collaboration of different stakeholders. Government and partner organisations have worked together very well to plan and implement food and nutrition security interventions for the district, with NGOs supporting the committee with stationary, transport and refreshments.

3.2 The Care group model (CGM). Using the CGM, a community-based nutrition behaviour change communication model, the district was able to significantly improve the sanitation coverage and reduce mal nutrition rates. The CGM had better coverage and reach of the target population integrating theory and practice (e.g. cooking demonstrations, food fares, continuous production of vegetables through keyhole household and community nutrition gardens). With the Care group model, nutrition was integrated with agriculture and a significant proportion of care group participants learned to produce and also consumed bio fortified crops. CGM managed to penetrate the hard-to-reach apostolic faith churches in Mt Darwin, allowing meaningful promotion of EBF and other recommended nutrition behaviours in these communities, as well as giving them access to essential health services such as growth monitoring, vitamin A supplementation and micronutrient powders. These smaller groups were also used as effective platforms to raise awareness on COVID-19.



3. What Worked Well (continued)

3.3 The Mother-Led MUAC approach was very effective in active screening of under-fives as evidenced by increased number of screened cases noticed in the first few months after the programme had started. The programme is community based and led by care givers.

3.4 Promotion of community nutritional gardens and irrigation schemes supported by government and partner organisation such as world vision and ENTERPRISE. There was also an Increase of farmers practising conservation agriculture popularly known as Pfumvudza which targeted all households in the district. Up to 89% of household in the district managed to participate In the programme and training and distribution of free inputs for farmers made the programme hugely popular.

4. What Did Not Work Well

4.1 Ward level capacity building trainings were not done in all ward of the district which affected the uniformity in programme implementation.

4.2 Conflicts at nutrition garden points and irrigation schemes significantly affected productivity.

5. Challenges and Bottlenecks

5.1 The DFNSC has meagre resources which limited monitoring and support visits. There is lack of continuity due to staff turnover within the stakeholders. Lack of adequate training for stakeholders and some ward level structures.

5.2 Leadership wrangles and conflicts in community run irrigation schemes and community nutrition gardens.

5.3 Late distribution of inputs for the pfumvudza and command agriculture programmes. Some farmers have failed to adhere to the pfumvudza recommended practices which might lead to poor harvest.

6. Areas of Improvement

There is need to engage community leaders as a strategy of enhancing successful implementation of care groups through village meetings and ward meetings. There should be consistent support and supervision of care groups quarterly in order to reach targeted population. The irrigation scheme members and members of the community nutrition gardens are encouraged to have detailed constitution documents to guide them in settling leadership wrangles and resolving conflicts. When new development interventions are introduced in the district, Involvement of all key members in the community is critical, to instil a sense of community ownership from project inception as well as implementation.

There is need for early distribution of inputs so that farmers can adequately prepare in time. There is need for continuous training as well as monitoring visits so that district and ward level committees are encouraged. Inter –provincial, inter-district and inter-ward look and learn visits should be supported to sustain the best practices and allow for sharing of lessons learnt. There is need for a district food and nutrition security committee vehicle to be used in the many field activities. IT gadgets for the district team and the ward level committee to capture data reports and statistics on Food and Nutrition Security interventions in the district in real time, are urgently needed to allow efficient flow of information in the COVID context. Scaling up the support from the ten wards to all wards in the district.

7. Future Priorities

There is need for a District Food and Nutrition Security Committee vehicle.

There is need for IT gadgets for the district team and the ward level committee to capture data reports and statistics on food and nutrition interventions in the district in real time.

The DFNSC needs training support to scale up the support from the ten wards to all wards in the district.



GWANDA DFNSC LESSONS LEARNT REPORT

January
2021

1. Brief History

The committee was formed in the early 2000, when there was a severe drought. In that period, the government started to reinforce these meetings because malnutrition rates were high. Members who became the DFNSC were also drought relief members who convened every two weeks for updates and work that was being done. The drought relief committee was organized and chaired by the district administrator. The main challenge before the establishment of the committee (DFNSC) was lack of resources to monitor interventions. The introduction of this team at district level created hopes of creating more focus on food and nutrition security issues.

2. Current Situation

Meetings have been conducted consistently and complementarily with the drought relief committee. Of late however, the COVID-19 has made meetings more erratic. Lockdown measures have led to Information sharing between the members through digital platforms and calls. Use of monthly reports, DHIS data bases, surveys and DFNSC members reports are used to guide decision making

3. Successes

Writing of reports by sectors and government departments has been a major success.

