

UN Sri Lanka SDG Multi-Partner Trust Fund
Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Nutrition Insecurity of Vulnerable Groups through Nutrition Sensitive Agricultural Home Gardens and Urban Agriculture Systems
MPTF OFFICE GENERIC FINAL PROGRAMME¹ NARRATIVE REPORT
REPORTING PERIOD: FROM May 2021 TO November 2021

Programme Title & Project Number	Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results²
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme Title: Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Nutrition Insecurity of Vulnerable Groups through Nutrition Sensitive Agricultural Home Gardens and Urban Agriculture Systems Programme Number UNJP/SRL/077/UNJ MPTF Office Project Reference Number:³ 127153 	<p><i>Sri Lanka, Island wide</i></p> <p><i>Priority area/ strategic results contribute to FAO Strategic Objective 5 (SO5): Increase the resilience of livelihoods to disasters. Under SO5, this project contributes equally to two Organizational Outputs, viz; 503 - Countries reduced risks and vulnerability at household and community level and 504 - Countries prepared for and managed effective responses to disasters and crises. Under above two Organizational Outputs, the project contributes to achieve Organizational Outcomes, 50302 - Communities equipped with vulnerability reduction practices and measures and 50402 - Humanitarian assistance for livelihood saving timely delivered to crises affected communities respectively in the cooperate level.</i></p>
Participating Organization(s)	Implementing Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Health & Ministry of Agriculture Scaling Up Nutrition People’s Forum The Dieticians Association of Sri Lanka Women’s Bureau
Programme/Project Cost (US\$)	Programme Duration
<p>Total approved budget as per project document: USD 100,000</p> <p>MPTF /JP Contribution⁴:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> by Agency (if applicable) Agency Contribution by Agency (if applicable) <p>Government Contribution</p>	<p>Overall Duration 6 months</p> <p>Start Date⁵ 26 May 2021</p> <p>Original End Date⁶ 24 Nov 2021</p> <p>Actual End date⁷ 30 Nov 2021</p>

¹ The term “programme” is used for programmes, joint programmes and projects.

² Strategic Results, as formulated in the Strategic UN Planning Framework (e.g. UNDAF) or project document;

³ The MPTF Office Project Reference Number is the same number as the one on the Notification message. It is also referred to as “Project ID” on the project’s factsheet page on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#).

⁴ The MPTF/JP Contribution is the amount transferred to the Participating UN Organizations – see [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

⁵ The start date is the date of the first transfer of the funds from the MPTF Office as Administrative Agent. Transfer date is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

⁶ As per approval of the original project document by the relevant decision-making body/Steering Committee.

⁷ If there has been an extension, then the revised, approved end date should be reflected here. If there has been no extension approved, then the current end date is the same as the original end date. The end date is the same as the operational closure date

(if applicable)
Other Contributions (donors) (if applicable)
TOTAL:
Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.
Evaluation Completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date: 29.10.2021 Evaluation Report - Attached <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date: 29.10.2021

Have agency(ies) operationally closed the Programme in its(their) system? Yes No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Expected Financial Closure date ⁸ :
Report Submitted By
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Name: Deleshi Weliwatte ○ Title: Programme Coordinator ○ Participating Organization (Lead): FAO ○ Email address: Deleshi.weliwatte@fao.or:

FINAL PROGRAMME REPORT FORMAT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Home gardening is one of the easiest ways to ensure access to a healthy diet that contains adequate macro and micronutrients. This is especially important during this time of uncertainty with loss of household income during the Covid-19 pandemic. Through this project FAO together with Scaling up Nutrition People's Forum (SUN PF) identified 47136 vulnerable families affected by Covid-19 including women headed households and families with children under the age of five. FAO together with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture identified suitable vegetables that will address the micronutrient deficiencies of the vulnerable communities in Sri Lanka and procured these seeds through the Seeds and Planting Material Development Centre, under the Department of Agriculture within the short time frame available and made arrangement for the distribution of these seeds to beneficiaries through SUN PF. The Dieticians Association of Sri Lanka carried out virtual training programs for Midwives, Agriculture Instructors and Dieticians who would take the message of nutrition-based home gardening to the vulnerable communities.

