

FANSER Gender Strategy: Towards an Effective and Innovative Gender Transformative Approach for Better Nutrition for Women and Children

The overall objective of the Food and Nutrition Security, Enhanced Resilience (FANSER) Project (FANSER) project is to improve **food and nutrition security and dietary diversity** of women of reproductive age particularly pregnant and lactating women and children under the age of two years. This is to tackle malnutrition during the 1000 days critical period to end the vicious cycle of malnutrition. The project aims to reach **110,000 WRA and 64,000 children under the age of two years** in Katete, Petauke, and Sinda Districts in Eastern Province and in Kawambwa, Mwansabombwe, and Mwense Districts in Luapula Province.

To achieve this goal, the project has **five fields of actions**:

1. Improving knowledge levels of women on nutrition, change attitudes positively
2. Improving knowledge levels of women on hygiene, change attitudes positively
3. Increasing the year-round availability nutrient-rich foods
4. Developing improved strategies for households to improve their household and productive resources
5. Strengthening nutrition governance at District, Provincial and National Level

Improving nutrition of women and children is highly dependent on the level of women's **empowerment and decision-making power** over income, time, land ownership, active support from men/husbands, and the communities (e.g. including traditional leaders, peer groups and church leaders). Therefore, in FANSER **Gender** is an **important component** in the **implementation**, not only a crosscutting topic. Using with a transformation process in the households, communities and systems level towards gender equality FANSER is able to **archive sustainable change and improved nutrition**.

This gender strategy will enable FANSER to address gender even more holistically and effectively in its project activities, implementing a **Gender Transformative Approach**¹ (GTA). The document consists of five parts: i) outcomes of the recent studies on gender in FANSER, ii) conceptual background, iii) FANSER's gender strategy, and iv) action points for further strengthening the effectiveness of current activities and innovations which shall further support the transformation process.

Outcomes of Gender Studies in FANSER

The gender baseline survey which was carried out by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in 2019 in Eastern Province shows that:

- Men are more likely to have the decision-making power and control over resources in the households.
- This includes household income, food purchases, ownership of land, farm equipment, livestock, and earned income from sell of crops and participation in Savings and Internal Lending Committees (SILC).

¹ Gender Transformative Approach (GTA): support transforming unequal gender relations to promote shared power, control over resources, decision-making, and support for women's empowerment. In transformative approaches, root causes of gender inequalities are assessed, addressed, and activities are implemented to transform harmful gender roles, norms, and relationships

- Males dominate in making most decisions that impact nutrition outcomes of their families. Generally, the rate of joint decision making among couples on almost all critical areas under consideration is low.
- Equally low is male participation in child caring activities.

The results from the Social and Behavioral Change (SBC) qualitative research in 2021 gives a more mixed picture on the decision-making power and behaviors on joint decision-making practices. Some of the main **outcomes include:**

- Decisions on what children eat are mainly made by women, due to their responsibility for cooking / feeding and because they spend most time with the children.
- Decisions on what food will be bought are often done jointly by women and men, because men are in charge of the household's money, while women are preparing the meals.
- Decisions on which crops to be grown are made by men on cash crops such as maize, cassava, soya beans, etc. and women regarding legumes, pumpkin, and other crops that are meant for consumption. Women are more often consulted when the couple has a good relationship and are less often consulted when men see themselves as more knowledgeable on farming inputs.

The central question from these gender studies is: *Are women able to put their knowledge and benefits from nutrition and hygiene lessons, nutrition-sensitive agriculture activities, Farmer Business Schools and membership in Savings and Loan Groups into practice to improve the nutrition situation in the households?* This depends especially on who takes the **following decisions:**

- Who consumes which food in the household.
- Purchase and/or establishment of handwashing facilities, toilets, soap, and an appropriate container for water.
- Allocation of women's and household's members time for cooking adequate foods for children, breastfeeding, farming activities, etc.
- Land allocation e.g. for production of nutritious foods for home consumption (considering soil fertility, size, etc.).
- Labour allocation for production of nutritious foods.
- What is sold, and which crops are kept for consumption.
- Investment in proper food storage facilities and methods for food processing (e.g. PICs Bags, plastic container and solar dryer).
- Use of resources for investments in agriculture and livestock production and purchase of nutritious food.
- Purpose and investment of savings and loans.
- Health care support for children and pregnant mothers.

