



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

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It Takes a Village—and Civil Society—to Nourish a Child in Tanzania



Sylvester Mavanza

Held by her mother Zawadi Paulo, Lucy Boay is now an energetic 2-year old with the help of the Mwanzo Bora Nutrition Program.

At 23 months old, Lucy Buoy weighed 11 pounds—just half the normal weight for a child of her age. Within only 2 months, however, her weight doubled, thanks to a Feed the Future-supported program run by a civil society organization that focuses on nutrition during the 1,000 days between a woman's pregnancy and her child's second birthday.

Lucy, though she had no other health conditions, was prone to illness because she was undernourished. The Community Support Initiative-Tanzania (COSITA) was called in to help after being notified that Lucy was not well.

COSITA works with Africare's Mwanzo Bora Nutrition Program, which receives Feed the Future support, to improve the nutritional status of children and pregnant women. The organization actively works with village, ward and other community leaders to solicit input on local needs and appropriate interventions. One of the program's primary objectives is to reduce the rate of childhood stunting in five regions of Tanzania, including the Manyara region where Lucy and her mother, Zawadi Paulo, live.

The program helps mothers to adopt a range of sound nutrition practices. These include exclusive breastfeeding, the use of vitamin A and iron-folic acid, home gardening, small livestock rearing, complementary food preparation and use of tippy taps, an outdoor handwashing device, for hygiene purposes.

Zakaria Msumari, a nutritionist for COSITA, assisted Lucy's family by visiting Paulo at home. "The mother did not have enough knowledge on infant and young child feeding," he said. Together, the two decided to take Lucy to the hospital to be treated for wasting. There, Msumari continued providing information to Paulo.

"I visited Paulo every day to cover the knowledge gaps on nutrition that I observed during our prior conversations," Msumari said. His advice included better food preparation methods and improved hygiene, which can help reduce recurrent diarrhea in children.

"I educated the mother on how to prepare her child's food and feeding frequency," he added.

Msumari also linked Paulo to a community health worker trained by Africare, who conducted home visits to provide additional one-to-one education on child health. The health worker stressed good nutrition and the importance of getting a child to the clinic on time.

Paulo said, "I followed their advice, and my child is doing well now, unlike in the past." She continued, "I am very grateful for the assistance from the Mwanzo Bora project for their services that helped to save my child's life."

COSITA is helping children just like Lucy all over the region. The group has already reached nearly 4,570 children, and it is now working with four other civil society organizations to reach 5,150 in a single year.