I. Purpose

This programme falls under the following Strategic UN Planning Framework
 Zero Hunger
 Good Health and well-being

II. Assessment of Programme Results

i) Narrative reporting on results:

Outcomes: Vulnerable families produce and consume nutritionally rich home garden produce

The initial plan was for Midwives of MoH to identify the 45,000 project beneficiaries, i.e nutritionally vulnerable families island wide, affected by COVID-19 including both rural and urban areas. High priority was to be given to families with pregnant and lactating mothers, infants, children adolescents and senior citizens. After many discussions with the Ministry of Health, the Secretary to the Ministry of Health sent a letter to all midwives of the country asking them to revert with the list of beneficiaries to an email address created by FAO. When this information was collated, it was visible that only 6,500 beneficiaries were identified out of which some data was sent in form of photos (with unclear information) and handwritten with

which is when all activities for which a Participating Organization is responsible under an approved MPTF / JP have been completed. As per the MOU, agencies are to notify the MPTF Office when a programme completes its operational activities. Please see [MPTF Office Closure Guidelines](#).

⁸ Financial Closure requires the return of unspent balances and submission of the [Certified Final Financial Statement and Report](#).

missing details. After discussing this with the MoH, FAO was informed that the MoH was overburdened with work, being in the forefront of the Covid-19 pandemic and therefore could not assist further.

This led to a small delay in work and after internal brainstorming it was decided that since the allocation of USD 10,000 for non-expandable equipment (which was to be used to develop Urban Agriculture Systems) cannot be done with the pandemic situation and a shortage of raw material and skilled labor, this allocation could be used for another Letter of Agreement with the Scaling Up Nutrition People Forum (SUN PF) who will provide the list of beneficiaries as well as organizing the seed distribution and other related activities.

Beneficiary identification was done in collaboration with the SUN PF district CSO coordinators and the WDOs of the Women’s Bureau. The focal points for the beneficiary identification and the seeds distribution are SUN PF district CSO coordinators and the WDOs of the Women’s Bureau. There were 30 CSO coordinators and 265 WDOs involved in it. MoA, Deputy Director of Agriculture (seeds) , Nikaveratiya office organized the seeds and dispatched the seeds to the beneficiary focal points of the districts and the divisional secretariate areas. Seeds were distributed to the identified 47136 beneficiary households with the support of the Scaling Up Nutrition People’s Forum Civil society Alliance network and through the Women’s Bureau network. SUN PF network distributed seeds for 14454 beneficiary families. Women’s Bureau distributed seeds to identified beneficiaries through the Women’s network. 32682

The seeds were selected in consultation with both the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health. It was decided to go for seeds that grow in all areas of the country and also to ensure that micro nutrient deficiencies such as Vitamin A, Vitamin B-9 and Iron are addressed through the vegetables selected. Two home garden seed packs were provided for each family and the selected seeds were as follows;

- Okra
- Winged Beans
- Brinjal
- Mae
- Amaranthus

• **Outputs:**

Output 1: Many varieties of nutritionally rich vegetables for rural and urban vulnerable families produced	
Planned	Progress as at 18 October 2021
1.1 Identification of COVID-19 affected, nutritionally vulnerable families	The SUN PF identified 47136 vulnerable families from every district of Sri Lanka. The target was to identify 45,000.
1.2 MoH track nutritional information of identified families	Pre and post survey was carried out through a Letter of Agreement with Dieticians Association of Sri Lanka (DiASL). With the lockdown of the country they faced difficulty in collecting this information
1.3 Selection of suitable vegetable types	FAO in consultation with MoH and MoA selected the suitable vegetable types that could be grown easily in local conditions and also provide nutritional requirements.
1.4 Procure and distribution of seeds, plantlets urban agricultural equipment	The seeds were procured through the Seed and Planting Material Development Centre under the