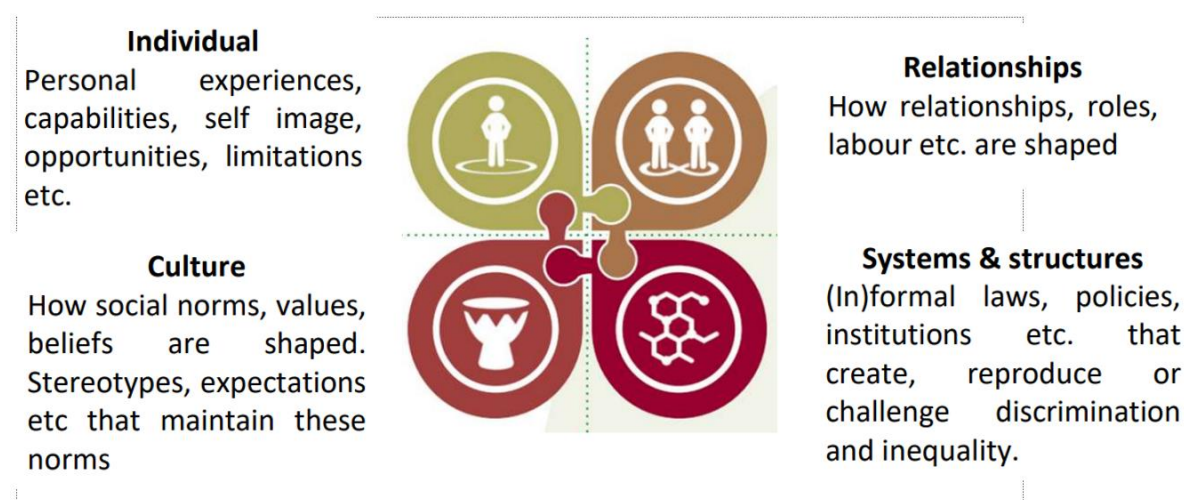
Without the **support from men** as well as the **community as a whole** and without **joint decision-making** in the households and **shared responsibilities** women will not be able to improve their own and their children's nutrition in the families. Barriers and enablers from the men's perspective towards increased joint decision-making and support for better nutrition are key in designing an effective and innovative **Gender Transformative Approach (GTA)**. Therefore, the project supports households to **develop and implement a family vision for better nutrition.**

Conceptional Background

Quadrants of Change to Transform Gender Relations

The Quadrant of Change to transform gender relations is a holistic model in which gender is approached from four angles: i) the individual, ii) relationships, iii) culture, and iv) systems and structures (see **Figure 3**). This model helps to design a Gender Transformative Approach, addressing the four quadrants of change as a contribution to improved Gender Equality for the project's effectiveness.

Figure 1: Quadrant of Change in the Gender Transformative Approach



The Gender Transformative Approach implemented by FANSER

FANSER's goal is to empower women to improve their control over resources on household level and increase their decision-making power especially related to nutrition. This includes:

- Improve women's and men's self-efficacy²
- Improve joint decision making at household level
- Enhance shared roles and responsibilities on household level for better nutrition.

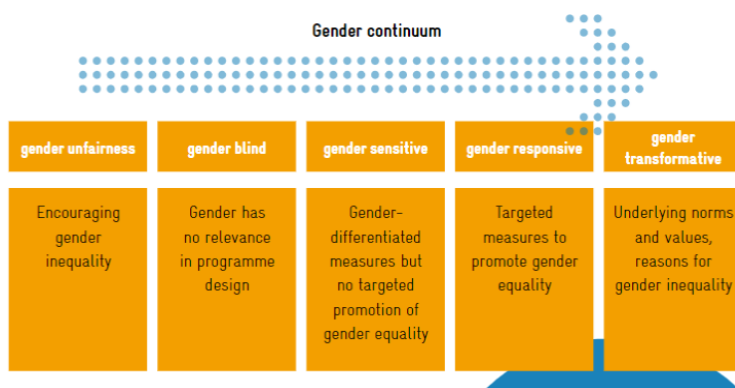
FANSER measures its success under **Output 4** with an **indicator** which requires a **transformative change** how couples in the households are interacting traditionally:

Output 4: Households at risk of food and nutrition insecurity have developed improved strategies for managing their household and productive resources.

GTA Output Indicator 4.1: 50% of the 16,500 households trained under FBS apply 30% of the 10 key practices on **joint decision-making** and **resource planning** in their households.

² Self-efficacy is a person's belief that he/she is capable of learning something or performing a certain task. The conviction regarding one's own abilities determines how people feel, think, motivate themselves and also act in a concrete situation, it therefore influences perception and performance in a wide variety of ways.