4. Major Challenges

Roles played by key members and their Limited resources for the committee have continued to affect the frequency of meetings.

The COVID 19 has introduced another dynamic where most interaction is online and team members need data support.

5. Areas to Improve

Capacity building of DFNSC Members

6. Future Priorities

To train ward FNSC

To strengthen horizontal coordination between DFNSC members for effective utilization of resources



SHAMVA DISTRICT LESSONS LEARNT REPORT

1. Brief History

Before the committee was established, the district usually had stakeholders' meet in various foras, but they were not confined to clear specific roles, hence food security issues were not clearly tackled. Before the committee was established the main challenge was poor allocation of resources and efforts since there was no integration of activities. Departments would operate separately resulting sometimes in confusion and duplication of labour

2. Current Situation

Pre-COVID- 19 era, meetings were regularly organized at least once per month with a high attendance turnout, but due to COVID-19 2020 was a very difficult year we only managed to meet at least once per quarter.

Currently the team has managed to create a WhatsApp DFNSC group where various departments can share and discuss issues of concern.

As a committee we usually use survey results such as ZIMVAC, Crop and livestock assessment survey reports, SMART Surveys, Nutrition survey reports. To help in identifying areas and populations that require the most urgent support.

The team also uses community leaders to help in gathering information of interest and most importantly to make decisions.

3. Successes

Team work has worked tremendously for us as a district coupled by community engagement, Partners and leadership engagement and Business people engagement

4. Major Challenges

COVID-19 was the greatest challenge, we reduced the frequency of meetings and mostly have relied on texting through the Whatsapp group.

"We were unable to mobilize WFNSC due to lack of resources because they lack motivation"

5. Areas to Improve

Train the stakeholders at ward level on WFNSC coordination so that they will be able to functional and start operating.

6. Future Priorities

Reduce stunting, ensure 80% of the total population is food secure at least as a start. Ensure that everyone in the district have access to safe water.



Overall Comment of the FNSC function in Zimbabwe

These district food and nutrition committees are mentioned in the national nutrition plan and a clear structure has been set up from national to village level of how they committees fit into Zimbabwe's nutrition coordination architecture. Committees interact with the FNC at the national level through the department under FNC responsible for multi-sectoral coordination (MCU). This department engages in the capacity building of committees as well as conduct regular exercises to assess functionality of district committees and promote of best practices. In terms of funding, the district committees depend on partner support within their localities, there is no committed budget to cater for their day to day operational needs. For example, a district like Mt Darwin 100% of its financial needs to operate are met by their innovative approach to harness local resources within the various government ministries and local NGOs. REACH support in these continued efforts has been to train committees in non-operational districts, support district committee functionality assessments as well as supporting look and learn activities.

ANNEXE 1

1. Picture Gallery

Picture 1 below showing Shamva District successful nutrition project.



Picture 2 and 3 below showing Tsholotdhpo district highlights.



ANNEXE 2. Documentation of lessons learnt framework guidance tool

FNC with support from REACH Zimbabwe is looking to document lessons learned with respect to district coordination teams. Below are some considerations and/or sections that may be included in the framework and final report,

Include pictures and direct quotations from the district teams to bring out the human side in these

types of documents.

Thematic area	Extra notes.
1.What were u doing before the DFNSCs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brief History that culminated in the the formation of the commitees.
2.What are you doing now ? explain more based on functionality guideline. Success aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting frequency: How often do they meet?• Communication lines/Knowledge sharing:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ How is information shared between the members (e.g. meetings, calls, digital platforms/info systems, email)?• Decision-making: What tools or sources of data/information are used to guide decision-making?
3 What worked well	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do the teams consider to be critical success factors?
4.What were your challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the main challenges and bottlenecks (including capacity gaps)?
5AA.What would you recommend	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What would they do differently the next time?• What are the future priorities of the district coordination bodies/teams?•