	Department of Agriculture. It was decided to not go ahead with urban Agriculture Equipment due to unavailability of raw material and labor due to the covid-19 pandemic situation
1.5 Mobilize AIs to train beneficiaries on cultivation practices to harvesting home garden produce	Due to the pandemic, AIs were reluctant to have training. However virtual training was planned for and coordinated with the provincial directors who nominated AIs from each district. A successful virtual training program for AIs was conducted by DiASL on 23 September 2021 with 440 participants.
1.6 Field monitoring of the intervention	SUN PF and DiASL conducted field monitoring till the end of the project duration. Unfavorable Weather condition island wide and heavy rains some of the plants and seeds got washed away and destroyed in certain areas
Output 2: Nutrition education relevant to commodities and healthy cooking and eating habits provided	
2.1 Develop training material, booklets and leaflets	DiASL has developed leaflets on Micronutrient Deficiencies in Sri Lanka and healthy recipes that could be used by AIs and Midwives to educate the beneficiaries. These have been translated to local languages and were printed and distributed in November 2021.
2.2 Conduct TOT Programmes	Virtual training for Midwives was conducted on the 13 October 2021 for 500 midwives in Sinhala language. Two workshops were conducted in November 2021, one for Midwives in Tamil/English language and one workshop for CSOs
2.3 Knowledge Dissemination	SUN PF and DIASL disseminated information on good nutritional practices to beneficiaries

- **Qualitative assessment:**

Overall, despite the covid-19 pandemic and lockdown situation in the country, the project was successfully concluded. More than the targeted amount of families were covered through this emergency intervention. There were cross cutting issues with the pandemic leading to delay in supply of seeds which in turn led to delays in planting and also physical training programmes could not be conducted however virtual trainings were conducted. The success of this programme led to the start of another similar initiative through the TCP/SRL/3804 project-Strengthen capacities to implement the adaptive national agriculture policy interventions with focus on school gardens.

Key Partnerships-

Civil Society Engagement

Through the involvement of the SUN PF , the district level and divisional level CSO coordinators was able to identify vulnerable beneficiaries. The SUN PF has a national council and the district level civil

society organizations' network. The council organizations and also the district level organizations involved in the identification of the beneficiaries and also the distribution.

Government Engagement:

Ministry of Health

The project was initiated with the collaboration of the Nutrition Division of the Ministry of Health with the objective of supporting to improve the nutrition situation of the families

Ministry of Agriculture

The main partner for the project. MoA helped in preparation of the seeds, packaging and distributed the seeds packs to the beneficiary focal points from Civil Society Organization's Coordinators to district level and to the Women Development Officers at Divisional Secretariat level

Women's Bureau

One of the main partners to the project supported to identify and distribute the seeds to the vulnerable families at district level. The Women's Bureau falls under the State Ministry of Women and Child Development, Pre-Schools & Primary Education, School Infrastructure & Education Services. Women's Bureau of Sri Lanka conducts programmes under the key areas of empowering Women Headed Families economically and socially, preventing Gender-Based Violence and creating equality. The Women Development Officers at District and Divisional Secretariat level helped to identify the beneficiary families and also to distribute the seeds using the network of Women Societies Island wide.

District Secretariat and Divisional Secretariate

The women development officers attached to both district and divisional secretariates helped with the distribution of seeds including identifying beneficiaries.

Samurdhi Department

In some areas Samurdhi Development officers helped to identifying the beneficiaries and also to distribute the seeds.

ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment:

Using the **Programme Results Framework from the Project Document / AWP**s - provide details of the achievement of indicators at both the output and outcome level in the table below. Where it has not been possible to collect data on indicators, clear explanation should be given explaining why.