Figure 2: Gender Continuum³



FANSER project implements a Gender Transformative Approach to support a transformation process addressing the underlying norms, values and reasons for gender inequality (see figure 2). The project addresses the underlying norms, values, stereotypes, and reasons for gender inequality in a very **comprehensive** way. Apart from specific gender related activities, Gender is included in all Nutrition and WASH activities. To be effective in the support of real change the project is **continuously** very **close** to the **households** and **communities**. Adequate **human and financial resources** are provided and **key** to be **impactful**.

CRS, FANSERs the main implementing partner, has employed **Gender Animators** in each District who are planning, supervising, supporting, and monitoring the activities under the Gender Transformative Approach. They train the **intermediaries** and **change agents**.

- **Nutrition Volunteers, Health and WASH Promoters** receive a 1-day training on gender-sensitive topics.
- **Private Service Providers (PSPs)** receive a 5-days Training of Trainers (ToT) which enables them to deliver the 12 modules of the GTA+SILC training to the **members of the SILC Groups** and their spouses. For trainings of the PSP and SILC members the [SILC+GTA](#) Facilitation Manual was developed. It includes in-depth instructions on the preparation and the methodologies for the delivery.
- Selected **Gender Champions** from the communities receive an in-depth (5-days) training on Gender and how it is related to the different project areas of intervention.
- **Traditional Leaders** receive a 3-days training on gender (simplified based on the SILC+GTA modules)

Gender Animators also plan, supervise, monitor, and support all Gender Activities in the project.

³ Source: Transforming Gender roles to reach Gender Equality – [Guidance for G500 Projects](#)

In the following all FANSER gender activities are listed, using the **Quadrant of Change** as a conceptual frame, see the overview in Table 1.

Table 1: Activities under Gender Transformative Activities in the Quadrant of Change

<p>Individual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lesson delivery on nutrition and hygiene for women - Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture trainings for women - SILC and Farmer Business Schools for women (80%) - Trainings in Farmer Financial Cycle for SILC members (80% women) 	<p>Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SILC+GTA: SILC Group Members receive learning sessions on GTA topics (11 modules), delivered by PSP. Spouses are invited, husbands and wives discuss and experience topics around joint decision-making and shared roles and responsibilities in the household. - Involvement of men and household members in FANSER nutrition and hygiene lessons at household level. - FBS trainings encourage couples to decide and work together in the implementation of the key practices promoted - Household visits (6 households/month) by Gender Champion: one-to-one conversations separately with women, men and the couple on specific, Gender-related topics (joint decision-making, shared roles and responsibilities, prevention Gender-Based Violence) – Gender Animators support the discussions and do follow up.
<p>Culture</p> <p>Peer-to-peer program: strengthening dialog on community level to influence change on harmful norms and traditional practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trained Traditional Leaders, together with Gender Champions, conduct conversations with other traditional leaders on Gender. - Traditional Leaders conduct community engagements to discuss gender inequalities and harmful cultural practices (1-2 engagements/month). Role plays and other adequate methods are used. They are usually assisted, supported, and monitored by Gender Animators. - Focus Group Discussions: Gender Champions facilitate Focus Group Discussions (men, women and mixed) once per quarter to discuss gender inequalities and harmful cultural practices. - Cooking demonstrations for men only are conducted. 	<p>Systems & Structures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transformation in the team: FANSER Eastern & Luapula gender workshops. - Training and equipping Gender Champions, Private Service Providers and Traditional Leaders within the communities with knowledge and skills to disseminate gender appropriate messages and facilitate community engagements on gender topics. - Collaboration with key government departments such as community development to re-enforce gender advocacy: Advocacy activity on early marriage and Gender Based Violence by strengthening their reporting system (Gender Desk): joint trainings on Gender, Supporting District Nutrition Coordinating Committee where Ministry of Community Development is part of it.

Activities to further improve effectiveness of the GTA

Based on our **learnings in the implementation of gender transformative activities** and two assessments on the effectivity of GTA approaches and men's perception of FANSER and needs for engagement in nutrition activities conducted in March 2022 (in [TEAMS](#)) we focus on the following **activities for 2022 and 2023** with the **aim:**

1. improving quality and effectiveness of our GTA interventions

2. addressing husbands' perception and needs for behaviour change (roles and responsibilities for nutrition and cultural change) and improving men's ownership and participation in the FANSER project

