

FUTURE RESILIENCE OF HOME-GROWN SCHOOL FEEDING SYSTEM IN URBAN ZAMBIA AND MALAWI (FRESHGROWS) Project Phase 1

Project Summary

Overview

This project aims to enhance Home-Grown School Meals Programmes (HGSM) in Zambia and Malawi by addressing systemic challenges in procurement, gender inclusion, climate resilience, and rural-urban food system linkages. It seeks to create equitable, climate-resilient, and sustainable school feeding ecosystems that benefit both learners and local farmers. The project has 6 cities regions where it is being implemented. These cities are Ndola, Livingstone, Solwezi and Lusaka for Zambia and Blantyre and Lilongwe for Malawi. Project has subgrant partners who are:

1. University of Malawe
 2. Kasisi Agricultural Training Center
 3. Kalichi Picture.
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Key Challenges that the project hopes to provide recommendations for solutions

1. **Procurement Issues:** Inadequate systems for sourcing from local smallholder farmers.
2. **Weak Coordination:** Poor collaboration among stakeholders and institutions.
3. **Data Gaps:** Lack of research on farming practices, gender equality, and climate resilience in HGSM.
4. **Urban-Rural Disconnect:** Limited integration for shared prosperity between rural food producers and urban schools.
5. **Gender & Inclusion:** Neglected roles of women and vulnerable groups in HGSM systems.

Objectives

General Objective:

To build knowledge and pilot pathways for a resilient, gender-inclusive HGSM ecosystem based on local, agroecologically-produced food.

Specific Objectives:

1. Reform HGSM systems to deliver healthy meals while enhancing farmer incomes.
 2. Foster collaboration among actors to improve supply chains and promote sustainability.
 3. Test scalable gender-responsive and climate-resilient solutions for HGSM.
 4. Develop guidelines to integrate gender equality and climate resilience into HGSM practices.
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Theoretical Framework

The project applies **Systems Thinking**, treating HGSM as an interconnected ecosystem. This involves:

- Engaging diverse stakeholders.
 - Recognizing feedback loops and non-linear dynamics.
 - Balancing competing demands like cost, nutrition, inclusion, and resilience.
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Work Packages (WP)

1. **Data Collection & Analysis:** Study procurement systems, gender inclusion, and climate resilience.
2. **Pathway Development:** Build collaborative linkages across HGSM actors.
3. **Testbeds & Trials:** Pilot six innovative solutions in procurement, logistics, and food waste management.
4. **Knowledge Dissemination:** Share findings via workshops, reports, and policy briefs for scalability.

Expected Outcomes

1. Evidence-based reforms for resilient HGSM ecosystems.
 2. Strengthened linkages between rural producers and urban schools.
 3. Gender equity and sustainable practices embedded in HGSM programming.
 4. Scalable solutions for sustainable school feeding systems.
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Impact

The project seeks to transform HGSM into a vehicle for social inclusion, climate resilience, and urban-rural prosperity. It emphasizes collaboration, innovation, and intersectional research to drive sustainable growth.

Stakeholders

The key stakeholders in the project include:

1. **University of Zambia (UNZA):**
 - Primary institution leading the project.
 - Principal Investigator (PI): Dr. Gilbert Siame, supported by Co-Leads Dr. Esther Malama and Dr. Innonge Milupi.
 - Additional UNZA members include Dr. Progress Nyanga, Dr. Chongo Kaulule, Musonda Chipampata (Project Manager), Peter Mulambia (Policy Analysis), and Eddy Chikuta.
2. **University of Malawi (UNIMA):**
 - Partner institution conducting research and analysis in Malawi.
 - Co-Principal Investigator: Associate Professor Evance Mwathunga, supported by other researchers specializing in gender, climate change, and food systems.
3. **Kasisi Agriculture Training College (KATC):**
 - Expertise in agroecology and sustainable food production.
 - Key contributors: Executive Director Fr. Claus Recktenwald and John Banda, supported by a project officer.
4. **African Centre for Gender and Climate Action (ACEGA):**
 - Focus on gender equality and climate resilience.
 - Lead: Astridah Lupiya, supported by a project officer.
5. **Government Ministries:**

- Agriculture, Education, Environment, and city governments in Zambia and Malawi.
6. **Other Stakeholders:**
- Civil society organizations (CSOs), farmer organizations, schools, and local communities.
 - International actors such as IDRC (funding body), and relevant platforms like FAO and ICLEI.

This network collaborates to ensure effective research, knowledge sharing, and the success of Home-Grown School Meals Programmes across both countries.