Annex 3: List of Participants

District	Ministry/Sector/Organisation	First Name	Last Name	Cell Number	Email
Gwanda	Ministry of Public Service Labour and Social Welfare	Alex	Ushendibaba	263775352550	alexushendibaba@gmail.com
Gwanda	Forestry Commision	Fortunes Felix	Matutu	713886195	matutufelix@gmail.com
Gwanda	Agritex	Geoffrey	Hove	779024408	geofreyjoe@yahoo.com
Gwanda	Ministry of Public Service Labour and Social Welfare	Golden Mugove	Mapanga	772245176	gmmapanga@gmail.com
Gwanda	Ministry of Health and Child Care	Jubilent	Jacha	775816616	ndukwanajubie@gmail.com
Gwanda	Women Affairs, Community Small and Medium Enterprise Development	Sipho	Maposa	773638008	siemapho@gmail.com
Mount Darwin	Forestry Commission	Chrispen	Nyangombe	774042431	chrisnyangombe@gmail.com
Mount Darwin	Ministry of Public Service Labour and Social Welfare	Karison	Kambumbu	774110469	kkambumbu@gmail.com
Mount Darwin	Youth Sport Arts and Recreation	Linia	Matare	775347031	liniamatare@gmail.com
Mount Darwin	Ministry of Health and Child Care	Munashe	Kapasura	771694312	munashekapasura@gmail.com
Mount Darwin	Women Affairs Community Small and Medium Enterprises Development	Oscar Jonathan	Manyepwa	773043229	oscarmanyepwa@gmail.com
Mount Darwin	Local Government	Sashar	Zvomuya	772725569	sasharzvomus@gmail.com
Mat North	Local Government	Dhasai	Parenda	774670859	dparenda055@gmail.com
Mat North	Health and Child Care	Elizabeth	Katuruza	779071868	ekaturuza@gmail.com
Mat South	Health and Child Care	innocent	mazarura	772600880	imazarura@gmail.com
Mat South	Local Government	Nomathemba	Ndlovu	784407793	mdunoma77@gmail.com
Mash Central	Health and Child Care	Shingirai	Mikiri	772580805	mikirishingirai@gmail.com
Mat North	Agritex	Mapira	Charity	772319763	chamapira@gmail.com
Shamva	Agritex	Darlington	Tungwana	774052869	tungwanadarlington@gmail.com
Shamva	Local Government	Gladys	Mapfumo	774273888	mapfumogladys9@gmail.com
Shamva	Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare	Grenia	Chaomba	0713019282/0774654688	grenchaomba@gmail.com
Shamva	Health and Child Care	Margaret	Mhlanga	774025651	margaretmhlanga@gmail.com

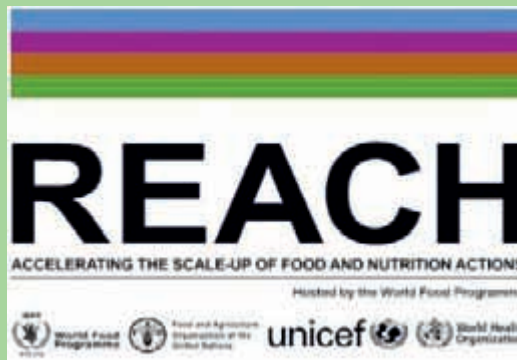
District	Ministry/Sector/Organisation	First Name	Last Name	Cell Number	Email
Shamva	Ministry of women affairs, community, small and medium enterprise development	Simbisai	Ndige	772855252	simbisaindige8@gmail.com
Shamva	Primary and secondary Education	Victor	Mugiya	773434942	mugiyav@gmail.com
Tsholotsho	Tsholotsho RDC	Linnet	Banda	772319962	linnetdebbby47@gmail.com
Tsholotsho	MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND CHILD CARE	MBONISI	NCUBE	773494888	mbonisijason084@gmail.com
Tsholotsho	Agriculture	Rachel	Sibanda	772387813	rachiesn@yahoo.com
Tsholotsho	Local Government	Aaron	Gono	774011392	gonoaaron69@gmail.com
Tsholotsho	Health and Child Care	Nomsa Lee	Tauya	775041207	leetauya@gmail.com
Tsholotsho	Department of Social Development	Varaidzo	Mahachi	777670396	mahacheev@gmail.com
National	Food and Nutrition Council	Alfa	Ndlovu	773700866	ndlovualfah@gmail.com
National	FNC	Eulita	Tivafukidze	0772 850980	eulitativa@gmail.com
National	Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare	Mary	Takangovada	773385346	
National	Min of Agric	Nester	Gumbo	0772 728 717	gumbonester@gmail.com
National	FNC	Rangarirai	Mureya	779622600	rmureya@gmail.com
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National	Local Government	Disalicey			

Notes

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