



REPORT

NUTRITION TRAINING FOR ECD & SOUP KITCHEN STAFF IN GOBABIS

Venue: Light For The Children, Gobabis.

20th & 21st September 2024
+ 4th & 5th October 2024



Co-funded by the
European Union

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Background & Introduction

Omaheke is one of the regions hardest hit by malnutrition, with increasing cases of hospital admissions and deaths. Contributing factors to malnutrition in Omaheke include lack of access to food coupled with poor knowledge of proper breastfeeding, complementary feeding and caring practices, poverty, high unemployment, alcohol addictions, insufficient availability of psychosocial support services, and inefficient social protection systems.

Since 2021, Omaheke was repeatedly visited by national staff from the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS), together with UN agencies and NAFSAN, leading to several reports, recommendations and interventions, yet the situation did not notably improve. Hence, in November 2023 the Omaheke Governor urgently requested support from the Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, who is responsible for coordinated implementation of Namibia's revised Food and Nutrition Security Policy¹. A high-level meeting was convened on 1 February 2024, where it was agreed to address the situation as a matter of urgency.

One of the key recommendations from this meeting was the development of a **Post-Discharge Strategy (PDS)** aiming to reduce high rates of admissions and re-admissions of cases of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) and Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) among children under five, whereby members of the San communities are disproportionately affected. Between February and June 2024, NAFSAN - supported by the European Union (EU)² - facilitated the development of the PDS with a concept note submitted to MOHSS in July, which is currently still pending approval.

¹ Launched in Dec.'21 - <https://opm.gov.na/national-food-and-nutrition-security> & www.nafsan.org/nfns

² Project: "Making Multi-Sectoral Coordination Work: Collaborating towards better nutrition, food security and development for everyone" (December 2021 – May 2025), developed and implemented by NAFSAN.

Between 2021 and 2024, NAFSAN lead the collaborative development of a comprehensive and highly participatory training on “**Nutrition for Health – Embracing our Namibian Food Systems**” (www.nafsan.org/n4h) which covers the following four areas:

1. Nutrition & Malnutrition,
2. Food Groups & Healthy Eating,
3. Right Start for Our Children, and
4. Food Systems & Cycles.

Training-of-Facilitators on this approach started already in March 2023, yet securing funding for efficiently printing all the materials and conducting further Trainings-for-Facilitators took over a year until mid 2024³.

To prevent re-admission and to more sustainably address food insecurity among identified families with children recovering from or affected by malnutrition, a combination of providing Nutrition-for-Health education together with healthy/diverse (yet affordable) food packages was initially meant to form part of the Post-Discharge Strategy. In March 2024, the **FirstRand Namibia Foundation** was approached and generously committed N\$ 300,000 in support of this approach, primarily for food items, as well as for educational activities and coordination.

With the official adoption of the Post-Discharge Strategy by MoHSS still pending while the need to take action persisted, NAFSAN decided to slightly adapt the PDS-approach and focus on strengthening existing community resources in form of soup kitchens and Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centres, which play a vital role in affected communities by providing a lifeline for vulnerable, poor and/or neglected children (socially/psychologically/physically). Even without the availability of Community Healthcare Workers (CHWEs) one would be able to reach families and parents/caregivers of affected children through these ‘islands of hope’.

Approach

As local part-time coordinator (by NAFSAN), Ms. Belinda Thanises, played a key role in linking children from the hospital’s discharge list to soup kitchens in or near the areas where they stay, and in identifying functioning soup kitchens in affected areas to be part of this initiative, as well as ECD centres that are also dealing with malnutrition challenges on a daily basis.

In addition, an agreement with a local retailer (Omaheke Megasave Gobabis) was developed to ensure regular supply of diverse food items for participating soup kitchens at least twice a month. This aims to strengthen already existing food distribution processes and deliberately promote more diversified diets within these soup kitchens as well as on household-level.

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of malnutrition and of nutritious diets and healthy behaviours, NAFSAN facilitated **nutrition education sessions**, i.e. training staff and volunteers from soup kitchens and ECD-centres on Nutrition-for-Health to walk-the-talk, and providing them with skills and materials to educate the children and parents they work with.

³ NAFSAN hereby appreciates the support from GIZ’s Farming-for-Resilience project, the Capricorn Foundation, the European Union, the Government of Japan, and the World Health Organization in Namibia.

This enhanced awareness and understanding of various forms of malnutrition, as well as the importance of a balanced and diversified diet and proper infant and child feeding practices, is regarded as essential before much needed food packages can be provided to these centres as well as to families whose children are on the post-discharge list, as well as those who are most affected by the drought poverty and inequalities. This also helps to ensure that identified children receive necessary nourishment to prevent future hospitalizations and re-admissions.

The individuals targetted here, play an important role in ensuring that the foundation for healthy and holistic developmen of children under their care is established.