	<u>Achieved</u> Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
Outcome 1⁹ Indicator: Baseline: Planned Target:	Number of home gardens developed for improvement for family nutrition 60,000 families – 10 vulnerable families per each midwife basis 45,000 families	No change in achieved target. However the operation modality was changed from midwife to Scaling up Nutrition Peoples Forum (SUN PF) with the support of Women’s Bureau, as the midwives were overburden with COVID-19 related activities	SUN PF and Women’s Bureau
Output 1 Indicator 1 Baseline: Planned Target:	Consumption of home garden vegetables None At least once a day	Target was not changed, but the information collection will be done by SUN PF	SUN PF and Women’s Bureau
Activity 1.1 Indicator Baseline: Planned Target: Activity 1.2	Identification of COVID-19 affected nutritionally vulnerable families done through District Secretariat, Women’s Bureau and SUN PF Preference was given to families with pregnant and lactating mothers and no information was available 45,000 families	Target was not changed. However operation modality was changed from Ministry of Health to Women’s Bureau.	SUN PF

⁹ Note: Outcomes, outputs, indicators and targets should be **as outlined in the Project Document** so that you report on your **actual achievements against planned targets**. Add rows as required for Outcome 2, 3 etc.

<p>Indicator</p> <p>Baseline:</p> <p>Planned Target:</p> <p>Activity 1.3</p> <p>Indicator</p> <p>Baseline:</p> <p>Planned Target:</p>	<p>Secondary information from Women's Bureau regarding daily diets</p> <p>None available</p> <p>45,000 families</p>	<p>No change in target</p>	<p>SUN and DiASL</p>
<p>Activity 1.4</p> <p>Indicator</p> <p>Baseline:</p> <p>Planned Target:</p>	<p>Number of vegetable types selected</p> <p>None</p> <p>At least 5 types of vegetables, which has the potential to fulfill the micronutrient needs</p>	<p>No change</p>	<p>Ministry of Agriculture, SPMDC</p>
<p>Activity 1.5</p> <p>Indicator</p> <p>Baseline:</p> <p>Planned Target:</p>	<p>Procurement and distribution of seeds</p> <p>None</p> <p>45,000 families</p>	<p>Urban agriculture component was altered only for potted plants and home gardening as no urban agriculture equipment were readily available in the open market due to lockdown situation of the country</p>	<p>Ministry of Agriculture, and SUN PF</p>
<p>Activity 1.6</p> <p>Indicator</p> <p>Baseline:</p> <p>Planned Target:</p>	<p>Number of trained field officers</p> <p>None on this area</p> <p>At least 500 field officers</p>	<p>No change of target. However, training programs were conducted on virtual basis and the interest of the field officers were very encouraging</p>	<p>Ministry of Agriculture and Provincial Divisions of Agriculture</p>
	<p>Visuals and information collected through CSOs</p> <p>45,000 families</p> <p>Minimum 15,000 families</p>	<p>No change of target.</p>	<p>Women's Bureau, SUN PF and DiASL</p>

<p>Output 2 Indicator 2 Baseline: Planned Target:</p>	<p>Number of ToTs conducted None 7,000 people</p>	<p>No change of target. However the modality was changed to conduct ToTs only for the main extension officers and to deliver the message to recipients through one to one meetings and leaflets due to prevailing COVID-19 situation</p>	<p>Provincial Department of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, DiASL</p>
<p>Activity 2.1 Indicator Baseline: Planned Target:</p>	<p>Number of training materials developed None At least three documents on nutritional value of targeted vegetables, cooking method for maximum retention of nutrients and meal planning as per the special requirements of vulnerable group</p>	<p>No change in targets</p>	<p>DiASL</p>
<p>Activity 2.2 Indicator Baseline: Planned Target:</p>	<p>Number of training programs conducted, and number of ToTs trained None on this area At least 400 on nutritional aspects and two large scale training programmes</p>	<p>Targets were not changed. The training programs were conducted on virtual basis. The number of attendees exceeded 500 numbers and the interest was very encouraging</p>	<p>Ministry of Health, SUN PF, Provincial Department of Agriculture</p>
<p>Activity 2.3 Indicator Baseline: Planned Target:</p>	<p>Number of trainers familiar with nutritional aspects of home garden vegetables and dietary requirement of vulnerable communities None at present At least 300 trainers familiar with the dietary aspects of vulnerable groups</p>	<p>Targets were not changed</p>	<p>DiASL, Women's Bureau, SUN and Ministry of Health.</p>