Table 2: Plans for 2022/20223

What	Responsible	Until when
individual level/relationship		
Improve effectiveness of Nutrition and WASH Lessons, SILC&GTA and work of Gender Champions through <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Translation of SILC+GTA Manual in local language (2) Development and printing of pictorial Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Materials for SILC+GTA trainings through PSP (in local language) (3) Provision of teaching aids for Gender Champions and PSP (flip charts, markers) (4) Development and provision (printing) of counselling material for Gender Champions 	CRS/Angela: development of material to be used TBI: printing IEC/counselling materials	tbd
Not all women and all men are the same, and therefore FANSER needs to consider intersectionality ⁴ in its efforts: We want to support the participation of young women/couples in SILC and FBS <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. evaluate age group of membership in SILC 2. develop approach to interest young women/couples being part of savings and loan groups 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) MEAL CRS (2) E.g. AgFin in collaboration with CRS 	
Pilot men to men groups to support behaviour change (joint decision making, support understanding about roles and responsibilities for good nutrition) and pilot (<i>contributes also to quadrant culture</i>)	Gladys and Patrick K.	October 2022
Improve men's involvement in nutrition activities (ownership, knowledge, understanding roles and responsibilities) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plan nutrition-lessons at household level with women AND men (timing, etc.) to improve men's participation 2. Development concept on using Soccer Games at community level to interest men in nutrition (concept and messages to be developed, pilot to be implemented) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Message to be spread through Cascade: NO/CRS-FS-HP-NV (2) Malumbo & Patrick & Joe 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) (2) November 2022
Relationship		
Have wider reach of SILC+GTA approach: Develop concept how components of SILC+GTA approach can be implemented in Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture activities. Senior Lead Farmer and Camp Extension Officers to be trained.	Angela & Malumbo	
Review appropriateness of the Dignified Families approach: Methodology to bring families together, discuss different levels of interaction: revision of existing training materials	Angela to review	
Culture		

⁴ Intersectionality = Interaction between different dimensions e.g. how gender, age, socio-economic status, education and marital status can have an impact in an individual's life.

Develop Youth Clubs concept and implementation at schools	Gladys, Malumbo, Sharon	tbd
Systems and Structures		
<p>Strengthening female participation on beneficiary level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support and Women's and men's participation in DNCC and WNCC meetings. This includes identification and capacity development of these selected beneficiaries/household members so that they are able to participate actively and take their stand. ▪ Pilot participation beneficiary participation in PNCC meeting. 	Xavier	
<p>Support gender-responsive multisectoral Nutrition planning on District, Provincial and National Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support NFNC/line Ministries to include gender aspects in their decision making, planning processes and coordination structures (link bilateral project) ▪ Analysis of multisectoral Nutrition plans on Gender-responsiveness and impact on Gender Transformation ▪ Identification on potential for gender responsive and transformative multisectoral nutrition planning ▪ Capacity strengthening of partners from Ward to National level on gender responsive and transformative planning. 		

Possible activities to further strengthen structural change within the FANSER project context:

Empowerment of Nutrition Champion Network

- Identify and strengthen female and male Nutrition Champions from the civil society through capacity building and empowerment measures: with different backgrounds (rural communities, small towns, cities)
- Support creating and strengthening operationalization of a nutrition champion network/and/or support participation in SUN Civil Society Network:
 - Support exchange of experience and approaches
 - Support advocacy work e.g.
 - through support participation in important nutrition related platforms: high level, Province-level up to District level
 - support public relation activities.
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Further reading

- Transforming Gender roles to reach Gender Equality – [Guidance for G500 Projects](#)
- [Checklist for GTA](#) (G500)
- **The Reach – Benefit – Empower concept**, which was developed by the International Food Policy Research Institute. A brief conceptual overview can be found [here](#). This approach is especially useful to design gender activities in agricultural programs.
- **The four powers of women empowerment** as defined by [Rowlands](#):
 - Power within: personal self-confidence and having an idea of your rights
 - Power with: collective power, by coming together and joint action
 - Power to: the capability to decide actions and carry them out
 - Power over: the power of hierarchy and invite others to take on tasks
- **The Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index** (WEAI): The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI), launched by IFPRI, Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), and USAID's Feed the Future in February 2012, is the first comprehensive and standardized measure to directly measure women's empowerment and inclusion in the agricultural sector. The WEAI is an innovative tool composed of two sub-indices: one measures women's empowerment across five domains in agriculture, and the other measures gender parity in empowerment within the household. The tool also measures women's empowerment relative to men within their households. The appropriate tool for **projects** is the [pro-WEAI](#). Currently there are special modules under development: Value Chains, livestock, health and nutrition

The indicators are grouped by **type of agency** as follows:

Intrinsic agency (power within)

- Autonomy in income
- Self-efficacy
- Attitudes about intimate partner violence against women
- Respect among household members (optional)

Instrumental agency (power to)

- Input in productive decisions
- Ownership of land and other assets
- Access to and decisions on financial services
- Control over use of income
- Work balance
- Visiting important locations

Collective agency (power with)

- Group membership
- Membership in influential groups