Nutrition Education & Training

The nutrition training sessions were facilitated at Light for the Children Centre in Gobabis, and reached a total of 30 ECD-Centre and Soup Kitchen staff and volunteers directly involved in caring for children (3 males and 27 females), although only 25 were present throughout all four sessions. To accommodate working hours and availability of participants (as they had to care for the children during weekdays), the sessions were held over two weekends (Friday afternoons and Saturdays = 2 x 2 x ½ days) on 20-21 September and on 4-5 October.



Participants came from eight different ECD-centres and soup kitchens operating in Gobabis' informal

areas, namely: Light For The Children, steps for children, Shiloh Pre-school, Omaheke Good Hope Kindergarden, Ditsa i Mu, Eden Park Kindergarden, Vita-Min Kids and Val en Opstaan. Four of them are also supported by Capricorn Foundation through Development Workshop Namibia⁴. All of them are responsible to care for between 80 and 300 children per day, either in form of education, feeding or a combination of both.

⁴ **Development Workshop Namibia (DWN) focuses on these key areas to support ECD in Namibia:**

- **Teaching and Learning Materials:** Developing, publishing, and distributing high-quality ECD and pre-primary curriculum materials.
- **Teacher Training:** Providing standardized ECD training with detailed materials.
- **Parent Support:** Engaging parents through meetings and providing resources to support their children's learning at home.
- **Nutrition and Feeding:** Implementing a cash-based feeding system to ensure children receive nutritious meals. ECD centres receive funds to purchase and prepare food.
- **ECD Centre Improvements:** Offering grants to help centres improve their infrastructure, such as building toilets, which are key in terms of sanitation, hygiene, health and food safety.

Through funding from the Capricorn Foundation, DWN currently supports nine (9) ECD's in Gobabis, namely: Val en Opstaan, Vita-Min Kids daycare, Shiloh Daycare, Sister tine daycare, Omaheke Faith kindergarten, Tui Ni Duse, Omaheke Good Hope and Omaheke Sunshine.

In addition to the four areas of *Nutrition-for-Health*, these particular training also included:

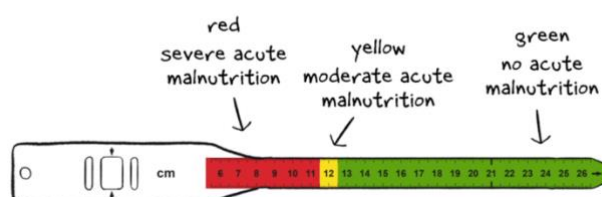
- **Introducing a Soup Kitchen Meal Plan:** A draft meal plan for soup kitchens (initially developed by NAFSAN's nutritionists, yet has not been fully field-tested) was distributed and discussed. It aims to ensure quality and nutritious meals for children, and staff from soup kitchens and ECD Centres are expected to not only try it out, but to provide feedback regarding practicality and make recommendations for improvements.



- **MUAC tape demonstrations:** Educators and soup kitchen staff learned to utilize these tapes to screen children for malnutrition every two weeks. Early detection of under-nutrition is crucial for timely intervention and prevention of severe cases.



MOWELL MUAC TAPE FOR CHILD



The training itself followed a highly interactive bottom-up approach, aimed at ensuring that those individuals who work directly with children, namely educators, caretakers and soup kitchen staff are empowered with practical information and insights on nutrition through experiential and participatory learning in the specific context of their work.



Funding from First Rand Namibia Foundation covered costs for venue, refreshments and transport of participants, while EU-funding allowed the facilitators to travel to and stay in Gobabis, where they also visited the various sites in the community and engaged with different stakeholders (see separate reports) to improve coordination at regional level.

Participants' Comments

Positive Aspects of the Workshop

- **Informative Content:**
 - Learned about the importance of a healthy lifestyle during pregnancy.
 - Gained knowledge on nutrition, including the types of food to eat and the risks of malnutrition.
 - Acquired practical skills like composting, food preservation, and gardening.
- **Effective Facilitation:** The training was well-organized and informative. Facilitators were clear, concise, engaging and language was suitable (Afrikaans).
- **Supportive Environment:** Appreciated the venue, taxi money refunds, catering, and the facilitators' patient and supportive conduct.



Negative Aspects of the Workshop

- **Limited Menu:** Some participants felt that fruits were missing from the menu.
- **Insufficient Transport Money:** A few participants indicated that the transport money provided was inadequate.
- **Inconvenient Timing:** Some participants found the weekend training schedule to be inconvenient and preferred weekdays.