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iii) Evaluation, Best Practices and Lessons Learned

Sri Lanka had many travel restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic and also went into a complete lockdown from late August to beginning of October. This delayed the seed distribution activity as government institutes were not working in this period. However the planning was done with SUN PF throughout the lockdown period and was ready to start the distribution once lockdown was lifted.

The slight delay in dispatching and distribution of the seeds due to the procedures of the procurement caused an issue as the beneficiaries were not able to start the laying of the seeds on time. Due to the heavy rains in most of the areas of the country some of the plants or seeds got washed away and destroyed in certain areas.

Alternative routes were used for some of the project activities such as training programmes by making use of virtual platforms.

iv) A Specific Story (Optional)

- This could be a success or human story. It does not have to be a success story – often the most interesting and useful lessons learned are from experiences that have not worked. The point is to highlight a concrete example with a story that has been important to your Programme.
- In ¼ to ½ a page, provide details on a specific achievement or lesson learned of the Programme. Attachment of supporting documents, including photos with captions, news items etc, is strongly encouraged. The MPTF Office will select stories and photos to feature in the Consolidated Annual Report, the GATEWAY and the MPTF Office Newsletter.

Problem / Challenge faced: Describe the specific problem or challenge faced by the subject of your story (this could be a problem experienced by an individual, community or government).

Mr N.M Riswan, Agriculture Instructor, Trincomalee- " As an agriculture Instructor we possess the knowledge to reach vulnerable communities regarding practises of a home garden, however to combine this knowledge with nutrition is something that was not available for us. In order for us to convince people they can get the proper nutrients required through home gardening we need to have this knowledge ourselves."

Programme Interventions: How was the problem or challenged addressed through the Programme interventions?

"The Workshop on Nutrient sensitive home gardening really helped us improve our knowledge on how home gardens can be used as a tool to address the micronutrient defficiencies that we see among the people specially in the East."

Result (if applicable): Describe the observable *change* that occurred so far as a result of the Programme interventions. For example, how did community lives change or how was the government better able to deal with the initial problem?

