



Tropentag, September 20-22, 2023, hybrid conference
“Competing pathways for equitable food systems transformation:
Trade-offs and synergies”

Nourishing futures: Cultivating nutrition and male engagement for healthy childhoods on Likoma Island, Malawi

TIWONGE VANESSA LONGWE

Unilia, Malawi

Abstract

Malnutrition remains a persistent concern among children under the age of five in Likoma Island, a lakeshore district in northern Malawi, with high stunting levels of 26.6% despite national reductions in malnutrition rates for young children. Current efforts to raise awareness about proper nutrition among young children lack a gendered approach for effective dissemination.

Comprehensive nutrition education has shown promise in reducing malnutrition. To maximise impact, the project will utilise community radios, proven effective channels for disseminating information, to reach a larger audience in the district. Additionally, the project strives for sustainability by empowering local non-governmental organisations on the Island with nutrition knowledge through proper training. By imparting nutrition knowledge and skills to local non-governmental organisations, the project ensures that the island's community will continue to tackle malnutrition beyond the project's duration. This approach not only builds capacity within the community but also empowers them to address future challenges independently.

The project's holistic approach is designed to break down barriers and inspire a collective effort in prioritising the nutritional needs of children. It also aims to create a positive shift in societal norms, encouraging increased male involvement in child care and nutrition, leading to healthier and happier families. This approach will contribute to a comprehensive reduction of malnutrition among children under five on Likoma Island. Ultimately, the goal is to foster increased male involvement and improved inter-organisational collaboration to prioritise the nutritional needs of children while ensuring sustainability and lay the groundwork for a brighter and healthier future for Likoma Island's youngest generation.

Keywords: Improved nutrition, inter-organisational collaboration, male engagement, sustainability, under-five