Recommendations for Future Nutrition Trainings

- **Wider Audience:**
 - Extend invitations to community members and secondary school children.
 - Consider offering trainings to pregnant women and teenagers.
- **Enhanced Content:**
 - Incorporate additional topics, such as how to make jam from fruit (value addition).
 - Explore new and innovative topics for future trainings.
- **Improved Logistics:**
 - Conduct trainings more frequently.
 - Consider longer training durations, such as for a whole week.
 - Ensure that healthy snacks are served during the training.
 - Provide sufficient transport money or other transportation arrangements.



- **Community Engagement:**
 - Expand the reach of the trainings to the larger community by inviting more participants.
 - Ensure that the menu includes a variety of healthy foods, including vegetables and fruits.

Overall, the participants found the workshop to be valuable and informative, with positive feedback on the content, facilitation, and supportive environment.

Conclusion & Ways Forward

These nutrition training sessions successfully empowered ECD-Centre and Soup Kitchen staff with essential knowledge and skills to improve child nutrition and promote the well-being of children in the community.

Everyone who attended all four sessions received a 'Certificate of Participation' and they are not only expected to apply what they learned but to also engage with and educate parents and caregivers of children under their care through the training materials

(www.nafsan.org/n4h-materials) they received:

- N4H Training Manual (1 per participant)
- N4H Flip Charts (1 complete set with carry bag per ECD/Soup Kitchen)
- Food Group Cards (1 pack per ECD/Soup Kitchen)
- MUAC Tapes (1 per participant)

All participants have expressed their readiness to further facilitate sessions at their respective places of work.

One (1) participant from each ECD/Soup Kitchen will receive further cooking training offered by GIZ Namibia's Farming for Resilience (F4R) project, including practical demonstrations. This will further enhance their skills and abilities to prepare more diverse/healthy meals, hereby contributing to long-term positive behaviour change.



Participants' positive feedback and enthusiasm for the training and overall intervention is a good indicator for its potential effectiveness in achieving the goal of overcoming all forms of malnutrition, especially when recognizing malnutrition as intergenerational problem.

It is furthermore positive encouragement for NAFSAN and its members and key partners, to continue expanding the Nutrition-for-Health education and awareness raising, to reach a wider audience nationwide in collaboration with other child development initiatives in Namibia, such as the multi-sectoral Right Start Namibia platform.

Annexures

Participants Feedback

What I Liked: What was interesting, new, and/ or important for me, and why?

- I learned about what to do when I am pregnant. // I learned the importance for pregnant women to avoid alcohol and drugs. // The importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle, especially during pregnancy.
- That breastfeeding is important for both, baby and the mother // The first 1000 days.
- The actual examples of malnourished children. // What children look like when they suffer from malnutrition. // MUAC demonstration was very helpful.
- The high sugar content in drinks. // The sugar content in food and drinks.
- What type of food to eat so that your body is healthy.
- How to preserve food.
- How to start up a garden. / I learned how to compost and what to add to compost.
- I gained a lot of new information. // Everything was interesting. // I liked everything about the training.
- Facilitators were concise. // The facilitators had good conduct, and they were patient. // Facilitators were loud and clear. // Language use was suitable.
- I appreciate the venue, taxi money refunds and catering.

What I didn't like: What was not so valuable for me for the whole group, and why?

- Everything was good. // Everything was interesting.
- No fruits were added to the menu.
- Transport money was not sufficient.
- Trainings over the weekend are inconvenient. Weekdays would have been better.

Recommendations: What to be aware of or change for future nutrition trainings?

- More people should be invited next time. // Invitations to be extended to community members and secondary school children. // Trainings should not be limited to a specific group but extended to the larger community. // Training should be given to pregnant women. // Training should be given to teenagers.
- Healthy snacks to be served at the training. // Add vegetables and fruits to the menu.
- Conduct these types of trainings more often. // Make it longer, e.g. one week.
- Training on how to make jam from fruit (Value addition).
- Facilitators need to come up with new topics.

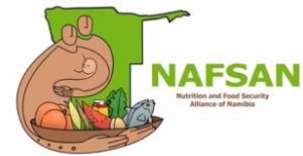
Nutrition-for-Health – Training of Facilitators (ECD)

| Friday, 20 September 2024 (14:00 - 17:00) | |
|---|---|
| 14:00 - 14:20 | Welcome and Introductions |
| 14:20 - 15:30 | Nutrition Quiz: <i>whole group exercise</i> + Undernutrition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causes and consequences • MUAC demonstration and assessment |
| 15:30 - 16:00 | Hidden Hunger: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Micronutrient deficiencies • Importance of diverse diets |
| 16:00 - 16:45 | Overnutrition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causes and consequences • Obesity and related health issues |
| 16:45 - 17:00 | Closing Round + Small meal (with take home option) |
| Saturday, 21 September 2024 (09:00 - 14:00) | |
| 09:00 - 09:30 | Reflections on the previous day |
| 09:30 - 10:30 | Sugar Exercise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying hidden sugars in common foods |
| 10:30 - 10:45 | Natural Sugar vs Added Sugar: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sugar and Me • Hidden Sugar and Fats |
| 10:45 - 11:00 | <i>Tea Break</i> |
| 11:30 - 11:45 | Food Group Exercise |
| 11:45 - 12:45 | Food Groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of consuming all food groups • Practices and measurements for Soup Kitchen staff |
| 12:45 - 13:15 | Nutrition Challenges in Our lives |
| 13:15 - 13:30 | Closing Round for 1 st Weekend ... <i>to be continued on 4 - 5 October 2024</i> |
| 13:30 - 14:00 | <i>Lunch</i> |