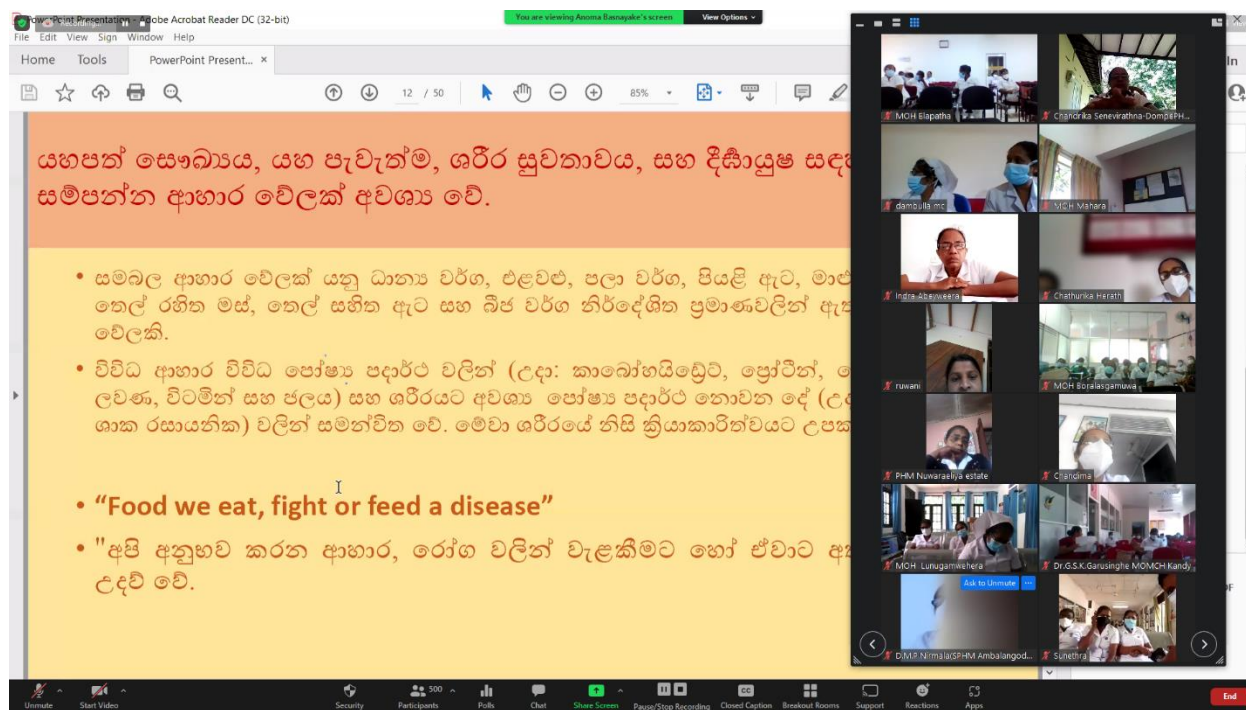
"We are in a better position to take this information to the community and disseminate the knowledge learnt to vulnerable farming communities especially to the Covi-19 affected families"

Lessons Learned: What did you (and/or other partners) learn from this situation that has helped inform and/or improve Programme (or other) interventions?

It is a good practice to provide training not only in related fields to AIs but also overall knowledge which would complement their work.

Annex

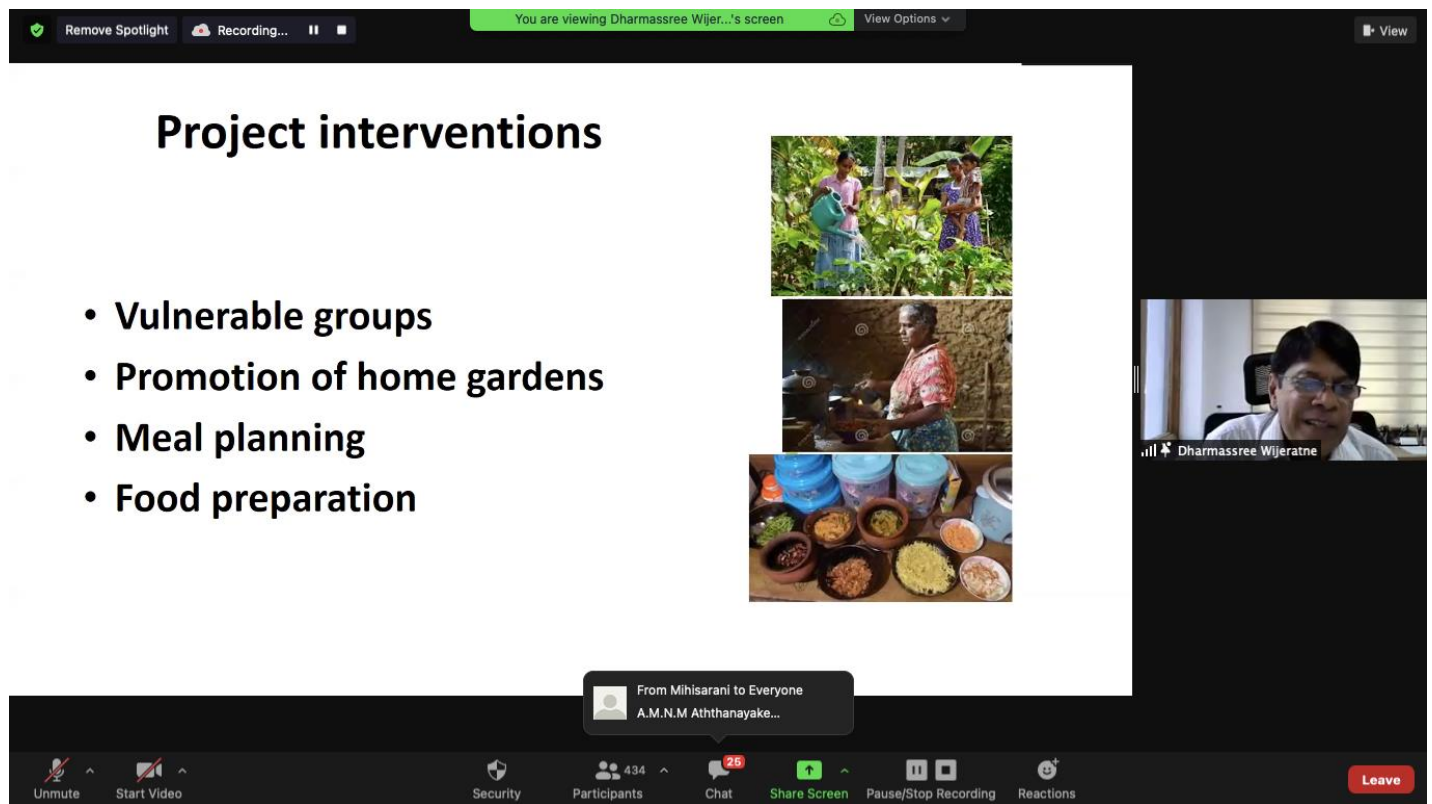
1. Screenshot from the virtual workshop for Public Health Midwives on 13 October 2021