Nutrition-for-Health – Training of Facilitators (ECD) - continues...

Programme for the 2nd Weekend

| Friday, 4 October 2024 (14:00 - 17:00) | |
|---|---|
| 14:00 - 14:20 | Welcome and Reflection on previous session |
| 14:20 - 15:30 | The Right Start for Our Children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The First 1,000 Days – <i>Input and discussions</i> |
| 15:30 - 16:00 | Maternal Nutrition – <i>Exercise and input</i> |
| 16:00 - 16:45 | Breastfeeding and First Foods – <i>Exercise, reflections and input</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Nutrition and More – <i>Input and discussions</i> |
| 16:45 - 17:00 | Closing Round + Small meal (with take home option) |
| Saturday, 5 October 2024 (09:00 - 14:00) | |
| 09:00 - 09:30 | Reflections on the previous day |
| 09:30 - 10:30 | Food Systems and Cycles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agri-Nutrition Linkages: The Food We Grow – <i>exercise and input</i> • Food Safety and Preparation – <i>Input and discussions</i> |
| 10:30 - 10:45 | How Do We Conserve Food? – <i>Exercise and reflections</i> |
| 10:45 - 11:00 | <i>Tea Break</i> |
| 11:30 - 11:45 | Food Preservation, Storage and Waste Reduction – <i>Input and discussions</i> |
| 11:45 - 12:45 | Recap of Workshop – <i>Brief summary / reflections</i> |
| 12:45 - 13:15 | Challenges, Opportunities and Ways Forward – <i>Exercise and joint reflections</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Workshop Evaluation |
| 13:15 - 13:30 | Closing Round & End of Workshop |
| 13:30 - 14:00 | <i>Lunch</i> |



Attendance/ Meeting List

Event: Nutrition-for-Health (N4H) Training for Soup kitchen & ECD staff

Facilitated by: Fredrika Amupolo & Carmen Letlhagoje

Venue: LFTC **Dates:** 20-21 September & 04-05 October 2024.

| Name | Surname | Sex | | Organisation |
|---------------|------------|-----|---|------------------------|
| | | M | F | |
| Anastasia | Pietersen | | x | Eden Park |
| Anna | Jacobs | | x | Val en Opstaan |
| Anna | Goeieman | | x | Good Hope ECD Centre |
| Annastasia | Hamutenya | | x | LFTC |
| Arnolda | Booyesen | | x | NAFSAN |
| Belinda | Thanises | | x | NAFSAN |
| Bitu | Hendrik | | x | LFTC |
| Brumelda | Goeieman | | x | Shiloh Pre-School |
| Carmen | Letlhagoje | | x | NAFSAN |
| Christiaana | Garises | | x | Good Hope ECD Centre |
| Christo Henry | Moklakla | x | | Shiloh Pre-School |
| Clara | Martin | | x | Eden Park |
| Erica | Tsuses | | x | Val en Opstaan |
| Florinda | Goagoses | | x | LFTC |
| Fredrika | Amupolo | | x | NAFSAN |
| Johanna | Kakoro | | x | LFTC |
| Johanna | Nakale | | x | Val en Opstaan |
| Justine | !Hogobes | | x | Ditsa i Mu PP |
| Klaas | Swartbooi | x | | Good Hope |
| Lisethe Ellen | Kamendu | | x | Ditsa i Mu PP |
| Liz-Ben | De Klerk | | x | Eden Park |
| Maria | Jentjies | | x | LFTC |
| Mathilde | Tlhmelang | | x | LFTC |
| Mina | Goreses | | x | Good Hope Centre |
| Monica | Kamutjemo | | x | LFTC |
| Monica | Veta | | x | Vita-Min Kids PP |
| Noubert | Louw | x | | LFTC |
| Rachel | Ngava | | x | Val en Opstaan |
| Regina | Ruduvini | | x | Steps for The Children |
| Rumano | Hamutenya | | x | LFTC |
| Salome | Haoses | | x | Ditsa i Mu |
| Sara | Vita | | x | Vita-Min Kids |
| Tina | Damm | | x | Val en Opstaan |