2. Testimony of a participant from the Public Health Midwives workshop from Ms Dilma Wijesekara, SPHM, MOH Office, Galle

"The Training programme conducted was extremely useful to refresh my knowledge as a Senior Public Health Midwife serving the community. I gained a very good knowledge as to how to organize diets according to the dietary needs of the patients. The information was useful for dissemination to individual families as well as to the community in general. We can provide useful guidance to mothers who are bringing their underweight or overweight children to us for advice. As the 'Nutrition Month' is now on, I can tell the affected families the importance of micro-nutrients in the diet and how they could prepare nutrient rich diets using their home garden produce."

3. Screenshot from the virtual workshop on Nutrient sensitive home gardening for Agriculture Instructors of the Department of Agriculture on 23rd September 2021



The screenshot displays a Zoom meeting interface. At the top, a green bar indicates "You are viewing Dharmassree Wijer...s screen". The main content area shows a slide with the following text and images:

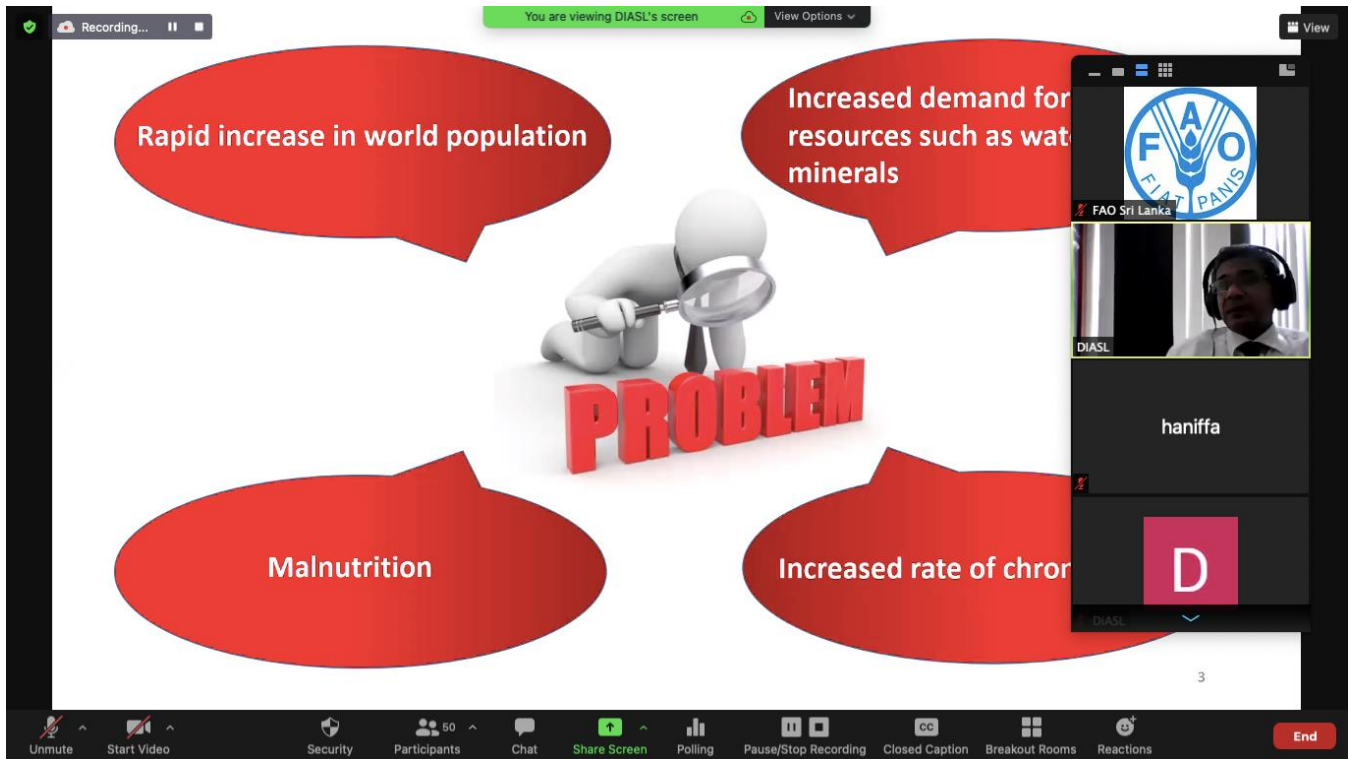
Project interventions

- **Vulnerable groups**
- **Promotion of home gardens**
- **Meal planning**
- **Food preparation**

The images on the slide are: 1. A group of people in a lush green garden. 2. A woman in a red patterned shirt cooking in a kitchen. 3. A table with several bowls containing different types of food, including what appears to be rice, lentils, and vegetables.

At the bottom of the slide, a chat bubble from "From Mihisarani to Everyone" (A.M.N.M Aththanayake...) is visible. The Zoom control bar at the bottom shows options like Unmute, Start Video, Security, Participants (434), Chat (26), Share Screen, Pause/Stop Recording, Reactions, and a red Leave button.

4. Screenshot from the virtual workshop for Dietitians linking agriculture, nutrition and health on 17th October 2021



5. Testimony of a participant of the workshop for Dietitians linking agriculture, nutrition and health
From Ms.Amal Firouse, Dietitian/Nutritionist, Colombo

"The Training programme was important to me because the knowledge of nutrition related diseases and deficiencies is of utmost importance to ensure providing advice on adequate nutrition and safe foods to meet dietary needs at individual level as well as community level.

As a practicing Dietitian/Nutritionist I can pass the message of how effectively nutrition oriented home gardening can benefit household food supplies for the well being and health of all the members of the households in COVID-19 affected families. "

6. Seed distribution in Ratnapura by CSO coordinator



7. Seed distribution in Thanamalwila by WDO – Thanamalwila (Ms.Kumudhuni Chandrika Kumari)



8. Beneficiaries in Thanamalwila area





9. Beneficiaries in other districts



10. The national level seed distribution event on 30th November 2021

